Tadeusz Różewicz and Modern Identity in Poland since the Second World War
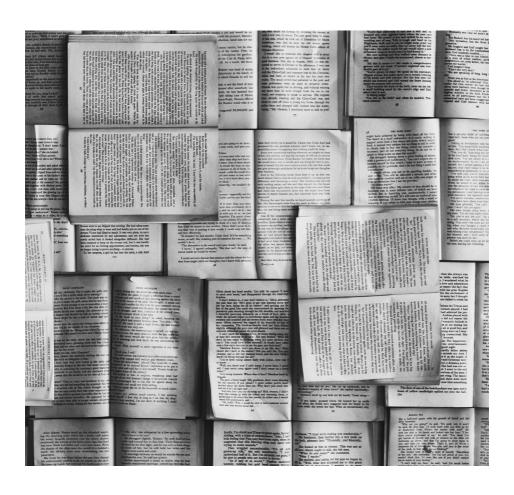
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TADEUSZ RÓŻEWICZ
AND MODERN IDENTITY IN POLAND
SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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Tadeusz Różewicz i nowoczesna tożsamość

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To My Parents

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Unless otherwise noted, the bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume refer to the following works:

I–XII   –   *Utwory zebrane* [*Collected Works*], vol. I–XII, Wrocław 2003–2006.

E   –   *Echa leśne* [*Forest Echoes*], Warszawa 1985.

K   –   *Kartki z Węgier* [*Notes from Hungary*], Warszawa 1953.

Ko   –   *Korespondencja* [*Correspondence*], ed. K. Czerni, Kraków 2009 (Tadeusz Różewicz, Zofia Nowosielska and Jerzy Nowosielski).

M   –   *Matka odchodzi* [*Mother Departs*], Wrocław 1999 (quotes from: *Utwory zebrane*, vol. XI, Wrocław 2004).

Ma   –   *Margines, ale …* [*Marginal, but still …*], ed. J. Stolarczyk, Wrocław 2010.

Mp   –   *Most płynie do Szczecina* [*A Bridge Flows to Szczecin*], in: *Wejście w kraj. Wybór reportaży z lat 1944–1964* [*Into the Country: Selected Reportage from the Years 1944–1964*], ed. Z. Stolarek, vol. I, Warszawa 1965.

N   –   *Nasz starszy brat* [*Our Elder Brother*], ed. T. Różewicz, Wrocław 1992 (quotes from: *Utwory zebrane*, vol. XII, Wrocław 2004).

O — *Opadły liscie z drzew* [*The Leaves Have Fallen from the Trees*], Warszawa 1955.

U — *Uśmiechy* [*Smiles*], Warszawa 1955 (quotes from the Warsaw 1957 edition)

W — *Wbrew sobie. Rozmowy z Tadeuszem Różewiczem* [*Against Yourself: Conversations with Tadeusz Różewicz*], ed. J. Stolarczyk, Wrocław 2011.

Tadeusz Różewicz's Narratives and Modern Identity (an Introduction)

Tadeusz Różewicz was a modern writer rooted in modernity, a term that is understood both as a historical epoch and a type of experience. The temporal boundaries and the very concept of modernity, however, are debatable. If we assume, following Anthony Giddens, that modernity encompasses such phenomena as systematic industrialization and urbanization, the dominance of the national state over other politico-territorial forms of collective existence, political or economic control of information and public space, abrupt changes in manners and mores, revision of key traditions, and accessibility of culture and education, then the modern experience in Central Europe became commonplace in the 20th century.[1] Some of those defining characteristics materialized in Poland simultaneously with Western countries, while others emerged later, i.e. only in the second half of the previous century, when modernity as a social project had already generated critical awareness of its moral and political consequences, which was typical of late modernity.[2]

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[1] A. Giddens, *Nowoczesność i tożsamość. "Ja" i społeczeństwo w epoce późnej nowoczesności*, trans. A. Szulżycka, Warszawa 2002.

[2] This "paradox of asynchronization" of modernity in post-World War Two Poland has been pointed out by Teresa Walas, among others. Cf. T. Walas, *Zrozumieć swój czas. Kultura polska po komunizmie – rekonesans*, Kraków 2003, pp. 39–47.

The existential and social experience of modernity invariably involves modern identity. Its philosophical foundation, according to Charles Taylor, is

> first, modern inwardness, the sense of ourselves as beings with inner depths and the connected notion that we are 'selves'; second, the affirmation of ordinary life which develops from the early modern period; third, the expressivist notion of nature as an inner moral source.[3]

This list of modernity's defining characteristics could of course be expanded. At this point, though, it is enough to stress its reflective and creative aspect. For Taylor does not see it as a static, closed structure accounting for modern man's experience, but rather as an indispensable "cognitive framework", defined and verified in the course of individual searches for and the resultant expressions of the meaning of life. The latter observation seems particularly important.

> But the invocation of meaning also comes from our awareness of how much the search involves articulation. We find the sense of life through articulating it. And moderns have become acutely aware of how much sense being there for us depends on our own powers of expression. Discovering here depends on, is interwoven with, inventing. Finding a sense to life depends on framing meaningful expressions which are adequate.[4]

Taylor's project implies that modern self-awareness is invariably linked to one's self-creation capabilities. The identity of the modern

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[3] Ch. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge University Press 1989, p. x.

[4] Ibid., p. 18.

self is circumscribed by its ability to make symbolic sense of one's life. Thus, identity could be viewed as an articulation of experience; moral systems, ideas, cultural artefacts, social relations and political events supply one's identity with sources of justification or means of expression, but they cannot deliver a comprehensive, all-encompassing and permanent meaning. The modern individual, once conscious of the problem of his/her identification, begins to look for the meaning on their own, creating it personally, as it were, though at the same time s/he invariably participates in history and the collective understanding of reality. Consequently, individual identity is all about referring one's personal experience to pre-existing cultural meanings and patterns present both in a given culture's intellectual and material heritage as well as in its current manifestations. The modern individual subjects this act of reference to reflection. In other words, they live with an awareness that they are personally responsible for the meaning of their own existence and should therefore come up with it on their own. Not, however, alone or in isolation. Richard Rorty emphasizes that in order to construct oneself, it is necessary to make use of pre-existing culture.[5] The modern self's identity, emerging through a dialogue with tradition and social environment, is constructed on an individual basis and simultaneously negotiated with what remains external or even alien to the self. The aim and object of this dialogue is the understanding of oneself and the world, resulting in a contingent image of one's own self. This concept of identity results from hermeneutical thought in the humanities, one which Rorty ascribes to Hans-Georg Gadamer. "Pondering the question of what constitutes the truth in the humanities" led the author of *Truth and Method* to the conviction that hermeneutics "is not a science of humanities' methods, but an attempt to under-

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[5]   See R. Rorty, *Filozofia a zwierciadło natury*, trans. M. Szczubiałka, Warszawa 1994, p. 325.

stand what in essence are the humanities apart from methodological self-understanding and links it to the totality of our experience of the world".[6] Interpreting thus the German philosopher, Rorty argues that in the humanities "the way things are said is more important than the possession of truths".[7] In other words, Rorty argues, the act of coming up with new, more interesting forms of self-expression – "finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking"[8] – is more valuable than the quest for the heart of the matter and the accumulation of objective knowledge. Hermeneutics, then, does not tell us how to *describe* man, but how to *construct* him, or, more precisely, how to understand man's *self-awareness* from the hermeneutical perspective. It is not objective knowledge, Rorty adds as if in Gadamer's name, that is man's greatest ability – it is, rather, our ability to come up with new self-images.[9]

Narrating Identity

Individual identity is not accessible in a ready-made form. It does not follow, though, that we do not have any pre-existing models or sources of such an identity – in fact, there are many of them. However, while acknowledging this variety, we still view identity more as a personal and unique merger of experience, social coercion, life's contingency, spontaneous action, pre-existing norms and behavioural patterns, and one's own imaginativeness. Modern man's self-definition is

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[6]   H.-G. Gadamer, *Prawda i metoda. Zarys hermeneutyki filozoficznej*, trans. B. Baran, Warszawa 2004, p. 22.

[7]   R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton University Press 1979, p. 359.

[8]   Ibid., p. 360.

[9]   See ibid., p. 359. Discussing the function of biographical form in narrative fiction, Anna Łebkowska confirms the hermeneutical purpose of narrative forms as a "guarantee of identity", not a cognitive method. Cf. A. Łebkowska, *Narracja biograficzna w fikcji*, "Teksty Drugie" 2003, no. 2–3, p. 38.

ultimately creditable only to himself, or, more precisely, to his interpretation of the world and his life. Identity thus construed is a historical term, one that is practically synonymous with the term modern identity because identity as an expression of the individual's character and biography as well as his/her attitude to the world is typical of modern culture and social relations.[10] Alain Renaut traces such an understanding of the human subject to modern interpretations of modernity, such as those by Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, whose basic assumption is that

> A modern attitude to the world is one in which man bestows upon himself the power to establish (his actions and representations, histories, truths, laws) […], from the moment the arts entered the aesthetic horizon to the development of the Diesel engine, from the emergence of the consumerist society to the process of globalization of war and terrorism, everything has been linked to the rule of subjectivity, or, which amounts to the same thing, to the blossoming of humanism, which at that point was merely a cultural *expression* and a philosophical *introduction* of man-as-subject.[11]

The modern individual's identity is a process of subjectively generated meaning, whereas the self's mode of operation is (self-)awareness. For my purposes, the most useful formulation of that idea is Heidegger's. In his ontology humans disclose and problematize their condition because they are beings that *understand* their *being,* their *be-*

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[10] Cf. S. Grotowska, *Tożsamość jednostki w perspektywie wydarzeń i planów życiowych*, in: *Biografia a tożsamość*, ed. I. Szlachcicowa, Wrocław 2003, p. 80.

[11] A. Renaut, *Era jednostki. Przyczynek do historii podmiotowości*, trans. D. Leszczyński, Wrocław 2001, pp. 31–32.

ing present-at-hand and *being-in-the-world*.[12] This "understanding" of one's "being is not a collection of terms but a primordially continuous and holistic structure".[13]

Following the author of *Being and Time*, I define existence (existential experience) as the individual's "understanding [his/her] possibility of being",[14] even though the Heideggerian model of man seems inadequate for analysing the problems of identity I discuss in this book. The links between *being-understanding-being* to real culture and society are largely irrelevant in Heidegger's ontology, whereas it is precisely these links I am interested in. Reaching for philosophical or sociological texts inspired by the Heideggerian concept of *Dasein*, I build primarily upon those theories whose authors supply the concept with an anthropological context. Thus I cite Charles Taylor, Paul Ricoeur, and Anthony Giddens, but when discussing particular texts by Różewicz I also refer to selected ideas of Jan Assmann, Jean Baudrillard, Zygmunt Bauman, Ernst Cassirer, Michel Foucault, Marc Fumaroli, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Maria Janion, Jerzy Jedlicki, Izabela Kowalczyk, Philippe Lejeune, Andrzej Mencwel, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Stanisław Ossowski, Ewa Rewers, Richard Rorty, Elżbieta Rybicka, Richard Shusterman, Georg Simmel, Jerzy Szacki, Magdalena Środa, Nikodem Bończa Tomaszewski, Christian Vandendorpe, Andrzej Walicki, and Anna Wieczorkiewicz. I largely follow their reconstruction of the socio-historical, cultural, and material background of modern identity or selfhood, and also adopt the very language they use to describe the modern self.

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[12] Cf. M. Heidegger, *Bycie i czas*, trans. B. Baran, Warszawa 1994, p. 57. *Dasein* has been translated as *being-here* or in the translation of *Wegmarken* as *being-present-at-hand*, while *In-der-Welt-sein* as *being-in-the-world*. Cf. M. Heidegger, *Znaki drogi*, trans. S. Blandzi et al., Warszawa 1995.

[13] Ibid., p. 331.

[14] Ibid., p. 325.

From the hermeneutical perspective of the idea of *being-understanding-being*, what is crucial is the assumption that by raising the very question of identity human beings go beyond themselves. The indispensable preliminary condition for self-definition is the self's participation in culture and social relations that make it possible to construct and express one's identity in comprehensible ways, facilitating its manifestation in human works and actions.[15] Thus mediated, the individual's identity becomes communicable, meaningful for the person involved, and accessible to others; it also becomes the individual's social identity. How does this mediation work? According to Heidegger, human life is grounded in temporality; one's "thinking [about] being" (Lorenc) requires that *Dasein* should simultaneously refer to the past, present, and future, thus interpreting one's experiences and existential plans in invariably temporal terms. Still, the author of *Being and Time* questions the feasibility of getting to know human beings through their psychological and social aspects. *Dasein* as a metaphysical essence of the self remains incognizable.[16] Narrativists, by contrast, who regard temporality and self-understanding as presupposing any conscious being, reject attempts to anchor being in ontological terms in favour of understanding identity in discursive and constructivist terms. A model of (meaningful) existence in a sequential order is a narrative, which, in their view, adequately reflects the temporal structure of our thinking and manifests itself in cultural texts and social situations. Human beings as selves/subjects define themselves in narrative forms. It follows then that by analysing human-made narratives, one can find out, at least hypothetically, how human identity is constructed and construed. It is in this way – the textual one – that I would like to

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[15]   Cf. W. Lorenc, *Hermeneutyczne koncepcje człowieka. W kręgu inspiracji heideggerowskich*, Warszawa 2003, p. 257.

[16]   Ibid., pp. 98–99.

describe the identity of Różewicz's literary persona and the experience of his protagonist.

In his studies on the individual's identity in the late-modern age, the British sociologist Anthony Giddens uses the term "narrative identity". In his definition, narrative identity is an individual way of ordering one's personal experience, consisting in projecting a coherent, holistic picture of the world experienced by the person in question. What makes up this world are both one's direct experiences and pieces of mediated information – abstracted from one's immediate environment but interpreted in the context of one's personal life and daily experience. As Giddens argues,

> the narrative of self-identity has to be shaped, altered and reflexively sustained in relation to rapidly changing circumstances of social life, on a local and global scale. The individual must integrate information deriving from a diversity of mediated experiences with local involvement in such a way as to connect future projects with past experiences in a reasonably coherent fashion. [...] A reflexively ordered narrative of self-identity provides the means of giving coherence to the finite lifespan, given changing external circumstances.[17]

The material of identity narrative is the world, which modern man, to a great degree, gets to know indirectly – especially thanks to humans' ability to communicate with others – and then internalizes, including it in his local and direct personal experience, all the while ordering and reinterpreting his observations. For Giddens, identity narrative amounts to an individual way of experiencing social phenomena, through which individuals make sense of their experience.

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17   A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford University Press 1991, p. 215.

The narrativist concept of identity combines both sociological and philosophical thought. In this book I rely on both. I regard a personal identity as a narrative fusion of collective identity, which consists in expressing (manifesting) a person's identification with a social group or part of one, and subjective identity, which, in Paul Ricoeur's view, combines one's sense of being himself/herself (*ipseitas*), or one's unique "selfness", with one's awareness of being oneself (*identitas*), i.e. one's existential sense of continuity in time.[18] Following Jan Assmann, I distinguish between two types of identity: social (collective) and self-identity. The latter can take two forms: individual and personal identity.

> Individual identity is the individual's self-image, constructed and maintained in their consciousness, which [in the person's view] distinguishes them from all the other ("significant") others; it is a body-generated awareness of one's own irreducible personhood, unique and irreplaceable. Personal identity, in turn, encompasses all the roles, characteristics, and competences resultant from the person's inclusion in specific constellations of the social structure. Individual identity refers to the contingency of human life, with its "border dates" of birth and death, to the corporeality of being and its corporal needs. Personal identity, in turn, refers to the person's social recognition and allocation. Both aspects of self-identity, also individual identity, are sociogenic and culturally determined. Both the process of individuation and that of socialization proceed within a culture-generated framework. Both aspects of identity reside within one consciousness

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18   Cf. P. Ricoeur, *Czas i opowieść*, trans. M. Frankiewicz, J. Jakubowski, and U. Brzeźniak, Kraków 2008; Ricoeur, *O sobie samym jako innym*, trans. B. Chełstowski, Warszawa 2005; Ricoeur, *Czas i opowiadanie*, trans. P. Murzański, "Logos i etos" 2001, no. 2; Ricoeur, *Życie w poszukiwaniu opowieści*, trans. E. Wolicka, "Logos i etos" 1993, no. 2; Ricoeur, *Filozoficzne osoby*, trans. M. Frankiewicz, Kraków 1992.

which was formed by the language, self-images, values, and norms of a given culture and epoch. Society, therefore, is not antithetical of the individual, but makes up the individual's constructive element. Identity, including self-identity, is always a social construct, and thus a cultural identity […].

The term social or collective identity denotes the self-image that a given community forms and with which its members identify. Collective identity emerges when the individuals partaking of it begin to identify with it. It does not exist "in itself", but only to an extent to which given individuals recognize it as their own. It is as strong or weak as its ability to stay alive in the consciousness of the community members and to motivate their thinking and actions.[19]

Individual identity in Assmann's definition is roughly synonymous with Ricoeur's concept of subjective identity, while personal identity is comparable to the individual's social identity. The term "personal" is used here in the constructivist sense, not the personalist one. Collective identity is an image of a community or social group that individuals may or not identify with. That identity requires the type of cultural competence that makes it possible to recognize and select those images of a given collectively that facilitate the identification of its members with the group. Whenever I write about modern identity or modern man's identity, I mean the connection between social identity and subjective identity. That is why, when it comes to Różewicz's narratives, I am interested in both the subject (the "selfness" and "continuity" of the textual "self") and the literary character (construed as a possible model of individual identity). In addition, I assume that the constructing and the understanding

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19   J. Assmann, *Pamięć kulturowa. Pismo, zapamiętywanie i polityczna tożsamość w cywilizacjach starożytnych*, trans. A. Kryczyńska-Pham, Warszawa 2008, pp. 145–146.

of this identity, including discovering or defining the relations between its constituent parts (e.g. experience, historical reflection, culture, interpersonal situations), takes place within the identity narrative. It is also there that one's identification with the group or community – or, more precisely, with their images – may take place. Each of those identities is constructed within a culture, thanks to the signs, values, and stories operating therein. It follows that one can describe such narratives by studying the culture involved.

It is not on psychological grounds that I intend to discuss these narratives, however, because I am interested not in the sources or general conditions of the identity-forming process, but in modern identity narratives or their past counterparts re-read through the lens of 20th-century problems and experiences. As a rich and accessible collection of such narratives, culture offers its works to individuals trying to make sense of their experience; this belief is fundamental to all my further reasoning. There is no simple access to another human being's ego, but one comes across its cognitive and interpretive activities in social reality, public discourse, literature, or the humanities. The individual's narrative identity requires their participation in culture; it presupposes one's forming a personal and conscious relationship with the images (descriptions) of man and his existence. Every identity narrative is a single person's story, but even personal experience acquires intersubjective meanings there, becoming comprehensible to fellow partakers of the same symbolic space.

The term "narrative" may mean several different things in narrativists' writings. Giddens, for example, talks about identity narrative, which in his work stands not for a textual or literary utterance but for a way of comprehending reality. I use his definition (though I include in one's individually processed reality not only social facts and situations, but also cultural artefacts and phenomena, since modern humans perceive and express themselves also, if not primarily, through acts of cognition

and interpretation), but I define the term slightly differently. Thus I assume that narrative is a sequentially organized literary utterance, or story, whereas identity narrative is a philosophical term describing the way of comprehending and conceptualizing human experience as a meaningful, temporal structure expressible not only through literature but also through other forms – artistic and otherwise. Identity narrative is a symbolic ordering of the individual's experience in time, which makes it possible for identity to emerge as an act of self-knowledge.

To avoid ambiguity, I will now devote some time discussing the difference between identity narrative and story narrative. Though I apply both the literary and hermeneutical understanding of narrative, this book is not focused on mental processes, social events, or philosophical issues. I analyse identity narratives in Różewicz's fiction not as psycho-social phenomena or cognitive theory problems, but as particular stories. It can be said that at this point I depart from Giddens' stance, approaching the presuppositions of Ricoeur's hermeneutics instead. According to the French philosopher it is cultural narratives that constitute an operative mode for human identity; only via such narratives can our identity be articulated and externalized as a meaningful story. Identity narrative for Ricoeur is a tangible narrative utterance that makes it possible for the individual's identity to be integrated and expressed in the form of a story. Thus psychological or sociological descriptions of human beings, even those taking one's existential experiences into account, do not make up identity narratives. Neither does *Dasein*, the self's act of self-understanding assuming the form of a temporally ordered mental structure, though it is isolated, however, from its historical environment. Following Ricoeur, I recognize identity narrative as only the tangible literary utterance – autobiographical, historical, philosophical or other – which, as much as possible, attempts to get a holistic grip on the individual's life in time, making sense of it at personal and social levels with the help of narrative categories.

That is how I read Tadeusz Różewicz's texts. I do not regard his works as repetitions of identity narratives already existing in art and literature, let alone as simple reflections of mental processes or structures, or as philosophical models, but as his personal work. Unique and self-created identity is modern man's artwork, so it can be evaluated in accordance with modern culture criteria. One may well ask whether it is internally consistent, self-reflexive, subjective, and critical of pre-existing forms of thinking and collective life, but also whether it is connected with tradition and identification patterns. What does it look like in Różewicz's texts? The author of *Death Amid Old Set Designs* refers to diverse identity narratives, often subjecting them to revisions. As a result, the narratives are re-told, the retellings being inspired by his personal experience, by artistic projects, or by his reflections on man's experience in the 20th century. This kind of revision usually consists of a rethinking of pre-existing identity models and their transformation through the critical dialogue that Różewicz engages in with modernist writers and philosophers. For this reason, Różewicz's debate on modern culture smacks of late-modern sensibility, one that is intellectually and morally more mature than the project of modernity emerging out of their works. One of this book's themes is the relationship between the modern Różewicz and the late-modern version.

Tadeusz Różewicz and Modernity

Creating one's own self-image consists in one's participation in culture; personal self-expression entails engaging in dialogue with others. In my view, the idea of the individual's identity in Różewicz's work fulfils that criterion. In his texts, man not only expresses himself in a cultural environment but also establishes connections, mediated through that environment, between diverse representations of the world and the social codes of its comprehension. But, first and foremost, he attempts to inter-

pret culture as a legacy (canon), as a communicative community, and as a symbolic language. Man's identity, his self-image, emerges in relation to himself and the available interpretations of reality. The individual's self-creation, then, amounts to one's personal way of understanding what is collective and generic in personal experience. Identity in Różewicz's texts is an interpretation of personal patterns, a description of the relationship between old and new images of man in culture, an attempt to consolidate personal experience with historical memory and the traditions present in modernity. This, in short, is my book's major premise.

Because of the timing of Różewicz's debut, and the time the texts I discuss here were written, I am primarily interested in the three decades following the year 1944. That period in Poland's political history, culture, and social life makes up the historical background for the modern identity described in this book. Andrzej Mencwel has noticed that "in the face of fundamental historical changes" there clearly emerges a need to rearrange "the entire pre-existing system of memory and tradition".[20] Changes on such an unprecedented scale took place in Poland during World War Two and in the subsequent decades. What translated into the collective experience of those days were – apart from the political antagonisms – such revolutionary social and cultural phenomena as the replacement of the elites and the reinterpretation of their grand narratives (or their symbolic universe), the ultimate "enfranchisement" of the Polish gentry traditions and national history to the masses, the spread of urban lifestyles and the expansion of popular culture, industrialization and the emergence of the ethnically-monolithic state (continuously existing for decades) relinquishing the policy of domination over its Eastern neighbours and oriented towards settlement and development of the so-called

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[20]   A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, Kraków 2009, p. 39.

Western and Northern Territories.[21] Różewicz's work referred, both in intellectual and biographical terms, to those processes and historic events. Mencwel, comparing Juliusz Mieroszewski's political journalism with Tadeusz Różewicz's work, emphasizes their peculiar affinity. Both of them wrote as if they had "indeed already experienced the end of the world."[22] Karl Dedecius in his afterword to the German anthology of Różewicz's texts wrote about "Stunde Null" ("Zero Hour") as a starting experience for his entire work.[23] This experience prompted attempts at new self-definition, in collective and national, as well as individual terms, attempts to search for new ways of thinking and writing about humanity.

The idea of "the world's end" and the beginning of new history is not unique in Polish literature. The reference point, for example, for Stefan Żeromski's fiction – inspirational for Różewicz's literary debut – "is invariably the time of defeat and the search for ways of overcoming it".[24]

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[21] Andrzej Leder writes: "Revolution means not only a change of the political system and [replacement] of the powers-that-be – for such transformations the term 'coup' [or 'upheaval'] would suffice – but also a rapid and fundamental unravelling of the social fabric, a change of economic and cultural hierarchies, a mass breakdown of prior property relations. This is usually facilitated by violence on a large-scale. It is precisely this type of revolution that took place in Poland between 1939 and 1956." Leder points out that the key acts of this drama included: (1) the annihilation of the Jews, replaced by the Polish middle class; (2) the loss of Eastern territories, important for Polish culture, and the attendant migration and relocation of millions of people to post-German lands; (3) the destruction of traditional gentry-based rural social structures and their mental forms. The revolution, Leder adds, since it materialized "as something external, [something] that one participated in passively, bereft of decision-making powers", resulted in the emergence of an ambiguous, not fully internalized, Polish collective identity. A. Leder, *Kto nam zabrał tę rewolucję?*, "Krytyka Polityczna" 2011, no. 29, pp. 32–36. Consequently, it is more appropriate to talk about the "revolutionary results" of the period's changes in Marcin Król's phrase, rather than a revolution as such. M. Król, *Inny kraj*, "Res Publica" 1987, no. 1, p. 20.

[22] A. Mencwel, *Przedwiośnie czy potop. Studium postaw polskich w XX wieku*, Warszawa 1997, p. 351.

[23] K. Dedecius, *Nachwort*, in: T. Różewicz, *Gedichte und Stücke*, trans. K. Dedecius, I. Boll, München 1983, p. 298.

[24] H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, *Świat jako zadanie inteligencji. Studium o Stefanie Żeromskim*, Warszawa 1971, p. 122.

Similarly, for the early 20th-century literary avant-garde the "zero point" in history was, as Marci Shore tells us, the historic moment when all the pre-existing ideas of order had suddenly become radically questioned, which, in turn, called for an equally radical antidote.[25] That, in turn, meant a rejection of the existing principles and patterns of Art, Beauty, Truth, and Morality, followed by a construction of the "new order of things" (in Hans Arp's phrase), one based on elementary values – existential, material, corporal, quotidian. Mencwel finds a similar concept of time in the idea of the beginning of history (the division into pre-history and history which is "truly human") present in Cyprian K. Norwid's and Stanisław Brzozowski's thought – a polar opposite of Hegel's and Marx's idea of the end of history, which assumed the possibility of realizing the vision of a perfect order in historical time (history – posthistory).[26] One could argue that Różewicz confronted both historiosophies, concluding that all meanings and values are historical, but, at the same time, history at the "zero point" of the Holocaust lost the humanist meaning projected onto it before. That meaning, according to Theodor Adorno, can be reconstructed in culture only by beginning with the experience of life and death in their primordial, biological sense.[27]

Alexander Fiut, agreeing with the obvious claim that World War Two, occupation, and the Communist system "shook the Poles' sense of identity", pointed out that the "identity-shaking" took place at several levels simultaneously:

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[25] See M. Shore, *Kawior i popiół. Życie i śmierć pokolenia oczarowanych i rozczarowanych marksizmem*, trans. M. Szuster, Warszawa 2008, p. 66.

[26] A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., p. 28.

[27] Cf. T. Żukowski, *Skatologiczny Chrystus. Wokół Różewiczowskiej epifanii*, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1999, no. 1, pp. 122–123.

At the geographic level – through border shifts and the usually enforced "mass migration" to the East, and then to the West, to the territories seized from the Germans. At the social level – as a result of the destruction of the old class hierarchies, the upward mobility of the lowest social stratum, and the establishment of a newly privileged class. At the political level – as a result of the destruction of the democratic system replaced by the mono-party one. Finally, at the cultural level – as a result of the questioning of the national culture's traditional values replaced by values originating in a culture based on Marxist ideology in its Soviet version. […] The socio-political earthquake was accompanied by tectonic shifts in the axiological sphere. Coming under threat, some ideals, beliefs, or behavioural patterns, otherwise deemed definitely passé, were now, all of a sudden, gaining importance or becoming dangerously petrified. Other values – both in public and in private – were being given new meanings, different from the pre-existing ones. Under the circumstances, it comes as no surprise that the need for self-definition became desperate and acute.[28]

This "identity-shaking" process covered various foundations of self-identity – from the state's geographic location and the nation's core ideological or cultural traditions to everyday customs and lifestyles. Andrzej Walicki has dubbed this phenomenon "post-catastrophic catastrophism", explaining that "once the catastrophe is complete, the catastrophist who acknowledges its inevitability has to start thinking about a 'new beginning', about his own place in the new order of things".[29] Similarly, Hanna Gosk believes that the situation was "conducive to self-definitions, enforced by the necessity to settle into the new geographic, social, ideo-

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[28]   A. Fiut, *Pytanie o tożsamość*, Kraków 1995, p. 10.
[29]   A. Walicki, *Zniewolony umysł po latach*, Warszawa 1993, p. 30.

logical, and axiological space".[30] Significantly, the need to redefine the meaning of identity, resulting from one's experience of a major existential divide, was not exclusive to post-war artistic or political elites. For one thing, the sweeping social change with the attendant (unprecedented) democratization of access to national culture made it part of the "average person's" experience – someone who did not fully belong either to the intelligentsia, or to the middle class, the peasantry, or the proletariat, sometimes combining, or representing, several identities simultaneously. I describe this type of identity in subsequent chapters. At this point, suffice it to say that besides such writers as Tadeusz Borowski, Marek Hłasko, or Miron Białoszewski it was Tadeusz Różewicz who made the "Polish Everyman" a central figure in his work.[31] Therefore I intend to discuss modern individual identity in Poland in its two personal varieties – that of a cultivated individual with intellectual and patriotic traditions and that of an average, "transitory" and "mediated" person, or – in other words – the "new" man (both as an institutionally projected model from national and social projects and as a specific "grassroots" phenomenon).

As has already been mentioned, the temporal boundaries of modernity are debatable – or blurred, one could say. Teresa Walas points out that the post-war political, social, and civilizational changes not only "democratized" culture, changing it from "elitist and distributed along the lines of the recipient's social status to commonly accessible, from hierarchical to flattened", but also, "for the first time in Poland's history, gave rise to a broad social base for the emergence of modern culture", one which, in contrast to its Western counterpart manifesting "its belief that their ideas had been utterly defeated" was, as Walas argues, an "archaic

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30   H. Gosk, *Bohater swoich czasów. Postać literacka w powojennej prozie polskiej o tematyce współczesnej*, Izabelin 2002, p. 39.

31   See T. Drewnowski, *Polski everyman*, – idem, *Porachunki z XX wiekiem. Szkice i rozprawy literackie*, Kraków 2006, pp. 236–242.

version of modernism, with its typical historical optimism, scientistic utopia, belief in technological and social progress, with its humanism, now referred to as socialist humanism".[32] Arguably, whereas the caesura of World War Two separated the elitist phase of modernity from that of its popularization within the framework of Communist ideology and the real socialist state, the division was not equally marked when it came to modernism as a period in Polish culture. The post-modern tendencies – with their scepticism towards modernity's social and philosophical project – appeared in the literature of the Polish People's Republic (PPR) later than in the West. Różewicz's modernity was thus untimely – both late (self-critical) and belated (already undermined and revised in philosophical and ethical terms).

It is equally difficult to locate the moment of the twilight of modernity in PPR and its attendant formulas of modernism in culture. The 1960s and 1970s, which witnessed not only the debates and emergence of neo-avant-garde (e.g. conceptualism) but also theoretical reflection on the crisis of the modern paradigm in art, constituted a transition period. German Ritz claims that the new "general culture project", one referring to traditional models of Polish national identity, emerged together with the Solidarity movement at the beginning of the 1980s.[33] The literature of those days was, according to Aleksander Fiut, "a testimony to the formation of a new national mythology, one that, under new [historical] circumstances, referred – both indirectly and directly – to the repertory of traditional symbols and stereotypes".[34] The process, according to Andrzej Werner, in fact began in the mid-1970s, when "demythologizing tendencies and critical approaches to the collective consciousness, attacking the

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[32] In. Walas, op. cit., pp. 39–45.

[33] G. Ritz, *Nić w labiryncie pożądania. Gender i płeć w literaturze polskiej od romantyzmu do post-modernizmu*, Warszawa 2002, p. 235.

[34] A. Fiut, op. cit., p. 171.

formulaic and petrified collective beliefs, searching for new foundations of the Poles' identity and revising the vision of national history stored (partly through literature) in [the nation's] collective memory, gave way to a "new alliance of the creative class and society, an alliance directed against the common enemy".[35] The critic, following Adam Zagajewski, called this phenomenon a transformation of "negative spirituality" into "positive spirituality".[36] Andrzej Walicki offers a slightly different take on the late 1970s' breakthrough, arguing that it was then that the long process of "nationalization" of Poland's Communist system – initiated in 1956 and based on the "programme of the system's and the nation's mutual adaptation" – collapsed under the weight of strong political antagonisms that changed the existing social polarization.[37] In short, the standard juxtaposition – the emotionally detached intelligentsia, "derisive" towards national identity, vs the tradition-bound society (simultaneously affirmed and manipulated by such institutions as the state and the church) – was transformed into another one: an authoritarian regime that was an oppositional community of the intelligentsia and the people, with the increasing importance of the church as a mediator and partner for both sides of the social conflict. The new juxtaposition put an end to the isolation of the "jeerers" and their critical function in culture.[38]

At this point, I skip over other arguments for the twilight of (that phase of) modernity at the turn of the 1970s and the 1980s because I dis-

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[35] A. Werner, *Krew i atrament*, Warszawa 1997, p. 35.

[36] Ibid., p. 34.

[37] A. Walicki, op. cit., pp. 266–267, 297. The "nationalization" of the PPR can be understood as an ethnic and cultural legitimization of the system, one compensating for the lack of political legitimization.

[38] The historian of ideas believes that in the period between the late 1970s and 1989 a certain "regression to the year 1944" took place in Polish national consciousness, which might be conducive to a "deletion of some links from [the chain of] historical self-awareness". Ibid., pp. 298–301.

cuss them at length in subsequent chapters. Meanwhile, suffice it to say that, given the modernizing, emancipatory, and educational aspects of modernity's agenda, other influential factors included the decline of book and magazine readership, probably resulting from the expansion of television; the halt of the sexual revolution process; and the collapse of technocratic modernization during Edward Gierek's decade – accelerated by, among other things, the global economic and oil crisis. The end of the decade witnessed also the curbing of social mobility and mass migration from the countryside to the cities, which was particularly intense in Communist Poland and eventually stopped by the country's acute economic crisis. These local phenomena were accompanied by global changes such as, Pierre Nora tells us, the decline of revolutionary ideology as a result of Marxism's intellectual defeat in Europe, the ultimate disgrace of the Soviet Union in international politics, and the apathy of Western Communist parties.[39] Gilles Kepel calls this period "the crisis of modernity", one that – though building for decades – began to prompt large numbers of people to action only when combined with economic problems.[40]

Różewicz's Narratives

The model of identity proposed by the narrativists can be applied to the research of not only narrative texts. After all, identity narratives also appear in such texts – i.e. they can materialize through such forms – as a historical treatise, a political manifesto, a film, or an oral tale. They can also be discovered in poetry and drama. I believe, though, that in

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[39] P. Nora, *Czas pamięci*, trans. W. Dłuski, "Res Publica Nova" 2010, no. 10, pp. 135–136.

[40] "Due to the crisis of the 1970s the solidarity mechanisms of the welfare state had stalled, generating unprecedented human fears and poverty. The crisis exposed the hollowness of secular utopias – liberal and Marxist – manifesting themselves in the consumerist egoism of the West or in the repressive administration of poverty in dehumanized societies of socialist and Third World countries." G. Kempel, *Zemsta Boga. Religijna rekonkwista świata*, trans. A. Adamczak, Warszawa 2010, p. 37.

Różewicz's work it is narrative texts that best exemplify the concept and criteria of identity narrative. That this is the case is not only due to the fact that, of all the literary genres and forms practised by the Wrocław writer, it is his prose that seems the most diverse – stylistically and genealogically varied, intertextual, miscellaneous, sketchy, formally open, metaliterary and discursive as it is, consistently intertwining fictional and reflexive aspects,[41] and thus best fulfils the requirement that identity narrative should be an articulation of the self's experience in dialogic exchange with the works and utterances of others, such as historical reports, memoirs, behavioural models and images of humanity in culture. If the only selection criterion was the "impurity" of literary form,[42] some of Różewicz's plays and poems would also qualify. Besides, identity narrative is supposed to facilitate a holistic and sequential (temporally ordered) self-definition on the self's part with the assistance of such categories as agent, life plan, aim and cause of action, intention and rationale, attitude to one's past words and deeds, to one's self-descriptions within the frameworks of geographical space and social and material reality.[43]

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[41] That is how S. Burkot characterizes Różewicz's short fiction in his *Tadeusz Różewicz*, Warszawa 1987, p. 125.

[42] "Impure forms" is a term coined by Tomasz Burek. See his *Nieczyste formy Różewicza*, "Twórczość" 1974, no. 7. In the same year Kazimierz Wyka, discussing Różewicz's prose, wrote about "genealogically mixed records". K. Wyka, *Różewicza droga do prozy*, "Odra" 1974, no. 5, p. 58.

[43] Jerzy Trzebiński, claiming that one's knowledge – including that of one's own self and group – is organized "in terms of actor, goals, and the conditions and means of achieving the goal," writes that "various data attest to the functional grounding of natural mental processes in the structure of a particular, currently materializing action. Man does not experience world objects as beings 'in themselves' but – first and foremost – as elements and prerequisites of the particular action or event that s/he participates in or observes." The individual's experience (knowledge) structurally reflects those events. What is more, the process of their understanding is invariably connected with defining the motivation and subjecting to value judgements the behaviour of the events' participants. Thus one may assume that the adequate model of socially constructed identity is the narrative scheme. J. Trzebiński, *Narracyjne formy wiedzy potocznej*, Poznań 1992, pp. 26, 84–92, 102–104.

Although various works of culture and varieties of literature might serve as articulators of modern identity, it is the "impure" prose that can best illustrate the process, as it not only imposes a narrative form onto one's "self-images" but also complements their meanings with moral, philosophical, biographical, or metaliterary reflection.

In my analysis of specific premises of modern identity in the following chapters, I attempt to demonstrate that Tadeusz Różewicz's prose provides extensive, interesting, and varied material that matches its definition. Still, whenever necessary, I also refer to Różewicz's drama and poetry, especially some of his longer poems published after 1989. His most important works, however, were written in the three decades following his book debut – a collection of novellas, notes, and comic vignettes from his partisan days titled *Echa leśne* (*Forest Echoes*), printed on a duplicating machine in 1944. Though I focus mainly on that period, I do not skip over the newer texts – those, for example, from the collections *Nasz starszy brat* [*Our Elder Brother*] and *Mother Departs* , published in the last decade of the 20ᵗʰ century (but in some cases written earlier) – because the phenomena typical of modernity's transition to its late phase lasted several decades in Polish culture, indeed until the 1990s. Most of the fictional texts I discuss were published in three *Utwory zebrane* [*Collected Works*] collections of fiction in 2003 and 2004 (some of them also in the poetry and drama volumes of the *Collected Works*), in the collection of reportage titled *Kartki z Węgier* [*Notes from Hungary*] (1953), and in the collection of newspaper columns, letters, and notes – mostly from the 1960s and 1970s – called *Margines, ale …* [*Marginal, but …*] (2010). I also cite the volumes *Uśmiechy* [*Smiles*] and *Opadły liście z drzew* [*The Leaves Have Fallen from the Trees*] (1955), which comprise texts that are not included in the *Collected Works* or revised, and also some texts that only appeared in the national press, magazines, or anthologies. By way of auxiliary (contextual) material, I also make use of the interviews with

the author which found their way into the book *Wbrew sobie. Rozmowy z Tadeuszem Różewiczem* [*Despite Oneself. Conversations with Tadeusz Różewicz*] (2011) as well as Różewicz's letters to Zofia and Jerzy Nowosielski from the *Korespondencja* volume [*Letters*] (2009).

Even a cursory glance at the list of book-length studies on Różewicz shows that the least researched part of his work is his prose.[44] His narrative output, however, is extensive and relevant enough to warrant a monograph study. Tadeusz Różewicz published hundreds of short stories, novellas, essays, reportages, columns, notes, journal fragments, letters, and memoirs, clearly refuting the opinion that prose was marginal for his oeuvre (W 64).[45] It is, of course, neither the sheer numbers

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[44]   The only, to date, general and comprehensive study of Różewicz's prose (though omitting some of his reportages, newspaper columns, travel sketches, letters and public statements) is Janusz Waligóra's book *Proza Tadeusza Różewicza* [*Tadeusz Różewicz's Prose*], Kraków 2006. The authors of book-length studies on the selected prose by Różewicz include, among others, Tadeusz Drewnowski, Wiesław Kot, Aniela Kowalska, Eugenia Łoch, Jacek Łukasiewicz, Zbigniew Majchrowski, Jan Potkański, Andrzej Skrendo, Dariusz Szczukowski, Henryk Vogler, Kazimierz Wyka.

[45]   It was Stanisław Burkot who deemed Różewicz's prose "marginal for his main work" (S. Burkot, op. cit., p. 126), while Leszek Bugajski stated that the writer "viewed his own prose works in utilitarian rather than purely artistic terms" (L. Bugajski, *W świecie prozy Tadeusza Różewicza*, in: *Świat integralny. Pół wieku twórczości Tadeusza Różewicza*, ed. M. Kisiel, Katowice 1994, p. 108). Although the artistry of Różewicz's prose is not the focus of my work I will briefly comment on it. I believe that the prose of the author of *Uśmiechy* is interesting in literary terms, often superb, though because of its stylistic and generic diversity it is hardly possible to evaluate the writer's entire narrative oeuvre using a single criterion. Similarly, it makes little sense to reduce the diverse sources of his prose works' literary value to comparisons with his poetry or drama. The artistry of Różewicz's narratives is complicated business, so I shall restrict myself to outlining the connections with modern identity. His short stories and novellas would be far less credible as portrayals of 20th-century man if their author had not mastered the art of generating and controlling the tension between the imagery and the protagonist's insights, the pace of action in modern civilization and the rhythm of the Everyman's interior monologue, the realistic descriptions and the vision of the future or a dream vision; his artistic prose works as well as his essays, apart from their rich intellectual offer, represent – as Henryk Elzenberg put it – first and foremost the validity of thought as an act and as a lively discussion with other authors built, however, on the carefully crafted composition of their utterances and the author's commentary. The artistry of Różewicz's biographical sketches, newspaper columns, and the fragments of his

nor the author's opinion that make these narratives so highly relevant to the Różewicz scholar; it is their artistic, intellectual, and documentary value. Some of them – e.g. *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* [*Preparations for an Author's Night*] – are among Różewicz's best works. His prose was appreciated early enough –for a variety of reasons – by Kazimierz Wyka, Julian Przyboś, Michał Głowiński, Jan Brzękowski, Czesław Niedzielski, and, more recently, Tomasz Burek.[46] Viewed in its entirety, Różewicz's prose constitutes, in my opinion, an interesting theoretical problem, located at the junction of modern identity narratives, (auto)

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journal is an altogether different thing as the texts in question feature an encounter between fiction and experience arranged in such a way as to make the identity of the text's central character not only the image of a specific individual but also the mediating environment for the complex liaisons between literature (fiction), biography, and history as paradigmatic narratives, with Różewicz's prose remaining in a tangential relation to all of them, refusing to be incorporated into any single set of rules, being like "live matter in search of form" (J. Drzewucki).

[46] Kazimierz Wyka, in his sketch *Na linii Śląska* [*On the Silesia Line*], wrote appreciatively about Różewicz's journalistic trip to the "Reclaimed Territories". K. Wyka, *Na linii Śląska*, "Dziennik Literacki" (addendum to "Dziennik Polski") 1947, no. 4, p. 1. In 1974, in turn, discussing Różewicz's prose in its entirety, the critic emphasized its unique, subjective realism. "Filtered through the stream of his [Różewicz's] most personal consciousness, filtered through the masks, anonymous texts, through depersonalized intermediaries and substitutes, it is soaks into reality itself." K. Wyka, *Różewicza droga do prozy*, op. cit., pp. 51–61. On the story *Ni pies, ni wydra* [*Neither Fish Nor Flesh*], J. Przyboś wrote in his letter to Różewicz of 22 December 1953: "You have already left the generically frivolous forms behind and started the real thing, going the whole literary hog prosewise. And you are taking the real, that is ultra-realistic, bull by the horns, one that has been just let out of the pen, unknown, discovered by you alone!" (Ma 142). M. Głowiński, in his review of the volume *Opadły liście z drzew*, concludes that, as far as literary conventions go, "Różewicz's prose is very rich", dynamic and simultaneously subtle in its contemplative aspect. M. Głowiński, *Proza Różewicza*, "Życie Literackie" 1956, no. 1, p. 3. "A few weeks ago I came across *Przerwany egzamin*. As for the book, I appreciate your prose, it is as genuinely yours as your poetry", wrote J. Brzękowski in his letter to Różewicz of 15 May 1961 (Ma 210). C. Niedzielski gave Różewicz credit for consciously liberating prose from highbrow conventions by infusing it with the elements habitually attributed to documentary genres (e.g. reportage). C. Niedzielski, *O teoretycznoliterackich tradycjach prozy dokumentarnej (podróż-powieść-reportaż)*, Toruń 1966, pp. 188–189. T. Burek claims that Różewicz's prose should not be deemed of lesser importance when compared to his poetry and drama. T. Burek, *Niewybaczalne sentymenty*, Warszawa 2011, p. 141.

biographical writing and literary texts. His narrative texts are immensely varied in terms of their style, composition, genre, and subject matter. A theory-bound literary scholar may discover in them some fascinating theoretical and textual issues, whereas scholars reading those texts from an anthropological standpoint come across major problems of 20th-century culture, individual consciousness, and history of ideas, as well as, first and foremost, modern forms of biographical identity. I deem both cognitive perspectives indispensable and apply them simultaneously. Różewicz's narratives constitute a testimony to the epoch, but not only in a documentary sense. Creating a literary image of the post-war period, the writer attempted a "reconstruction" of contemporary man, trying to comprehend his historical experiences, to make sense of them through identity narratives of modern culture and its connections with relevant humanist, political, and artistic traditions. My goal, among others, is to translate the writer's attempts into the terms and ideas of the narrativist concept of identity.

Any attempt to describe the individual's identity entails capturing the connection between what is collective, historical, and public and what is individual and contingent. Różewicz seems particularly sensitive to this connection. Despite the presence of grand moral, social, and artistic themes, his prose remains for the most part an intimate and autobiographical narrative, one coming from the narrative persona that seeks its own independence and separateness, consistently claiming his right to be himself and describing his attempts to achieve those goals. On the other hand, however, one can also witness in Różewicz's prose the disintegration of identity construed as a selfhood project. In some of his texts there are no protagonists or narrators capable of defining themselves "from within", that is of composing a unique narrative of their own selves in the name of commonly accepted ideas, lifestyles, value systems, role models, or – conversely – against the grain of ideas and models which are either intrinsically

alien or externally imposed. The individual's identity in the 20th century is not always a fully autonomous work, as its fundamental experience often boils down to a sense of loss of one's selfhood under the pressure of historical events, social phenomena, ideologies, or mass culture. As Włodzimierz Maciąg put it, modern man "to some extent recognizes – and to some extent yields to – the incentives and constraints inherent in his personal experience, accepting the prevalent models not so much as a matter of choice but rather of constant adaptation".[47] It follows that the problem of identity in Różewicz's prose should also be viewed as the individual's inability to retain agency in the world. Like many other 20th-century writers, Różewicz attempted to describe that situation in order to "expose, reveal, depict – all such mechanisms, to highlight all the factors that turn people into dependent, subjugated, conditioned, and contingent beings, to reach the deeply-hidden connections and constraints".[48] It would be erroneous, however, to interpret his work only as an act of rejection and exposure. Questioning the modern individual's autonomy in the face of tradition, history, culture, or language, Różewicz does not restrict himself to mere diagnosis. His "conforming" or "self-adapting" protagonist embodies an identity which is hollow – because it is typical and nondescript – and filled with models – because it is extremely impressionable, open to reality and its representations. Nothing can monopolize his loyalties, even though there is a lot that concerns him, defining him partly or temporarily. Though bereft of an identity that would constitute a direct reflection of any single project, this type of protagonist, in most cases, does his own identification work, checking out the accessible ways and models of self-creation, and retreating – in narrative terms – to fundamental experiences. The resultant retreat from ethical systems and grand narratives does not mean giving up on any

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[47] W. Maciąg, *Świadomość bohatera współczesnej prozy*, "Odra" 1975, no. 12, pp. 42–43.

[48] Ibid., p. 43.

of them but presupposes the necessity of turning to the biographical narrative in order to test their true value.

From a literary studies perspective, the identity of the persona, narrator, or central character can be seen as a textual phenomenon. In Różewicz's prose the problems with identification are often explicitly stated, but some important identity problems can also result from the narrative's form and the communicative relations within the text. The situation of the self in Różewicz's texts is inscribed into the process of speaking (communicating), but also depends on the strategy of the author's persona that makes use of pre-existing narratives, cultural motifs, or symbols that come already laden with such problems. It goes without saying that through the narrative's order and dynamic, its intertextual structure, the characters' dialogues and monologues, the grammatical tense and gender used, the modality or internal communicative situation – or, in other words, through the code of the narrative world-creation process – the problematic of selfhood, community, and existence can be construed in numerous ways. As a result, the identity narratives in Różewicz's prose cannot be easily separated from utterances and descriptions that do not fall into that category. One of the tasks of this book, therefore, is to describe the narrative techniques remaining at Różewicz's disposal, the writer approaching them both as a user and critic of modern codes of the individual's personal and collective identity.

Identity narrative presupposes the existence of the self who either subjects himself/herself to the description or interprets the identity of another self – for example, by analysing episodes from memory and history, by assuming numerous narrative roles, or by making use of diverse formulas of biographical writing. Although the textual self thus construed has no direct counterpart in real life, it is nevertheless ultimately headed for an identity understood as an individual attempt to make a single "biography" complete. Many texts by Różewicz fulfil this criterion. One

can identify in his prose, however, ways of speaking in which the author has either recognized or to which he has ascribed – making the most of the writer's licence, his interpretation of the genre's rules, or literary communication – the extraordinary ability to express identification problems. Among the narrative conventions thus privileged there are, among others, the personal confession, the account of a vision or a dream, the essayistic monologue, the literary yarn or the portrayal of another writer, the description of a journey or domestic space, family memories, and the textualized reading of a newspaper or a literary work. They best exemplify the "identification work" in the text, one that consists not only in mere story-telling, but also in explicit ordering and reading of anecdotes, symbols, quotes, memories, or fantasies, that is in constructing yet another narrative whole. Composing a new tale made up of other writers' or one's own past works, the writer introduces therein temporal sequentiality, cause-and-effect relationships, or a teleological perspective, marks the similarity or dissimilarity of the events depicted, changes the narratorial point of view, and emphasizes the textual character of representation as such. He corrects the modality of the narrator's or the protagonist's utterances while presenting them, shifts the intratextual boundary between fiction and non-fiction, blurs the boundary between the personal and auctorial narrative, loosens up the narrative coherence of his tale, and problematizes the attitude of the narrative persona to the tale's message or to its implied reader.

The self's identity in Różewicz's works is therefore a construct resultant from the act of narrative compilation, linking, consideration, and transformation of different testimonies or identification patterns. It does not mean, though, that his self is reducible to subjective compositional-linguistic operations within the text. The ultimate model of selfhood thus construed is not a web of textual interactions that have no metalinguistic references. Quite the contrary; the Różewicz self tells about specific experiences, de-

scribes and offers value judgements on historical reality, and engages in a dialogue with other cultural voices or works. The self-creation of the self thus construed would not have been possible if the identity (identity narrative) emerging from the text had not been preceded by the self's identification work, one conceived along hermeneutic lines. The "open and mobile" self does not have an identity but creates it. Różewicz's "narrative man" can express himself solely through culture and vice versa – he comprehends culture always in relation to his own experiences and beliefs. Identity is both a process and a dynamic system of meanings based on a continuously negotiated and communicable relation between the narrative "I" and the text-given world. From the narrativist perspective the Różewicz "I" is the modern self bent on personal fulfilment, ready to internalize the new images (projects) of himself, distrustful of the metaphysical concept of person and the dogmatic visions of social man. At the same time, it is the post-modern self, dispersed and situational, lacking in identity but bent on attaining it through subsequent attempts – the invariably contingent "holisticisms."[49]

The Model and Aims of Description

Identity in Różewicz's texts has already been discussed by numerous scholars and critics in terms of philosophical theories of selfhood – those, for example, emerging from the works of Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Lévinas, Jacques Lacan, and Melanie Klein. Based on these theories, different projects of the "Różewicz man" (in terms of his character or persona) have

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[49] "Modern identity defines the course of one's life, shows the direction it is headed in, constitutes a permanent element of psychological reality. The post-modern identity is temporary, binding only 'until further notice', does not show any directions, does not define anything. One might say, it boils down to a search for self-identification." S. Grotowska, op. cit., p. 84.

been compellingly applied to the interpretation of the writer's texts.[50] Some of these interpretations were truly revelatory, especially those in the fields of poetry and drama. None of them, however, managed to cover all the crucial problems of modern identity raised by Różewicz in his prose. I deal with those in later parts of this book, though I prefer to apply the narrativist model of description. It is not an attempt to transfer the discussion of Różewicz's work entirely into the realm of philosophy and social sciences, however, thereby eschewing historical-literary tools for interpreting literary works and the context in which they were published. In discussing his texts, I shall attempt instead to maintain a historicist perspective while simultaneously making the most of scholarly and critical perspectives on them.[51]

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[50] After 1989, cf.: D. Szczukowski, *Tadeusz Różewicz wobec niewyrażalnego*, Kraków 2008; T. Kunz, *Strategie negatywne w poezji Tadeusza Różewicza. Od poetyki tekstu do poetyki lektury*, Kraków 2005; J. Potkański, *Sobowtór. Różewicz a psychoanaliza Jacquesa Lacana i Melanii Klein*, Warszawa 2004; S. Burkot, *Neopozytywistyczne konteksty twórczości Tadeusza Różewicza*, "Ruch Literacki" 2002, no. 4–5; A. Skrendo, *Tadeusz Różewicz i granice literatury. Poetyka i etyka transgresji*, Kraków 2002; A. Krajeńska, *Osoba w dramacie i dramat osobny*, in: *Osoba w literaturze i komunikacji literackiej*, eds E. Balcerzan, W. Bolecki, Warszawa 2000; R. Cieślak, *Od Grünewalda do Bacona. Gra o tożsamość w poezji Tadeusza Różewicza*, in: *Ponowoczesność a tożsamość*, eds B. Tokarz, S. Piskor, Katowice 1997; R. Cieślak, *Oko poety. Poezja Tadeusza Różewicza wobec sztuk widowiskowych*, Gdańsk 1999; E. Kuźma, *Kto mówi w utworach Tadeusza Różewicza?*, in: *Zobaczyć poetę. Materiały z konferencji "Twórczość Tadeusza Różewicza"*, eds E. Guderian-Czaplińska, E. Kalemba-Kasprzak, Poznań 1993; E. Łoch, *Koncepcja człowieka w prozie Tadeusza Różewicza*, in: id., *Między autorem – narratorem – bohaterem a czytelnikiem*, Lublin 1991.

[51] I engage in a polemic with both earlier and contemporary readings of Różewicz, taking into account diverse perspectives on his prose and, occasionally, poetry and drama. Among the concepts of the Różewicz speaker (or poetic persona), the ones that proved most useful to me for the purpose of this book came from the texts of A. Werner, H. Zaworska, A. Skrendo, D. Szczukowski, and R. Cieślak. I argue with them not only on the issues of the anthropological or ethical dimensions of the Różewicz persona (both his "I" and "we") but also about his situation within the text. Among the several cited interpretations of the dramatic works I regard as crucial, the essays and studies by J. Kelera, S. Gębala, M. Piwińska, A. Werner, M. Dziewulska, and T. Żukowski, whose diagnoses of the conflict between cultural tradition or political "duty" and the quotidian and somatic experience of modern man in the works of Różewicz I either deem apt and attempt to expand upon or – as in the cases of Małgorzata Dziewulska and Andrzej Werner – I approach critically.

The individual's identity and selfhood inscribed in literary text can be paraphrased or described in a discursive mode, which invariably transforms or even reduces the ambiguity of the artistic perspective. I acknowledge this inevitability. Recognizing the cognitive limitations inherent in my model of reconstruction, I still believe it does not omit the crucial constituents of Różewicz's vision of man, including those that have already been observed and described. I try to refer to the most important of those, discussing some of them at length while merely mentioning the others. Making no claims about the superiority of my reconstruction model, I merely assume that it is adequate, i.e. internally consistent and capacious enough to describe Różewicz's prose. What is more, the model identifies problems of modern identity that have hitherto gone unnoticed. It is consistent and capacious – but only relatively speaking. According to Kurt Gödel's well-known first theorem, every model is either complete or consistent, unable to be both things simultaneously.

An efficient and adequate reconstruction can be carried out using the problem model, i.e. a system of axioms that make solving problems possible.[52] The nominal model (theory) is used for formulating premises (hypotheses) thanks to which the issue can be decided upon or proved, its provableness resulting from a conscious act of reduction (simplification). The real model, in turn, can be defined as "a class of objects or a class of situations meeting the preliminary criteria for the constituents of a given model in the nominal sense".[53] In short, the nominal model "tells us on what premises and conditions a particular issue becomes resolvable".[54] The real model, in turn, tells us if our preliminary assumptions are fulfilled by phenomena, situations, or concepts, i.e. whether the theory (the

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[52] On acceptable models of reconstruction – for any given system – cf. J. Giedymin's *Problemy, założenia, rozstrzygnięcia. Studia nad logicznymi podstawami nauk społecznych*, Poznań 1964.

[53] Ibid., p. 94.

[54] Ibid., p. 177.

nominal model) is a real description of reality (or a part of it). The real model can be "a set of material objects, or things, but it can also be a class of 'abstract' objects, for example a set of points, a set of numbers, functions, etc."[55] The reading of a literary text – except for the radically referential kind – does not require a real model containing elements with physical attributes, but a real model in the semantic sense, i.e. a set of ideas and their interrelations. Applying the logical inference pattern in the humanities is not always possible or advisable; still, any scientific reasoning consists, to a certain extent, in model thinking. The nominal model used in this book is the narrativist concept of modern man, the sociological and philosophical project of his traits or identity behaviours, whereas the real model is the collection of identity narratives established in Polish literature and culture. Looking for them in Różewicz's prose, I aim to establish whether identity narratives in their modern version are actually present in his texts, but also whether and how they are interpreted, evaluated, tested, and stylistically processed by the writer.

I do not think that identity issues in Różewicz's prose can ultimately be resolved through logical reasoning. Still, I would like to start with premises that will allow raising such issues by means of answerable questions and soluble problems, meaningful in terms of narrativist hermeneutics. The model attributes of modern identity, merely listed below, should be therefore treated as the nominal model of my book, a set of hypotheses. I do not expect Różewicz's prose to fully corroborate this model; in fact, I suspect that many of his works do not fulfil the nominal assumptions. I hope, however, that analysing the discrepancies between "theory" and particular "cases" will also facilitate describing those identity problems in Różewicz's texts that do not belong in the modern model.

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[55] Ibid., p. 95.

(1) The Różewicz man experiences reality indirectly. His experiencing of the world – subjective but mediated and manifested in real culture – makes up one of the premises of his identity.

(2) A thinking and acting individual self is actualized as the narrative "I", one that makes conscious attempts at self-definition. His identity may, though does not have to, constitute a meaningful whole, however temporary and provisional. Articulation is a necessary precondition for selfhood to exist.

(3) Man in Różewicz's prose differentiates between his personal and collective identities, the latter bringing him closer to other people, but in the identity narrative he distinguishes between them, and connects and confronts them in different ways.

(4) Both his personal and collective identification is ethically loaded. The narrative self faces the problem of personal responsibility for the story about oneself or about others. The self's self-awareness is predicated on the question of identity narrative's intention and credibility.

(5) Existence in his experience has a temporal character. Immersed in history, that is in specific historical events, it is also time-oriented at the individual level, directed simultaneously at the past, present, and future.

(6) Identity in Różewicz's prose needs a point of reference. The narrative self, therefore, refers to the image of others or that of his own from the past, relying on ready-made descriptions and stories about man, actualizing "being oneself" as a form of relation. Interactive and construed, this identity does not emerge directly from empirical being.

The theoretical model predicated on such premises is the concept of narrative identity. Consequently, when analysing literary works, I refer primarily to works of the aforementioned narrativists, but also – if need be – to other perspectives on selfhood in culture and the text, as well

as to general and thematic studies on socio-historical conditions for the emergence of modern identity, both personal and collective. I do not use Różewicz's prose to prove any theory. The main goal of this book is to describe his narrative texts, because what interests me is not model identity as such but rather its empirically realized version, saturated with the individual's historical experience as well as the contents of a particular culture or tradition; that is, a model in the real sense. Needless to say, modernity in a number of Różewicz's narratives provides a negative point of reference, the writer finding in the modern individual's thoughts and actions the routine of social life and the pressures of mass culture. Therefore I also apply the concept of narrative or reflective identity to my descriptions to that in the Różewicz man which does not fit the initially assumed theoretical model.

It is precisely these personal identity problems that I seek in Różewicz's prose because his literary range is enormous, covering numerous aspects of Polish culture, with the author interpreting them from the vantage point of real existence and history. I assume therefore that by analysing his work, I will be able to describe and compare selected identity narratives of modern man and, what is more, will probably discover how these narratives functioned in a specific culture and in the public sphere. My next assumption is that by reading Różewicz's prose it will be possible to understand how the writer interprets and applies ready-made patterns or identity stories that permeate our tradition and our contemporary times; similarly, it should be possible to infer from his texts what self-creation options national literature and history offer to the individual. Finally, I address what is probably the most important question: does Różewicz offer, in his prose, a new interpretation of Polish modernism – or, in other words, does he engage in a polemic with the grand narratives of Polish modernity? Even though I consciously limit the answer to the latter question to this book's titular concern (i.e. modern identity) I do

believe there are other fundamental dilemmas of modern culture that correspond to the problem of the individual's identity.

What is it exactly that I find interesting in Tadeusz Różewicz's prose? I read his works in the context of identity narratives functioning in culture and in historical-biographical stories, which raises the question of their modelling impact on the individual; what is it in those stories that constitutes a point of reference for the identity-seeking self? When and how does individual experience acquire intersubjective significance? What are the conditions for its articulation in the public space? Did any new identification patterns appear in Polish modernity and, if so, what areas and phenomena of 20th-century culture or history acquired such a – model – significance? How and where was the line drawn between what is individual and what is collective in the identity of someone speaking and thinking "in Polish"? What was considered native to this identity and what was viewed as a foreign – for example: Western, bourgeois, Communist, German, Jewish, religiously or sexually non-normative – import, and how was this social-cultural "otherness" constructed back then? Seeking answers to these questions, I refer to such cultural anthropological terms as symbolic universe, collective memory, autobiographical identity, the body and space in culture, as well as those from the social sciences, such as interpersonal relations, public discourse, and communication community. Simply speaking, with their help I would like to describe the most important narrative forms and themes of Różewicz's prose that make it possible for the writer to raise and articulate in a literary way the individual's problems with identity (individual, personal, and collective) as well as the very process of Różewicz-the-writer arriving at his own unique identity narratives, resulting from the evolution of his own narrative conventions.

Reading Różewicz's texts in this way, and by ordering the chapters in this book to cover identity from its most public forms (manifested

socially and coded in ideology or ethics) to the most private (individual) one, I pay particular attention to certain issues in Cultural Studies and Communication Studies. Based on the reconstruction model, I assume that even one's most private identity-forming experiences are mediated through culture and language. Therefore, in Różewicz's narratives I describe and compare both the more collective premises of identity construction, e.g. history and cultural memory, ideology or tradition, and the more individual ones, including the body and existence, among others. The criterion for their selection results from this book's narrativist presuppositions. Even the individual's autobiographical identity is created and articulated within the framework of pre-existing culture and public space. That is why I am primarily concerned with the history of ideas and social relations, symbols and personality patterns; changes in social habits and everyday life as reflected in literary, political, or historical narratives. Aware of the existence of other sources of identification, I try to acknowledge them, however indirectly and in the margins, as it were, of my main argument. I consider such issues as the person in the religious-personalist sense, eschatological perspectives on death, or essentialist and ahistorical nationhood, to be parts of a worldview or cultural tradition. As for performative identity, understood in Erving Goffman's and other interactionists' terms, I discuss the concept while analysing different identity narratives, and not in a separate chapter, because I agree with their thesis that all modern identities are to some extent roles.[56] Neither do I skip over such identity premises as the work ethic or the attitude to property ownership. Admittedly, *homo oeconomicus* or *homo faber*, the protagonists of grand narratives who legitimize the doctrine of technological and economic progress, industrial civilization, civic society,

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[56] See E. Goffmann, *Człowiek w teatrze życia codziennego*, trans. H. Datner-Śpiewak, P. Śpiewak, Warszawa 2000; A. Elliott, *Koncepcje "ja"*, trans. S. Królak, Warszawa 2007.

and human rights, but also the 20th-century's revolutionary changes in political systems, are not central characters of Różewicz's work. Still, under different guises and in different periods, they do appear in his prose. They have not been granted a separate chapter either, but I did acknowledge their presence in my discussions of Polish consumerist imagination, urban semiosphere, and post-war ideological persuasion.

One of the focal points of this book is the Western-orientation of Polish collective identity in the 20th century connected, on the one hand, with the civilizational modernization of Central Europe and the post-war "Iron Curtain" division of the continent that was conducive to Poland's phantom-like idea of the West, and on the other, with the post-war border shift resulting in Poland's annexation of the lands along the Oder river and the Baltic coast, the Polonization of formerly German territories and the historical and political discourse justifying the incorporation. As a travelling writer and journalist, Tadeusz Różewicz would frequently problematize the relation between the real Europe and its Polish image and, as a resident of Gliwice and Wrocław, he not only described (ever since the time of his river trip from Koźle to Szczecin on an Odra barge in 1947) the symbolic colonization of the "post-German" Odra Valley, but also diagnosed artistically the birth of a new individual and collective identity of those border regions, noticing the conflicting local narratives of history, biography, and national literature as well as the palimpsest-like traces of various cultures and memories.

There is no doubt that besides the aforementioned social identity of the individual, Różewicz's prose contains a number of suggestions and mental tropes which will force the careful reader to confront the issue of the "aporetic" or even "incommunicable" character of parts of the modern experience for which there is no logically consistent explanation. Though remembering this, I attempt to minimize the areas of the "aporetic" and the "incommunicable" in Różewicz's texts, subjecting them to

interpretation instead, trying to describe them in my own way but definitely without omitting, let alone falsifying, anything. Still, acknowledging the existence of such areas, I have marked the cognitive boundaries of my argument, circumscribed as it is by the selected model of description which I thus verify.

The logic of classification has it that objects grouped within the same subset should be maximally similar to each other, elements belonging to different subsets should be maximally dissimilar, the sum of the subsets must correspond to the total of the set, and the division criterion is to be one unchanging principle. Consistent adherence to these rules is impossible with such ambiguous, complex and mutually interconnected cultural phenomena as identity narratives. This is all the more so because Różewicz, as the author of their textual form, while not abandoning the recurrent themes of his work, constantly changes and develops literary versions of them. For practical reasons, therefore, chapters that are situated close together in this book describe identity narratives that are similar in their problematics, whereas those that are further apart present narratives that are dissimilar, though also related. Thus, what links "The Adventures of an Ideologist" to "Culture, Memory, and Community" are ideological, symbolic, and social motivations behind identity rooted in post-war history, but also in 19th- and early 20th-century traditions. "I, the Reader", in turn, complements the concept of culture as a communication community, tracing also the evolution of modern changes in human expression in cultural space. Notably, "I, the Reader" introduces the biographical perspective that becomes dominant in later parts of the book. The next two chapters, "Anatomy of Experience" and "Place in a Narrative", focus on the private and existential aspects of loneliness connected with the experience of the body, everyday life and space, with collective history providing a background for the experience and viewed primarily from the perspective of changes in social habits and customs in

Communist Poland. "The Biographical Identity and the Signature" – the book's closing chapter – discusses the problem of existential narrative in terms of text and intertextual connections interpreted within the framework of modern biographical thinking, although here too the questions of ethics and historicity also play a part. The main criterion of division into chapters, therefore, is the dominant issue (and problem) of identity narrative, hence the chapters' ordering results approximately from the problem's location on the social-private axis or, in narrativist terms, on the historical-biographical one. The criterion is, of course, blurred. Every biographical story corresponds, to a certain extent, to the current historical master narrative (meta-history), either approvingly or polemically, and the way it becomes historicized depends on the state of collective memory, the latter, in turn, being affected by current social narratives about the past and – in the case of contemporary history – by generational and personal memory of the biographical story's author.

As one can easily notice, the issues discussed in this book's chapters are not "maximally dissimilar". They fail to meet the criterion of proper classification because I attempt not only to clearly distinguish between themes and issues but also to preserve the continuity of argumentation throughout the book. The composition of *Tadeusz Różewicz and Modern Identity* results from a convergence, not to say conflict, of two cognitive goals. Discussing the crucial premises and formulas of identity in Różewicz's prose, I describe them in separate chapters as problems of culture, literature, and history of ideas, as well as social patterns and projects. At the same time, though, I would like them all to form a coherent identity narrative of the individual from the second half of the 20th century – a "biographical" case study, as it were. The case study includes, in the chapters that follow, both the process of the individual's acquisition of political agency and his/her participation in a democratized mass culture; the attitude to collective memory and the European cultural com-

munity; the experience of the body, sexuality, and common existence; emotional and social relation to space; and, finally, biographical identity, which I reconstruct as a temporary and contingent whole.

The individual's identity in the 20th century, except for special cases, was not limited to self-creation or identification – political, ideological, social, or territorial. Quite the contrary, it was grounded, as a rule, simultaneously in diverse patterns and numerous affiliations, although their choice and mutual relations were subject to change. Modern identity as a narrative is a holistic attempt – and merely an attempt, as any symbolic totality has become suspect these days – to comprehend one's experience and one's self-images. The attempt, though it makes sense in retrospect, is invariably temporary and malleable. What is more, it is an individual, subjective project which is comprehensible thanks to its connections with culture and history and thus not necessarily authentic or unique. To reconstruct identity narratives in Różewicz's prose in this way, I am ready to sacrifice the strict order of their typology. That is also the reason why I cannot always respect the integrity of particular texts and read them as separate, closed literary totalities. Each longer text by the author of *Anxiety* refers to a number of problems and patterns of identity, some of them appearing simultaneously in many of his texts, which is why I sometimes return to the same work in subsequent chapters. I order the Różewicz texts chosen for analysis primarily on the basis of the problems they tackle and, as long as it does not collide with the first criterion, also chronologically, based on the date of their composition or publication (or their editing by the author in subsequent editions).

When I write in this book about the Różewicz man, I do not mean the writer, of course, even though I am interested in his "autobiography", understood as a work that is dispersed and completed in different texts. The "Tadeusz Różewicz" created in them is not identical to Tadeusz Różewicz. It is clear that among the many attitudes and ideological

stands that Różewicz refers to in his prose, some are close to his heart and some are not. I do not ignore his beliefs stated in non-fictional narratives or public pronouncements, but I focus on the experience, worldview, and self-awareness of his literary persona and characters, thematized or indirectly implied by the image of man and human community in his texts. Analysing Różewicz's works, I differentiate between clearly journalistic statements and humanistic reflection, the latter resulting from a philosophical or literary approach to problems of the individual's identity. I read his prose as an element of 20th-century culture and a comment on it as well as being a nonliteral – due to it being articulated in fictional, intimate, or rough-draft narratives – critique of contemporaneous social reality. In general, I leave open the question as to whether Różewicz was or is a writer committed to a particular political project, whether he is a modern man in different meanings of the word, or whether his personal identity coincides with identity narratives in his texts. Solving such riddles is not the aim of this book. More interesting and more relevant to me seems the problem of Tadeusz Różewicz's intellectual involvement in modern Polish culture, literature, and history, the problem of the writer's participation in their creative and critical understanding.

1. The adventures of an ideologist

Whenever I discuss in this chapter – aside from discussions on Tadeusz Różewicz's texts, literary diagnoses, and critical discussions – Polish political orientations, some political platforms, or social journalism, I look for traces of ideology in them that form the historical context of his works. It is my concern, however, that the historical-ideological reading should not overshadow the texts as such, thus reducing their literariness. While reading prose works as identity narratives, I also take into account their genealogy, lexicon, and artistic composition. I read them along both ideological and philological lines. The method and aim of the former reading is to describe a general phenomenon as exemplified by a particular case. A worldview expressed through literary means is a merger of diverse political or social beliefs, an image of their mutual relations and temporal changes. It can be presented as a system of ideological messages, their justifications, and ways of verbalization. The latter aim, equally important, corresponds to the literary premises of this book. In line with them I intend to describe what transpires between ideological discourses bent on shaping collective identity and a literary creation, the text. The title's "ideologist" – the term inspired by Julien Benda – has two meanings here. Firstly, it refers to the historical-sociological concept of identity featured in reflections on political consciousness, tradition, and the social role of the intelligentsia; secondly, it

pertains to model ideological identity narratives – collective and personal – that literary texts and critical statements refer to.

The "Clerk" and the "New Intellectual"

The aforementioned ideologist is certainly an intellectual, a member of the intellectual elite.[57] In accordance with that elite's social role, the intellectual is engaged in creative work – primarily academic or artistic, although in some cases he may also go into public service. His activity may take the form of purposeful political action undertaken in the best interest of a group of people, a nation, or even the whole of humankind; or, it may resemble more the attitude of the "clerk", an independent arbiter in those ideological conflicts that exert a decisive influence on the state of culture and the humanities.[58] "Clerkism" is the opposite of partisanship, of acting in the vested interest of a group; it is not, however, in conflict with social thinking. Julien Benda, who defined and popularized the term, claimed in *La Trahison des Clercs* [*The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*], published in 1927, that "the ideologist does not betray his function by entering the public market; he betrays it only when he begins to defend on that market the realistic class, racial, or national passions".[59] The true "clerk", then, is an intellectual keenly interested in the condition of art and independent thought in the public space, but someone who personally abstains from political praxis and not is guided by particular interests of his nation or social sphere.

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[57] See J. Szacki, *Dylematy historiografii idei oraz inne szkice i studia*, Warszawa 1991, p. 372.

[58] By "ideological attitude" I mean one's acceptance of certain values arranged into an axiological system or a worldview, or one's attempts to realize them in social life. Ideological attitude as worldview is an individual affair, whereas as an expression of ideology it becomes a public issue. See U. Schrade, *Międzywojenna polska myśl narodowa. Od patriotyzmu do globalizmu*, Kraków 2004, pp. 10–11.

[59] J. Benda, *La Trahison des clercs*, Paris 1927 (qtd in: H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, op. cit., p. 129.).

As Benda argued, the non-politicized territory of culture and art had shrunk considerably in the 20th century, which had forced intellectuals to face a dramatic choice.

> The clerk striving to guarantee earthly commodities has exactly two choices: He either safeguards them, thus betraying all his principles (like the church when it supports nation and property), or he keeps his principles and brings to ruin the very organisms he was supposed to sustain (like the humanitarians when they want to pass for the nation's defenders). In the former case, the clerk lays himself open to the contempt of the just man, who accuses him of cunningness and dismisses him from the clerks' ranks; in the latter case he is destroyed and derided by people as useless, provoking simultaneously a violent and much-applauded reaction from the realist, as is currently [the second half of the 1920s – WB] happening in Italy.[60]

The modern "clerk", Benda added, gets "crucified", his mission being exceptionally difficult and unclear. Commenting on *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*, Andrzej Walicki points out that the term "clerkism" is not rooted in Polish tradition as the issues of national leadership and social progress were always crucial for our intelligentsia. Despite various changes, that attitude remained binding until the end of the 20th century. While what all intellectual identities in Poland had in common was nonconformism, for the typical intellectual it was ethical and communal values that were of paramount importance. By contrast, for the "clerk" it was independent thought that was crucial.[61] Depending on one's perspec-

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[60] J. Benda, *Zdrada klerków* (fragments), trans. A. Ostolski, "Krytyka Polityczna" 2002, no. 1, p. 50.

[61] See *Społeczeństwo bez mózgu i sumienia. Z Andrzejem Halickim rozm. Aleksander Pawlicki i Sławomir Sierakowski*, "Krytyka Polityczna" 2002, no. 1.

tive, the bone of contention could be either one's intellectual detachment from collective concerns or one's involvement.

Tadeusz Drewnowski called Różewicz a typical "clerk", describing the writer's stance in the 1970s.[62]

> Although not a party member and persistently anti-aulic, he [Różewicz
> – WB] always tried to remain loyal to the state in the growing conflict.
> Like a typical "clerk", deeply involved in state affairs, he joined neither
> the opposition nor the apologists for the status quo, let alone the hard-
> core commies.[63]

The author of *Anxiety* was indeed "involved in state affairs", but this should be understood in a specific manner. He wrote jokingly about his attitude to the world in a January 1985 letter to Zofia and Jerzy Nowosielski: "I neither ski nor skate, or go sledding for that matter; I don't dance, don't drink beer, don't flirt, and don't politicize … I have time for postcard- and letter-writing activities" (Ko 311). More seriously, in a March 1973 letter he distinguished between "seemingly relevant 'national' affairs", traditions stretched on the "modern last", and "genuinely relevant contemporary problems one may encounter on a tram, in a taxi cab, on a bus, on campus, in the street, at a clinic, in a hospital, at the school, at a train station, in the church – in the

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[62] T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, Kraków 2002, pp. 18–24.

[63] Ibid., pp. 23–24. Answering, in a 1999 conversation, Robert Jarocki's question how come a left-ist writer managed to avoid Communist Party membership in the Polish People's Republic, Różewicz explains that he did not hold any editorial or administrative posts and would not give in to the persuasions of his friends and fellow writers who had joined the Party. Immediately after the war, thanks to the support of Karol Kuryluk and Julian Przyboś, he was allowed to publish in "Odrodzenie", attaining "relative independence" with time. And later, thanks to the peripheral status of Gliwice, where he lived, "he did not catch the eye of the party literature bandmasters" (W 294).

local county or at a roadside inn" (Ko 182). "I hate it [he concluded] when non-existing problems play the role of real problems – because that's spoof, that's hogwash, and we've had enough of that here." On the debate on romanticism he wrote in 1977, putting the terms "national" and "romanticism" in quotation marks, that "these are some pseudo-problems (shadows)" (Ko 252). The author's self-created persona emerging from these letters matches the sceptical, detached, and "professional" attitude of the "clerk", avoiding involvement in current political strife but remaining a keen observer of (and an informed commentator on) public life. Some of the above-quoted remarks are indeed on point. Superimposing Romantic templates onto modern reality, Różewicz tells us, results in formulating pseudo-problems ("shadows") that limit our perception of real, everyday life. The poet's remarks imply that those artificial, TV-generated problems are merely a distraction or a diversion, an intellectual catnip chase designed to make intellectuals and artists focus on unreal, past, or totally irrelevant problems detached from everyday life (Ko 258). Some of Różewicz's "political" comments pertain to specific events, for example the strike of municipal public transport employees in August 1980. In general, however, Różewicz did not go beyond mere description or a general diagnosis of public sentiment, not giving up the writer's independence and apparently not sharing in the collective emotions typical of that day. On the one hand, then, the poet noted the "shadows", i.e. irrelevant historical, symbolic, and collective problems, only seemingly "national"; on the other hand, he recognized the "living" issues – everyday, personal, and contemporaneous. This alternative, superimposed on the "clerk" model of intellectual identity, corresponds, by and large, to Różewicz's stance in those days, the writer's attitude to his country's political situation.[64] It seems

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[64]   As Różewicz explains in his conversation with Elżbieta Królikowska-Avis (1991), "My poetry,

that the author of *The Card Index* was perfectly aware of the scope and nature of the social transformations of those days, but he participated in them solely as an artist and uninvolved intellectual.[65]

This attitude did not seem right to everyone, however. Andrzej Falkiewicz wrote in the mid-1970s that "Today, among us, it is, again, Różewicz that seems to have made the most of the Chekhov opportunity – perhaps his inert records will one day testify to what we really were." Then he added: "Still … there are things that Chekhov didn't keep a record of. He didn't write about Narodnaya Volya or the bombs exploding in his days."[66] The latter remark led to the critic raising the question, also addressed to himself, whether the world of this type of literature "is only my inner world… or is it also our world", that is to the question of its communal aspect or the relation between the "inert" recording of individual experiences and an objectivized diagnosis of social phenomena.[67] Falkiewicz implied that, being unable to see clearly this relation in Różewicz's texts (probably those from the first half of the decade), he is unable to say anything relevant about them. By the same token, he pointed to his socio-historical criterion of "sense" in literature.

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my dramas are [politically] involved in a very peculiar way. My theatre writing, for example, was always to some extent destructive towards the post-war Polish political-economic-social reality. My plays were not banned by [state] censorship because the censorship was too primitive to notice that destructiveness" (W 200-201).

[65] Różewicz spoke extensively in his conversation with Mieczysław Orski, published in 1999, on the role of 20th-century intellectuals engaged in public discourse. Despite the suggestion that "at this point, perhaps, we could use a Zola who would write, for example, about the controversy over Catholic crosses at Auschwitz", Różewicz made it emphatically clear that we should remember that not everyone was able or allowed to speak in public (W 310–311).

[66] A. Falkiewicz, *Takim ściegiem: zapisy z lat 1974–1976 przepisane w 1986 przeczytane w 2008*, Wrocław 2009, p. 221.

[67] Ibid., p. 222.

Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, in *Dziennik pisany nocą*, which was printed on a regular basis in Jerzy Giedroyć's "Kultura", commented in 1976 on Różewicz's statement about Rudolf Hess.[68] Herling-Grudziński was outraged at the "ferocity" of the poet who is anxious about the proposal to release Hess from the Spandau prison, but cares little about Soviet and Polish Stalinists who had never been convicted for their crimes. As Herling-Grudziński put it:

> Our *poeta laureatus* prefers not to think about such matters (providing that he has taken the trouble to learn about them from anyone in the first place). For his tender, sensitive, "bleeding" conscience, Hess' carcass guarded by the soldiers of the Big Four in Spandau will suffice.[69]

Several months later, Herling-Grudziński called Różewicz's drama *Marriage Blanc* a "stupid and flat (if not vulgar) little play", and also regarded his *Sobowtór* [*Doppelganger*] a "cunning imitation" of Albert Camus' short story "Renegade".[70] What Herling-Grudziński had in mind was not only Różewicz imitating Camus' stylistic mannerisms but also the writer's egotism manifesting itself in his inability to "notice an elephant" as he was

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[68] Różewicz's statement was merely a voice "in the margin" of a large-scale legal-political debate on the possibility of releasing R. Hess (known as prisoner number 7) from Spandau prison, which took place in the Western European and Polish press. At least several articles and polemics on this issue were published in the Polish press in the years 1969–1976, in "Przekrój", "WTK. Tygodnik Katolików", "Życie Warszawy", "Kultura", "Za Wolność i Lud", and "Przegląd Zachodni", among others. Viewed in the context of that campaign, the poet's voice may have seemed opportunistic. However, Różewicz was in those days equally harsh on any attempts at "humane" treatment of former high-ranking Nazis, e.g. in his note *Krótko i węzłowato* [*Straight and To the Point*] published in "Odra" (1975, no. 1). "Given this sort of danger, I, a poet and a partisan, repeat once again: the lowest sons-of-bitches ever…" (III 221). The note was reprinted several times, also in *Utwory zebrane* [*Collected Works*].

[69] G. Herling-Grudziński, *Dziennik pisany nocą*, "Kultura" 1976, no. 10, p. 7.

[70] G. Herling-Grudziński, *Dziennik pisany nocą*, "Kultura" 1977, no. 7-8, pp. 81–82.

"constantly preoccupied only with himself".[71] Janina Katz Hewetson responded to these charges in "Kultura". She noted that Herling-Grudziński's accusations pertain, in fact, to the wrong "political message" of Różewicz's work and, more significantly, to the "clerk"-like stance of the writer who would not sign protest letters addressed to the Communist regime.[72] This charge was not explicitly formulated by Herling-Grudziński – who points this out in his letter to the editor[73] – but his allegory of the elephant may have implied that he meant exactly Polish social problems and the political events of that day, which were, after all, constantly documented and discussed by "Kultura".[74] The debate was joined by Adam Czerniawski, who viewed this sense of moral superiority displayed by an émigré writer ("[operating, after all,] in the free world") towards a poet in the home country as utterly repulsive. By the same token, Czerniawski argued, evaluating "cultural phenomena through the lens of one's political stance" was very much

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[71] Ibid., p. 82. On his "egotism" Różewicz wrote in December 1978 to J. Nowosielski: "I need a human being in my life – with a soul, body, thoughts, and even with dandruff on the collar … wait, it's like a slice of bread and a cup of tea. Some see this as the egotism (egoism) of the poet, but that's just a stupid sham. […] The so-called social connections ('perks' and 'privileges', reciprocities, obligations, sense of propriety … I find all this ridiculous and boring) mean nothing to me" (Ko 272–273).

[72] J. Katz Hewetson, *Godzina Savonaroli*, "Kultura" 1977, no. 10, p. 130. Konrad Rokicki writes that Tadeusz Różewicz's signuature, together with the signatures of 600 other Polish writers, can be found in the so-called counter letter condemning the authors of the Letter of 34. The historian quotes, however, Irena Lewandowska (wife of Witold Dąbrowski, a high-ranking party apparatchik affiliated with the Polish Writers Union), who claims that names of writers from regional branches of the PWU were added "automatically, from the [members'] list". K. Rokicki, *Literaci. Relacje między literatami a władzami PRL w latach 1956–1970*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 287–288.

[73] G. Herling-Grudziński, (*** Drogi Panie Redaktorze), "Kultura" 1977, no. 11, p. 133.

[74] "Kultura" in those days wrote, among other things, about the amendment passed by the parliament of the People's Republic of Poland enshrining in the Constitution the "steering role" of the Polish United Workers' Party and the "permanent and unbreakable" alliance with the Soviet Union, the so-called Memorial of 59, the crushing of workers' protests in Radom and Ursus, the founding of the Workers' Defence Committee, and the death of Stanisław Pyjas, considered a political murder.

in line with Communist practices back home.[75] A little earlier, Czerniawski argued that "any Pole (and they are legion) who demands that literature should, first and foremost, possess narrowly conceived state-building assets" is guilty of making a non sequitur argument, and in this "lack of logic the home country luminaries and the émigré ones are mutually supportive".[76] Admittedly, as the polemic unfolded, Herling-Grudziński tried to make his charges less explicitly politicized, shifting the emphasis to an alleged difference in aesthetic tastes and ending up with blaming Różewicz not so much for indifference to the national cause but rather for his personal "signature allergy". It does not change the fact, though, that the framework of the debate was the contrast between egotism and "clerkism" on the one hand and the writer's political stance on the other. This could not have been denied by Herling-Grudziński, especially given that in his piece at the time about Julien Bemda's *Betrayal of the Intellectuals* in his *Dziennik pisany nocą* [*Journal Written at Night*], he noted that the new edition of the book in France in 1946 as well as other works discussed the ideological stance of the "new intellectual", i.e. the 20th-century intellectual, named, after Nicola Chiaromonte, the "time server".[77] Although his point of departure was the term's general meaning, the writer also described the contemporaneous Polish intellectual of the positivist (or organicist) orientation, distinguishing between his two types of political stance – the neoconservative one, stressing the primacy of the nation's substance, and the realistic one, acknowledging the "technical" aspects of politics. Herling-Grudziński's conclusions boiled down to the suggestion that the "time server" of the post-war era was rooted in the European past (which was Benda's point too), whereas both "positivist" stances are deviations from the "clerk's" Decalogue. The requirements that the author of the *Journal* imposed on a particular poet

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[75] A. Czerniawski, (*** Szanowny Panie Redaktorze), "Kultura" 1977, no. 12, p. 137.

[76] A. Czarniawski, (*** Drogi Panie Redaktorze), "Kultura" 1977, no. 6, p. 132.

[77] G. Herling-Grudziński, *Dziennik pisany nocą*, "Kultura" 1977, no. 5, pp. 28–29.

were at odds with the apolitical ideal of the "clerk" juxtaposed with the "new intellectual" at the service of politics. In light of Herling-Grudziński's arguments, Tadeusz Różewicz seemed not "clerk-like" enough and, paradoxically, not socially involved enough. The "Różewicz case", viewed from the perspective of the writer's moral and artistic imperatives, was ultimately summed up by Marta Wyka, who concludes that the writer "never backs off from obeying his inner voice, even if it means antagonizing the audience and the critics".[78]

Between Romanticism and Modern Consciousness[79]

The rough equivalent of the "clerk" as creator of symbolic language and learned interpreter of reality is the cultural intellectual, restricting himself in collective life to the defence of autonomous values of literature

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[78] M. Wyka, *Szkice z epoki powinności*, Kraków 1992, p. 86. Magnus J. Kryński and Robert A. Maguire also wrote on the Różewicz formula of "involvement", noting that even though Różewicz is convinced that the poet should get involved in current affairs, he suspects that his voice might not be heard, being thus unable to effect any changes in the world. Viewed from such a perspective, the poet's role is much like that of a tape recorder, hardly capable of recording the flow of life. Cf. M.J. Kryński, R.A. Maguire, *The Poetics of Tadeusz Różewicz*, New York 1971 (qtd in: M. Or. [M. Orski], *Poetics of Różewicz*, "Odra" 1973, no. 6, p. 110.

[79] I do not juxtapose modern consciousness against Romanticism as such, agreeing with Agata Bielik-Robson that Romanticism combines "emotions, political passions and all sorts of strong affections with typically modern rational persuasion", while modernist revisions of Romanticism – S. Brzozowski's, for example – discover in it sources of the modern condition of the individual. Here I would see the connection between Różewicz's man-as-subject, experiencing the disintegration of the world's image and the resultant need for a new totality, and Romantic identity. In the sense proposed by Bielik-Robson, Romantic identity is the identity of "lack" (a disintegration of spiritual totality and of life's purpose), which – once acknowledged – becomes a drive towards its compensation with a holistic vision of man's essence, going beyond the Enlightenment limits of the rational and secular worldview. Although, the philosopher argues, the Romantic concept of human nature does not allow for a philosophically credible description of the human condition, it has a pragmatic value, enabling humans to "strengthen their ever fragile and uncertain identity." A. Bielik-Robson, *Romantyzm, niedokończony projekt. Eseje*, Kraków 2008, pp. 6–7, 24–34 and 85. The links of Romantic attitudes to modernity and radical Enlightenment is discussed by Bielik-Robson in her study *Inna nowoczesność. Pytania o współczesną formułę duchowości*, Kraków 2000, p. 296 and passim.

or philosophy. The political intellectual, or the "time server", in turn, consciously yields to ideological passions, serving particular vested interests, and group or national goals.[80] It does not follow that intellectuals cannot go into politics or discuss public morality, or that, while doing that, they have to give up their autonomy and creative pursuits. As Pierre Bourdieu argues, the modern "intellectual was born transcending that opposition and as a result of it".[81] Writers and scholars alike

> confirmed their being for the first time the moment when, because of the Dreyfus affair, they intervened in political life *as writers and scholars*, that is basing on their particular authority grounded in their belonging to a relatively autonomous world of art, science, and literature as well as on all the values related to that autonomy – disinterestedness, competence, etc.[82]

Szacki claims that

> Culture's total isolation from politics is inconceivable in the modern world […] the cultural intellectual enters politics fully aware that by doing so he changes his social role […] he feels responsible for his area of expertise, being concerned with other fields only if they have direct consequences for the realm of cultural values.[83]

The intellectual foregoes his calling, the sociologist adds, when, apart from creating pure ideas, he supports a "material force" that instrumen-

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[80]   See J. Szacki, op. cit.

[81]   P. Bourdieu, *Reguły sztuki. Geneza i struktura pola literackiego*, trans. A. Zawadzki, Kraków 2001, p. 508.

[82]   Ibid., p. 508.

[83]   J. Szacki, op. cit., pp. 388–389.

tally exploits them in public life. One can also imagine an intellectual siding with a social group that, instead of implementing its own ideology, combats somebody else's. Any of the above attitudes, however, make the intellectual more of a "time server", even if he still pursues his scholarly or artistic vocation. That is, for example, how Bolesław Drobner, a member of the Polish Socialist Party and the first mayor of post-war Wrocław, perceived "ideologists", using the term to describe the early 20th-century leftist Polish intelligentsia engaged in the struggle for national independence and social justice.[84]

The identity and biography of the Polish ideologist, at least in some periods of the past two centuries, did not always match the ideal of the cultural intellectual, being closer instead to the ethos of the socially involved intelligentsia. The "clerical" model in a country occupied by foreign powers or ruled by authoritarian regimes, totally or partly subjugated and threatened by civilizational stagnation (marginalization), did not meet the requirements resulting from the social and civic obligations of a "thinking man". As a rule, the Polish intellectual had to protect both his independent thought and the most important collective good – the homeland and national cultural heritage. He had to combine, sometimes even identify, his own biography with the history of the collective, consciously carrying out his own tasks in the latter's name.[85] The necessity of such identification was symbolically expressed in the national "Romantic heroism – that wonderful dream of the collective dreaming about itself".[86]

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[84]   B. Drobner, *Wspominki…*, Kraków 1965, p. 23 and passim.

[85]   Alasdair MacIntyre distinguishes between two types of link between patriotism and personal identity: (1) patriotism as the individual's attitude to the collective, in which the meaning of one's biography emerges from the history of one's community; (2) patriotism as a moral value acknowledged in biographical narratives. See A. MacIntyre, *Dziedzictwo cnoty*, trans. A. Chmielewski, Warszawa 1996.

[86]   M. Janion, *"Czy będziesz wiedział, co przeżyłeś"*, Warszawa 1996, p. 15. Janion writes: "Generally speaking, over the past two hundred years – beginning with the post-partition era and

The nation apprehends itself and finds its own way through the actions of its heroes, the condition for and the measure of the individual's greatness being his connection with the feelings, dreams, and aspirations of the community, with the "people's thought", with the nation's consciousness and memory. The Romantic Self is rooted in the community's historical existence. The passage of existential time merges in it with the passage of historical time.[87]

The "Romantic system" of the 19th century was a catalyst for the concept of the intelligentsia, also understood as a peculiar type of collective identity. The term was used already in the 1840s by the messianic philosopher Karol Libelt.[88] This type of identity was grounded in the Romantic mythology of leadership, of historical mission and service to the nation, one that combined intellectual authority with avant-garde, progressivist aspirations and classless social solidarity.[89] That is why the background for the "adventures of a thinking man" – to use the title of a popular novel by Maria Dąbrowska – was that of ideological-political history affecting also the history of national identity (ideology).[90] Modern, bour-

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[87]   ending with Martial Law and the period that followed – there was actually one dominant type of culture in Poland which I call symbolic-romantic. It was primarily Romanticism – as an all-encompassing style – an idea of culture and its praxis – that built national identity and defended the symbols of that identity." Ibid., p. 9.

[87]   M. Janion, M. Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Gdańsk 2001, p. 17.

[88]   See *Społeczeństwo bez mózgu i sumienia*, op. cit.

[89]   Szacki notices in this mythology "the myth of the avant-garde that, thanks to its education, is capbable of recognizing collective needs and shows its compatriots the adequate course of action; the myth of [social] service, through which the intelligentsia, by giving all its energy to the people, redeems – to the point of losing its cultural identity – its guilt of affiliation with privileged groups, and the myth of the [neutral] arbiter whose social role is to stay maximally independent and give objective evaluation of all the social forces currently at play". J. Szacki, op. cit., p. 374. A similar definition of the Polish intelligentsia's internal, post-Romantic mythology is offered by Janaszek-Ivaničková, who calls it "the intelligentsia ideology". H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, op. cit., p. 144.

[90]   Following Stanisław Ossowski, I define the modern nation and its attendant ideological identity (the individual's identification with national ideology) through national ideology. For Os-

geois, individualist values that could have contributed to a change of that identity, for example in the liberal direction, were confronted in the public space with the principles of post-partition patriotism. As a rule, the post-aristocratic intelligentsia of Eastern Europe defined itself as a polar opposite of the bourgeoisie.[91] Its ethical and patriotic code included the republican heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as well as the Romantic philosophy of nation, civic customs of the landed gentry, and the tradition of armed struggle for independence. There was also room in that code for social and positivist ideas, or even for pragmatic appeasement policies towards the partitioning powers as long as they were justifiable by national interests.[92] Andrzej Walicki rightly argues that, in

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sowski a nation is "an ideological group" or a "national-ideology community". Members of the modern nation "are not bound together by shared personal experience but by a conviction that they are all attached in the same way to certain values shared by the whole group […] which generates among them certain shared aspirations and shared emotional attitudes". S. Ossowski, *O ojczyźnie i narodzie*, Warszawa 1984, pp. 11, 34, 50, 62–63. Joanna Kurczewska, in turn, holds that modern national experience emerges when "common ethnocentric experience" and "being in national culture" are codified in a system of national ideology. J. Kurczewska, *Nowoczesne doświadczenie narodowe (z różnorodnością teraźniejszości w tle)*, in: eds R. Nycz, A. Zeidler-Janiszewska, *Nowoczesność jako doświadczenie*, Kraków 2006, p. 227 and passim. This reasoning results from harmonizing constructivist thought, according to which nations are ideological constructs, with the essentialist stance, which holds that nations are natural phenomena. The realistic position, adopted in this book, is based on the assumption that nations are historical constructs − emerging, however, as a result of ideological codification of cultural-ethnic traditions and natural social bonds. See A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., pp. 17–19.

[91] See *Społeczeństwo bez mózgu i sumienia*, op. cit., p. 59.

[92] As Andrzej Walicki tells us, "That elite remained faithful to aristocratic values such as honour, valour in open combat (as a rule not accompanied by civic courage), liberty understood as participation in collective sovereignty, not as protection of the individual's rights to carry out his/her own individual life plans; [that elite] never internalized any legal culture, especially when it comes to respect for private rights. […] Democratic ideologies of the Polish intelligentsia were consistent with the aristocratic ethos in their emphasis on disinterestedness, dedication and heroism; even 'organic work', to be considered socially acceptable in those days, had to resemble as much as possible disinterested volunteer work performed in the name of patriotic duty." A. Walicki, *Trzy patriotyzmy. Trzy tradycje polskiego patriotyzmu i ich znaczenie współczesne*, Warszawa 1991, p. 32.

the long run, this upset the balance between social respect for democratic freedom, guaranteeing collective political rights to citizens, and recognition of modern freedom, i.e. both private and liberal, which guarantees cultural, social, and economic rights to the individual, including the opportunity for spiritual self-development.[93] The imbalance described by Walicki favoured the collectivist idea of identity which proved more lasting than the historical situation justifying it.[94] The historian of ideas argues that the unpreparedness or reluctance of the public in Poland to differentiate between morality in politics and morality in other areas – for example, in art – was in the 20th century an effect of the Romantic concept of patriotism created in the times of national bondage.[95]

Maria Janion adds that "Romanticism in Poland, unlike in most European countries, by no means ended with the end of the 19th century. Its rule extended into the entire 20th century wherein it had three culminating points", namely the revolution of 1905, the Warsaw Uprising and the Martial Law as the last Romantic breakthrough.[96] The Romantic-symbolic identity became in that period a flagship identity of the Polish intelligentsia, a moral ideal that over time was internalized also by other

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[93] Ibid., p. 15 and passim. What confirms the existence of such imbalance is the lack of works featuring a decisive rebellion of the individual against their community in Polish Romanticism. See M. Piwińska, *Legenda romantyczna i szydercy*, Warszawa 1973, p. 363. Similarly, Maria Janion, noting the scarcity and indirectness of Polish 'black Romanticism', holds, that the Romantic rebellion was as a rule directed against contemporaneous reality, one in which the collective had degraded itself. See M. Janion, M. Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, op. cit., p. 17.

[94] Andrzej Walicki and Maria Janion both hold that this paradigm of Polishness lasted until the second half of the 20th century. See A. Walicki, *Trzy patriotyzmy*, op. cit.; M. Janion, *"Czy będziesz wiedział, co przeżyłeś"*, op. cit.

[95] Walicki views this lack of distinction as one of the Romantic premises of modern Polish patriotism. See A. Walicki, *Trzy patriotyzmy*, op. cit., p. 56. Mencwel lists several other "mental stigmas of [partition-time] bondage" that remained in the Polish thought until the 20th century. See A. Mencwel, *Przedwiośnie czy potop. Studium postaw polskich w XX wieku*, op. cit., – *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit.

[96] M. Janion, *"Czy będziesz wiedział, co przeżyłeś"*, op. cit., p. 10.

social groups, which, of course, led to all kinds of changes and simplifications.[97] An ideologist thus construed denoted someone capable of independent, creative thought who is at the same time subject – especially at moments of historic culminating points – to moral rigours of the Romantic ethos. The heroization of the ideologist's biography came in two varieties: the military one, featuring a defender of the homeland, and the artistic-intellectual one, reserved for the "servant" of the truth or of art, or for the spiritual leader who is also an embodiment of the collective conscience of the nation.

The individual's identity in the post-Romantic paradigm was not established once and for all in an automatic, "mechanical" manner. Nikodem Bończa Tomaszewski, analysing the state of Polish national awareness at the end of the 19th century, concludes that although "modernity elevated the nation to the rank of a suprahuman metabeing" and "defined what constitutes a human in a total sense", identity for the late 19th-century intellectual was still a matter of individual reflection connected, of course, with social, familial, and professional circumstances.[98] National awareness, adds Tomaszewski, would never have emerged if selfhood had not been born earlier. "Discovering man's selfhood is a necessary prerequisite for the birth of national awareness. There is no nationhood without selfhood."[99] A typical representative of the Central European intelligentsia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, sometimes even a co-author of national awareness,

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[97] According to Hanna Gosk, the intellectual as a role model in the second half of the 20th century "actualizes the semantic field of such labels, slogans, appraisals, and allegations as cavalier conceit, honour and bravado, Romantic gesture and positivist volunteer work, intellect and snobbery, megalomania and clownery, action and garrulity, mentorship and opportunism, subversiveness and 'service to the state', anti-governmental rebellion and loyalism, careerism and selfless sacrifice, softness and pluckiness". H. Gosk, *Bohater swoich czasów*, op. cit., p. 33.

[98] N. Bończa Tomaszewski, *Źródła narodowości. Powstanie i rozwój polskiej świadomości w II połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku*, Wrocław 2006, pp. 52–53, 135.

[99] Ibid., p. 63.

perceived his bond with the nation as a relation that was necessary, irreducible, but also one that involved agency and corroborated his self-efficacy, as well as his personal ethical and political sensibility. He would stress his group loyalties, aspiring at the same time to the role of an independent creator of collective identity. That is why interpretations of the national metabeing would take on diverse philosophical, ideological, or artistic forms, while the relation between the ideologist and his native community did not necessarily fit in the framework of "national charisma" (in Maria Janion's terms); when it did, the match may have been incomplete or may have operated in dissimilar ways. Comparing, for example, the writings of Stefan Żeromski and Stanisław Brzozowski, one cannot but conclude that similar social premises of the thinking man's actions, especially the ideas of democracy and modernization, could have resulted in different historiosophies or ideological programmes.[100] They might have even been conducive to the emergence of diverse moral criteria for evaluating the individual's attitude to national principles or the compatibility of his/her existential decisions with higher causes.

The crisis of the Romantic model of the nation in Poland, noticeable earlier but escalated at the moment of regaining independence in 1918, also affected the intelligentsia's identity.[101] The major challenges of the day involved revolutionary movements in Central Europe, the emergence

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[100] Mencwel writes: "History is, in Żeromski's view, always a history of nations, nations being history's only agents; Poland's history is the story of national articulation [...]. Brzozowski uses the vision of universal history; nations do exist there, of course, and play different roles, but they are not its major agents. True agency belongs to humankind understood as a receptacle in which good – liberty, equality, brotherhood – is to materialize." A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., p. 157. S. Brzozowski's and S. Żeromski's historiosophical concepts are also compared by H. Janaszek-Ivaničková (*Świat jako zadanie inteligencji*, op. cit., p. 148 and passim), who argues that they both viewed social reality not as a "ready-made world", since that one had already succumbed to modernist disintegration, but as a creative project, one that requires intellectual action of the ideologist.

[101] See J. Szacki, op. cit., p. 367.

of new nation-states, the arrival of avant-garde ideas, and civilizational changes.[102] Błoński noted that "In the interwar period it was felt acutely that the signs and symbols of Polishness formed prior to the year 1914 had faded away or become obsolete."[103] The creative elite, hitherto shaping national awareness, had begun to give way to the professional intelligentsia, the relatively numerous and educated middle class (of varied material status), carrying out specific cultural, scientific, economic, and administrative tasks,[104] who felt, at least temporarily, relieved from their missionary duties and the role of spiritual leaders. This does not mean that they had given up on their intellectual or cultural aspirations – far from it; they still constituted the social base of literary, theatrical, and cabaret audiences, of the academic, educational, or clerk communities, etc. What had changed, however, was their collective founding myth that defined the intellectual's identity. This identity was now increasingly defined not only in terms of its relations with the national community and political history, but also in relation to the ideal of the modern, active individual. The literary embodiment of this group's representative was the Skamander Group protagonist of the 1920s – urbane and present-oriented, or the "positivist" protagonist of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's *Panny z Wilka*. Its well-known caricature version was the "white-collar worker" Nikodem Dyzma from a popular novel by Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz, the "transition man" of the interwar period. Still, the culture of the "Ro-

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[102] See J. Tomaszewski, Z. Landau, *Polska w Europie i świecie 1918–1939*, Warszawa 2005.

[103] J. Błoński, *Odmarsz,* Kraków 1978, p. 280.

[104] With this social group the poet's father, Władysław Różewicz, a court lerk in Radomsko and Częstochowa, could also be bracketed. "These included civil servants of all ranks, white-collar workers at private companies, officers, engineers, physicians, clergymen, teachers, intellectuals." J. Tomaszewski, Z. Landau, op. cit., pp. 51–52. The entire group (including family members) in 1931 numbered 1.5 million people, with the population of Poland being then almost 32 million. By comparison, the wealthy upper-middle class numbered six hundred thousand people, tradesmen 3.2 million, and factory workers around 3 million. Ibid., p. 44 and passim.

mantic system" had preserved its solid foundations because, as M. Janion reminds us, "Romantic education was continued at school, inspired by the poetry of the Romantics and the cult of Piłsudski".[105]

Almost exactly at that point, simultaneously with new interpretations of the Romantic thought (e.g. by Henryk Elzenberg), authoritarian ideological movements created in Poland a demand for a political intellectual who serves group interests. The "clerk", with his detached attitude, became an object of ideological attacks, coming mostly from young writers and journalists, supporters of either nationalism or Marxism. In addition, the "clerk's" neutrality was harshly criticized or dismissed as a manifestation of escapism also by authors of manifestoes and literary programmes in the interwar years (e.g. the Futurists, the Żagary Movement). Applying Przemysław Czapliński's terms, one could argue that the ideological meaning of literature in those days was undergoing a transformation from the "confession of faith" to the "ideological passport".[106] The tendency intensified in the second half of the 1920s. The looming dictatorship of the Sanation movement, competing over social influence with the National Democracy camp, led to a tightening of censorship, etatization of major cultural institutions, a wave of anti-Semitism, and repressions of ethnic minorities, which was, in turn, conducive to ideological polarization of the intellectual circles. Some of their representatives, otherwise belonging to different generations and associated with diverse worldviews, became affiliated with editorial boards of ideological periodicals or engaged in campaigning journalism. The economic collapse that, as a result of the international economic crisis, affected mostly agricultural and (in civilizational terms) backward countries additionally

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[105]   M. Janion, *"Czy będziesz wiedział, co przeżyłeś"*, op. cit., p. 11. As Różewicz recalls: "We, of course, already at school before the war, were raised in the cult of military action, which was a result of the cult of Marshal Piłsudski" (W 328).

[106]   See P. Czapliński, *Poetyka manifestu literackiego 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1997.

contributed to the radicalization of the Polish creative intelligentsia's social views. Notably, after living for twenty years in independent Poland Polish intellectual elite had freed itself – temporarily – from the post-partition mythology of unity, recognizing political divisions as essential to the makeup of the modern nation.

The end of the aforementioned novel by Dąbrowska is a case in point. When the protagonists of the last chapter of *Przygody człowieka myślącego* – which ends in 1944 – plan their future they are guided by such political premises as the military defeat of the Warsaw Uprising and the expected arrival of communism.[107] Their pragmatic calculations are still outweighed by the sense of their historic mission and social obligation. They understand these, however, in different ways. Some of them pledge to continue fighting against the system, others expect the "long-overdue brotherhood of nations" or, in accordance with the spirit of Romanticism, they promise to carry out the terms of the last will and testament of the dead. Their dilemmas are dramatically rendered in the novel's Komorów train station scene depicting "normal everyday life so close to that terrible Warsaw".[108] Juxtaposing the intellectual debate held almost literally among the smouldering ruins of the capital city with the image of normal private life, the novelist touched upon one of the crucial problems of modern consciousness in post-war Polish culture. The scene constitutes the second, implicit, conclusion of her (unfinished) work. The ideologist of that day, in most cases an intellectual, was still a participant in the public sphere, a witness of and commentator on ideological discourses, but was at the same time also

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[107] M. Dąbrowska, *Przygody człowieka myślącego*, Warszawa 1970. The ending of the novel is a synthesis of all the post-war ideological disputes revolving around such issues as the problem of Conradian faithfulness, the role of the intelligentsia and the Romantic heritage, the humanist tradition, and political realism. Mencwel points out that the chapter was written in the years 1951–1952, that is at the apex of Stalinism. A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., p. 217.

[108] M. Dąbrowska, op. cit., p. 767.

– even in the moments of historic "breakthroughs" – primarily a private individual, preoccupied with his existence, family, and work, concentrated on quotidian experience. Needless to say, I do not claim that previously the commonplace experience did not play an important role in life – it certainly did. However, I believe it was only the modern "self" project that made it possible to circumscribe ideological identity with a superior personal plan and to ground collective history in the individual's narrative. That is how one can interpret Różewicz's note of 4 August 1944 included in *Dziennik z paryzantki*:

> We are lying in the sack, crushing lice. We are listening to the radio – the Soviets are 100 kilometres away from Kraków – there is fighting in Warsaw. […] I'm very curious what the future holds. I'd like to devote two years to learning foreign languages, this I will utilize, of course, for building the foundations of my life. I believe that after turning 25, I'll be able to get married. One can look at the world from an "astronomical" perspective and still have a normal job like anybody. Marcus Aurelius was a citizen of the world. I am sure that the days when we all become citizens of the world will come. You can always find a place for yourself on earth, your own place at that (II 228).

Did this kind of common "self"-image change the ideologist's identity and if so, how? Tadeusz Drewnowski wrote that "after forty years" of the post-war period "no new model of the Pole had emerged" in order to replace the civic and cultural ideal of the intellectual.[109] This chapter

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[109] T. Drewnowski, *Porachunki z XX wiekiem*, op. cit., p. 222. The research conducted in the years 1974–1975 among people with college education "showed that almost 70% claimed that such a social group [the intelligentsia – WB] existed, and more than half of the respondents identified with it". I. Białecki, *Między tradycją a sytuacją, czyli o nas, inteligentach*, "Res Publica" 1987, no. 1, p. 14.

describes Różewicz's narrative as a literary attempt to verify the ideal not only under the changed social and political circumstances but also in the light of the modern concept of the individual's identity (consciousness).

Heroic Fictions

Tadeusz Różewicz, nom de guerre "Satyr", was assigned, having been given the rank of corporal, to a unit of Home Army partisans based in the forest (Radomsko county) on 14 or 15 August 1943.[110] He had gone through a six-month boot-camp training course at an underground military academy (W 429). Tadeusz Drewnowski, in turn, based on a "document issued after [Różewicz's] coming forward [as a Home Army partisan]", claims that Różewicz got his call-up papers for the forest guerrilla unit in the early summer of 1943.[111] According to the document, "Satyr" took part in armed combat from 26 June 1943 until 3 November 1944 on various terrain in the counties of Radomsko, Końskie, Włoszczowa, Opoczno, and Częstochowa. Zbigniew Majchrowski tells us that Różewicz held the post of a non-commissioned officer for cultural and educational affairs. His duties included preparing occasional bulletins and regular summary reports on propaganda and frontline communiques based on radio interceptions.[112] In the spring of 1944, Różewicz's debut poetry volume,

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[110] T. Różewicz explained in the film *Tadeusz Różewicz: twarze* that his code name "Satyr" was connected with the work of J. Kochanowski but also with the figure of one of the officers of J. Piłsudski's legions (probably that of Major Albin Fleszar) that served under that pseudonym. The writer added that in his guerrilla unit nobody, except for the commander, understood the code name, which resulted from the low level of education among the soldiers. *Tadeusz Różewicz: twarze*, dir. P. Lachmann, 2012.

[111] T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 48. A facsimile of the document can be found in Majchrowski's book (p. 87) who, however, sets the date of Różewicz's joining the guerrillas for "the middle of August 1943". Z. Majchrowski, *Różewicz*, Wrocław 2002, p. 67.

[112] Ibid., pp. 70, 74. Majchrowski and Drewnowski also hold that on 3 November 1944, following the charges of "propagandistic sabotage", Różewicz left his unit. The political charges levelled against "Satyr" by the Home Army Regional Command pertained to his article published in

Echa leśne, came out in Częstochowa following the printing of one hundred copies on a mimeograph and featuring small pieces of prose, poetry, and humoresques. (The text was reprinted in 1985.) Marian Kisiel called this volume the writer's "real debut", undermining the popular (mis)conception that the proper beginning of Różewicz's literary career is marked by *Unease* (1947).[113] In fact, *Unease* can be considered the writer's *opus secundus*, a polemic with his own debut, questioning the concept of national literature taken up in *Echa leśne*. Subsequent post-war fictional texts featuring German occupation and guerrilla experience were collected by Tadeusz Różewicz in *Opadły liście z drzew* and *Przerwany egzamin* [*Interrupted Exam*], published in 1955 and 1960, respectively.

These narratives are connected with the political discourses of the war and the post-war years, for instance with the cited decisions of the German administration or news from the front, whereas the rhetorical justification of the Różewicz characters' ideological stances comes from the patriotic-civic, nationalist, or Communist argument. The titular short story of the collection ("The Leaves Have Fallen") begins with the monologue of a partisan – bored with, and bitter about, his mundane life in a forest hut, mocking the West's promises of military help scheduled to arrive "when the leaves fall down …" (I 44) and scornful of his orders to "stand by with his weapons ready".[114] Already in *Echa leśne* it says that "even the echo of those words, spoken in far away, misty Albion, has faded" (E 18). The short story

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"Czyn Zbrojny" containing socialist accents. Ibid., p. 72; T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – biopoetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 56.

[113] See M. Kisiel, *Przypisy do współczesności*, Katowice 2006, p. 64.

[114] That was a propagandist slogan of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), falsely accusing the Home Army of "standing by with their weapons ready", that is remaining militarily passive in the face of the German-Soviet conflict. Polish nationalist formations, by contrast, decided indeed not to interfere with this *samo-zbójstwo*, or "sons-of-bitches-cide" (a pun based on *samobójstwo*, the Polish word for "suicide"). See G. Kucharczyk, *Polska myśl polityczna po roku 1939*, Dębogóra 2009, pp. 26–27.

Spowiedź [*Confession*], from the *Przerwany egzamin* collection, features a motivational dictionary of two strong ideological identities. Unidentified partisans, questioning a peasant who is hiding weapons, call upon his patriotic sentiments, warning and threatening him, sometimes acting like occupiers. Their argument is clearly grounded in the Romantic-nationalist metalanguage of the "blood and steel" community: "We are ready to spill our blood"; "enemy and traitor of the Polish nation"; "bad Pole"; "the legitimate army"; "one army and one nation" (I 54-62).[115] The counterpoint to this persuasion is the commentary of the villager who interprets the letters "WP" [Polish: *Wojsko Polskie*, meaning the "Polish Army"] on the white-and-red armbands as *Wojsko Pańskie* [the "Masters' Army"]. Arguably, the caricatural picture of the "legitimate army" referred to the nationalist forces, whose military and ideological activity under the occupation Różewicz criticized after the war. The author of *Drewniany karabin* [*A Wooden Gun*] wrote: "The National Armed Forces men, 'drafted' into the Home Army, often claim to be Home Army soldiers … Not only under the occupation did they anarchize the AK [Home Army] ranks, imposing their own ways and often taking up actions unworthy of the Polish soldier" (II 225). Also, the utterances of the "vaudeville" Cavalryman, the protagonist of *Do*

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[115] This rhetoric is reminiscent of the Romantic national identity idiom, the "Polish mystique" discourse (J. Strzelecki), which provides a basis for the idea of classless bonds of blood and history uniting the whole nation (the gentry and the commons). See N. Bończa Tomaszewski, op. cit. p. 138. At this point, though, the soldiers' arguments justify their pragmatic actions. The Partisan from *Do piachu* mockingly describes a similar situation presented as almost typical: "You don't know the type? 'Who is it? The Polish Army! Open up!' Take the peasant's pig and screw his woman to boot" (VI 167). The concept of the ideological army, permeated with the "spirit of creative aggression" found its expression in, among others, the programme of *Konfederacja Narodu* (The Nation's Confederacy), Bolesław Piasecki's underground political organization active under the occupation and postulating, among other things, about creating "the new Pole" in accordance with the ideals of active nationalism. See G. Kucharczyk, op. cit., p. 16. This ideal functioned already in the political-ideological journalism of the 1930s. See M. Bednarczuk, *Marzenie o męskości w polskich koncepcjach nacjonalistycznych*, in: eds I. Kamieńska-Szmaj, T. Piekot, M. Poprawa, *Ideologie codzienności*, Wrocław 2009.

piachu [*Into the Sand*], referred to in the drama as the "rightist-nationalist scum", generally correspond to the social and political platform of Polish nationalist formations of the 1930s and 1940s – for example, the vision of a chauvinist, class-based, and hierarchical (elitist) ideological army. Notably, the Cavalryman dismisses the realistic "interest politics", fundamental for the anti-Romantic premises of National Democracy's *Realpolitik*, opting instead for the Romantic vision of a great historic nation at the "moment of breakthrough". The project of establishing Poland's western borders on the Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers, as he mentions twice, was, in turn, part of National Democracy's geopolitical programme (for more on this, see the chapter "Place in the Narrative").[116]

Spowiedź cannot be interpreted merely as a political polemic because ideological statements, invectives, and slogans featured in Różewicz's prose of those days – for example, in the short story *Borem, lasem...* published in "Odrodzenie" in 1945 and included in the collection *Opadły liście z drzew*[117] under the title *Ciężar* – are not only discursively confronted but also stylistically or gestically reduced to mundane experiences and idioms. The writer uses the same technique in *Do piachu*. "I got all this shit on my hands now", the Commandant concludes in a comic scene with a guerrilla barber, "The Commies on my left flank, the Nationalists on my right, and I'm in between" (VI 162). It is, however, the mundane routine in the partisan shelter – the daily bookkeeping and counting of provisions: "so many bulls, so many pigs, so many sheep" (I 44) – which jarringly contrasts with the stereotyped image of military "life", that can get really afflictive. The nationalist narrative of national identity is thus shattered

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116 On the subject of ideological and axiological differences between the romantic and "politically realistic" (national democratic) concept of Polish nationalism in the interwar period, see U. Schrade, op. cit.

117 T. Różewicz, *Borem, lasem...*, "Odrodzenie" 1945, no. 43. The changes introduced by the writer in the book version are described by J. Waligóra, op. cit., pp. 27–28.

in *Spowiedź* by inappropriate statements, undermined by colloquial and broad commentaries such as, for example, "Here we are, spilling our blood, and those motherfuckers are doing the simple folks", or by executioners talking shop and cracking jokes at the same time (I 54-55). The soldiers finally yield to some form of collective bestialization, bellowing, snorting, growling, grunting, and screeching, while the interrogation of the peasant degenerates into a grotesque display of their feral instincts, grimaces, and aggression. Animalization as a way of presenting and accounting for inhuman behaviour towards fellow humans was characteristic of descriptions dealing with social and moral problems of World War Two and the days of occupation.[118] The identity of the ideological army constructed in *Spowiedź* splits into mutually conflicting elements: authoritarian ideology, declarations of national solidarity, and instinctual behaviours stigmatized by the denigrating comparisons to animals.[119] The nationalist discourse, legitimizing primitive violence, is thus exposed on primarily aesthetic grounds.

The story cannot be interpreted as a critique of one political doctrine from the perspective of another either. While not dismissing any ideology explicitly, Różewicz looked sceptically at signs and images constituting the ideologist's sociosphere. Admittedly, some ideological oppositions in his short stories from the collections *Opadły liście z drzew* and *Przerwany egzamin* do reflect, in a general way, the conflicts in the occupation and post-

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[118] See e.g. Z. Klukowski, *Dziennik z lat okupacji Zamojszczyzny*, Lublin 1958.

[119] This imagery derives from the naturalistic vision of the social human being in which interpersonal relations – especially physical or symbolic aggression – are manifestations of a struggle over political gains, with politics standing for "a form of rivalry for attaining the position enabling one to issue 'authoritarian' messages or orders to the rest of the society […]; just as the pecking order is in many animal populations communicated by means of gestures or through acknowledgement of one's own position within that order, so do human groups express social and political status by means of verbal and nonverbal symbols regulating social interactions". R.D. Masters, *Polityka jako zjawisko biologiczne*, trans. by K. Nader, in: *Człowiek, zwierzę społeczne*, eds B. Szacka, J. Szacki, Warszawa 1991, pp. 144–145; R. Lynn, *Socjobiologia nacjonalizmu*, trans. by B. Szacka, in: *Człowiek, zwierzę społeczne*, op. cit., p. 381 and passim.

war periods, such as, for example, that between Communist propaganda and nationalist understanding of patriotism. The time when the former collection was written – the late 1940s and early 1950s – was a period of intensified Communist propaganda and political repressions aimed at local nationalists and anti-Communist resistance. Still, the characters portrayed in the fiction are caricatures rather than simple reflections of political loyalties, the disintegration of their political discourse pertaining to the collective Polish mentality rather than to particular doctrines. Questioning the purpose of "acting in history" as the foundation of the Polish biography, the writer disputed the heroic perspective on war rather than modern nationalism. First and foremost, however, he polemicized with the Romantic concept of identity according to which the individual "actualizes" himself only through the history of a nation.[120] It also Różewicz's coming to terms, so to speak, with his own debut. The anti-Romantic attitudes and behaviour of the partisans in Różewicz's post-war short fiction can be viewed as a revision of the soldiers' biographies presented in *Echa leśne* and openly referring to the works of Słowacki, Wyspiański, Mickiewicz, and Żeromski,[121] even though in a humorous sketch titled *Uwaga! Tylko dla chłopców z lasu* [*Please Note: Forest Boys Only*] as well as in other texts from the 1943 bulletin "Głos z Krzaka" ["A Voice from the Bush"], those biographies are glaringly flat, ostensibly reduced to the schoolgirl's shallow fantasy of the "forest knight" (E 58).[122] One could argue that Różewicz was purposefully explicit in his

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[120]   See M. Janion, *Romantyzm i historia*, op. cit., pp. 16–18.

[121]   The literary tradition in *Echa leśne* is reconstructed by Stanisław Gębala in his essay *Śmierci piękne i śmierci brzydkie* ("Dialog" 1986, no. 11). The critic considers the references to Żeromski and Słowacki as the debut's patrons to be a "choice within the curriculum canon" of the interwar Polish school. Ibid., p. 105. See also: S. Gębala, *Odpowiedzialność za słowo (felietony i szkice)*, Bielsko-Biała 1993. The literaly critique of the Polish heroicist self-stereotype in post-war fiction is discussed, among others, by Błoński and Maciąg. See J. Błoński, op. cit.; W. Maciąg, *Literatura Polski Ludowej 1944–1964*, Warszawa 1973.

[122]   On "Głos z Krzaka" see T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., pp. 49–50.

choice of pre-war "school" literature so that he could first establish a rapport with the reader and then liberate himself from its – internalized – aesthetic, historiosophic, and moral presuppositions. Turning the implied reader of his volume into an active participant in literary "Polishness", the writer nevertheless managed to present national memory and civic identity as non-obvious issues that needed reinterpreting in the war reality (but also in the quotidian one) – first and foremost in relation to the consciousness and attitude of the common man.[123] Różewicz would exploit this opposition between the literary image of war and the prosaic experience of its rank-and-file participant in the short stories collected in *Opadły liście z drzew*, whose central character brings to mind the protagonists of World War One pacifist fiction rather than the "chivalric" poem by Rainer M. Rilke, even though both literary contexts are present there. The stories reflect a tendency in Polish post-war (1946–1948) fiction to explore wartime themes not so much along ideological lines but more in moral-existential terms. The tendency was disrupted by the imposition of Socialist Realism on writers.[124]

The crucial moment in the Romantic ideologist's biography, Nikodem Bończa Tomaszewski tells us, is the transformation of the subjective self into the identity of an active and conscious participant in the nation's heroic history.[125] "Rymwid", the tragic protagonist of Stefan Żeromski's *Echa leśne*, "faithful to his duty for the fatherland", leaves the Russian army to join a forest unit of insurgents.[126] This is the scenario used by

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[123]   See M. Kisiel, op. cit., pp. 67–69.

[124]   The moral-existential "deepening" of wartime themes in literature was what Anatol Stern expected in his 1946 essay *Pisarz a wojna*, in: A. Stern, *Głód jednoznaczności i inne szkice*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 104–107.

[125]   N. Bończa Tomaszewski, op. cit., p. 197. Generally speaking, the transformation of the individual in the sense given by the Romantics, e.g. J. Słowacki, supposedly consisted in a "heroic-Promethean effort to combat the weaknesses of the spirit and the body in one's actualization of the self-creation and self-realization imperative understood as moral action". See I. Bittner, *Romantyczne "ja". Studium romantycznego indywidualizmu*, Warszawa 1984, p. 176.

[126]   S. Żeromski, *Echa leśne*, Warszawa 1935, pp. 15–17.

Różewicz in his novella *Przemiana strzelca Korzenia*, adapted of course to changed social realities. An apathetic peasant, totally bereft of national awareness, becomes, as a result of the occupation experience, a "real soldier" in the civic-patriotic sense, his biography acquiring dramatic and martyrological characteristics (E 41). The concepts of the simple folk adopting political ideas and the transformation of "the people" into a nation – the "nationalizing of the people" – is part of the canon of both socialist and National-Democratic thought of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.[127] The heroic biography may also run the opposite course: from patriotic sacrifice (and sanctification) to personal collapse. The titular protagonist of another novella from the debut collection *Zmówcie pacierz za duszę sierżanta Grzmota* ends up as a "drunk, a destroyed man, prematurely withered, fallen". Though existentially degraded, the former 1914 legionary remains symbolically a character from a heroic tale, a sacred "echo of that magnificent and horrific thing" (E 26-28).[128] The collective history, which provides a background for his biography, marks him with historic tragedy, elevates his all-too-common fall, and counterbalances the moral and physical regress. The hero of the Great War

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[127] On the topic of "nationalizing the people" see e.g. J. Molenda, *Chłopi, naród, niepodległość. Kształtowanie się postaw narodowych i obywatelskich chłopów w Galicji i Królestwie Polskim w przededniu odrodzenia Polski*, Warszawa 1999. Hanna Gosk writes, following Tadeusz Łepkowski: "The major building block of the modern Polish nation was, in fact, the peasant lass, for whom Polishness initially connoted a land, a language, and a religion; only later did it begin to connote national tradition, classless solidarity, supralocal culture, and a pursuit and defence of one's own national, supra-class state." T. Łepkowski, *Rozważania o losach polskich*, London 1987, pp. 104–107 (qtd in H. Gosk, op. cit., p. 31).

[128] The myth of the legions as the greatest patriotic "act" on the way to independence, referred to in the novella, served in interwar Poland the apotheosis of Marshal J. Piłsudski and was used to legitimize the dictatorial policies of his political formation after the May Coup. The legions, however, were a relatively small military formation, subservient to the army of Austria-Hungary and then of Germany, which did not play a major military role in World War One and was even viewed by the victorious allies (the Entente) as collaborating with the enemy (i.e. the Central Powers). See T. Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic*, London 1952.

and struggle for independence, though in danger of losing his humanity, cannot nullify his heroic biography, overlapping at crucial points with the history of the nation. The nation stands here for a subjective community of historical experiences, generated by the memory of past glory and sacrifice.[129] The metaphysical "national good", collected through history by self-sacrificial military action, is not subject to existential verification. Grzmot constitutes the Romantically interpreted occupation-period embodiment of Sarmatian patriotism, the equivalent of the patriot-rake figure from the 19th-century nobiliary tale.

The epitaph-style novellas from *Echa leśne* are surrounded by satirical texts and humoresques from "Głos z krzaka" and the author's *Introduction* (added in the 1985 edition) which circumscribes these texts with a tongue-in-cheek commentary, recalling his guerrilla poster (issued on 11 November 1943) featuring a little rhyme that went as follows: "Olaboga / Czy to wojsko Świętej Jadwigi, / Czy pluton Ostroga" (E 8). The literal translation, with the rhyme effect lost, reads: "Oh, me God! / Is this Saint Hedwig's army, / Or Ostroga's platoon?" The literary motif of Saint Hedwig's army – subsequently used in *Do piachu* – is also Romantic in origin, as Danuta Szkop-Dąbrowska tells us, noting that in Różewicz's drama it was used against the grain of its own tradition. "The sleeping army, or – as in Goszczyński [in the 1833 poem *Wojsko Królowej Jadwigi* – WB] – the army of shadows is in Romantic literature a recurrent motif. It is a myth, an expression of hope for the future, victorious fight."[130] According to Szkop-Dąbrowska the motif in *Do piachu* acquires a scornful, offensive meaning because Polish waiting for the "miracle of freedom" is accompanied by the hopeless inefficacy and counterproduc-

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[129] See E. Renan, *Co to jest naród?*, trans. M. Warchal, "Res Publica Nowa" 2005, no. 1, p. 143.

[130] D. Szkop-Dąbrowska, *"Jak to na wojence ładnie…"*, "Dialog" 1980, no. 7, p. 97. The motif of Saint Hedwig's Army appears in *Do piachu* as many as four times, also next to references to other prophecies.

tiveness of real actions. Still, one could argue that while the expressions "Queen Jadwiga's Army" from *Do piachu* and "Saint Hedwig's army" from "Głos z krzaka" are indeed mockeries of inept guerrilla warfare, the derision is not directed against the Romantic myth of struggle for independence as such, but rather against the intellectuals' emancipatory myth of the simple folk's transformation into a conscious civic military force or a political agent. As a folk tale, "Saint Hedwig's army" originates from the plebeian "protection myth"; before the myth was inscribed with the hope for regaining national sovereignty, the tale of knights sleeping in the Holy Cross Mountains had been a promise of the social liberation of peasants.[131] Thus, as a literary motif in Różewicz's work, "Saint Hedwig's army" should be viewed as mocking the anachronistic, idealistic image of the folk rising in defence of its homeland and national sovereignty. Tadeusz Łomnicki, writing about *Do piachu*, said that the play does not settle any historical or political disputes.[132] Admittedly, Różewicz did not take any explicit ideological stands, but – one could argue – by portraying a man "up to his eyeballs in the squalid prose of his life" (Łomnicki) – he acknowledged their ultimate meaning in the characters' everyday actions, gestures, and utterances. The Cavalryman from *Do piachu*, who would relieve himself far away from the forest latrine because it was too "democratic" for him, is identified by the other partisans by his "striped hat and spurs". It is only at the rock bottom of the carnal-material reality that the ideas, roles, sublimities, and sublimations in which the Różewicz man finds himself acceptable, or is considered so by others, can indeed

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[131] See S. Opara, *Tyrania złudzeń. Studia z filozofii polityki*, Warszawa 2009, p. 83.

[132] T. Łomnicki, *Refleksje przy lekturze Do piachu…"*, "Dialog" 1979, no. 2, p. 88. The historical background of *Do piachu*, whose plot was based on the real fact of the Home Army eliminating a group of pseudo-partisans engaged in plain banditry, was recalled by Różewicz in his conversation with R. Jarocki (W 284–285).

settle anything.[133] Only there can such attitudes be tested as personal experiences.

This is the way in which the guerrilla biography loses its sacral and historiosophic meaning in the story *Opadły liście z drzew*. The gratuitous, accidental death of Maks, whose weapon "fired itself" during a routine patrol, changes the expected finale of Gustaw's (the narrator-agent's) *Bildungsroman* narrative. As Jean Baudrillard tells us, sacrificial death is experienced as a "collective passion" because, unlike the natural or trivial death, the dramatic death "affects the entire group, refers to the group's passion about itself, changing its form in one way or another and allowing the group to redeem itself in its own eyes".[134] Only this kind of death can acquire symbolic status, giving other members of the community a sense of historic mission and a moral pattern. Maks, however, dies accidentally and his body, clad in a flowered bathrobe, is a civilian's, an anti-hero's, corpse. The witness of this death, Gustaw, does not transform into Konrad or "Rymwid", his potential antecedents.[135] This is the first fundamental difference between *Opadły liście z drzew* and Różewicz's prose debut. The Różewicz protagonist, discovering the incongruity between his experience on the one hand and the heroic discourse and role on the other, abstains from ideological motivation. Not bent on the patriotic-civic ideal, he remains a personal and single human being, capable of acknowledging the raison d'etre

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[133] As Józef Kelera wrote after the publication of *Do piachu*, "This raw matter should not be converted by means of any sublimations or arbitrarily imposed constructs – of fate, history, or a higher ordering idea – or by any patterns or models originating in the high realm of abstraction […]. Hence the conclusion: the ultimate functioning perspective of elementary values has to be a 'low' one. It has to be looking 'from the bottom up'. This looking 'from the bottom up' is also a guarantee of the best possible verification of values at work". J. Kelera, *Tezy o Różewiczu*, "Dialog" 1979, no. 2, p. 92.

[134] J. Baudrillard, *Wymiana symboliczna i śmierć*, trans. S. Królak, Warszawa 2007, pp. 210–214.

[135] The motif of Gustaw's questionable transformation into Konrad features in the poem *They came to see a poet*: "byle jaki Gustaw / przemienia się / w byle jakiego Konrada" [A shoddy Gustaw / transforms / into a shoddy Konrad] (*Na powierzchni poematu i w srodku*, Warszawa 1983).

of everyday life. The partisan's death is, unlike in *Echa leśne*, not a sacrificial and glorious death; it is not a "triumph of great souls" (J.W. Gołuchowski), multiplying the collective resources of heroism, but a demise in the carnal-existential sense. This type of death does not belong in the martyrological myth, does not change death's ultimate value because it does not transform demise into a lofty act of conscious sacrifice (devotion).[136] Nevertheless, the writer does not reduce his protagonist to a solely private, individual identity. The juxtaposition of the ideologist and man in the existential sense – present, for example, in the work of Miłosz and Gombrowicz – remains in the stories of *Opadły liście z drzew* one of the fundamental oppositions as far as identity is concerned.

At the junction of modern social doctrines and the Polish intelligentsia's myths there is a utopia of national unity encompassing the intelligentsia and the people. It is also a Romantic narrative, particularly productive and mobilizing in dramatic historical periods. The novellas from *Echa leśne* are both an account of the real meeting of different social groups and an attempt to verify the meaning of the narrative under the new – current and expected – political circumstances.[137] The effects of any utopia-verifying process must be ambiguous. On the one hand, the Różewicz narrator attests to the patriotic biography of the peasant partisan, a brother in arms; on the other, he notes the breaches of social

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[136] Eliade holds that it is Christianity that transformed, "suffering into an experience with a positive spiritual meaning". M. Eliade, *Sacrum, mit, historia*, trans. A. Tatarkiewicz, Warszawa 1970, p. 250.

[137] This is what T. Drewnowski makes of those days: "It was something unprecedented under foreign occupation that peasants had joined *en masse* the struggle for Poland's independence. That was the greatest, because it was somewhat unexpected, result of the interwar period which, incidentally, had not favoured peasants, to say the least. Admittedly, they were, officially peaking, drafted into the Home Army, which regarded military conspiracy as a continuation of regular military service, rather than joining it. But many of them were also volunteers, joining either the Farmers' Battalions (which, since 1943, had been merging with the Home Army) or the People's Army." See T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 51.

etiquette which happen during interactions between representatives of different social groups. However, such interactions never evolve to open conflicts over politics, while the process of "nationalizing" the people through shared struggle for independence becomes real. The two groups still do not form an obvious cultural community. The anecdote of a patriot farmer, an avid reader who, in gratitude for *Echa leśne*, presents the author with a packet of home-made butter, openly confessing: "We cried as we read your book" – much like the Henryk Sienkiewicz character crying over *Pan Tadeusz* – was only added to the 1985 edition, when the existence of such a supra-class community was already unquestionable.[138]

The national question in *Spowiedź* is handled differently. We do not know if the story's protagonist is an ethnic Pole – he is, though, a political man for sure. He refuses to hand over the hidden gun, even when the partisans refer to the community of "one army and one nation."[139] The latter issue appears explicitly in the story *Jego honor* [*His Honour*] (1954) when

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[138] T. Różewicz, *Wstęp* (E 8–9). The anecdote appeared first in a short sketch *Orle Pióro – 1973*, published in "Płomyk" in 1973 (Ma 132).

[139] In this story Różewicz referred to – and explicitly questioned – the morally disciplining myth of national unity in the face of an external enemy or the Other. In 1947, in the bi-weekly "Pokolenie", in which Różewicz published his work on a regular basis, Roman Bratny also publicly criticized the abuse of the national-unity myth in the interwar years and under the occupation. Bratny wrote: "In a normal state of affairs of a liberal-democratic state, so-called 'unity' is out of the question. The so-called "national unity" governments result from a temporary suspension, forced by historical circumstances, of differing political postulates, and the attendant social and class differences. Still, the myth was elevated to the position of the central canon of political education for the entire young generation." R. Bratny, *Duch narodowy w bluzie robotnika*, "Pokolenie" 1947, no. 3, p. 3. A. Walicki locates the roots of the myth in the nobiliary utopia of national identity, which featured a nation (*nobiles*) as an integral, politically unanimous agent of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. From the merger of this republican idea with a later, cultural-linguistic (post-Romantic) concept of identity there emerged "an image of a nation as an extended family, a homogeneous community". A. Walicki, *Trzy patriotyzmy*, op. cit., pp. 20, 37–38. Marcin Zaremba argues that one of the cultural consequences of the war and occupation trauma in Poland was "the strengthening of national bonds and supra-class solidarity, resulting in an exclusivist definition of the national 'we'". M. Zaremba, *Wielka Trwoga. Polska 1944–1947. Ludowa reakcja na kryzys*, Kraków 2012, p. 118.

the narrator reminds us that the weapons abandoned in September 1939 by the Polish soldiers were collected and taken good care of by the peasants: "The people became a major storekeeper of arms. Under the cover of noble-sounding slogans, claiming that there was only one army in the country, the army that is not engaged in political bickering and remains exclusively focused on fighting the Nazi invaders, using bloated platitudes and plain cant, they would confiscate weaponry from the farmers" (O 88). The mythic image of a nation as a suprapolitical community was thus re-politicized as the people in the story – though charged with bestiality when viewed from the perspective of the intellectual partisan – are presented as a new, self-conscious agent of national history, ready to fight for state sovereignty and social justice (O 79).[140] The peasant-into-patriot transformation, typical of the national unity meta-narrative, was replaced by Różewicz with a portrayal of a conflict of ideological stands leading to a moral revision of Polish identity patterns.[141] The human "beast", for whom sausage was to "suffice for homeland and ideals" (O 90), dies like a hero, whereas the intellectual-patriot, feeling something of an aesthetic solidarity with Germans, "clean-cut, clean-shaven, nice-looking guys in uniforms", rather than with the proletarian and plebeian "scum", becomes a potential turncoat (O 85). Similarly, in *Spowiedź*, which can be read as a continuation of the story of the people securing the abandoned

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[140] It was this distinction between the ruling nation (a collective political agent primarily bent on internal unity and estate solidarity) and the people (or the commons) that Sarmatism – an ideology of the Polish nobility in the 16th–18th centuries – was built upon. See J. Sowa, *Fantomowe ciało króla. Peryferyjne zmagania z nowoczesną formą*, Kraków 2011, pp. 262–272. As Jerzy Siedlicki reminds us, the "Cultural gulf between the commons and the nobility", which lasted at least till the end of the 19th century, was not a uniquely Polish phenomenon. The idea of two nations within one appears, for example, in a novel by the British writer and politician Benjamin Disraeli entitled *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (1845). See J. Jedlicki, *O narodowości kultury*, in: *Przemiany formuły polskości w drugiej połowie XIX wieku*, ed. J. Maciejewski, Warszawa 1999, p. 14.

[141] The patriot farmer and the farmer who is indifferent or hostile to the concept of nationhood are two major characters of this meta-narrative. See J. Błoński, op. cit., p. 272.

weapons, the farmer's resistance is caused not by bitterness or indifference to the national cause but by his dissenting political stance. The explicit carriers of ideology, the nationalist guerrillas, are threatened with inner bestialization, whereas a simple peasant, supposedly a political simpleton representing the class of "creatures with empty heads and hearts of stone" (O 85) displays a well-defined ideological identity. In ideological terms, none of the stances involved in this conflict are innocent because the characters' actions are motivated by their political interest. From an ethical point of view, however, the situational dramas constructed by Różewicz seem to speak in favour of the "creatures", attesting to their humanity, patriotism, heroism, social awareness, and sensitivity to the plight of the common man.

Ideological conflicts and heroic stands in Różewicz's fiction of the late 1940s and early 1950s are part of the mental makeup of the narrative persona or, at least, belong in the symbolic order of textually represented reality. They can be morally discredited, ridiculed, or mockingly paraphrased, but they cannot be deleted from the individual's experience or worldview. This already begins to change in some of the stories collected in *Opadły liście z drzew* and increasingly so in later texts, beginning with *Przerwany egzamin*. Firstly, the temporal distance of the narrator-agent to the world described (constructed in retrospect) increases. Secondly, the sense of commonly shared historical experience disappears. The textually constructed situation of the community's historical drama becomes obsolete from the individual's perspective. The Różewicz protagonist keeps telling and listening to wartime or martyrological tales but he cannot help noticing their anachronistic, run-of-the-mill, literary character and incompatibility with the post-war consciousness. This, for example, is the case in an existentialist story entitled *Piwo* (*Beer*), whose protagonist, recalling a humiliating scene from the days of occupation, fantasizes about an alternative scenario, one in which he becomes a hero, western-movie style: "gunshots, shouts, blood

and a heroic retreat" (I 101). The highest value of this "heroic fiction" is neither the community nor the idea, but the protagonist's concern about his near and dear ones and with his own self-image.

The author of *Spowiedź* thus for the second time – following Błoński's formula – deepens and problematizes his fundamental experience, elevating representations of reality to the "order of ideas" which he, in turn, transforms into narrative solutions.[142] *Wycieczka do muzeum* [*A Trip to the Museum*] and *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* represent a new model of textual communication. Their heroic narratives are mediated, paraphrased in a memoir story, recalled in everyday dialogue, quoted from a newspaper or a book. Although still existing in the characters' consciousness and in common use, they are no longer the natural semiosphere of the Różewicz protagonist but function instead as a peculiar code which is instrumentalized in the practice of collective memory, political propaganda, educational activities, and community rituals.

The "New Man's" Identity

Szacki is right, of course, when he writes that, "The cultural intellectual's independence from politics resulted not only from their choice of a particular stance but also from the fact that in the past they were able to live happily ever after without ever facing the necessity to defend that stance against the state making totally different claims on them. There is no doubt that this kind of opportunity was drastically reduced" in the middle of the 20th century.[143] Unrestrained creativity and intellectual freedom were most seriously threatened by totalitarian systems, Nazism and Stalinism, that destroyed "all cultural values that cannot be politicized or nationalized".[144] Under such circumstances, the "clerkism"-vs-

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[142]   J. Błoński, op. cit., pp. 62–282.

[143]   J. Szacki, op. cit., p. 398.

[144]   Ibid., pp. 398–399.

involvement alternative was a deceptive and unreal opposition. The Nazis aimed at a physical destruction of the Polish intelligentsia, while the Soviet Communists wanted to subjugate it to their own political goals or to marginalize it. The German occupiers did not come up with a political offer that would correspond to significant ideological narratives or generate major ideological debates on the Polish side.[145] By contrast, the ideology and the "new man" of communism as identity patterns left important traces in Polish journalism, literature, and art because for many prominent intellectuals and artists they constituted a serious challenge.

A consistent "clerk" in the Stalinist state was invariably sentenced to silence; the time server, in turn, could serve in a number of ways. *Toutes proportions gardées*, one could generalize that the ideologist in the Stalinist period would usually choose "inner emigration", isolation in the private sphere, or would take an ideological stand on reality (or would be ascribed one by the powers-that-be) as neutral intellectualism was inconceivable to the Communist worldview. Totalitarian institutions did not leave the ideologist a necessary margin of creative freedom, nor did they respect his/her political agency. But it was not only administrative pressures that decided the ideologist's position in the Stalinist culture. What affected his/her real situation was also the experience of the occupation, mostly traumatic, intensive social reforms after 1945 resulting in pauperization of the intelligentsia, quantitative growth of the white-collar workforce and its inner diversification connected to professional specialization, educational promotion of workers and peasants changing, to a certain degree, the cultural profile of the entire group as well as its social recruitment base.[146] The latter changes caused some of the elements

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[145] On the difference in attitude on the part of Polish intellectuals towards German Nazism and Soviet Communism see A. Walicki, *Zniewolony umysł po latach*, op. cit., pp. 31, 282–284.

[146] See J. Szacki, op. cit.; H. Palska, *Nowa inteligencja w Polsce Ludowej. Świat przedstawień i elementy rzeczywistości*, Warszawa 1994.

of the intellectual's ethos to disappear, for example the social service imperative. Nevertheless, a considerable part of the creative intelligentsia attempted to continue carrying out its traditional mission – either within the existing political system or, if it was possible, against it. That was one of the reasons why the social and mental transformations of the Stalinist period – which affected, after all, not only the ideologist – were carried out with the active participation of intellectuals as co-authors of the vision of the "new man" and his public role.

It is not only Communist ideology that postulates the creation of "new man".[147] Such a project also features in republican thought, Christian doctrine, Existentialist philosophy, and in interwar programmes of avant-garde and nationalist literatures. The project's conclusions and postulates usually pertain to interpersonal relations, the nature of the individual or of the self, axiological worldviews and moral stands. Despite all these similarities, however, they fulfil different functions. The "new man's" identity can be interpreted as a rhetorical figure, an ideological postulate, a diagnosis of the political situation, a normative description of the human condition (or its assessment), a result of submission to stereotypes or an attempt to combat them or replace them with different stereotypes. Of all the 20th-century implementations of that model identity, the most characteristic one is probably the "new man" of totalitarianism, a *homoid du systeme*, perfectly submissive to social engineering and propagandistic persuasion.

Ideological identity is not synonymous with ideology, that is with a system of conceptualized political or social beliefs. Still, as a pattern of sorts, it may fulfil the same functions, integrating or disintegrating the

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[147] Concepts of "new man", from Plato's philosophy to the Polish Workers' Party programme and the 1956 breakthrough debates are extensively discussed by Mariusz Mazur in his dissertation *O człowieku tendencyjnym… Obraz nowego człowieka w propagandzie komunistycznej w okresie Polski Ludowej i PRL 1944–1956*, Lublin 2009.

group, generating the group's awareness of its goals and thus mobilizing its members for collective effort, strengthening existing images of reality or undermining them.[148] Ideological identity results from harmonizing ideology with experience and individual plans, providing that the systemic character of the ideological ingredients and their rootedness in a particular doctrine are not blurred in the process. Thus the identity narrative of each individual, each member of the ideological group (S. Ossowski) is different, even though it contains elements belonging to one and the same ideology. In order to make the most of the integrative force of ideological identity – for example, so as to define social relations on its basis – one needs to refer to the source ideology. Ideology's functions, as described by Szacki, imply that ideological identity does not pertain to members of every community. It is indispensable for representatives of those groups whose identification does not result from a naturally given vision of the world, but is an ideological construct formulated in historiosophic, ethical, or political terms. The church, nation, and social class are the most important and typical cases in point. Ideological identity, similarly to ideology, either ruins such group's inner order or, contrastingly, legitimizes their status quo, defining their separateness and uniqueness, conserving the group's collective goals and their hierarchy,

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[148] J. Szacki, op. cit., pp. 223–224. I use the dictionary definition of ideology according to which it is a system of "historically, culturally, and socially condtioned beliefs shared by the members of a given social group, offering them a holistic and simplified vision of the world, one that facilitates manipulating the collective consciousness. It employs religious or mythic, or empirical, rational, and scientific legitimizations, its aim being either to maintain the social status quo or to negate the current order and construct a new one in accordance with its ideological directives". *Słownik społeczny*, ed. B. Szlachta, Kraków 2004, pp. 399–400. It may also be in place to note the difference between ideology and idea. Jan J. Szczepański writes that, "Whereas the idea remains in a vast realm of abstract concepts, ideology is its practical derivative aspiring to the role of a worldview system in general and a political one in particular." J.J. Szczepański, *Inżynieria dusz?*, in: *Literatura i demokracja. Bezpieczne i niebezpieczne związki*, ed. M. Gumkowski, Warszawa 1995, op. cit., p. 62.

establishing the individual's place or role in the realm of interpersonal relations. An identity of this type is a discursive totality bound by axiology and specific rules of reasoning. Ideas and personal patterns included in it remain semantically accessible, even when referred to in isolation from each other, with social phenomena acquiring ethical explanations or an emotional tinge.[149] When a collective and its conflicts are presented in the ideological narrative, one can explain them in causative and normative terms; name their originators or beneficiaries; ascribe reasonings, intentions, and motives of action to their participants; give them political and moral meaning within the conceptual framework generated by the ideology. The ideologist thus construed is a carrier of ideological orientation, one that s/he identifies with.[150] This act of identification is an individual interpretation of group relations the individual participates in, a personal identity narrative effected from the perspective of ideology, and at the same time an expression of a group identity.

The "new man" of communism is a model identity, affecting other identity patterns preserved in journalism, literature, culture, or the media, especially when those patterns, though still vivid, lose credibility and appear to be anachronistic. Jan Błoński argues that the process of weakening the traditional intellectual's status in Polish literature gained momentum in the 1950s. In all kinds of texts, but primarily in fiction, the dominant image was that of a nondescript, transitional figure, or, as Błoński put it, "an anonymous employee, neither a proletarian nor a bourgeois, neither a farmer nor a bureaucrat".[151] Significantly, the "tran-

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[149] On the significance of referring to the realm of values in political practice see S. Opara, op. cit., p. 54 and passim.

[150] Among literary examples of characters functioning as "carriers of ideological orientation", Hanna Gosk includes minor characters of J. Andrzejewski's *Popiół i diament*. H. Gosk, op. cit., p. 15.

[151] J. Błoński, op. cit., p. 279.

sitional" identity in Communist Poland was not merely – like in inter-war literature – a projection of the intellectual-narrator projecting his/her social and ethical imaginings onto a figure excluded from "the cultural community which includes neither a storekeeper nor a proletarian, or an illiterate, or an upstart",[152] but constituted instead a new interpretation of Polish culture and society after great changes. Andrzej Werner called these changes "transforming Poles into Communist citizens", accusing some writers – including, among others, Tadeusz Różewicz – of contrib-uting, perhaps unwittingly, to an axiological situation in which there was room only for the "New People".[153] The critic did not charge the poet with engaging in Communist propaganda or with playing any organizing role in the Sovietization of Polish society. However, in his reconstruc-tion of the "cultural zero point" awareness in Różewicz's works there is no unambiguous confirmation of national tradition narrowed down to patterns and obligations acceptable in the 1980s. Between nihilism and a dream of the humanist "full humanity", he argued, there is no room for a "formation that does not attain this ideal".[154] The essayist did not claim that the writer took particular pleasure in denigrating all things Polish, but, quite the contrary, he noted that the attacks on the values protecting Poles against Sovietization resulted from the totality of Różewicz's vision, who was equally critical of Western civilization too.[155] This observation implied, in fact, another unspoken charge. In adopting a supranational historical and moral perspective, Różewicz was supposedly severing the

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[152]   Ibid., p. 273.

[153]   A. Werner, *Polskie, arcypolskie…*, London 1987, p. 122.

[154]   Ibid., p. 121. Elżbieta Morawiec, referring to the nihilism-socialist-realism implications, wide-spread particularly in the early 1980s (see e.g. *Hańba domowa* by Jacek Trznadel), argued that the "clerkist" critics had erroneously linked Różewicz's alleged acceptance of the doctrine of So-cialist Realism to his "alleged ethical nihilism", both allegations being simply false. E. Morawiec, *Tadeusz Różewicz*, "Życie Literackie" 1981, no. 42, p. 5.

[155]   A. Werner, *Polskie, arcypolskie…*, op.cit., pp. 121–122.

ties with his native community of sense and tradition. In substantiating such claims, the critic simultaneously discusses numerous poetic and dramatic texts that attest to Różewicz's strong ties to the symbolic universe of Polish Romanticism. Therefore, to avoid contradicting himself, Werner emphasizes the difference between the "image of life" and the "image of cultural, artistic consciousness", crediting only the former with ethical soundness. Consequently, the charge of nihilism was ultimately formulated as an objection – a new-wave one, in fact – to an alleged excess of modern metaconsciousness and a shortage of objective realism, that is an image of specific social life.[156] This charge, though, is easily refutable. The critic's reasoning makes perfect sense only if one assumes that "life" can be faithfully portrayed in literature, without taking into consideration the state of awareness of the artistic (and not only artistic) persona. This essentialist definition of life goes against the grain of modern experience which, among other things, emphasizes the sense of a loss of selfhood on the part of the morally and culturally devastated individual. Only if Różewicz had described the world and man while consciously ignoring this kind of experience would the critic have had any grounds for charging the writer with nihilism.

A more loyal response to Różewicz's work was provided by Józef Kelera, who in his 1980 essay *Porachunki*, published in "Odra" in response to Artur Sandauer's and Stanisław Majewski's allegations occasioned by *Do piachu*, distinguished between nihilism and criticism of "fake values".[157] As the scholar noted, the very concept of nihilism seems anachronistic,

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[156] Ibid., p. 120.

[157] Kelera referred to Artur Sandauer's statement uttered during a cultural TV show "Pegaz" (3 January 1980) and Stanisław Majewski's article published on 6 May 1979. S. Majewski, *"Achtung! Banditen!"*, "Stolica" 1979, no. 18. E. Morawiec called this article a libel of a prophet "possessed by dark ideology", "an unprecedented instance of crudeness and demagoguery". E. Morawiec, op. cit., p. 5.

especially given its modernist-bourgeois genealogy. Kelera argues that in Różewicz's case one cannot speak of nihilism thus conceived because

> The values that are ridiculed or undermined in one way or another, depreciated or simply refused unconditional trust are either fake values – the primary object of mockery – or those that have been habitually overpriced, insufficient or untested for their crucial function in the decisive moments of trial. Thus the revision, the verification of values that Różewicz carries out further and more uncompromisingly than anyone in contemporary literature is always effected in the name of restitution, protection, purification, and strengthening of those values that are elementary and indisputable but also radically threatened. Such as humankind. Such as humanity. Such as fundamental interpersonal relations. Such as the existence and continuation of species. It is only those values – elementary and indisputable – that other values should refer to and be tested against.[158]

Kelera rightly interprets the "life-deepening" formula in reference to the real life of the individual articulated by the poet in numerous texts, the earliest one being a note in *Dziennik z partyzantki* from 1944. The life-deepening process in Różewicz's writing makes sense as long as it is mediated by symbols, signs, and values "tested" in the face of existential being – threatened and genuinely annihilated. Viewed from this perspective, the "Poles"/"New People" opposition becomes meaningless as modern man's experience can be related to collective identity only through the individual's identity. Collective identity plays a role only to the extent that it constitutes a point of reference for the individual person, motivating or accounting for their self-definition, and providing the individual with a means of self-

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[158]   J. Kelera, *Porachunki*, "Odra" 1990, no. 3, p. 52.

expression. The opposition posited by Werner would be more credible if it included the individual's identity, which in turn could be contrasted with a number of different – though not necessarily of equal standing – collective identification patterns (such as "Poles" or "New People"). Furthermore, no matter how many adherences and affiliations Różewicz's modern protagonist defines himself by, he can attain only a "mobile and open" identity because none of those adherences or affiliations could be considered total, exclusive, final, unambiguous, or coherent.

Andrzej Skrendo notes that the whole nihilism debate – including Różewicz's case (the debaters in the 1970s and 1980s included Błoński, Trznadel, and Karasek) – revolved around two major stands: the concern with preservation of ethical "foundations of society and humanity" and the bond with cultural tradition on the one hand and the awareness, on the other hand, that "the real nihilism consists in one's refusal to acknowledge the current disappearance of metaphysical foundations".[159] The metaphysical and historical optimism of the autonomous self that "colonizes and sterilizes the world" according to Heidegger was, however, ascribed by the scholar to Przyboś, the modern nihilist. Różewicz, by contrast, did not appropriate reality, which turns into "nothing" in his experience, but instead attempted to face and address the phenomenon.[160] "Not the ecstatic wonder but the stubborn perseverance with what is contingent, combined with the equally tenacious rejection of metaphysical legitimizations and religious consolations – this is what the Różewicz stand is all about."[161] Nihilism thus conceived is, consequently,

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[159] A. Skrendo, *Dwaj nihiliści: Przyboś i Różewicz*, "Słupskie Prace Filologiczne. Seria Filologia Polska" 2004, no. 3, p. 235. The debate over nihilism is also reviewed in Michał Januszkiewicz's article *Różewicz-nihilista*, in: *Przekraczanie granic. O twórczości Tadeusza Różewicza*, eds W. Browarny, J. Orska, A. Poprawa, Kraków 2007.

[160] Ibid., p. 239.

[161] Ibid., p. 241.

a revolt against the false awareness, one that avoids confrontation with the real human condition and the real world; it is, in Stanisław Brzozowski's terms, an expression of one's spiritual honesty.

Kelera proposed to call Różewicz an outsider rather than a nihilist as the poet "was never on anybody's payroll, never marched under anybody's banner, would not join any coterie, and consistently – from the very first poetry volume all the way to his last dramas – would go against the grain".[162] The latter statement needs qualifying, though. Henryk Vogler, quoted by Zbigniew Majchrowski, recalled that the writer, when cooperating with "Echo Tygodnia" in 1949, would "keenly respond to current political demands".[163] To verify that memory it is enough to look at the front page of the magazine's first issue, which featured a Socialist Realist epic poem by Różewicz entitled "Gwiazda proletariatu" ("The Star of the Proletariat"), a panegyric for Karol Świerczewski.[164] The Communist general is presented there in terms of the heroic poetics derived from ancient (Homer) and Romantic (Słowacki) formulas of the warrior's heroic life and death. Likewise, the character of Marian Buczek, the protagonist of Różewicz's debut play, dutifully follows the Socialist Realist format.[165]

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[162] J. Kelera, *Porachunki*, op. cit., p. 47.

[163] Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., p. 134. "Echo Tygodnia. Nauka. Literatura. Sztuka" was a Saturday addendum to "Gazeta Krakowska", a Communist Party magazine published in Kraków. The "Echo Tygodnia" contributors included, among others, H. Vogler, S. Morawski, M. Promiński, W. Szymborska. H. Markiewicz, W. Mach.

[164] T. Różewicz, *Gwiazda proletariatu*, "Echo Tygodnia" 1949, no. 1, p. 1.

[165] T. Różewicz, *Towarzysz Marian Buczek oskarża… (fragment dramatu p.t. "Będą się bili")*, "Echo Tygodnia" 1949, no. 31 (the play's subsequent acts were published in "Echo Tygodnia" 1950, issues 2 and 21). The editor's introduction read as follows: "We print below Act One of Tadeusz Różewicz's play, a fragment of the young poet's hitherto unpublished first dramatical text based on the life of the great revolutionary." Ibid., p. 1. The information was imprecise. Różewicz's first drama – published, admittedly, as late as 1991 in "Notatnik Teatralny" (no. 2) – was *Nędznicy. (Sztuka teatralna w trzech obrazach)*, originally written around 1936. See *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny*, eds J. Czachowska, A. Szałagan, vol. VII, Warszawa 2001, p. 91.

However, literary scholars writing about Różewicz's poetry of the late 1940s and early 1950s argue that it was not some kind of Stalinist aulic verse.[166] Arkadiusz Ściepuro writes that thanks to the "triple" character of the Różewicz speaker, representing the co-existence of diverse ideological roles in the speaker's identity, "The poet avoided the pitfalls of reductionism in his existential outlook."[167] The three roles are that of the Saved Man, the Adapted Man, and the Mediator. None of them corresponds to the "clerk's" stance. Analysing Różewicz's attitude to the latter, Stanisław Stabro notes that it marks an important turning point in the writer's entire oeuvre. Continuing, after the period of Socialist Realism, to develop the idea of the "annihilation of the spiritual aristocrat and traditional art" as well as that of the demise of "high-culture myths", Różewicz gave up on getting involved in supporting ethical scepticism and detachment from political affairs.[168] He did not, however, give up on the axiological minimum he had arrived at in the first post-war decade, defining the rules the writer should follow when portraying a single person. Różewicz's "clerkism" in the subsequent decades boiled down to his defence of the realm of fundamental values and

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[166] Jan Marx considers the "aulic" quality of Różewicz's literary stand during the years of Socialist Realism to be "unobtrusive", thus implying that his writing, though ideologized to some extent, was not apologetic of the new regime after 1944 and its apparatus of oppresion. J. Marx, *Pomiędzy wieżą Babel a wieżą z kości słoniowej. O poezji Tadeusza Różewicza*, Wrocław 2008, p. 118. On Różewicz's attitude to Socialist Realism see e.g. A. Lam, *Różewicz – socrealista?*, in: idem, *Inne widzenie. Studia o poezji polskiej i niemieckiej*, Warszawa 2001; T. Kłak, *Spojrzenia. Szkice o poezji Tadeusza Różewicza*, Katowice 1999; A. Ściepuro, *"Wobec stalinizmu". Wiersze Tadeusza Różewicza z lat 1949–1956*, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1997, no. 2. Różewicz summarizes his attitude to Socialist Realism in a conversation with Adam Czerniawski as follows: "Some of my peers accepted without questioning what had been decreed at the Szczecin Congress, where Socialist Realism had been officially announced – the congress which I, incidentally, missed […]. For them it was an "act of faith", but I really struggled, often gnashing my teeth and shedding a tear, trying to work it out, so to speak, to create it as if anew, to make it my own thing, to internalize it. Not by orders of the Ministry of Culture and Arts or the editor of *Kuźnica*. To me it went hand in hand with regaining my faith in humanist, humane, and human values" [W 164–165].

[167] A. Ściepuro, qtd in: A. Lam, op. cit., p. 232.

[168] S. Staro, *Poezja i historia. Od Żagarów do Nowej Fali*, Kraków 1995, pp. 220–231.

experiences prior to their mystification, which resulted from the abuse of ideological formulas of the individual's participation in culture and collective life. It was, then, a defence of what is personal in the public realm.

Andrzej Lam, in his essay *Różewicz – socrealista?*, having analysed poems from the volumes *Pięć poematów*, *Czas który idzie*, *Wiersze i obrazy*, *Równina*, and *Srebrny kłos*, concludes that at the source of this poetry there is an experience of "fear of loneliness" and the awareness of one's "cluelessness" when it comes to life phenomena.[169] These experiences are primary, the choice of ideology being a secondary matter. Still, communism as a real force, the "victorious ideology" that facilitated the defeat of fascism, viewed in a utopian and futuristic fashion, constitutes in Różewicz's poetry a foundation for the "renewal of life" as well as an alternative to the "ivory tower" of pure intellect. Nevertheless, Lam adds, the poet "wants to be a sensitive empiricist first, and only later a cautious, though eventually convinced, ideologue".[170] Significantly, the writer's encounters with Communism's "New Man" take place in the realm of experience of the common man – not constructed in accordance with ready-made formulas of Socialist Realism but rather sought and gradually approached in the process of familiarization. This is one possible way of interpreting *Notatki z podróży po Czechosłowacji* [*Notes from a Trip Across Czechoslovakia*], a reportage devoted precisely to the search for the "New Man" in Czechoslovakia after the "victorious revolution", that is, after the coup d'état by local Communists in February 1948.[171] In the fall of 1949,

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[169] A. Lam, op. cit., p. 220.

[170] Ibid., p. 224.

[171] "Szukamy nowego człowieka" ["We Are Looking for the New Man"] is the title of the reportage's initial part. T. Różewicz, *Notatki z podróży po Czechosłowacji*, "Echo Tygodnia" 1950, no. 1, p. 1. Prague was Różewicz's first "foreign experience". As he recalls in a conversation with R. Jarocki, "I went there with Kornel Filipowicz. In Prague I saw a great statue of Stalin, the biggest in Europe. I wrote a small prose piece about Prague and about that monument in the fog; there stood this weird, Kafkaesque monster, you might say, lording over the city…" (W 292).

Różewicz visits two Czech villages, Velci and Drozdov, where he meets the "new people" – peasants reading books, a charismatic local leader giving fervent stump orations, farmers involved in volunteer service for the community, young people working in blue uniform-like outfits of the Communist League of Czechoslovak Youth. The narrator-agent of *Notatki* constructs their portrayals out of small observations, simultaneously observing them and listening to them, asking questions, and pondering the purpose of "making literature" about workers and peasants. The "new man" in the subsequent *Kartki z Węgier* [*Notes from Hungary*] will be, as a rule, a ready-made flat character, clearly defined and circumscribed by the ideological discourse.

The same process was also taking place in poetry. One can still read *Pięć poematów* along such lines, but ever since the publication of the volume *Czas który idzie*, Różewicz's poems would be increasingly dominated by prefabricated ideologemes turning poetic images into illustrations of political and social theses, the poems' protagonist invariably being a typical *homoid du systeme*. Paradoxically enough, the writer was still charged by hard-liners of Stalinist criticism, such as Andrzej Braun and Anna Kamieńska, with decadence, nihilism, antihumanism, and superfluous aestheticism.[172] Kamieńska, the editor-in-chief of the poetry section of "Nowa Kultura", commenting on the text *W związku z pewnym wydarzeniem* in a letter to the poet, wrote: "This is a nihilist, bad, and antihumanist poem with a pseudo-socialist message attached to it. […] This is my personal opinion. The decision not to print the text was a collective one" (Ma 228).

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[172] At one of the meetings of the Polish Writers' Union in the early 1950s, Wiktor Woroszylski, touching upon the issue of the ongoing fight against formalism, pointed out to "Różewicz's obstinacy", concluding that the writer "is stubbornly sticking to the old forms, meanwhile teasing us into believing that one day his stance will come closer to ours". Qtd in: A. Bikont, J. Szczęsna, *Lawina i kamienie. Pisarze wobec komunizmu*, Warszawa 2006., p. 173. On attacks by hard-liners of Socialist Realism on Różewicz's texts and stance see, for example, T. Klak, op. cit., pp. 28–43.

Her political objections to the poem *List pisany do Niemców na Zachodzie* [*A Letter Written to the Germans in the West*] were deemed excessive even by Roman Bratny (Ma 234). From the writer's correspondence with editors of different periodicals (such as "Szpilki", "Twórczość", "Przegląd kulturalny", or "Świat", among others) one can infer that Różewicz's work in those days did not meet those criteria of Socialist Realism that most editors of literary and socio-cultural magazines were guided by. That held true also for his short fiction and satirical texts. Thus Tadeusz Konwicki would reply to "Citizen Tadeusz Różewicz" that his reportage had not been found appealing by Bratny and Putrament, Antoni Marianowicz judged *Wzorowe Małżeństwo* to be "pessimistic and bleak" and *Ni pies, ni wydra* (*Neither Fish nor Flesh*) to be "perplexing in terms of its contents", whereas Wilhelm Mach deemed *Majowy wieczór* an "irrelevant text". *Nie zrozumiał* and *Gałąź* were also considered unprintable, even though the editors would supplement official, ideologically motivated rejection letters with private accolades (Ma 232–237). The texts from the years 1949–1954 attest to the ever-changing distance between Różewicz's work and the rules of Socialist Realism, the biggest gap pertaining, apparently, to his humoristic fiction, subsequently published as the collection *Uśmiechy* (1955). The sketch *Spostrzeżenia i propozycje* from 1953, eventually included in the aforementioned collection, is ample evidence that the writer – "in the margins of the debate on schematism" – did note, already in those days, the flatness of the characters featured in journalistic prose, especially those coming from proletarian or rural backgrounds (I 276-278).

Worldview and Everyday Life

Kartki z Węgier (1953), Różewicz's longest work from the first half of the 1950s, is not an ideological or stylistic monolith. Though most of the collection's journalistic reports offer a clearly biased angle on the social transformations taking place in Communist Hungary, where the poet

resided in 1950, there are also more personal and ideologically ambiguous excerpts there. These are, undoubtedly, the most interesting fragments which, read separately, are close to *Uśmiechy* (published two years later) as far as the image of reality and the characters are concerned. There are not many of them: "Godzina języka węgierskiego", "Szekspir", and "Kartki z dziennika", a record of a conversation with an old miner dated 16 December 1950, included in the 2004 edition of collected works, and, finally, a childhood memory entitled *Ryż* and a recollection (included in *Kartki z dziennika*) of a walk through Tatabánya dated 20 December 1950. In keeping with the chapter's subtitle ("Najpiękniejsza węgierska puszta …" ["The Most Beautiful Hungarian Puszta …"]), the entire book is dominated by the poetics of "numbers and images" intended to demonstrate the prosperity of the socialist country. The precious few fragments which are more private, colloquial, or lacking in ideological conclusions expose, by contrast, the narrator's official bias and his instrumentalized representation of the world and characters depicted in the remaining parts of the book.

The narratives making up *Kartki z Węgier* are conventional, typical of the epoch that produced them. *Kartka z życiorysu* [*A Postcard from a Biography*], which opens the book, is a commentary, characteristic of the cult of personality, on the biography of Mátyás Rákosi. The indispensable heroic episode in the life of the secretary of the ruling party, raised to a historic rank thanks to museum arrangement, is a long-time interwar stay in prison.[173] Several dozen pages further into the book, the "last word" from Rákosi's trial, cited in *Siła, która spełniła nadzieje biedniaków* [*The Force that Fulfiled the Hopes of the Poor Peasants*], completes, in discursive terms, the identity of the Communist ideologist. The narrator quotes the theses featured in the oration in terms of a fulfilled historical

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[173] M. Shore explains that in Communist tradition, incarceration was a "type of [ideological] initiation". M. Shore, op. cit., p. 119.

vision, tacitly accepting their author's ideological authority. The composition of *Kartki z Węgier* is nearly entirely subject to the patterns of Socialist Realism in its representation of history and social reality. The history of the workers' movement, outlined at the beginning, and the model biography of a Communist activist are concretizations of telic and progressive Marxist historiosophy, while the country's modernization, improving the quality of life for workers and peasants, is supposed not only to attest to the new system's efficiency but also to demonstrate its moral legitimacy. The narrator-agent of *Kartki*, identifying with this social project, aligns with it even his own textually generated identity. His personal childhood memories, e.g. associating rice with the "poor people" in China, support the general argument for the superiority of the socialist economy.

Another point in the Polish writer's itinerary is New Dunapentele, soon to be renamed Sztalinvaros, where a new city and a steel mill are being built from scratch. The green and brightly lit Sztalinvaros functions in the Różewicz text as the anti-city, symbolically erected on the memories of attics and "damp, dismal cellars that capitalism had in store for the urban proletariat" (K 11). The lifting of the boundary between the textually constructed representation of reality, the city in the making, and a ready-made ideological interpretation betrays the narrator's bias, which makes him dutifully proceed from thesis to example.[174] The narrative self of *Kartki* subordinates exploring reality to social project, and private memory to the teleological concept of history understood as political and civilizational progress. In Różewicz's later prose, in turn, for example in "Drewniany karabin" from 2002, a similar ideological conclusion is

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[174] This type of attitude on the author's part is referred to by Hanna Małgowska as "the conscious ideologist's stance", i.e. one which "subordinates the collected materials to pre-existing beliefs", the narrator's role in such texts being reduced to "collecting documentation for the professed beliefs". H.M. Małgowska, *Gatunki reportażowo-dziennikarskie okresu dwudziestolecia (próba typologii)*, in: ed. K. Budzyk, *Z teorii i historii literatury*, Wrocław 1963, p. 195.

marked by subjectivism and literariness whereas the connection between the social status of the proletariat and the identity of the Różewicz self acquires a personal, autobiographical dimension in the text.[175]

With few exceptions, the attitude of the "conscious ideologist" accompanies the narrator of the remaining parts of *Kartki*, for example in the report "*Wycieczka na wieś* [*A Trip to the Countryside*]. The expected visit to a farming cooperative during that trip – all in accordance with the thematic canon of Socialist Realism – materializes under the auspices of the propagandist theatrical play "Burza w lecie", which functions as the source of the only politically correct interpretation of the situation. The play's thesis is not subject to any verification, even an empirical one, because it is one of the ideology's axiomatic truths. One can infer, then, that the Hungarian village's idyllic atmosphere noted by the narrator of that fragment is just a façade whereas the real struggle for the peasants' access to the cooperative remains invisible. A similar situation was created by Różewicz in the story "Strach ma wielkie oczy" (*Uśmiechy*), though the text's denouement is tragicomic, however. The younger of the agitators, trying to talk the peasants into collectivization, overhears a conversation at night between his hosts, who are planning to kill a rooster for dinner:

> "Let's wring those two necks, period."
> "I pity the old one, but the young one screams too much, all the time."
> "No use wasting a knife on that one, I tell ya."
> "You can always use your axe … but then you'll mess up everything with blood."
> (I 364)

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[175] *Drewniany karabin* was first published in "Odra" (2002, no. 7–8), and then in the second prose volume of *Utwory zebrane*.

The agitator misconstrues the intentions of the hospitable farmers. Expecting to be murdered, he escapes through the window in panic. "Strach ma wielkie oczy" mocks the excessive presence of ideology in everyday life during the Stalinist era and parodies political thinking in terms of a bloody struggle. By the same token, incidentally, the image of killing a person, well entrenched in the Communist activist's imagination, reveals its striking similarity to routine animal slaughter. This association could be interpreted as the author's intuitive sense of the emotional and moral state of post-war consciousness, permeated as it was with images of killing and instinctively responsive to the tenets of social Darwinism. "You kill a man like you kill an animal", wrote Różewicz. As Marta Piwińska rightly puts it,

> [We are talking here about] man degraded after the war in his humanity, the man who is already aware of the animal he carries within, because he can be hunted like an animal, may die like one, and is perfectly capable of attacking and killing another human animal. He cannot forget this [disturbing] truth, no matter how thick-skinned he becomes.[176]

The agitator in "Strach ma wielkie oczy" is only seemingly the carrier of a powerful, victorious (see the episode about the new regime's bloody suppression of the resistance movement), and emancipatory ideology (the civilizational progress of the rural areas); in reality, he is a "man infected with death". The protagonist's ideological identity disintegrates not because of the opponent's arguments, as Różewicz's "tragicomedy" does not unfold on a discursive plane at all, but as a result of an inner crack in the consciousness of the Communist activist, stripped of faith in

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[176] M. Piwińska, op. cit., p. 394.

pure intentions and of trust in others. Consequently, the identity proves to be merely a role.

The narrator of *Kartki z Węgier* attempts to legitimize his ideological stands in two ways. Firstly, through argumentation, citing statistical data and commentaries of state officials and social activists arguing and pontificating. This way of reasoning pops up even in the scene of saving the abandoned works by Goethe and Shakespeare, one which remains meaningful even outside of any political context. Secondly, however, what the narrator of "Wycieczka na wieś" (*Kartki z Węgier*) means by opposing the destruction of the books with the words "Those two are their property now" is not only that the books now belong to the people and should find their way to the local library. Equally important is the fact that the former farmhands – in accordance with the rule of progressive internationalism and democratization of access to high culture – obtain the rights of cultivated persons. This is also an element of ideology characteristic of despotic systems in countries boasting a substantial cultural legacy, often famous for their openness to the world's progressive intellectual and literary traditions. In his discussion of Różewicz's report, Janusz Waligóra sees it as a testimony to the symptomatic destruction of any world heritage failing to conform to the "teachings of Marx and Lenin".[177] Still, the ideological tenets are represented in the text by the narrator, not the Hungarian characters responsible for the condition of books from the palace library. Notably, this episode clearly features – thanks to the narrator's editorializing comments – the Communist equation of civilizational progress with unrestricted access to cultural property.[178] Had the former farmhands already been equipped with the awareness that the report's protagonist boasts of they would have taken proper care of the books themselves. Viewed from this perspective,

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[177] J. Waligóra, op. cit., p.79.
[178] I discuss the socialist cultural state and the democratization of access to culture in the chapter "Culture, Memory and Community".

Różewicz's text is not so much a testimony to Communist cultural policy as it is an accusation of the pre-socialist past to which the behaviour of the characters of "Wycieczka na wieś" can be traced back. The revolutionary changes in Hungary had not been long enough in the making to shape proper attitudes to culture among those characters.[179]

Because of its argumentative excess, some parts of *Kartki* sound pontificating and doctrinarian, too general and isolated from personal experience. Only in scenes and stories featuring specific characters that the narrator-agent focuses upon are ideological premises corroborated not by sociological diagnosis but by individual biography or personal stand – which is another way of making them more credible. The fancy signature of János, an employee of the "Tancsics" cooperative farm and a former illiterate, is ample material evidence, the narrator argues, of civilizational progress and democratization of culture in a people's republic. The scene featuring a swineherd who signs the Stockholm Appeal calling for a ban on nuclear weapons seems ambiguous, though, not only because the date of the Appeal coincides with the aggravation of the Cold War tensions but also because the episode described by Różewicz is a potential caricature of the people's emancipation. Juxtaposing a herd of mud-covered pigs with an act of international politics seems grotesque.[180] To counter the effect, the writer focuses the narrator's attention on personal experiences of the characters and only indirectly on collective history. Such fragments, however, in the entire volume are few.

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[179] Ksawery Pruszyński, more critical of communism as such, described in similar terms, in the 1930s, the difference between ideologically defined "property of the people", which commands concern about the cultural legacy of the Catholic church and the upper classes, and social practice of the revolution: looting and devastation perpetrated by undereducated workers and peasants. See K. Pruszyński, *W czerwonej Hiszpanii*, Warszawa 1997.

[180] Also, texts by other authors featuring collecting signatures under the Stockholm Appeal among peasants are unintentionally grotesque, what with the protaginist of Seweryn Skulski's reportage who "signed it, though unevenly". S. Skulski, *Plon trójki*, "Wieś" 1950, no. 22, p. 1.

More compelling are *Kartki z dziennika* (*Entries from a Journal*), the book's closing chapter. The protagonist of one of the journal's fragments, dated 16 December 1950, a Polish emigrant named Józef Prusek, tells the story of his 90-year-old life to the narrator-agent.[181] Against the background of the old miner's personal tale (and the narrator's account) the history of several formations and political systems of the 20th century unfold: the twilight of the landed gentry, the industrialization and revolutionary movements of the century's early years, economic migrations, nationalism, and communism. The emphasis in Prusek's story, however, is neither on political events nor patriotic merits. When they do pop up, having been woven into the fabric of his commonsensical reasoning, they fit into the cognitive and emotional framework of personal existence. Military dramatism ("the Battle of the Piave River") is accompanied by existential pragmatism, individual exceptionality ("Francis Joseph, Emperor and Apostolic King") – by commonness, the lofty style ("has in his royal magnanimity kindly consented to announce") – by blunt addresses, symbols ("the golden cross of merit") – by real action. The protagonist's life, modest in comparison to its historical and social context, comes across as authentic, complete, and balanced. Revealingly, the narrator abstains from editorializing comments on it, trusting in the compelling composition of the text itself and the colloquial narrative form.

I disagree with Janusz Waligóra, who claims that Różewicz wasted the opportunity to create a portrayal of a committed worker and seasoned activist.[182] This is not the kind of portrayal the writer had in mind. It still does not follow that Prusek's image is, as Waligóra argues, ideologically

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[181] The character of Old Miner Janosz features also in the closing part of *The Card Index* where he recalls the arrival of Hero, then a young author, in 1950 or 1951. That character directly refers to the realities and rituals of the Stalinist period as well as the tendentious literary practice of the day (IV 54–55).

[182] J. Waligóra, op. cit., p. 79.

indifferent. The miner character is a challenge for two models of identity: the worker-revolutionary and the Polish emigrant. The Różewicz protagonist vaguely resembles the two types, at the same type not conforming to their implied axiologies. The seemingly most elevating episodes of Prusek's life – political and patriotic – have been rendered at the level of mundane biographical facts. They seem comparable in status to the anecdote of the killed piglets and other equally prosaic vignettes. The hierarchies are gone: the ideologist within the old emigrant and worker does not rule over the common man inside him, nor has a model identity dominated the individual existence. Różewicz, though accentuating the universal aspect of Prusek's experiences, refuses to subject them to ideological typology. The ideological distance pertains not only to the doctrine of Socialist Realism, which Waligóra notes, but also to the concept of Polishness conceived as a supreme symbolic value, privileged over existential and social values. The author of *Kartki z dziennika* created a positive protagonist without subjecting him to ideological identities, but not ignoring them either.

The miner is not a "proletarian version of Skawiński", as the scholar argues, but, rather, seems to have been cast in the role of the positivist emigrant.[183] Bogusław Bakuła, in his essay "Antylatarnik", writes that, "Sienkiewicz refers in his novella [*Latarnik* – WB] not to common sense, not to the positivist cult of work and responsibility, but to the myth of the word creating a new man".[184] Różewicz, by contrast, has no use for that mythology, relying instead on the colloquial "biographical" narrative. His protagonist does not undergo a radical inner transformation, a symbolic return to Polishness conceived as a primary identity. The miner's fragmentary biography – confirming reasonable work for the Polish diaspora

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[183] Ibid.

[184] B. Bakuła, *Antylatarnik oraz inne szkice literackie i publicystyczne*, Poznań 2001, p. 121.

in Hungary – is crowned not with a dramatic sense of national bonding but with a vitalist memory of "the shade of orange trees", the strong scent of Italian fruit and flowers, or of joking with young women. This is, in fact, an anti-Romantic creation, referring to the positivist type of a social-economic refugee, describing "the everyday reality of emigrant life" through a well-balanced account of historical, political, economic, and personal matters.[185] On the other hand, though, Prusek is not a type of positivist *homo pauperum*, a physically and psychologically degraded proletarian. Compared to his antecedents from the fiction of Artur Gruszecki or Aleksander Świętochowski, he seems to be a happy man, satisfied with his life, emotionally and morally balanced, and, first of all, liberated from a compulsive bond with his homeland.[186] The difference is, probably, a result from the optimistic image of the "new Socialist man", in line with the literary doctrine of Stalinism, but also an effect of the departure from the sacrificial, Romantic stereotype of the Polish emigrant.

As a positive protagonist, Prusek is also a discreet realization of Różewicz's literary projects presented in earlier journalistic texts, such as *Most płynie do Szczecina* or *Wyprawa na złotą rybkę*.[187] The narrator of the latter piece, recounting his conversation with Wolin Island fishermen,

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[185] See H. Gosk, op. cit., p. 101.

[186] See A. Notkowski, *Robotnik polski schyłku XIX wieku – postawy wobec rzeczywistości (Kilka migawek z literatury lat 70.-90.)*, in: *Przemiany formuły polskości w drugiej połowie XIX wieku*, ed. J. Maciejewski, Warszawa 1999.

[187] T. Różewicz, *Most płynie do Szczecina*, "Trybuna Tygodnia" (a Sunday supplement to "Trybuna Robotnicza", an organ of the Silesian Regional Committee of the Polish Workers' Party in Katowice, Katowice-Kraków-Wrocław-Częstochowa-Rzeszów-Kielce) 1947, no. 9 of 16 November 1947; T. Różewicz, *Spacer po Opolu*, "Trybuna Tygodnia" 1947, no. 10 of 23 November 1947; T. Różewicz, *Światła na drodze*, "Trybuna Tygodnia" 1947, no. 11 of 7 December 1947 (a cycle of three reportages reprinted as one text with slight abbreviations and changes in sequential order: T. Różewicz, *Most płynie do Szczecina*, in: *Wejście w kraj*, ed. Z. Stolarek, vol. 1, Warszawa 1965 – subsequent quotes come from this edition unless otherwise noted); T. Różewicz, *Wyprawa na złotą rybkę*, "Trybuna Tygodnia" 1948, no. 33 and 35 of 26 August and 12 September 1948.

concludes that in working-class people and common readers of contemporary literature,

> There is a great longing for the positive protagonist, for the type of person who is good, authentic, involved. Among the mentally deranged, the grotesque, the cowardly, the abnormal, there are no protagonists that my interlocutors are longing for. It is my deeply held conviction and my greatest gain as a young writer.[188]

Apart from the image of the individual "derailed" by historical experiences or that of the anti-social man in both texts, there appears a negative example of the idealized protagonist of propagandist literature, full of worn-out journalistic clichés about working for Communist Poland and devotion to socialism. These two types are contrasted with the images of the authentic worker, a man of flesh and blood, and with the literary model of the Polish positive protagonist featured in the works of Mickiewicz, Żeromski, Prus, and Sienkiewicz. This journalistic "personology" is also based on the conviction that national culture is an instrument for the creation of a new, conscious man of labour, a model citizen.

Significantly, in his journalistic texts Różewicz steered clear of the debate about the worker's homeland, adopting no stand whatsoever on this dilemma – neither the nationalist one, which places national loyalties way above other elements of personal identity, nor the Communist one, which insists that "the common people have no motherland". The latter

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[188] T. Różewicz, *Wyprawa na złotą rybkę*, "Trybuna Tygodnia" 1948, no. 35, p. 5. This critical remark brings to mind Ignacy Fik's arguments, who in his well-known article entitled *Literatura choromaniaków* (1935), in a way joining the interwar campaign for non-fiction, charged contemporaneous prose writers with excessive irrationality and indulging in gratuitous descriptions of ugliness, decadence, and pathology at the cost of social observation and descriptions of the socially active individual.

stance was represented, for example, by interwar Polish proletarian litera-
ture in general and Wanda Wasilewska in particular, the author of the 1935
novel *Ojczyzna* [*Fatherland*]. As Stanisław Ossowski explained, both world
wars, and especially World War Two, demonstrated that, as a result of in-
creased participation of peasants and workers in national culture almost all
over Europe, "national solidarity proved stronger than international class
solidarity".[189] The tendency, the sociologist argued, increased with the ar-
rival of Soviet Russia and the victorious "Great Patriotic War" against Nazi
Germany to such an extent that the regimes of subsequent so-called people's
democracies would habitually rely on nationalist legitimizing discourses.[190]
The author of *Echa leśne* did not question the common people's national
identity, for that would go against the grain of his own wartime, guerrilla-
days experience. He did, however, raise questions about the existential and
moral dimensions of that identity. Prusek's biography provides an answer
that clearly goes beyond the ideological project of the "new man".

One cannot reduce the concept of the "new man" to Communist
ideology, or equate the project of "the New Man of the Socialist Era"
(J. Strzelecki) with the administratively and spiritually enslaved *homo so-
vieticus* limited "to externally imposed tasks, identifying with his social
role, liberated from mental splits by ceding to the authorities his freedom
of choice, of moral judgement, and of evaluation of his own actions".[191]
This kind of simplification is typical of some East European intellectuals
who have internalized the "nomenclature taken from propagandist dis-
course" of the Communist system's creators.[192] Analysing the history of
the "new man" idea, Mariusz Mazur emphasizes that one should

[189] S. Ossowski, op. cit., p. 69.

[190] Ibid., pp. 15–16, 68–70.

[191] J. Strzelecki, *Ślady tożsamości*, Warszawa 1989, p. 177.

[192] See M. Mazur, *Uwagi wstępne do koncepcji "nowego człowieka"*, "Przegląd Humanistyczny" 2008,
    no. 2, p. 109.

clearly separate the goal – the new perfect man, from the effect – *homo sovieticus*; after all, the Communists did not want a passive, benighted slave […], the new man was supposed to be an educated person, conversant with the world and its problems, his thoroughly internalized knowledge telling him what was acceptable in terms of acknowledged necessity. He did not believe in transcendence not because he was a slave but because he had made such a choice on the basis of accessible science. He had chosen communism not unreflexively or because of fear, but because the Communist system suited him best and it does not matter that other alternatives were either unknown to him or evoked negative associations. Either way, one cannot talk here of benighted slavery. If, however, one insists on keeping the very term as such, then it is slavery of a higher order, one based on predetermined or perhaps even fatalistic historical necessity, and thus largely unacknowledged if perceivable at all. The difference between the terrified fool and the self-satisfied "slave of the idea" is important and worth noting.[193]

Mazur, comparing the concepts of Plato, More, Campanella, Rousseau, Dmowski, and others, adds that *homo sovieticus* – as defined by A. Zinovev, M. Heller, and J. Tischner – is merely a particular embodiment of the "new man", one that constitutes an element of "projection of a new, alternative social order", typical of civilizational transformations.[194]

The "new man" in Różewicz's *Notes from Hungary* confirms the Communist vision of a politico-economic system and history. The nar-

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[193]   Ibid.

[194]   Ibid., p. 104. The Latin term for a "new man" (*homo novus*), which can be considered a source meaning here, originally denoted an upstart or a novice "nominated to a clerical post", a man of humble origins holding a public office. M. Korolko, *Thesaurus albo Skarbiec łacińskich sentencji, pomysłów i powiedzeń w literaturze polskiej*, Warszawa 2004, p. 381.

rator-journalist purposely describes the socialist project of establishing interpersonal relations, one that also defines the individual's social role and place. The modern city and the factory, the farming cooperative, the workers' art school, the women's club – all these make up the living, working, and educational space totally dominated by the ruling ideology. The protagonists of Różewicz's Hungarian reportages also participate in the processes of the country's modernization, the democratization of access to culture, and the rationalization of the common images of the world, simultaneously bidding farewell to tradition, the old mentality, and the old ways. The Communist modernity in *Kartki* is not limited to empirical reality presented in its characteristic places and moments, but, first and foremost, it offers a consistent perspective on that reality, anticipating or correcting experience and the narrator-agent's observations in pre-established doctrinarian ways. This is the book's primary, official principle. At several points, however, the book's expository parts, those including ideological explanations, are counterbalanced by vignettes featuring highly individualized portrayals, made more realistic through existential and linguistic detail. The modernization of the protagonists' environment – presented from an outsider's perspective, in an almost sociological manner, through accounts and statistics – is complemented by biographical details, episodes, and personal utterances. The "new man" as a generalized identity project in *Kartki*, cannot stand this kind of editorial intervention. When the narrator cites the memories of his interlocutors, it turns out that their historical and social experience remains, at least to some extent, indefinite or even politically incorrect when viewed in terms of the ruling ideology. With most protagonists merely repeating propagandist slogans, jarringly incongruous in the mouths of the simple folks, the precious few characters who talk about their everyday lives in their own way – in a spontaneous and often disorderly manner – do not fit the model

of the socialist individual. Not undermining ideology as a system, this narrative dissonance of *Kartki* does go against the grain of the individual's consistent, ideological identity.

Waligóra rightly considers this dissonance to be an act of "ideological smuggling", "exceeding the mainstream norms and limitations" of Socialist Realism. The scholar does not analyse the writer's motives, adding that

> it is hard to establish to what extent this is a conscious act of sabotage [on Różewicz's part] and to what extent we are dealing here with some unconscious factors of a psychological or personal nature blocking the possibility of complete subordination to ideological and artistic indoctrination.[195]

Comparing Różewicz's different narratives one could risk explaining the writer's stance in terms of his literary programme rather than personal psychology. His early prose and journalism, as well as his later essays, journal entries, and autobiographical notes, do imply that he viewed – and described – the modern individual's identity as a conglomerate of social discourse, cultural traditions, and biography. The protagonists of *Notes from Hungary*, ill-fitting the rigid patterns of Socialist Realism, existentially and colloquially "thrown" into the larger ideological meta-narrative of the "new man", seem to reflect, *toutes proportions gardées*, Różewicz's model of prosaic identity already discernible in the late 1940s' texts. Almost any individual portrait in that writing is supplemented by private, biographical elements. The "smuggling" noted by Waligóra seems to testify to the writer's not giving up entirely on this programme even within the journalistic confines of Socialist

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195   J. Waligóra, op. cit., p. 72.

Realism. What looks like a dissonance in *Kartki* may be considered a norm in Różewicz's personology.

The Limits of Ideology

The "scientific worldview" functions in *Notes from Hungary* as an unquestionable cognitive authority, represented for example by the professor who fights against all kinds of "superstition and naive beliefs". Różewicz tests this authority in passing, as it were, in the margins of Prusek's personal story: "Now, you know, the Communists say there is no God" (II 254). The atheistic doctrine, reduced in the conversation to a footnote in Prusek's "autobiography", turns into an anecdote and a cliché. The limits of the ideology's credibility are marked by the protagonist's attitude to his own existence, to his personal identity narrative in which national and ideological persuasions are but a means of expression or a biographical episode.

Różewicz's take on the issue was similar in his later prose. For example, in a 1953 novella entitled *Ni pies, ni wydra* [*Neither Fish nor Flesh*], and subtitled "A story of a man who had his own convictions", the writer used a third-person narration supplemented by the quotes of the protagonist's thoughts.[196] When the sentence "The priest is coming to us with a pastoral visit" pops up, irritated Stefan begins his interior-monologue debate. "I'm not a believer, Reverend, I'm just not a believer. Now that's my right, isn't it?" (I 272–273). Despite this ar-

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[196] The phrase "ni pies, ni wydra, coś na kształt świdra" [literal translation: "neither a dog nor an otter, something in the shape of a drill bit"] was used for political purposes by Władysław Gomułka, First Secretary of the Polish United Workers Party, in his speech of 19 March 1968, in reference to "the compromise model of a political system that would be neither communism nor capitalism" projected in the essays of Juliusz Mieroszewski, a collaborator of the Paris-based "Kultura" magazine. Source: http://www.1917.cba.pl/cs/articles5.php?article_id=5 (accessed on 2 November 2011). Only from that moment, according to M. Głowiński, can we talk of the political cereer of that popular saying. M. Głowiński, *Marcowe gadanie. Komentarze do słów 1966–1971*, Warszawa 1991, p. 143.

gument, the question of the protagonist's identity has been presented by Różewicz in behavioural rather than expository or discursive terms. Similarly, in his essayistic memories the religion-atheism opposition is interpreted primarily in the context of the protagonist's biography rather than ideology or worldview. The narrator of *Zamknięcie*, recalling Zdzisław Hierowski's struggle with a terminal disease, says: "He was not a church-goer. He did not believe in God. And he was probably, of all my friends, the most persistent and pure in his choices. Even though, as a young man, he was, after all, a graduate of the famous Chyrów school, in which the Jesuits formed human characters and personalities" (III 94–95).[197] Ideological controversies connected with Hierowski's past acquire in Różewicz's essay the status of a personal drama. The ideological dilemma returns two decades later in another memorial essay entitled "Tylko tyle (Nasz starszy brat)" devoted to Janusz Różewicz, the writer's elder brother who was murdered by the Nazis. The essay's autobiographical narrator admires and emulates him, but does not share his political sympathies or religious stance.

Ni pies, ni wydra is a satirical novella, a comedy of manners dealing with everyday life and popular attitudes. Anti-religious declarations of the protagonist, who chafes at the social pressure to welcome a priest on his pastoral visit, get mixed up in grotesque ways with his concern that the rabbit cooked for dinner may "go dry" if left unattended for too long, Compared to such mental processes, the typical, almost gut responses of other characters seem perfectly natural. *Ni pies, ni wydra* is not, however, a type of perverse praise of conformism. Like the other texts collected in *Uśmiechy*, the story combines social satire with situational comedy. Though deeply convinced that he is motivated by ideological premises, the pro-

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[197] The test was originally printed in the "Odra" magazine (1970, no. 5) together with the critic's biographical note.

tagonist gets habitually stuck in mundane rituals of everyday life. This was the thematic framework that modernist "novels of ideas" were based on. However, while Żeromski's nonconformist protagonist was a tragic figure, a lonely "servant of the light" forced to operate in a world riven with ideological conflict or full of philistine hostility, Stefan in Różewicz's novella is ridiculous and inauthentic as a defender of "his own beliefs", "life's allure" in his case having been reduced to warm slippers and a good dinner. The ideological discourse in his interpretation seems frivolous, unfocused, and suspended in a void because it faces no resistance from a religious worldview; instead it dissolves in the quotidian morass of everyday social rituals. A genuine intellectual clash in terms of the religion-atheism opposition never takes place. Stefan's ambiguity and indeterminacy, signalled in the text's title, are resultant not from ideological indecisiveness but from his rootedness in bourgeois mentality and middle-class ways. With his orderly life, home-and-work routine, his desk at home and family meals, the novella's protagonist is both unmistakably bourgeois and modern at the same time. Liberalism, ideologically rooted in the elitist individualism of the 19th century, lost its emancipating and modernizing significance in a commonly banal world, inhabited by all-too-predictable, trite characters. It degenerated into snobbery, smug laziness, or indifference towards others. Stefan is like Młodziak from Gombrowicz's novel, but transposed to middlebrow, nondescript modernity that had been reduced to a political programme and thus not only trivialized but also anachronistic. According to Jan Błoński's synthetic diagnosis, a typical character in the Polish fiction of the 1950s "is not a Hamlet, but simply – a Matysiak", an embodiment of the "middlebrow element" residing at the crossroads of ideological identity that social discourses of the day were oriented towards and a mundane existence focused on private and contingent experiences.[198]

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[198]   J, Błoński, op. cit., pp. 62, 275.

These two constitutive elements of individual identity, affecting the image of Różewicz's protagonists ever since his prose debut, have been integrated by the writer into their "biographies" in diverse ways. Korzeń, the martyrologically experienced rifleman from *Echa leśne*, transformed from a crude wimp to a model soldier and as such was to return to "his place" in order to "plough the field and raise crops" (E 41). Although his anti-tank rifle is to become a ploughshare again, for the "transformed" Korzeń there is no going back to the grotesque and subaltern plebeianism. The emigrant and old miner Prusek identifies with his private memory rather than the history of the nation or of the working class. The narrator-interviewer does not grant him that right *avant la lettre*. The miner's biography is the opposite of panegyrical, highly conventional biographies of Communist activists in the sense that the identity it features becomes meaningful only via the narrative – dialogic and generically "impure". It is this kind of genealogical diversity that Różewicz's satirical and humorous prose is based upon: his sketches, notes, mini-treatises, portrayals, vignettes, and novellas collected in *Uśmiechy* and written mostly in the early 1950s. The reader encounters their protagonists sporadically, that is partially and in passing, as it were, because they are introduced against the background of everyday matters, trivial activities, and casually mundane utterances. Even if the writer incorporates an ideologist into this world, the situation promptly cuts the new protagonist down to size, forcing him to acknowledge the pervasive presence of common experiences and commonplace words. The agitator in his talk with the peasants, persuading them to join the cooperative farm, at some point has to admit that "a horse has four legs" (I 359), while another activist, lecturing for too long to kindergarten children on "the iron ranks of the enemy" and "the situation on the agricultural front" finally hears

by way of feedback from his audience: "I need to go pee" (I 330).[199] The possibility of going beyond the doctrine of Socialist Realism, signalled in *Notes from Hungary*, was explored in *Smiles* to a much greater degree. The political incorrectness of some of the texts from that volume did not, of course, boil down to their alleged nihilism, decadentism, or excessive formalism, as Stalinist criticism argued, but to the writer's rejection of a meta-narrative that defined, in an a priori fashion, the "relevant problems" of contemporaneous Polish literature. Ideological antagonisms that Socialist Realist fiction presented were placed by the author of *Smiles* in an ideologically-indeterminate reality. Political theses and declarations are not confronted by hostile arguments or attitudes there, but encounter knee-jerk responses and behaviour resulting from practical experience. In the Hungarian reportages such a composition still made some accusatory sense, with the charges directed against anti-social or anachronistic consciousness of citizens of a socialist state, one inherited from the previous era. Now, however, the same structural manoeuvre has different implications. Not only does ideological discourse in *Smiles* turn into nonsense, but, in most cases, it ends up suspended in a communicative void. The "new man's" identity does not clash with another project, or a polemic, but with a real person, a man of flesh and blood, while propaganda and canvassing are confronted by colloquial, non-systemic verbalizations. This "encounter" results in a reversal of axiological signs. Ideological identity turns out to be an ineptly played role, a collection of isolated ideas, to which the audience remains largely indifferent, whereas the world of Everyman remains unaffected as it is not based on any ideological constructs that might be threatened by practical exposure or historical relativism.

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[199] A similar episode is recalled by Różewicz in his sketch *Na dobre i złe zawsze z wami*: "I remember the opening ceremony of some crèche when one of the 'activists' talked to those children about Marxism and a little boy shouted that he needed to go pee" (Ma 295).

Yet another take on the problem of ideology in the individual's experience can be found in Różewicz's non-fictional prose – his journal entries, memoirs, and biographical sketches, for example in the aforementioned *Zamknięcie*. The tenacity manifested in "the sick man's wrestling with time" is compared in the text to triumph over death: "That man really managed, before my very eyes, to defeat death by means of discipline and devotion to his work" (III 94).[200] In between the lines of *Zamknięcie* there are questions about the ethos, the ideological motivation of Hierowski's existential and literary stands. There are no simple answers to such questions. Though witnessing the critic's atheism combined with an almost religious passion, the essay's narrator-agent does not construct an ideological worldview. Given the biographies of Hierowski and Różewicz, who both experienced crises of various "denominations", such a justification would lack credibility. Neither the belief in nation nor the belief in social justice managed to resist such a crisis because in the 20th century, as Jan Strzelecki writes in *Próby świadectwa*, eschatologies and ethical systems lost their innocence.[201] Consequently, the author of *Zamknięcie* has to look elsewhere for the moral and philosophical premises of Hierowski's everyday heroism. Where then? The critic's identity – reconstructed in the essay – corresponds to that of the intelligentsia, i.e. one premised on the individual's commitment to public service and devotion to non-material values in general and national culture in particular. Tadeusz Różewicz does not isolate the constitutive elements of

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[200] This is also how Witold Nawrocki perceives Hierowski's intellectual biography, writing, among other things, about "the lay courage of the real humanist" equipped with honesty, valour, and uncompromising nature in his/her search for the truth about the world and literature. Nawrocki also points out to the critic's right-wing and nationalist affiliations before World War Two. That part of Hierowski's biography was skipped over in his biography published by "Odra" underneath Różewicz's text. W. Nawrocki, *Trwanie i powrót. Szkice o literaturze Ziem Zachodnich*, Poznań 1969, p. 369.

[201] J. Strzelecki, op. cit., p. 192.

this formation. Hierowski is inextricably an ideologist, an ascetic "clerk", an atheist, and a priest of science, a personality infused with the spirit of Polish Catholicism and lay rationalism, a pure intellectual and a representative of the intelligentsia with a national mission to pursue. Any attempt to reduce this axiological whole to separate stands would ring false. Announcing the symbolic defeat of death, the narrator of *Zamknięcie* describes in fact a victory over the sense of creative life disrupted by wartime experiences. Irreducible, or "unclosable", to such binary oppositions as detachment-mission or religion-atheism, Różewicz's narrative attains "closure" in the form of a biography of the ideologist operating "after the end of the world", capable of commitment and resignation, guided by both passion and professionalism, constantly searching.

The narrator-agent of *Kartki wydarte z "dziennika gliwickiego"* [*Pages Torn Out of "a Gliwice Journal"*] constructs his persona in similar ways, telling about his ten post-war years of "service" in the name of creating, after "the end of one of the worlds" (III 319) a new poetry, a new principle and source of not only art but also life. "I did not want to remain 'heroically' silent; I wanted to write, publish, print" (III 87), explains the narrator of *Tożsamość (wspomnienia o Karolu Kuryluku)* [*Identity (Memories of Karol Kuryluk)*]. Jan Marx is wrong when he claims that in *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* that "Różewicz creates his artistic and political biography, constructing a myth of the implacable poet who never betrayed or misused poetry. A monolith then."[202] To the contrary, the narrator of several texts in the volume thematizes an ideological "scratch" on the autobiographical monolith's surface that undermines the myth of the poet-"clerk". The myth immediately becomes the anti-myth, an alternative way of telling one's own story, of talking about one's own past. When, in a conversation with Adam Czerniawski, the writer recalls

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[202] J. Marx, op. cit., p. 118.

his own "politically correct" poem about fascists who should be killed (*Ballada o karabinie* from the volume *Pięć poematów*),[203] he presents himself as a poet who only "occasionally" has a sense of mission (W 112). Różewicz fleshes out on the motif of literary "service" after World War Two also in the essay *Do źródeł* [*To the Source*, in *Przygotowanie*], but in this text he gives it a strictly social meaning. "My literary work back then had a political tinge, and political meant socially progressive to me" (III 144), he writes. Summarily interpreting the poems from the volume *W łyżce wody. Satyry* (published in 1946) as "journalistic notes in verse", Różewicz places those texts in the tradition of social action, considering Bolesław Prus to be the founder of its satirical current. As has already been mentioned, though, the patrons of Różewicz's early prose are Żeromski and Słowacki. The novels of the former, according to Andrzej Mencwel, had for several generations of the Polish intelligentsia in the 20th century an initiatory and formative significance.[204] The critic's observation is confirmed not only by Różewicz's debut[205] but also by his late autobiographical essay *Drewniany karabin* [*A Wooden Rifle*]. The text's sylleptically constructed protagonist named Tadejus traces back his wartime dreams of liberated, socialist Poland to a literary source, namely "the young, Labour-Day-style socialism of Żeromski and Ziuk" erected on literary images of "glass houses" and "homeless people" (II 219). This youthful adoration of Żeromski was accompanied by a fascination with Romantic heroism in the spirit of Słowacki, typical, by the way, of the

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203 First printing: T. Różewicz, *Ballada o karabinie*, "Wieś" 1948, no. 51.

204 A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., p. 159 and passim.

205 Traces of S. Żeromski's ideas can be seen in Różewicz's early work, e.g. in the 1938 ode *Do szarego pracownika* [*To the Rank-and-File Worker*] in which the "rank-and-file man" works "Far away from the sun, joy, freedom, / Among the grey and melancholy houses." Qtd in: Z. Łapiński, *O "wierszach prostych" (w czasach skomplikowanych)*, in: idem, *Jak współżyć z socrealizmem. Szkice na ten temat*, London 1988, p. 88.

young Polish intelligentsia of the wartime days.[206] This inspiration, both aesthetic and ideological, is noticeable in *Forest Echoes*, but in the very same volume it is also counterbalanced by texts whose poetics is naturalist and satirical, for example in the part entitled (Mikołaj Rej-style) "Figliki" ["Little Pranks"] (a motto referring to a Renaissance epigram also opens *Uśmiechy*).

One of the earliest textual traces of the writer's attitude to the Romantic paradigm is his note mentioning the burning of Juliusz Słowacki's *Król-Duch* under the partisan cauldron with bacon featured in *Dziennik z partyzantki* and dated 3 August 1944 (II 228). The motif returns in the short story *Ciężar* [*Burden*], whose protagonist, Gustaw, tosses the burdensome book into the fire, thus symbolically parting with the literary ideal of the defender of the homeland's defender, the Polish intellectual-soldier (O 20-21). One could say that "Romantic" Różewicz divorced himself from the elitist fascination with the beauty of heroic and spiritual deeds (Słowacki), focusing instead on the problems of "simple folks", on the here and now, on provincial life, and on how to "have a good day" (Mickiewicz).[207] Różewicz would refer to his indebtedness to Mickiewicz in various contexts, most explicitly in the essay *Do źródeł* [*To the Source*] and in his speech *"Kiedy myślę o poezji w ogóle, myślę o Mickiewiczu"* [*When I Think About Poetry At All, I Think About Mickiewicz*], the latter expanding upon some themes of the former (Ma 256). In the text *To, co zostało z nienapisanej książki*

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[206] Representative of this trend is, for example, Aleksander Kamiński's *Kamienie na szaniec* [*Stones for the Barricade*] (1943) with its references to the idea of heroic biography. A cult book, it was regarded by Janusz Tazbir as a formative work for the entire generation. A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., p. 221. Stanisław Różewicz recalled that on Christmas Day in 1943, when Tadeusz had already joined the partisans, the eldest of the Różewicz brothers, Janusz, read out loud *Kamienie na szaniec* at home (N 163).

[207] On the affinities between Różewicz's work and that of Adam Mickiewicz see e.g. K. Wyka, *Różewicz parokrotnie*, Warszawa 1977; T. Kłak, *"Liryki lozańskie" Tadeusza Różewicza*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne" 1971, no. 1 (vol. XIX).

o Norwidzie [*What Is Left of an Unwritten Book About Norwid*], in turn, published in "Kwartalnik Artystyczny" in 2002 and subsequently included in *Przygotowanie*, in the third volume of prose entitled *Utwory zebrane* [*Collected Works*], the author's mentors are Norwid and Przyboś, united here by the Romantic idea of civilizational and moral transformation of the "land of wheelwrights" under the influence of art (III 121). This is an understanding of the writer's "service" that Różewicz does not identify with in *Kartki wydarte z "dziennika gliwickiego"*, parts of which were published two years later in the monthly magazine "Śląsk" and finally included in that edition of *Przygotowanie*. The narrator of *Kartki* considers the pursuit of truth and honesty in art to be the writer's duty. This pursuit does not entail any faith in naive realism or in ideological functions of writing, but results from a craving for authenticity in literature after the apocalyptic collapse of the old, solid image of the world. It is this hunger that marks the *Hungerkünstler*, the Kafkaesque "starveling", scarred by his experience of the illusory nature of any human meaning, including the ethos of service and the sense of mission. The hunger artist in *Kartki wydarte z "dziennika gliwickiego"* remains insatiable not only because this kind of meaning is irretrievable in life or art, but also because he is all too aware of the fact that he himself, as *Hungerkünstler*, is also a "literary product" (III 334).[208] Viewed from this perspective, *Przygotowanie* can be seen as the writer's belated attempt to come to terms with his literary "service", his past actions, one that materialized at the moment when – as in the poem *They Came to See a Poet*– the writer has been getting ready "for fifty years / for this difficult task" to "do NOTHING", at the same time "seeing clearly those / who have chosen action". This "NOTHING", besides other meanings, is in Różewicz's writing also a metaphor for one's detachment from any

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[208]   I discuss the significance of the concept of *Hungerkünstler* in T. Różewicz's prose in the chapter "Anatomy of Experience".

identification, or a declaration of choosing the Kafkaesque hunger among the sated, the hunger consciously cultivated by the artist who refuses to be "consumed", i.e. to be trapped in a domesticated interpretation or a social role, including that of a writer.

Constructing characters and biographies of other artists, the Różewicz narrator-agent becomes himself part of the textual web of personal identity (re)construction, assuming both the role of the narrative's character and that of the narrative persona in between the texts. Any ideological identity thus construed loses its obviously external status, becoming simply a quote. This polyphonic nature of biographical narratives strengthens the effect of identity's sovereignty, its detachment from ready-made, naturalized representations. Michał Głowiński, in his essay *Dzieło literackie wobec democracji* [*The Literary Work and Democracy*] argues that the polyphonic structure, "taking into account, and giving expression to, various stands, ideas, and beliefs", allows the literary work not only to participate in democracy, the democratic exchange of, and competition between, ideas, but also to "support it [i.e. democracy] […] because it opposes any fundamentalism or ideological integrism".[209] According to the classification offered by the scholar, *Przygotowanie* is not a "discourse on democracy" but a "discourse in democracy" or a "discourse for democracy", democracy being here "a matter of style, rhetorical figures, conventions, and an attitude to the reader".[210] Consequently, the criterion for a democratic discourse in literature is not the narrative's subject but its organization – open, intertextual, and polyphonic, stylistically and generically "impure", legitimized both historically and biographically.

Among the several biographies of intellectuals and artists reconstructed in *Przygotowanie*, probably the best example of a discourse in/for

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[209] M. Słowiński, *Dzieło literackie wobec demokracji*, in: *Literatura i demokracja*, op. cit., p. 44.
[210] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

democracy is the first part of the *silva rerum* style (or almanac-like) essay *Dwie strony medalu* [*Two Sides of the Coin*], a short note on Ernest Lissauer entitled "Hiddekk".[211] The German poet earned a name for himself during World War One as the author of a nationalistic and militaristic poem against England. Różewicz's note is not so much about the poet but about the textual traces of his ideological stand and "covenant" with the nation that the essay's narrator-agent comes across. "Hiddekk" is an acronym composed of the initial letters of the German slogan "Hauptsache ist, daß die Engländer Keile kriegen" ["The most important thing is for the English to get a beating"]. Lissauer passed into history as a politically-involved artist, a time server responding with his poem to the popular demand and enjoying extraordinary popularity as a result. When the streets of Berlin were echoing with the yell "Hiddekk", the poet had become the voice of the German ideological "we". When the war ended he was ostracized, his wartime fame later on "burning him like Deianira's shirt" (III 300–301). Such an example would be easy to extrapolate and evaluate. As Antonia Vallentin writes in her biography of Gustav Stresemann (*Stresemann*, London 1931, p. 31), Germany's President and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the history of his ideological wrongheadedness in preaching the German victory during World War One and the resultant post-war sense of guilt was a history of the Reich's inner propagandistic "front". In Stresemann's view, in turn, it was a history of millions of Germany's best citizens.[212] Lissauer, then, was "everybody" during the war, as an utterer of a common nationwide stance, and "nobody" after the war, as an embodiment of equally common negative feelings of dissatisfaction, humiliation, and frustration. An analogous episode from

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[211] Originally printed in "Odra" 1975, no. 2. The formula of "sides of the coin" as the different roles/masks of the poet was used earlier by Różewicz in the triptych *Trzy strony medalu* [*Three Sides of the Coin*] published in the "Odra" weekly in 8, no. 49–50, p. 5.

[212] See T. Komarnicki, op. cit., pp. 11–12.

Ezra Pound's biography was interpreted by Różewicz in his conversation with Czerniawski, in which the writer touched upon a general problem pertaining also to his own political poetry: "What happens when poetry joins a fight, and with a knife to boot? We've got some unsolvable moral dilemmas here" (W 111). Summing up his own perspective on Pound, Różewicz states: "My task was to try to understand him till the very end" (W 110). A literary attempt at understanding is also a note on Lissauer, going beyond simplified, one-sided political judgements or the vantage point of national memory that habitually puts the entire blame on others or on the few.

The story of the German poet is not in *Dwie strony medalu* a springboard to a simple and unequivocal judgement. The fragment of a journal kept by a Polish medical orderly in the Russian army in the years 1914–1917, which closes Różewicz's *silva rerum*, can be interpreted as a suggestion that sometimes even "literature yields to Mars", on both sides of the front, with people yielding to literary visions of the conflict. Lissauer's case, then, was just a radical variant of a common phenomenon. It is revealing that the selected journal fragments include also a poem dedicated to the "bright memory" of Henryk Sienkiewicz, who "Taught us how to wrestle with fate / In our fight for tomorrow on ancestral soil …" (III 308). The "second side of the coin" is also our side, our longed-for and imagined great war that was "centuries in the waiting" (VIII 271). It was also that journal, kept by Józef F., Różewicz's relative and medical orderly in the Russian army during World War One, that the long poem *Z dziennika żołnierza* [*From a Soldier's Journal*] (1961), published in the volume *Głos anonima* [*Anonymous Voice*] was based upon. Although the poet does not give us the author's full name, one can conjecture that Józef F. is his uncle Józef Frontczyk, the husband of Waleria Frontczyk née Różewicz, who was the sister of Władysław Różewicz, the writer's father (Ko 246). This theme in Różewicz's writing combines three narratives on

man and the world: historical, biographical, and literary. The problem of their "impure" and non-obvious interconnectedness is fully addressed in the 1990s volumes *Nasz starszy brat* and *Mother Departs*.

Lissauer's presence in Różewicz's essay is partial and ambiguous. The narrator cites a paragraph from his mini-biography by Stefan Zweig reconstructing the historicity of his experience on the basis of wartime hate speech, including quotations and commentaries in his account. The identity of the literary character thus construed is at some points rhetorical and subject to the plural form, while at others it is more personal and concretized by facts. It is evidently only a narrative, a contingent whole, not a ready-made personal identity, legitimized by the authority of historical reconstruction or that of popular opinion. Reading the note, the reader realizes that Lissauer-the-nationalist, Lissauer-the-agitating-intellectual, Lissauer-the-victim-of-the-collective-resentment after the war, as well as Lissauer viewed first as a representative of the ideology of national community and then a stigmatized, lonely culprit, is also a narrative. The narrator of "Hiddekk" does not offer a new, real identity of the German poet, but, assuming the role of the narrator-agent of the existing story, reiterating and commenting on its constituent narratives, he activates the faded textuality and relativity of the collective memory. Within the scope of a short note he takes up the role of the historian-narrativist who, rather than describing the past and collecting evidence to support his theses, focuses on the way the past's narrative image in the texts is created.

This narrative laboratory of identity is not there to obfuscate the fact that it is human beings in general and intellectuals in particular who are creators and users of ideologies.[213] Instead, Różewicz's biographical

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[213] Joanna Adamowska in her interpretation of the essay emphasizes the issue of the 20th-century poet's entanglement in the "service of evil ideology" as well as "the artist's betrayal of his own calling". J. Adamowska, *Różewicz i Herbert. Aksjologiczne aspekty twórczości*, Kraków 2012, p. 62. Not belittling the importance of this role of the modern intellectual, Różewicz notices in

and *silva-rerum* style essays from the 1960s and 1970s are so many attempts to solve the riddle of personal identity by means of a narrative rather than a strictly ideological or cultural definition. Admittedly, the ideologist is a relational identity, linked to various traditions and public discourses. One can catalogue and discuss them. But ideological identity is not a simple sum total of social or political inspirations and loyalties in the individual's life because it is only their coordination with personal, reflexive experience that generates an identity narrative. Summing up their moral significance, the Różewicz narrator-agent simultaneously cites and discusses textual traces of the reconstructed character left in newspapers, journals, letters, and prosaic notes. The ideologist thus construed is a recipient of ideological contents and their interpreter, an authentic person reconstructed in the text and a fictitious character created there. Thus the textual identity of the Różewicz man is situated at the borderline between quotation and commentary, description and creation, historical discourse and anecdotal biography. So as not to disturb the fictitious-documentary environment of such a narrative, this being the central assumption behind any identity tale, the writer-narrator keeps his protagonist in the ambiguous "in between" position till the end of the reconstruction. The end-result of such a reconstruction is an identity which is openly narrative, or – in Głowiński's terms – textually democratized, referring to numerous metanarratives of the past.

The End of a Certain "Covenant"

Andrzej Werner argues that in the second half of the 20th century the Polish intellectual's attitude to collective consciousness and the nation's cultural traditions – combining intellectual obligations with a subjective,

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his fate also the phenomenon of blaming the individual for the guilt of the entire community which projects onto him its frustration and culpabilty for participating in the act of collective violence and hatred.

critical distance – was the most important determinant of his/her person-al identity.[214] This does not hold equally true for the entire half a century of Communist rule in Poland. The critic focuses on the crisis of the sec-ond half of the 1970s, tracing back to that time the rebirth of "a covenant between artists and the collective images, with the attendant cultivation of those myths that channel collective consciousness towards realization of superior [national] goals".[215] The author of the book *Polskie, arcypolskie* … came to the conclusion, however, that some writers and artists did not subscribe to this moral and symbolic covenant with their local public. Analysing Różewicz's post-1956 writing, Werner took note of

> A radical rejection of culture's traditional obligations, of all the roots: nothing induces us any more to choose or continue a particular way [of doing things] just because it is present or not in our culture. It is neither the emotional nor rational factors [that matter]; neither the mythological reasons nor those resultant from our assessment of social obligations towards the community.[216]

This repudiation of obligations, accompanied by a naive or hypocriti-cal belief in normalcy after the October breakthrough, seemed dangerous to the critic. A national consensus around culture and values, "reached in the hour of rebellion, in the time of fight", Werner argued, having in mind both history and contemporaneous times, should not be under-mined, even if it yielded dubious artistic results, because "a private war

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[214] A. Werner, *Krew i atrament*, op. cit., p. 17.

[215] Ibid., p. 38.

[216] A. Werner, *Polskie, arcypolskie…*, op. cit., p. 121. Werner's charges were refuted by Marcin Rychlewski, who analysed Różewicz's poem *Spadanie* in the context of the Nietzschean diag-nosis of disintegration of the metaphysical "centre" of ethics. Rychlewski argues that the critic's political charges missed the point because the poet's nihilism was, in fact, a form of philosophi-cal reflection. M. Rychlewski, *Różewicz – nihilista? O* Spadaniu, "Polonistyka" 2003, no. 7.

of several writers against ideas which they consider stupid, ridiculous, or obsolete" means, in fact, perpetuating the "loudly and incessantly proclaimed certitude that we are living not only in a free but also in the most equitable of worlds".[217] Such an "angelic" vision of the human existence in literature, he added after Milan Kundera, is made possible by one's ability to notice "only what one wants to see".[218] It was exactly this type of representation of reality – partial and isolated from social facts – that Różewicz allegedly created. The same charges, to repeat, were brought against the poet by Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, though he eventually withdrew his ironic allegation that Różewicz's conscience was clear but selective. Needless to say, there is no doubt as to what world Werner was writing about, but, to be on the safe side, he still warned at the end of his essay that "the devil can make a pact even with angels. Or he fools them."[219] The density and ambiguity of the critic's argument makes it impossible to decide whether this is still only a warning or already an accusation of indifference and conformity. If the essay was meant as an accusation, it misses the point because Różewicz's attitude to Polish culture and Romantic traditions is a long-standing and thought-provoking dialogue. What is more, Werner seems to have crossed all-too-easily the borderline between a political evaluation of the writer's stand and the problems of the characters he has created in his texts, or the borderline between narrowly conceived public morality and morality in art.

The kind of relation between the artist and the community that the critic called for was typical, for example, of the 19th-century bourgeois novel, becoming there a model for ethical agreement. Michał Głowiński, calling the realistic novel the work of ideal rapport, concluded that the "firm moral and political beliefs" (H. Balzac) materialized in it, or pre-

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[217] Ibid., p. 122.
[218] Ibid., p. 123.
[219] Ibid.

sent there only potentially, "made it clear what was good or bad, worthy or unworthy, what belonged to the kingdom of virtue and what – to the dark domain of vice […], neither the writer nor the reader had a problem deciding which of the characters should be marked with a negative sign, and which one with a plus".[220] The "moralistic realism" pact was terminated by Flaubert and Dostoyevsky, the forerunners of modern literature, who stopped referring to "the same meanings – which was a foregone conclusion – that the public could give to every element of the novel".[221] The modern pact between the writer and the reader consisted, among other things, in rejecting the text's ethical and cognitive authority, now replaced with a negative or even subversive agreement based on a constant and conscious violation of the aesthetic and ideological pact with the reader. The crisis of such a modern understanding between the artist and the public manifested itself in Communist Poland most clearly in the late 1970s and 1980s.

When Małgorzata Dziewulska wrote in 1982 about the twilight of the modern rapport between the author and the (theatrical) audience, she expected, in a way, a return to "moralistic realism" on the artists' part. "[People – W.B.] want something else. In the past they would let themselves be terrorized by modernity, then they started to rebel and, finally, they will say it straight to our face: 'We couldn't care less!' […] Our theatre today is way behind the sensibility of the intellectual, the worker, the professor, or the cloakroom attendant."[222] "We have no repertoire for them," she explained earlier in her book, "because the Polish repertoire at its best […] is thoroughly intellectualized and, to be honest, fully comprehensible almost only to intellectuals".[223] The charge was aimed also at Różewicz. The author

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[220] M. Głowiński, *Dzieło wobec odbiorcy. Szkice z komunikacji literackiej*, Kraków 1998, p. 219.

[221] Ibid., pp. 231–232.

[222] M. Dziewulska, *Teatr zdradzonego przymierza*, Warszawa 1985, pp. 146–149.

[223] Ibid., p. 92.

of the essay *Różewicz, czyli walka z aniołem* [*Różewicz, or A Fight with an Angel*] charged him with deviating from a tradition which used to provide both the author and the audience with "a sense of community within human culture", the culture grounded in the spiritual, or even religious, concept of humankind.[224] The logic of that deviation proceeded from "despair", through "possession", to "laughing stock". Soon enough Dziewulska raised her strictly ideological stakes, this time her charge against Różewicz being that in his works "It is the prisoners, not the prison's administration, that are the object of observation."[225] Not sparing the writer her numerous aesthetic rebukes ("This is hopelessly primitive […] all too easy and very boring indeed"), the essay's author openly admitted to applying moral categories to Różewicz's writing.[226]

Dziewulska's essay *Różewicz, czyli walka z aniołem* was, in fact, perfectly representative of the Polish intellectuals' state of awareness in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Though largely isolated from specific literary issues (which the author herself readily admits), the essay nevertheless ends up with a short analysis of the Waluś character, the protagonist of *Do piachu*. It is a well-known fact that the play generated a heated debate, which at some points came close to a political dispute over the writer's attitude to tradition and national community. Elżbieta Morawiec wrote, on the poet's 60th birthday, that "Apart from the criterion of seasonal snobbery other valuation patterns have begun to circulate among our cultural audience", generated by the "mechanisms of gregarious, embattled thinking".[227] This type of dominant interpretation style was later

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[224] M. Dziewulska, *Różewicz, czyli walka z aniołem*, "Dialog" 1975, no. 3, p. 128.

[225] M. Dziewulska, *Teatr zdradzonego przymierza*, op. cit., p. 53.

[226] Ibid., pp. 50, 53.

[227] E. Morawiec, op. cit., p. 5. Referring to Różewicz's situation and his public image (as functioning in literary circles) in the late 1970s, Zbigniew Kubikowski demonstrated "how easily a stereotype is popularized in social circles that, at least in theory, should not be that susceptible to stereotyping. Meanwhile, petrified social myths thrive precisely there, contrary to obvious facts

referred to by Andrzej Werner as the "interpretive hammer". As Werner explained, the process of simplification of the text's reception consisted in the "ordering and appraisal of literary, cultural, and artistic facts in terms of binary oppositions: art – politics, journalism, ideology, trend".[228] True, but the problem with Różewicz did not boil down to thinking in accordance with the *tertium-non-datur* formula, which dismisses the possibility of unequivocal connections between art and politics in a moment of social conflict. Dziewulska's and Werner's charges pertained not only to ethical and ideological contents of the relation between artist and audience but also to fundamental principles of such a relation. The point was not that the writer keeps silent or speaks unclearly but that when he takes a stand on national issues he uses the "wrong" language.

Maria Janion, in a conversation with Sławomir Buryła, summing up the debate over *Do piachu* in the context of the war themes in 20th-century Polish literature, recalled Janusz Majcherek's diagnosis published in 1990 in "Teatr". Majcherek contextualized the history of drama as

> so many stages of the struggle of the typically Polish perspective on things for the belief that "what matters is not what is and how it is but what should be", the belief that presupposes the superiority – in art – of ethics over aesthetics, imposing "stereotypes and myths aspiring to the status of the norm, although in reality they are mere projections of the collective consciousness" enamoured of the national heroism ideal.[229]

Janion also added that in the argument between "Romantics" and "lampoonists" the literary texts that proved most noticeable were

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and easily verifiable realities, and they keep growing fast and out of proportion." Z. Kubikowski, *Krytycy i plotkarze*, "Dialog" 1979, no. 4, p. 141.

[228] A. Werner, *Krew i atrament*, op. cit., p. 25.

[229] M. Janion, *Płacz generała. Eseje o wojnie*, Warszawa 1998, p. 328.

the short stories of Tadeusz Borowski, Witold Gombrowicz's *Trans-Atlantyk*, Sławomir Mrożek's plays, Miron Białoszewski's *Pamiętnik z powstania warszawskiego*, and finally – in terms of the order of publication– Różewicz's *Do piachu*. The canon of texts relevant for that particular theme in Polish literary history can be composed in various ways; the real problem, however, is altogether elsewhere. Modern culture, including that created after 1944 by the above-mentioned writers, among others, was often reduced to dilemmas pertaining to national awareness, which was essentially Romantic. Critics who rejected the modern, subversive rapport in art believed it was possible for the Romantic idiom to cover the entire experience and identity of modern man.

Marta Piwińska, pondering in the 1970s the status of Romanticism in modern Polish culture, concluded that "despite its constant metamorphoses and denials, it remained till this day a major culture-making factor" in the sense that it still constitutes "a certain type of rapport between author and reader, or between artist and the supraliterary audience".[230] This rapport is by no means open to all other types of content, however. According to Piwińska, Romanticism is such a well-entrenched system of signs that any attempt to speak through its agency brings back to life the Romantic myth of the national community. Through the agency of the Romantic metalanguage,

> Any Pole can enter the community realm and communicate with another Pole – on condition, however, that s/he fulfils the demands articulated in this language as information. Which means that s/he will shape his/her own image in the image of the Romantic signs.[231]

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[230] M. Piwińska, op. cit., p. 36.
[231] Ibid., p. 37.

Thus any use of the Romantic idiom, not necessarily intended as an act of self-definition, raises the issue of one's attitude to national identity. That is why Różewicz's "mockeries", exposing Romanticism as a "shadow", that is an illusory description of modern experience, breached the agreement postulated by critics after 1976 and pertaining to a collective – reproduced, for example, in the arts – image of the world in which society perceives itself as an integral community that individuals are supposed to exclusively identify with.

As Piwińska argues, Różewicz freed himself from Romanticism without terminating the agreement based on the Romantic code of identity. The Romantic tradition, e.g. in the drama *Wyszedł z domu*, was to function as a "shadow" cast upon the void. The play's gravediggers "are supposed to exhume the body of someone who changes his political visage (posthumously) on an hourly basis, because they take orders from a regime whose members cannot make up their minds what political visage to assume".[232] The scholar assumes that in the shadow of the Romanticism in question there is only void. The playwright – if I interpret her intentions correctly – has not rejected the covenant still binding in the Romantic community of sense, but he has annihilated, turned to "nothing", the object projected by the Romantic metalanguage, namely the "political ideal" of man. Thus he has created a situation in which the covenant as such between the collective and the individual still exists as a system of signs, but one of the contracting parties is gone, namely the bearer of national identity, obligated to "serve" the nation, the citizen, the intellectual, the ideal patriot, the ideologist, etc. He has been replaced with a non-person evading any identity whatsoever.

The scholar's point, though apt, seems overgeneralized because Różewicz does not solve the problem of ideological tradition with the

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[232] Ibid., p. 375.

"void" only; it is also too reductionist as the problem itself is irreducible only to Romanticism. Admittedly, ideological identity in the 20th century was, in accordance with Polish conditions, particularly tied to Romanticism, especially at times of "national crises" (S. Stroński). It was also, however, potentially linkable to, for example, a religious, modern-liberal, Marxist, or nationalist worldview, both its Romantic and realistic variants. Just as Różewicz's literary forms are "impure", so the identity of his protagonists is ambiguous, ranging from Sarmatism to plebeianism, from materialism to bourgeois lifestyle, from the political intellectual's involvement to the "clerk's" detachment from collective interests and mythologies. Likewise, it is hard to agree with Piwińska that Różewicz would expose a "hollow" man to the influences of political arguments. As Błoński points out, Polish literature, ever since the 1950s, has been increasingly reluctant to present unequivocal, flat characters with clearly defined social identities (apart from, of course, satirical and parodic texts), preferring more ambiguous protagonists instead. This trend, with some exceptions, pertained also to Różewicz's writing, particularly his prose. Indeterminate, however, does not mean "hollow".

Różewicz supplanted the ideologist with a character who, rather than being nondescript, or stripped of distinct character traits, is "unfinished" instead. Such a character spans diverse identities, embodying the identification-in-the-making process rather than complete identification or ideological loyalties that the text's metalanguage implies. It is not as if Różewicz attempted to strip his characters of roles enabling them to define, understand, and valuate themselves, or to compare themselves with others. He does, however, deprive them of any trust in those roles, before they get a chance to become internalized. This is evident in the stories from the *Opadły liście z drzew* and *Przerwany egzamin* collections, in the reportage interview with Prusek, in the novellas from *Uśmiechy*, and in later humoresques. The protagonists' identity there is as a rule

entangled within an ideological metalanguage which – though eventually exposed as mere pose and thus disintegrates in the course of the narrative – does not melt into a void because the exposed ideology is immediately replaced by other self-definitions and worldviews. This transience of the Różewicz protagonists is sometimes their only permanent and commonly held characteristic. By contrast, in the (auto)biographical sketches collected in *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, and in the volumes *Tarcza z pajęczyny*, *Próba rekonstrukcji*, *Nasz starszy brat*, *Mother Departs*, and *Margines, ale…*, the reconstruction of the protagonists is evidently a textual manoeuvre, the process of compiling the narrative with quotes and commentaries being accompanied by a deconstruction of those identities of the protagonist that begin as blanket attempts to make his story complete. Also in this case, the ideological meta-narrative, degraded to the role of a textual component of a new narrative, is harnessed for the identification project, thus demonstrating that what has been left of the ideologist is not a void but an entire symbolic universe that does not constitute, however, a stable and credible identification. The fact that the modern individual lives among the shadows of Romanticism and other ideologies does not necessarily imply that the experience of transient identity is yet another shadow. Różewicz treated this experience with the utmost seriousness.

The covenant metaphor, used by Dziewulska and Werner in a hardhitting fashion, facilitates posing a positive question as well. If Różewicz's works did not observe the rules of the "covenant" between writer and community based on national or religious values, then what did the metalinguistic rapport between the writer and his readers consist in? In theory, reducing the question to the problem of the modern individual's identification, one could assume that such a rapport was based on the bilateral agreement on the understanding of the identities of the text's characters and/or its narrator-agent. Consequently, the problem with Różewicz was

not about his refusal to come to terms with ideological obligations of human beings as such, but about critics expecting him to terms with such obligations in a specific manner, one that would not collide with the "superior national goals" or (equally superior) "moral type categories". Meanwhile, Różewicz would address the problem on his own terms – not only selective, grotesque, ironic, or nihilistic, as the hostile critics alleged, but also in a "liberating" fashion, as other critics emphasized, for example, the aforementioned Kelera. Różewicz, repudiating illusory or falsified values, removed them from the social and existential experience of the individual in order to rebuild trust in the material world, the body, the immediate environment, and other humans.

In narrativist terms the writer cancelled out the meaning of not only images of the collective consciousness but also the meaning of personal narrative (expressed through personal role models, symbols and identification signs). Returning to primary experiences, to one's date and place of birth, to the deaths of near and dear ones, to the traumatic, unerasable images from the wartime past, he would begin the reconstruction of his characters with whatever was most unique and exceptional in their experience, thus legitimizing his account. This does not mean that Różewicz attempted to bypass the problem of nation, social system, ethical norms, collective history, or to ignore their political or cultural images that the individual refers to in search of personal identity. Różewicz could not ignore them because it would have been synonymous with a loss of a pertinent means of expression and a practical termination of the rapport with the audience. What is more, it would have equated to giving up on the possibility to describe the dilemmas of the ideologist of the second half of the 20th century. Still, he could not trust them either as they were incompatible with his own historical awareness, shaped as it had been by the experience of a crisis of modern ideologies and metanarratives – those of national community, equality, progress, reason, and public mis-

sion.[233] Besides, if approached literally and uncritically, they threatened the individual's being with standardization (typicalness) or theatricality (façade-like appearances). After all, there is an inherent conflict between one's attempts at complete and continuous identity and social identification. The only way to overcome that conflict is by incorporating it in one's identity narrative, by reflectively problematizing it as a constant, irreducible characteristic of the modern self. Viewed from that perspective, the problem with Różewicz's writings from the 1970s and 1980s was that the writer had not repudiated ideologies as such, and would not fight them in discursive, expository ways, but chose instead to analyse their attendant images or models of man. "Analyse" may not be the best word here. The author of *Unease* did not explore them along sociological or political lines as such an intellectual exercise would have proved ineffective – among other reasons, because the inherent contradictions of the individual's transient identity would have become objectified in the process. Only by placing in the same narrative the ideological project of man and the results of its applications, the image of the community and the gesture of identification with that community, life as a sequence of events and the rules of biographical writing – only by attempting to integrate all these factors in the name of the impossible identity, invariably temporary and contingent, did the writer approach the possibility of "staging" the real drama of the individual in the world of ideologies.

The charge that he "betrayed the covenant" can be interpreted as accusing the writer of moral indifference. In Różewicz's case, however,

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[233] "The writer's disbelief in ready-made ideologies" was interpreted by Kazimierz Wyka as his distrust of consciousness and other manifestations of being. K. Wyka, *Różewicz parokrotnie*, op. cit., p. 30. Distrust of metanarratives or "grand narratives" that legitimize all other stories, endowing them with meaning and coherence, is, according to Jean-François Lyotard, a defining characteristic of the post-modern attitude. See J.-F. Lyotard, *Kondycja ponowoczesna. Raport o stanie wiedzy*, trans. M. Kowalska, J. Migasiński, Warszawa 1997.

such a charge misses the point as the writer – contrasting dogmas and public behaviour with private life – did not subscribe to the utopia of privacy. He did not cultivate the illusion that human existence can be comprehended in isolation from social and historical context, but, quite the contrary, found traces of collective mentality and other "universals" even in the personal experiences of the modern individual. If one understands keeping the covenant as the writer being responsible for the rapport with the reader, and for the fairness of that rapport, then Różewicz does not deserve the accusations of "treason". This is also true for another reason. Testing the value of the Romantic, nationalist, or socialist system of ideas in everyday life, colloquial speech, specific historical periods, or the textual structure of his protagonist's "biography", he searched, in fact, for a narrative way of incorporating what was still vital in the ideological tradition into the mainstream of contemporary culture. Acknowledging in the later phase of mass modernity the demise of the public individual as author and protagonist of grand socio-political narratives, Różewicz simultaneously discovered that the "yardsticks for the collective beliefs, valuation judgements, and commonly expressed ideas established in communication and mass culture" were "human motifs and ways of doing things manifested in small-scale, common customs".[234] Those non-discursive everyday ideologies, common everyday practices, and communication rituals are as effective in influencing the individual's identity as great ideological systems.[235]

The protagonists of Różewicz's prose make up a link between traditional bourgeois-intellectual's identity, the "new man" of nationalist or Communist ideology, and the transition man, transforming in the mid-20th century from an object of nationalist or emancipatory metanar-

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[234] T. Piekot, M. Poprawa, *Wstęp*, in: *Ideologie nowoczesności*, op. cit., p. 8.
[235] Ibid.

ratives into a participant of Polish culture. This type of personal identity in Communist Poland was as much a result of the success of social engineering as an effect of its fiasco. Aleksander Pawlicki claims that the Communist social-modernizing project was carried out only partially; despite decades of ideological indoctrination, the national community resurfaced in the late 1970s and early 1980s in its pre-modern form, with the new intellectuals submitting to the value system and group mythology of the old intelligentsia.[236]

> There is something peculiar indeed about this Polish intelligentsia of ours – as Stefan Kisielewski later commented on those days – suddenly, after many years, the intelligentsia was reborn in the old form. And, to boot, it was reborn on an "ethnic" basis, recruiting individuals from the countryside or from the previous "lower" classes … Seemingly new, but essentially old, apparently folk-like, but amazingly similar to the old, nobility-based kind. A new political system, new territories, new people, and the intelligentsia – the same.[237]

Kisielewski was right to acknowledge the identification of the "new people" with the tradition of the Polish intelligentsia, but this identification was only partial and temporary, though, admittedly, excessively conspicuous because of the Romantic perspective of yet another turning point in the nation's history. As Andrzej Mencwel rightly argued, during the debate on the "semi-intelligentsia" phenomenon (1977), never in the history of Poland had there been a time when the political, social, or material conditions conducive to the creation of the intelligentsia as such would recur.[238] Those conditions changed many times in the 20th century.

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[236]   A. Pawlicki, *Filistyni i samobójcy*. "Krytyka Polityczna" 2002, no. 1.

[237]   Ibid., p. 102.

[238]   See A. Mencwel, *Fenomenologia półinteligencji*, in: idem, *Widziane z dołu*, Warszawa 1980.

One can hardly talk, then, about the same intelligentsia in the 19th century, the interwar period, the World War Two period, Stalinist Poland, the period of "small stabilization", or the late Polish People's Republic, but it is possible to talk about the continuity of intellectual myths, role models, and traditions – though all of them constantly acquired new meanings.

Only if Różewicz had not noticed those changes, if he had ignored the presence of the "new man", or tried to describe him solely in terms of national or humanist traditions treated integrally, could one charge him with disloyalty – both towards the new man perceived through the old lens and, as a result, towards tradition presented in an inauthentic, petrified form. "Because so much depends on him, he should be faced with a genuinely and universally dramatic situation and confronted with crucial [existential] issues" – this is how Tadeusz Drewnowski interpreted Różewicz's obligations as the author of the literary portrayal of the "prosaic" Everyman.[239] The scholar's point is well received but can be supplemented with two more remarks. Firstly, this new situation could not be accounted for by referring to the "crucial issues" in the same way they had been defined in the metalanguages of Romanticism, early 20th-century modernism, or even the avant-garde modernity of the interwar period. The concept of history implicit in those metalanguages was, admittedly, capable of describing the history of the ideologist as such, a narrowly conceived intellectual, because it started with the narrative of his consciousness and biography. It was of little use, however, in the case of the transition man after 1939 or 1944 because for his personal identity-in-the-making such a concept was but a closed, pre-existing project. Secondly, the national or social covenant legitimized by those metalanguages – concluded also in the name of Everyman, the rank-and-file man of modernity – became after World War Two a pact sealed,

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[239] T. Drewnowski, *Porachunki z XX wiekiem*, op. cit., p. 238.

as it were, prior to and beyond his experience, speech, self-image, and biography. Tadeusz Różewicz pulled the reality and language of his texts "down", coming closer to the materiality of the world, the triviality of democratized culture, the coarseness of its imagery and lexicon, to the mass-produced kitsch of Communist Poland, and to the gutter. In the next step, he would – primarily thanks to the texts' open composition, the pervasive fragmentariness of the message, the tender attention paid by the narrator-agent to the tiniest, prosaic traces of life – search for the means of expression applicable to that part of the "new man's" experience which, viewed from the perspective of the "old" covenant, seemed boring, typical, commonplace, irrelevant, marginal, or too private.

2. Culture, Memory And Community

This chapter is devoted to cultural patterns and problems of identity as exemplified by Różewicz's texts from (primarily) the 1950s and 1970s, such as the "novels" *Moja córeczka*, *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*, and *Sobowtór*, as well as the stories and sketches collected in the volumes *Przerwany egzamin*, *Wycieczka do muzeum*, and *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*. Suffice it to say at this point that, generally speaking, I am interested in the relation between the individual's self-definition and the image of the world as shaped by art, collective memory, cultural policy of institutions (e.g. those of the state), popular culture and their attendant public discourses, and the model of a culturally sophisticated individual. The individual's identity is mediated through the social image of the world that s/he subscribes to, which entails perceiving the world in a pictorial form and also an understanding of the self which functions within a given community. According to Jan Assmann, both collective and personal identity are cultural constructs. Moreover, individual identity, though referring to the biological existence of a human being, can be expressed only through culture and language.[240]

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[240] J. Assmann, op. cit., p. 145.

The Symbolic Universe and the "Small Stabilization"

Culture in both the Republic of Poland in the years 1944–1952 (routinely referred to by propagandists as the People's Poland) and in its legal successor, the Polish People's Republic, was institutionalized and politicized as part of the ideological programme of the modern authoritarian state. The cultural identities and activities of citizens became objects of modernizing and educational efforts; they were also subject to ideological indoctrination.[241] This does not mean, though, that the state administration, the party apparatus and public institutions of Communist Poland, were the only agents in this field. The Catholic Church also exerted a powerful influence on the shape of the Polish national community and the concept of national tradition, carrying out its religious and educational mission in conflict with the secular state but also within a society that was almost homogeneous in terms of religion and ethnicity and thus ready for a communal vision of the world. The third ingredient defining that community was mass culture. As a result of the postwar ideological democratization of access to national and world cultural heritage, and thanks to new technical means of popularizing culture, the cultural audience substantially increased in that period, at the same time, however, yielding to far-reaching unification, losing its agency in the

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[241] Stanisław Siekierski maintains that the Communist authorities pursued a patronal cultural policy, centrally planned and executed, until the mid-1970s. Culture in those days remained subordinated to state modernizing and reorganizing projects. At the beginning of the Gierek-regime decade, for example, there were plans to "make secondary education common", "to extend the period of mandatory general education", to "change the proportions in family and state budgets in favour of culture", to shorten the work week to 40 hours, which was supposed to "create new conditions for participation in cultural activities", to "open up new venues for artistic expansion of the young generation", to "saturate Polish culture with electronic means of expression". S. Siekierski, *Książka literacka. Potrzeby społeczne i ich realizacja w latach 1944–1986*, Warszawa 1992, pp. 220–220. The end of the Gierek decade means the end of this cultural policy. "Party and government programmes practically cease to function in the years 1979–1981. They are clearly but mere attempts to survive the politically and economically difficult period, attempts to find a new status." Ibid., p. 222.

process and turning into a society of consumers rather than co-authors of cultural artefacts. The competences and the style of participation in culture were by and large a result of the rules imposed by the state cultural industry, geared primarily towards propagating national identity and traditions in a truncated, sanitized, and abridged form, interpreted in accordance with the regime's political principles. These principles did not necessarily manifest themselves in strictly modern symbols and narratives. The new Polish community constructed under Communist rule was indeed new in regard to social and communication (technological) criteria, but when it came to some of the community's dominant self-images, it also utilized some of the past cultural patterns (e.g. the models of patriotism, cultural memory, and ethnocentrism practised on a daily basis) but these were consciously transformed, however, into the modern national experience.[242] As a result, the "cultured" community (a social environment of high political and material status, actively participating in culture and pursuing an elitist lifestyle) yielded after 1939 and 1945 to metamorphoses that lowered its social and economic status, while the Polish cultural community (a community of national culture, language, history, and religion) was empowered and expanded, covering almost the entire society.[243] The latter had an enormous influence, therefore, on the cultural contents circulated nationwide via school education and the mass media.

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[242] Such a (re)construction was based primarily on hierarchization, that is a systemic comparison of national and foreign values and their due purification, which reduced natural interpersonal relations to cultural bonds and then legitimized them, transforming particular experiences of specific individuals and groups into a discourse or a worldview. Creating a collective national experience also required translating national ideology into an educational programme, i.e. replacing an intellectual formation with a "school" one. See J. Kurczewska, *Nowoczesne doświadczenie narodowe (z różnorodnością teraźniejszości w tle)*, op. cit., pp. 222–240.

[243] By "cultured" identity (the identity of a cultured individual) I mean identification with a cultured community or polite society, whereas by cultural identity – one's identification with culture understood in broader, anthropological terms.

Needless to say, the individual's personal identity is not a simple mirror-image of educational doctrines or common visions of the world as it emerges out of a dialogue between what is external and social on the one hand and one's individual consciousness on the other. As Charles Taylor notes, such an identity is grounded not only in one's personal experience or self-image but also in the reflective work of imagination, which is a prerequisite for any self-definition.[244] Personal identity is an ability to use pictorial and semiotic takes on reality, compare them with others, interpret them in one's own way, apply acts of self-description or self-definition conceived in opposition to them, or use them as building blocks in one's own personal narrative. The sources of such images and stories are art, ideology, religion, and language, which does not follow from their passive, illustratory relation to the world, but from their contribution to the symbolic dictionary in which the world acquires a meaningful form.

Ernst Cassirer, considering the relation between culture and the individual's consciousness (perception), used the term "symbolic universe".[245] Through mediation of this *imaginarium*, man can describe and comprehend his own experience. In short, the symbolic universe is a dictionary of images and signs mediating between the individual and reality. As Cassirer wrote:

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[244] See Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności*, trans. A. Pawelec, Kraków 2002.

[245] In this work I conceive of the term "symbolic universe" by analogy with Bourdieu's concept of the "habitus", that is as a system of cognitive and axiological dispositions given to the individual in the form of his/her symbolic-cultural capital. In order to avoid "introducing the pure cognitive self" or the structuralist premises reducing the self, Pierre Bourdieu – following in Erwin Panofsky's footsteps and engaging in a polemic with E. Cassirer, among others – proposes the term "habitus", which is a reinterpretation of the Aristotelian term "hexis" denoting the individual's "permanent disposition" to think, perceive, valuate, and act in accordance with certain scenarios. The *habitus*, Bordieau explains, constitutes a system of dispositions available to the individual. Its influence on the individual is, however, not a result of the workings of "nature's powers or the universal reason; […] *habitus*, as the very term indicates, is something acquired, and also a form of ownership which, under some circumstances, may function as capital". *Habitus* as a resource of relations between man and the world is only partially realized by the individual. P. Bourdieu, op. cit., p. 274.

> Man can accomplish nothing more in the domain of language, religion, art, or science than construct his own symbolic world which allows him to understand and interpret, formulate and organize, synthesize and universalize his human experience.[246]

The symbolic universe is not only a medium of experience. Hans-Georg Gadamer, debating with Cassirer, argued that reality becomes representable only after it has been represented, manifesting itself in all its complexity. Culture "brings to being an increase in representation. Word and image are not derivative illustrations, but [quite to the contrary] they allow what they represent to make the most of its presence."[247] The best example of the figurative mode of being is art. Pondering the figurative representation of experience in culture, Gadamer noted that,

> A work of art belongs so much to what it refers that it enriches its being like a new existential process. A figurative take on something, a descriptive passage in a poem, the goal of the allusion recited on the stage are not mere side-effects, removed from the essence, but representations of the very essence.[248]

The symbolic universe does not render reality but, rather, depicts or images it, thus authenticating and embodying it, as it were.

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[246] E. Cassirer, *Esej o człowieku. Wstęp do filozofii kultury*, trans. A. Staniewska, Warszawa 1971, p. 349. As Cassirer explains, "Man can no longer directly relate to reality. He is unable, as it were, to face it. As man's symbolic activity keeps progressing, physical reality seems to keep withdrawing. Instead of focusing on things in themselves, man, in a way, constantly talks with himself. He has wrapped himself so much in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mystic symbols or religious rites that he can no longer see or know anything that has not been mediated by this artificial means. […] He lives more among imagined emotions, among fears and hopes, among illusions and disappointments, among dreams and fantasies." Ibid., p. 69

[247] H.-G. Gadamer, op. cit., p. 211.

[248] Ibid., p. 216.

When the author of *Truth and Method* wrote about the image, he meant the "image sign", i.e. a pictorial or verbal representation functioning somewhere in between "*pure reference* – the essence of a sign – and *pure replacement* – the essence of a symbol".[249] Such an image refers to what it represents, that is it functions as a sign, but at the same time it does not "spend itself entirely in its referential function, but with its own being contributes to what it represents", replacing it and embodying it.[250] Gadamer, using the concept of representation, discovered that figurativeness does not consist in replacing and embodying because works of art represent being, which means that as well as copying being they also express the ambiguous relation between being and its copy, demonstrating by the same token the process of "arriving-at-representation". Culture in general and figurative arts in particular – painting, sculpture, theatre, or film – are not merely there to "pass on what has been copied", but they also cause an "increase of being" as it is "only through the image that the prototype becomes the archetype, i.e. only from the image's perspective the represented object becomes properly figurative" for the cognitive subject.[251] The double, semiotic-symbolic function of the image makes it possible to call forth the absent being and by the same token to replace it with an image in a way that is visible and comprehensible for the members of the same cultural community.

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[249] Ibid., pp. 222–223.

[250] Ibid., pp. 224–225.

[251] Ibid., pp. 204–209. Robert Cieślak writes that "man to whom being is to manifest itself as an image must simultaneously become the subject. It is the image, then, and by the same token – being manifested in its form, that is the source of information about modern man and his world. Man-poet will become the point of reference for any being only after he starts playing the 'representation' game, that is when he reconstructs his own being through other beings that he has encountered." R. Cieślak, *Oko poety. Poezja Tadeusza Różewicza wobec sztuk widowiskowych*, op. cit., pp. 11–12.

Every community relies on signs and symbols that represent it and confirm its existence, creating its image that the individual can identify with.[252] When an artefact, a cultural idea, or a tradition is a prerequisite of identity, it becomes part of the *imago mundi*, referring to contemporaneous times and commonly accepted norms and values. This holds true both for paintings or films and for memory narratives or literary texts. Viewed from the hermeneutical perspective, the world is "understandable" because it manifests itself in human experience as an image which is understood in similar ways by individuals belonging to the same figurative-communicative community. This sense of community is shaped and acquired socially thanks to the *sensus communis* (literally: "the common sense"). The author of *Truth and Method* traces this concept back to stoic thought, developed in modern philosophy as "the sense that constitutes the community", that is a certain "specific generalness" defining for a member of a given community – through the image of that community – what is comprehensible, probable, morally right, feasible, valuable, and what is not.[253] I assume, admitting that I might be simplifying Gadamer's definition, that the *sensus communis* is an experience of reality in a naturalized form, resulting from the reduction and stabilization of the symbolic universe (of a given community) to the collectively acceptable worldview. While the symbolic universe, as a collection of images, narratives, and symbols, is always open to new interpretations, even though its changes take a long time to materialize (synchronized with the

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[252] Following the sociological model, I assume that "the idea of identity is strongly connected with the 'world of experience'. It follows that identity can be assigned to persons who acknowledge the importance of a given sphere of life. Consequently, identity is the property of humans, not that of culture, institutions, or collective, and should be thus understood as a type of experience – one's awareness of important traits of one's own. [...] Man's social identity from now on will be understood as a bunch of his identifications constituting a peculiar whole." K. Koseła. *Polak i katolik. Splątana tożsamość*, Warszawa 2003, p. 46.

[253] H.-G. Gadamer, op. cit., pp. 48-63.

history of spiritual culture), the *sensus communis* expresses their meaning established in a specific historical situation, changing more frequently, following the rhythm of social phenomena.

It is the latter meaning, close to the *sensus communis*, that I would like to give the concept of "small stabilization", repeatedly used in this chapter. This metaphorical phrase, used by Różewicz in the title of his drama *Witnesses; or, Our Small Stabilization* (1962) and subsequently appearing in a number of his texts, is usually applied to descriptions of the Polish socio-economic system of the 1960s and Gomułka's political rule, a relatively stable period after the suppression of post-October debates and reform movements.[254] Given the problems discussed in this book, I understand the "small stabilization" in a slightly different way, primarily as a cultural phenomenon.[255] I use the term to denote symbols, memory

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[254] Józef Kelera gives credit to Jerzy Koenig for being first to note the "career" of the title of Różewicz's drama as "the formula of its epoch". J. Kelera, *Dramaturgia polska 1945–1978*, "Dialog" 1979, no. 4, p. 95.

[255] Stefan Nowak refers to that period as "stabilization", viewing it as a social and cultural phenomenon. Based on his research findings describing the worldview of Warsaw students in 1958 and 1961, Nowak noted the "decline of interest in social and political issues" accompanied by a decrease in popularity of heroic role models. At the same time he concluded that "the general process of the country's economic and political stabilization" has caused "aspirations and interests to shift to the realm of self-gratification, including personal, professional, and existential needs, leaving behind the questions of making a better world". S. Nowak, *O Polsce i Polakach. Prace rozproszone 1958–1989*, Warszawa 2009, p. 83. The sociologist also noted at that time an "increasing acceptance of socialism" as a way of socio-economic life (Nowak talks even of the "majority" supporting the egalitarian model of society and socialized economy) accompanied by a low acceptance of Marxism as a worldview and a thorough intermingling of "previous axiological structures". From the vantage point of 1981, the scholar also noted the emergence, ever since the 1950s, of a "social vacuum" separating the acceptance of post-war social transformations such as "nationalization of industry, agrarian reform, economic central planning, abolition of pre-war class-based social structure", strong national identification, and a strong position of family values and privacy, from the disintegration of basic social group identities (associations, unions, organizations). Analyzing the Polish system of values during the stabilization period, Nowak argued that it was a combination of social "values propagated by the new system and the old values cultivated somewhere deeper in the people's consciousness", such as nation and family, to name but the crucial ones. The "vacuum" resulted in the commonly felt need for

narratives, behavioural patterns and role models, colloquial speech idioms and public discourses, that is figurative and linguistic forms of the *sensus communis* of the day, while discussing the political and socio-economic context of those times only indirectly, taking into account their cultural ramifications.[256] Agreeing with Andrzej Werner, German Ritz, and other scholars that it was only at the end of the 1970s when a new, holistic model of national culture emerged, I extend the state (and concept) of "small stabilization" to include also the first half of that decade. That is, approximately, how Różewicz defined the time span of the phenomenon in his conversation with Richard Chetwynd and Grzegorz Musiał, stating that the "stabilization" covered the periods of "Gomułka's and, later, Gierek's rule" (W 194). In sum, I define the term as if against the grain of its own etymology, that is not as stabilization but, rather, as a return to the realm of traditional Polish symbols, norms, values, and beliefs, materializing after 1956 as a result of the collective sense of social crisis, the widespread need to identify with commonly respected models (endorsed, for example, by the cultural industry of the Polish People's Republic), and intensified educational pursuits of writers, artists, journalists, and such institutions as school and the Catholic Church.

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social integration, for an "authentic sense of belonging and group support". Ibid., pp. 163–169. Małgorzata Szpakowska, reconstructing the reality of "stabilization days" in K. Zanussi's screenplays, writes that it is a world of "axiological uncertainty", bereft at the same time, however, of the tragic dimension, a commonplace world, i.e. "relatively stable, peaceful, without major shocks or surprises". It is a world inhabited by a "common individual – that is someone who is not excessively determined by national or class identities, not put to the unbearable test, not attempting to become a conscious agent of collective history", someone who lives "a normal life – in a typical apartment in a standard housing project". M. Szpakowska, *Zanussi: moralistyka czasu stabilizacji*, "Dialog" 1979, no. 3, pp. 138–139.

[256] At this point I follow Václav Havel, who in his essay *The Power of the Powerless* (1978) described the situation in the so-called people's democracies as dominated by a false picture (panorama) of reality, composed of "signs, gestures, behavings, words". See A. Zura, *Publicystyka Václava Havla*, "Bohemistyka" 2001, no. 2, pp. 118–119.

As Gadamer tells us, *sensus communis* not only defines the rules and limits of perception, but also establishes a community, laying the cognitive foundations of one's comprehension of reality and interpersonal rapport.[257] Forming the *sensus communis* through religious morality, education, or participation in political and cultural life results in creating a common symbolic and cultural experience of a generation, a nation, a religious denomination, or a social group. Based on this, Gadamer concluded that the community exists as a type of agreement within the framework of a "given linguistic and cultural tradition" grounded in similar perceptions and understandings of reality.[258] Consequently, people raised in a different tradition or in another historical epoch comprehend the world in different ways. It does not mean that their symbolic universe is completely sealed off or inaccessible to individuals sharing a different *sensus communis*. This kind of representation of reality is not some inexpressible, extralinguistic totality, but is constituted in terms of signs and symbols, being thus subjectable to description and interpretation. The world of a given linguistic and cultural tradition is "open to any possible insight and by the same token – to every [possible] broadening of one's world image, being accordingly accessible to others".[259] Personal identity as a narrative may base on the familiar world image, and, since it is subject to interpretation – it can also go beyond its limits.

It follows that the dominant model (paradigm) of national culture exerts, to a certain degree, a decisive influence on the current identity of the typical individual, whereas the meta-narrative of history circumscribes his/her memory. Still, though highly impressionable, the individual's identity and memory are not completely determined by those factors. The *sensus communis* does not put a total check on individual

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[257] H.-G. Gadamer, op. cit., p. 50 and passim.

[258] Ibid., pp. 600–601.

[259] Ibid., p. 601.

consciousness; quite the contrary, the openness of any symbolic reality to "insights" from the outside facilitates individual interpretation of both one's own world and somebody else's, thus making it possible to change one's personal identity. Identity, understood in hermeneutical terms, "is not something that has been given, but, rather, a task or a challenge, something that has to be accomplished in one's struggle with culture".[260] Any instance of going beyond one's *sensus communis* through symbolic-communicative practice, for example by reading a novel or an essay, contemplating a work of architecture or a painting, or even through a conversation, can transform the individual's identity, changing his/her cultural "horizon of interpretations".[261]

The cultural universe also decides about the meaning and forms of memory, especially long-term memory. Jan Assmann, following in Maurice Halbwachs' footsteps, claims that "individual memory emerges in the individual through their participation in communication processes. It is a function of the individual's adherence to various social groups, ranging from the family to the religious and national community. […] Viewed from the individual's perspective, memory is an agglomeration" generated by processing one's personal experiences in relation to the memory of others and to different ways of expressing it, that is to the "rhetoric of memory".[262] Assmann does not rule out the possibility of having personal memories, but he claims that their articulation at the verbal level depends on the individual's participation in interpersonal communication. The affective and political stabilization of communicative memory is the collective memory. Aleida Assmann refers to it as the "long-term

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[260] E. Kobylińska, *Hermeneutyczne ujęcie kultury jako komunikacji*, in: *O kulturze i jej badaniu. Studia z filozofii kultury*, ed. K. Zamiara, Warszawa 1985, pp. 213–214.

[261] Taylor uses in a similar sense the term horizon of meaning/meaningfulness. Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności*, op. cit., p. 41.

[262] J. Assmann, op. cit., pp. 52–53.

social memory that transcends the framework of one generation" and individual biography.

> Collective memory is a political memory. Unlike the dispersed communicative memory [e.g. generational – WB] which is self-perpetuated and self-decomposed, collective memory is controlled from the outside and displays a high degree of homogeneity.[263]

This type of memory is characterized by (1) material minimalism, that is focusing on a few or even a single event from the past, (2) symbolic reductionism, which results in an "affective treatment of historical facts", combined with the distance towards "alternative perspectives on history", and (3) the symmetry of "relations between the past and the present" because any "stabilization of a particular memory results in a specific course of action". In other words, instrumentalization of the past is connected with current political or ethical claims.[264] The communicative memory of a generation, unifying and averaging individual memories, is in time transformed into cultural memory, replacing the interim agreement based on historical experience with a long-term perspective. Aleida Assmann, distinguishing this from collective memory, emphasizes the role of signs and cultural institutions: written texts, works of art and architecture, monuments, customs and holidays, school curricula. These carriers, which for collective memory "have only a signalizing significance and function as landmarks and appeals to shared [collective] memory", also make it possible to pass on memory in the long run, consolidating the identity of the cultural community thanks to its bond with tradition.

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[263] A. Assmann, *1998 – Między historią a pamięcią*, trans. M. Saryusz-Wolska, in: *Pamięć zbiorowa i kulturowa. Współczesna perspektywa niemiecka*, ed. M. Saryusz-Wolska, Kraków 2009, p. 164.

[264] Ibid.

> Because of its mediatic and material character, cultural memory op-
> poses the concentration of contents typical of collective memory. Its
> resources cannot be radically homogenized or instrumentalized politi-
> cally as they are intrinsically open to multiple interpretations.[265]

Aleida Assmann emphasizes that cultural memory, unlike collective
memory, is based on a complex "stock of messages which, in the course
of historical changes, requires constant interpretation, discussion, and
renewal so that it can be adapted to the needs and requirements of every
present".[266] Analysing collective memory (group and cultural), Astrid
Erll distinguishes its subjective aspect (collected memory), linked to the
cultural, social, and symbolic background of individual experiences and
their articulation, from its objective aspect (collective memory) belong-
ing among institutionalized practices of managing the past.[267]

Who is the individual in Różewicz's prose in terms of his personal
identity articulated by culture and in relation to its symbolic stock?
What images and narratives constitute the *sensus communis* of Com-
munist Poland in Różewicz's texts? What kind of relation is there be-
tween the identity of their narrators or protagonists and the cultural
community they belong to, aspire to, or feel detached from? To what
extent, and on what conditions, can they venture beyond the textu-
ally constructed "horizon of interpretations" of themselves and their
world? Does their *sensus communis* give them a feeling of symbolic
control over their biography, memory, and collective and personal
identity – and if so, how? In what situations do the Różewicz charac-
ters regard this vision of reality as inauthentic and insufficient for the

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265   Ibid., p. 171.
266   Ibid.
267   A. Erll, *Literatura jako medium pamięci zbiorowej*, trans. M. Saryusz-Wolska, in: *Pamięć zbioro-
      wa i kulturowa. Współczesna perspektywa niemiecka*, op. cit., p. 213.

description of their experience? What criteria and models do they apply when assessing the value of their symbolic and semiotic universe? Guided by such questions, I intend, first and foremost, to reconstruct the idea of cultural community and the image of the cultural/cultured individual in Różewicz's prose, and also to discuss – based on his narratives – the constitutive elements of the Polish *sensus communis* pertinent to Różewicz's work during the so-called small stabilization.

Communist Poland as a Cultural State

Marc Fumaroli, describing the European cultural state as the "religion of modernity", referred, by way of examples, to *Kulturkampf* Germany, post-revolutionary Russia, and France of the 1960s.[268] Notably, in all these cases the official cultural discourse served the political and educational interests of the state apparatus. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, by making "cultural persuasion" an official obligation, aimed to create the supra-regional German nation understood as a cultural community bound together by the dominant religion. This model of national identity was, with some modifications, adopted in the interwar years by the Polish Falanga. The idea of the cultural state, pursued in Soviet Russia by the People's Commissariat for Education (Narkompros) under the leadership of Anatoly Lunacharsky, was grounded in the ideological premise that creative work is part of the Communist system of persuasion and thus should be subject to institutional control. As Andrzej Walicki noted, the Soviet public discourse of that day made the most of the pre-revolutionary Russian idea of democracy understood not as the opposite of political authoritarianism – like in the Polish tradition – but of cultural

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[268] M. Fumaroli, *Państwo kulturalne. Religia nowoczesności*, trans. H. Abramowicz, J.M. Kłoczowski, Kraków 2008. Fumaroli claims that the "religion of modernity" flourished in most of those European states that had cultural policy programmes of their own run by the politico-administrative oligarchy.

elitism (the privileged status) of the upper classes.[269] The "progressive" programme of society's democratization, conceived as a process of making cultural works and education increasingly accessible to the masses and extending state patronage over their participation in culture, was based precisely on that idea.[270] The third model of the cultural state, pursued in France in the 1960s by André Malraux, among others, combined the idea of culture democratization with the vision of "refining" the national community based on the common partaking of the citizens of the Fifth Republic in the European spiritual and artistic heritage. The project was supposed to restore to the masses the sense of dignity and civilizational and cultural order disrupted by poignant memories of Vichy and Algeria.

Communist Poland can also be viewed as a modern cultural state.[271] The linchpin of the post-war transformation of culture and

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[269] A. Walicki, *Zniewolony umysł po latach*, op. cit., p. 116.

[270] Such an understanding of democracy was also popularized by the Polish interwar artistic avant-garde (see A.K. Waśkiewicz, *W kręgu futuryzmu i awangardy. Studia i szkice*, Wrocław 2003, pp. 250–251). In a broader sense, Ksawery Pruszyński referred to democratization, in the 1930s, as the struggle of the peasant class for political and social rights (see K. Pruszyński, *Podróż po Polsce*, Warszawa 2000, p. 97).

[271] As a cultural state, after 1948 Communist Poland began to emulate– following the precious few years of relative cultural variety – the Soviet model based on the dogmas of Socialist Realism and total ideological control of public communication. The model cultural individual in that system was to be open to the entire progressive heritage of world art and science, but in practice the accessible canon was dominated by the productions of contemporaneous Soviet artists and few Western ones, decidedly leftist. There was also room in the canon for pre-revolutionary works – on condition that they had been deemed aesthetically and politically correct in the world of Socialist Realism. The Communist cultural environment was meagre and nondiversified, being in addition subject to doctrinal reinterpretation. The tasks of forming cultural opinion and selecting key traditions (aesthetic and intellectual) were ceded to administration officials and loyal intellectuals active mostly in newspaper offices, writers' unions, professional organizations, academic and educational institutions. The control over their political loyalty was exerted by high-ranking ideologues of the Communist mono-party. Stefan Żółkiewski, for instance, the chief ideologue and editor-in-chief of "Kuźnica", listed the following among the tasks of state cultural policy: "abolishing the rift between the aristocratic culture of the privileged classes (and the intelligentsia at their disposal) and the culture of the masses. Secondly, he called for emancipation and promotion of the class elements of cultural life of workers and peasants. Thirdly, he demanded that immature forms of

education in Poland were not only the systemic changes imposed by the Communist Party, organically tied to the sovietization of the Polish political-economic system, but also the ideological indoctrination of society accompanied by the country's industrialization and urbanization, migrations to the cities and to the Western Territories, the expansion of education (e.g. the reform of school education and public libraries) and of social welfare programmes. The new cultural space, which was growing alongside the Communist state, was gradually being developed ideologically to become the stage for propaganda activities. Education and pedagogical traditions, open lectures in workers' clubs (operating on company premises) or village cultural centres, publishing houses specializing in popularizing science, literature, the press, theatre and film, radio and television – all of these were subject to political and administrative control by the ruling party and other institutions, as well as to the dogmas of Socialist Realism during the Stalinist period, which ended around 1955. Teresa Walas noted that, in the ideological lexicon used to justify the goals of Communist Poland as the cultural state there were, among others, such phrases as "education and culture", "cultural promotion", "popularization of reading", and "access to cultural goods".[272]

One of the goals of the new state was the democratization of national culture, which was deemed synonymous with popularizing it among

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folk culture be replaced in the lives of peripheral masses with mature culture organically linked to the entire tradition of top achievements of European culture" (S. Siekierski, op. cit., p. 41). Not all the ideologues and journalists involved in creating the cultural state immediately after 1945 followed exclusively Soviet models. "Jan Kott, and even more so Paweł Hertz, would refer mostly to those artistic values that had been formed and verified by previous generations and past political systems." It was only the years 1948–1949 that witnessed the official implementation of the principle that "anything not fitting those [Soviet] models was to be considered nationalistic or hostile to socialist culture". Ibid., pp. 45 and 51.

[272] T. Walas, op. cit., pp. 258–259.

workers and peasants, as well as extending the state's protection over their cultural activities. As Stanisław Siekierski tells us,

> A strong emphasis was put on publishing and insuring the availability of cheap books and on democratization of access to the theatre. Creating programmes for the new potential audience was postulated, not only those for elitist spectators. In sum, the programme assumed a rapid acceleration of cultural impact.[273]

Culture was not, however, viewed as self-existent, autonomous space, but, to the contrary, as a tool serving the party's interests, with the party aiming to subjugate society itself.[274] The fundamental goal of Communist Poland as the cultural state was, firstly, to appropriate the entire public space; secondly, to blur the lines of political divisions generated by the civil war and the post-1944 revolutionary social changes; thirdly, to create a coherent collective identity motivated by Marxist ideology and the universal, international community of humankind, and, fourthly, to encourage as many social groups as possible to warm to the new political system. Only the first of the above goals ever came close to being fully realized. The others were either never attained or the process of their realization got out of the ruling party's control, which led to results inconsistent with the original intentions. The Communists never managed to appropriate the Polish memory completely as, for example, the inconvenient truth about the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact or the Katyń massacre re-

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[273] S. Siekierski, op. cit., p. 43.

[274] Jan Prokop writes: "The beginnings of Communist Poland are marked by the plan to transform completely the consciousness of the country's inhabitants. This ambitious project was soon joined by numerous writers and journalists working side by side with [Communist] activists and the state administration." J. Prokop, *Universum polskie. Literatura – wyobraźnia zbiorowa – mity polityczne*, Kraków 1993, p. 17.

mained common knowledge in Poland.[275] They also failed in their goal to effect a total transformation of the collective identity. Admittedly, in the 1970s and 1980s a homogeneous national identity incorporating most of society became consolidated in Poland – which, among other factors, resulted from the influence of such media as film and television – but this identity had been based on the idea of the conservative ethnic-cultural community rather than the Soviet models.[276]

The transformation of the country's political system in the mid-1950s also affected the cultural state. Social communication and public institutions continued to operate under the auspices of the Communist Party and remained subject to censorship, but intellectuals and writers were now allowed again to touch upon previously banned thematic areas such as tradition, to engage in experiments, to search for new artistic forms, to discuss artworks and artistic phenomena, philosophical texts, or pop culture artefacts created at that time in the West. A critical revision of the Polish symbolic universe, especially the Romantic tradition, was back then one of the currents of the debate over national identity and collective memory.[277] The (obviously limited) independence of the creative and scholarly realms from state-orchestrated ideological interference did not extend to systemic solutions (e.g. law-making rules, economic principles, and public order) or foreign policy. The Gomułka

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[275] See P. Babiracki, *Co się Sowietom nie udało: kultura polska a imperium Stalina*, "Res Publica Nova" 2010, no. 11.

[276] Romuald Cudak maintains that a homogeneous (nationwide) culture was created back then, as a result of the emergence of mass culture and mass social communication. See R. Cudak, *Notatki do "analizy tekstu kultury". Na przykładzie pogrzebu*, in: *Sztuka czy rzemiosło? Nauczyć Polski i polskiego*, eds A. Achtelik, J. Tambor, Katowice 2007.

[277] Prokop writes: "The post-October years will witness again the debates over the 'national myths'. The 'Bim-Bom' generation, raised on Gałczyński (*Zielona Gęś*), who ridiculed all kinds of traditionalists, religion-mongers, and reactionaries embodied by the repulsive character of August Count Bęc-Walski, will also get started with its own project of sweeping the rubble of the God-fearing, patriotic past." J. Prokop, op. cit., p. 17.

regime, in power after 1956, also claimed the right to exercise absolute rule over the nationwide symbolic space covering information media, institutions, and public rituals. Before the plentiful and well-organized political opposition entered the stage in the second half of the 1970s, the major rival of the regime in that area was the Catholic Church.[278] There was a *Kulturkampf* of sorts going on between the two institutions. At stake was a definition of the Polish national community that would come closest to the concept of identity propagated by either camp, thus incorporating as big a chunk of the society as possible.[279] That is why the ideology of the Communist state, regarded by most Poles as alien, imposed by a foreign power, and brought into utter disrepute during the Stalinist period, had to yield to the 19th-century vision of the ethnic-cultural nation. As it happened, other community

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[278]   G. Kepel notes that communism in Poland "was opposed by only one organized group representing values alien to socialism [and, first of all, to Marxism as an atheistic ideology – W.B.] and consistently referring to them – it was the Catholic clergy". After 1956 "the political leadership was bent on working out a compromise with the society", the church remaining an indispensable partner for the pact aimed at maintaining social order. As Kepel writes, "The church, being a representative of the society and a depositary of 'the constitutive traits of Polish identity', 'began to think of Poland in terms of a re-Christianization laboratory. From now on, it would look into the future, imagining the society after communism […]. The idea back then seemed all the more credible because of the lack of any organized centre of resistance that might provide the populace with values alternative to totalitarianism." G. Kepel, op. cit., pp. 136–137. The idea of "grassroots" re-Christianization was implemented by the church primarily in the form of a mass-scale educational project which offered not only an alternative vision of society but also took care of religious socialization of the youth and prompted believers to participate in collective religious rituals. Crucial for this form of social action was "experiencing one's faith in a mass environment" (Patrick Michel). Ibid., p. 138. As a result of the convergence, in the 1970s, of "two factors – the role of Catholicism in defining national identity and the church's monopoly on representing society", the Catholic church in Poland proceeded from the "grassroots" phase of re-Christianization to the "top-down" one, "demanding for itself a number of concessions, including the status of a *de-facto* public institution". Ibid., pp. 138–140.

[279]   See e.g. D. Thiriet, *Marks czy Maryja? Komuniści i Jasna Góra w apogeum stalinizmu (1950–1956)*, trans. J. Pysiak, Warszawa 2002; J. Jaworska, *Świeckie święta*, in: *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach*, ed. M. Szpakowska, Warszawa 2008.

(or collective bond) formulas had either not been fully formed (e.g. the modern republican identity) or had not resonated with the masses (e.g. Marxism or the bourgeois liberal tradition), or had to confront the "social vacuum" of Communist Poland. As social psychologists tell us, "the uncertainty about the future makes people think in terms of time-tested categories".[280] The days of "small stabilization" witnessed the elevation and popularization of (among others) the post-Romantic models of Polish identity, rooted in collective memory and the canon of national literature and symbolism.[281]

As Przemysław Czapliński writes, the civilizational and political transformations of the post-war decade led to the disintegration of pre-existing social classes, thus creating an increasing demand for new, authentic identity models. However, "the 1960s in Polish culture witnessed a poignant disappearance of collective patterns and role models – acceptable, respectable, and inspirational".[282] Already in the mid-1950s the Communist Brave-New-World-style utopia began to

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[280] K. Koseła, op. cit., p. 302.

[281] As Michał Masłowski explains, identity traits of the cultural nation, created in the 19th century, were activated in Poland and other Central European countries only after 1945. The scholar describes the identification pattern as follows: "The collective will of the community replaces [civic/state – WB] tradition; the bond is of an interpersonal, conscious, voluntaristic – not inborn – nature. It expresses the situation of a nation that has lost its statehood but retained the will to maintain its identity. […] The national bond was increasingly sustained by both romantic poetry and religious rituals (Christmas, Easter), but also by ceremonies linked to historic events […]. National identity had become definitely 'transcendentalized' in such a way as to become the object of para-religious worship." Applying Antonina Kłoskowska's term of "cultural canon", conceived as the totality of a given culture's symbols, texts, and values that make up the very concept of national identity (the cultural nation), Masłowski includes in the "canonical core" of this identity Romantic literature (especially A. Mickiewicz's *Dziady* and *Pan Tadeusz*), the "morally uplifting" novels by H. Sienkiewicz, historical painting (especially J. Matejko's paintings and A. Grottger's graphics), and such "memory sites" as Kraków, among others. M. Masłowski, *Formowanie się narodu kulturowego w Polsce i Europie Środkowej*, in: eds N. Dołowy-Rybińska et al., *Sploty kultury*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 383, 389, 390.

[282] P. Czapliński, *PRL i sarmatyzm*, in: ed. H. Gosk, *(Nie)ciekawa epoka? Literatura i PRL*, Warszawa 2008, p. 159.

disintegrate, supplanted by a sense of existential sterility and symbolic void.[283] The anomy, typical of the "small stabilization" period, could be viewed as a result of the collapse of the totalitarian order and its legitimizing ideology on the one hand, and as a side-effect of disintegration, magnified by widespread uprootedness (resultant from increased social mobility) of norms and values on the other.[284] At the level of individual experience, anomy translates into a sense of chaos, of being lost in society, a feeling of loneliness and lack of self-confidence, accompanied by one's loss of faith in the purpose of life and of trust in others. As Tadeusz Różewicz wrote in his commentary to *Moja córeczka* when speaking of that period,

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[283] See B. Szulęcka, *My ludzie z pustego obszaru. Kilka uwag o polskim* flâneuryzmie, "Res Publica Nowa" 2011, no. 16, p. 86 and passim.

[284] As S. Nowak, referring to works by R.K. Merton and J. Turner, explains: "Anomy is a state of collapse of the effectiveness of values and/or norms binding in a given realm of human action on the social scale; this means an emergence of some peculiar axiological-normative vacuum in a particular area of life. It is generated by the inadequacy – perceived or sensed by people – of the means and goals in a particular area of social action, which renders impossible any further use of the former in the implementation of the latter, while further endorsement of both the former and the latter makes little sense. In such a situation there is always a number of people who 'withdraw their support' either for the cultural values (which define the goals) or for the norms (defining the means involved), or simultaneously for both. On a social scale this translates into all sorts of 'deviations'. Anomy is precisely the weakening or the collapse – revealed under different forms of deviation – of (more or less) extensive areas of axiological-normative 'social fabric' defining the form of human action and the form of particular aspects of the socio-cultural system." As a subjective experience, anomy manifests itself in the individual's conviction about the state authorities' indifference towards his/her needs, in the belief that one's personal life goals cannot be accomplished, the functioning of the society being "unpredictable and chaotic", in a "sense of meaninglessness" and in one's loss of faith in the social and psychological support of others. The sociologist distinguishes between nine types of "individual adaptation" to the situation of anomy, e.g. conformism, "shying away from action in a particular sphere of activity", ritualism and counterritualism, utopia, frustration, and rebellion. S. Nowak, op. cit., pp. 233–247. Viewed in terms of cultural sociology, anomy denotes a situation when culture, understood as a collection of "systems of meaning", i.e. "socially shared values, norms, symbols, and beliefs which tell groups, because they are owned by groups, what people should do with their lives, and why they should do it", becomes insufficient or incredible. K. Kosela, op. cit., p. 141.

> Life and education were becoming increasingly superficial and chaot-
> ic. Regrettably, neither the party nor the church had enough strength
> to create new moral, ethical, or aesthetic patterns for those young
> people who had been growing up in a vacuum of sorts, filled with
> formulaic "gas" and "yada yada". Big-city dwellers in general, and the
> youth in particular, were looking for mentors, for sources of renewal,
> in vain (Ma 88).[285]

Anna Jakubiszyn wrote in 1956 in the "Kamena" monthly that the
general "collapse of social morality", observable in those days, resulted
from wartime experiences, the emancipation of youth and women, and
mass-scale migrations of the populace. These experiences led to the dis-
integration of traditional social circles and, as a result, to the creation
of a moral vacuum between traditional ethics that was losing ground
(the "normative power") in confrontation with modern urban(e) life
and the abstract morality of the materialist worldview which, in its
vulgarized form, was conducive to a cult of easy life.[286] The anomy
also resulted from the regime-imposed "new social pact" that rough-
ly equated to the slogan: "Let us rule and we'll let you live."[287] The
"pact" was based on an ostentatious and demoralizing questioning of

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[285] M. Głowiński reminds us that, ever since the days of "Po Prostu", such phrases as "blah-blah-
blah" and "yada yada" were also used in reference to the Party's newspeak. M. Głowiński, *No-
womowa i ciągi dalsze. Szkice dalsze i nowe*, Kraków 2009, p. 31. In the columns of "Po Prostu"
this kind of language was analysed, among other things, in the context of educational problems
with the youth in those days, e.g. in Stanisław Manturzewski's essay *W zaklętym kręgu drętwej
mowy* [*In the Vicious Circle of Yada Yada*] (1955). See K. Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień. Szkice
o tygodnikach społeczno-kulturalnych 1950–1990*, Warszawa 1999, p. 140. Stefan Kisielewski
distinguished between three types of "yada yada", namely that of the Communist regime, the
church, and the political opposition. See G. Kucharczyk, op. cit., p. 160.

[286] A. Jakubiszyn, *Sprawy draźliwe*, "Kamena" 1956, no. 2, p. 2.

[287] A. Liehm, *Nowa umowa społeczna*, Warszawa 1976, p. 112, qtd in: M. Grzelewski, *Mała stabi-
lizacja i krążenie elit (1963–1970). Tygodniki społeczno-kulturalne lat sześćdziesiątych*, "Zeszyty
Prasoznawcze" 1990, no. 1, p. 34.

a cause-and-effect relationship between individual civic, economic, or intellectual involvement and personal success, between public speech, ringing hollow with the empty promises and "yada yada" of vulgarized Marxism, and the all-too-real burdens of everyday life in Communist Poland, between the pseudo-humanism of socialist progress and the narrow-minded, nationalist-conservative model of national community propagated in reality.

The anomy-conducive social experience of the first decade after 1956 is a major issue in *Moja córeczka* (1966), Tadeusz Różewicz's mini-novel. Its protagonist, early into the text, gives a public lecture launched by the "Society for the Proliferation of Knowledge" (whose ideological profile, ways of operating, and very name are reminiscent of *Towarzystwo Wiedzy Powszechnej* [*Society for Common Learning*] functioning in Poland since 1950). The lecture is "About everything. About the moon, conscious motherhood, Darwin, electricity, alcohol, about the difference between a planet and a comet, about gorillas, the potato beetle, the North Pole, the habits of elephants, about Matejko, Stefan Batory, the proletariat, Marx, and so on, and so forth" (II 20). The lecture covers popular sociological, historical, anthropological, and biological topics. The official lecture, however, does not capture the provincial audience's attention, the talk being dry and totally bereft of any pragmatic meaning; it fails to explain anything in vivid detail while its author cannot overcome even his own indifference to the subject matter. Not commenting directly on the degraded discourse of the cultural state, the narrator-agent circumscribes the lecturer's talk with various utterances of background characters, adding in a conversation between tipsy workers, a parody of the then trendy existentialist discussions, a young girl's question about the belief in God (one that pops up repeatedly in the novel), and an intimate story of a school principal abandoned by her unfaithful husband. When, on his way back home, the protagonist falls asleep on the train,

he is tormented by nightmares featuring the suffering victims of Nazi concentration camps.

Contrasting diverse narratives, the author makes official idioms clash with their own parodies, while ideological and philosophical discourses of Communist Poland intertwine with colloquial utterances. A honky-tonk discussion on morality and the worn-out formula of dialectical materialism, a boring lecture and the surprisingly principled stand of a teenage "bimbo", a commonplace story of marital infidelity and the martyrological vision – the protagonist of *Moja córeczka* feels lost amid those narratives and thrown off balance. Refusing to embrace the stories, doctrines, or visions thus encountered, he does not internalize them, unable to base his worldview or his moral compass on any of them. This is not because his own stance is different, but because he is tired of and discouraged by their persuasiveness, typicalness, excess, padding, and confusion. Although he openly admits to being an atheist, his declaration is uncertain, incidental, issued, as it was, in the margins of an educational lecture – not a firm ideological project. An alternative to this kind of nondescript and illusory identity in *Moja córeczka* is an escape into privacy. It is not a naive stand, though. A withdrawal into provincial family life is a gesture of someone who has experienced a variety of roles, having been fated to adopt an "incidental" identity: "I am a former prisoner, soldier, partisan, comedian, firefighter, swashbuckler, bugbear …" (II 37),[288] someone consciously choosing between an uncertain, fleeting personality and political and philosophical narratives that, in his view, have lost their credibility, becoming part of the *sensus communis* of the "small stabilization". Henryk, the protagonist of *Moja córeczka*, escapes

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[288] "I am also a father, a husband, a son-in-law, a cousin, a brother, a 'fellow writer', a union member, a former partisan, a former formalist, pessimist, nihilist, realist, football fan…" – it was in this tongue-in-cheek (but also "persistent") way that Różewicz introduced himself in a conversation with Witold Zalewski in 1965 (W 26).

into privacy even though the private realm proves an undependable shelter. The individual's existential autonomy is only real to the extent that it is protected by the "social pact" which draws a line between what is personal/familial and what is public. This enclave in Różewicz's novel, however, guarantees nothing because in the environment afflicted by anomy one cannot rely even on otherwise fundamental existential principles and interpersonal relations.

Just before he began work on *Moja córeczka*, Tadeusz Różewicz wrote a memoir essay entitled *Kto jest ten dziwny nieznajomy* [*Who Is that Strange Stranger*] dated 1963 in the text. It was first published as the Afterword to Leopold Staff's collection of selected poems bearing the same title,[289] then it was incorporated into the book *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*. The essay opens with the words of André Malraux spoken after World War Two. The quote's fragment goes as follows: "The problem we are facing today amounts to the question whether on this old European soil man has died or not. […] Beyond everything we can see, beyond the spectres and ruins of cities there looms over Europe an even more terrifying presence: the devastated and bleeding Europe is no more devastated or bleeding than the human being she expected to create" (III 28–29). Guided by the ideals of secular humanism, Malraux, as a minister in the government of the Fifth Republic, answered the question with a state-sponsored, socialist-republican programme of cultural education for all. Tadeusz Różewicz, in his sketch "Do źródeł" (1965), formulated an analogous task of rebuilding man, referring – I repeat – to his post-war response to the challenge of spiritual "devastation" as "socially progressive" (III 144),[290] his answer, therefore, fitting with the model of the cultural state. Soon enough, how-

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[289] L. Staff, *Kto jest ten dziwny nieznajomy*, Warszawa 1964 (selection, arrangement and afterword by Tadeusz Różewicz).

[290] The memoir sketch, dated 1965 in the text, was eventually published a year later in the "Studia Estetyczne" annual (Warsaw).

ever, the "religion of modernity" proved to be an instrument of indoctrination and political oppression rather than a catalyst of the world's renewal rooted in the principles and values of humanism. When, in the second half of the 1950s, Różewicz was busy writing such texts (thematically related to the same problem) as *Nowa szkoła filozoficzna* [*New Philosophical School*], *Przerwany egzamin*, or *Próba rekonstrukcji*, the discourse of the cultural state had already, in the view of the inhabitants of Communist Poland, deteriorated into formulaic "yada yada". Many Poles, though, at that time did not know any other official (and thus elevating) "cultural" language.[291]

The key metaphor in *Do źródeł* is the image of St. Mary's Basilica in Kraków, left materially intact after the war but symbolically turned into a "pile of rubble" that renders more accurately the protagonist's inner state. The image of St. Mary's Church and Kraków, "the capital of the Polish spirit" (E 46), appears already in *Echa leśne*. In the essay *Do źródeł* the image returns as a church *à rebours*, an idea for an epic poem in 1945:

> … passersby think that St. Mary's Church stands intact, they do not see that it is a huge prism of bricks and stones. The church lies in ruins. The church within me is destroyed. The building I am looking at is not a church, it is not a historical artefact, it is not a work of art; it is a devastated, desolate shack, a pile of rubble … (III 143).

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[291] "The disappearance of local dialects, which equates the peasant masses entering the mainstream language, is certainly regarded as [evidence of] cultural upward mobility. […] Theirs is, for sure, not the classic [literary] Polish; it is not the language of Mickiewicz or Prus, it is not the language of authors from high school curricula. It is the language of the evening news and newspapers, that is – a newspeak of sorts. Given such social entanglements, it is this kind of newspeak that may begin to embody the language of culture and modernity, and be regarded as a superior, highbrow form of speech. Mastering this language thus becomes a mark of cultural upward mobility." M. Głowiński, *Nowomowa i ciągi dalsze. Szkice dawne i nowe*, op. cit., p. 31. One might add to Głowiński's apt observation that the first language of culture in Communist Poland, as a result of popularization of education and reading among young people of peasant and working-class origin, was the Polish of the core literary canon, not identified, however, with the language of modernity.

The humanist tradition and humanity as a system of values have both fallen into ruin, disintegrated as a whole, with ideas and concepts of civilization turning into empty words. The "reversed" church also appeared in the reportage "Most płynie do Szczecina" (1947) and the essay "Zamek na lodzie (Notatka z lutego 1962)" included in *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*.

The quarry church is, literally, the space left after the demolished church, a site stripped of human meaning, while in metaphorical terms it is the desolate consciousness of modern man, a spiritual void that cannot be filled either with aesthetic "beauty" (*Zamek na lodzie*) or with ideology (*Do źródeł*). The two essays by Różewicz can be interpreted as anticipatory of such later narratives as *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* and *Sobowtór*. The protagonists of both texts, though no longer playing the roles of lawmakers of the world's symbolic image, use the code of the cultural individual. Despite their distrust of art, religion, and philosophy, they have to keep referring to them because otherwise their experience would remain unarticulated and unintelligible. Hence the split of their personal identity, their double nature. As an avant-garde metaphor, for example in Julian Przyboś's poetry, the "church of art" symbolizes culture, sacralized and radically transformed by the artist – the ultimate agent. The motif of the ruins in Różewicz's writing has the opposite meaning, implying, among other things, the disintegration of the idealist and utopian vision of man turned into a "metaphysical mammal", as in the poem *Kamieniołom* (in *Twarz*, 1964). The quarry church also stands for the erosion of highbrow language in culture, the need to return to the vernacular, to everyday, concrete – and, by the same token, banal – speech (III 147).

The motif of the church ruins was immediately after the war a popular image in Polish poetry and literary journalism. Mieczysław Jastrun, in the poem *Ruiny katedry świętego Jana* [*The Ruins of Saint John's Cathe-*

dral], published in "Odrodzenie" in 1945 described the rebuilding of the church as a "creation song rising from the ruins", a temple reconstruction and the beginning of a new life.[292] Jerzy Putrament in his programmatic essay *Odbudowa psychiczna* [*Psychic Renewal*], illustrated with a photograph of the ruins of St. Florian's Cathedral in eastern Warsaw, explained and agitated:

> Everyone in their own way has lost some values, inseparable from humans' social existence, indispensable even for normal human life. […] It is here, then, that the crucial role of literature begins. It needs to lead the way in the process of the nation's psychological reconstruction. The fundamental ethical concepts must return to the state of equilibrium, recover the meaning they have in all the cultural nations.[293]

The reconstruction, practically speaking, denoted public service on the part of literature and the arts which, rather than reconstructing the psyche, were now primarily supposed to shape the morality, worldview, and culture of the national community. As late as the last years of the 1940s –in his poems and journalism, for example – Różewicz also understood man's reconstruction in social terms, perceiving the whole enterprise as a nation-building process of sorts. By contrast, the narrator of *Do źródeł* speaks exclusively of the individual.

The motif of the church as a temple of national identity was used by Różewicz in his novella *Nawet bydlątko* …, published in "Odra" in

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[292] M. Jastrun, *Ruiny katedry świętego Jana*, "Odrodzenie" 1945, no. 49, p. 2. Małgorzata Czermińska points out to this M. Jastrun poem as a negative context for Różewicz's vision of the cathedral in her article *Katedra i żywioły*, in: *Maski współczesności. O literaturze i kulturze XX wieku*, eds L. Burska, M. Zaleski, Warszawa 2001, p. 328.

[293] J. Putrament, *Odbudowa psychiczna*, "Odrodzenie" 1944, no. 4–5, pp. 1–3.

1968.[294] The guide to the "Gothic temple" quoted in the text emphasizes the national, Polish character of Veit Stoss' altar, addressing its story to the teacher and the children on a school trip. It is not a matter-of-fact narrative of an art historian (though containing quite a lot of professional information, it glosses over a relevant biographical fact, namely Veit Stoss' German nationality and his formal indebtedness to German art) but, rather, a prepared *ad usum delphini* post-partition interpretation of Polishness, appealing to the sense of cultural-religious community in the name of the belief that "in our thought the concepts of nation and Catholicism are inseparable" (J. Bocheński). Not commenting on this idea of identity, the narrator closes the novella with another quote: "… on your way out, you will see inside the side chapel the Queen of the Polish Crown decorated with banners in national colours; looking at the chapel and the painting you can surely figure out the rest of the story …" (II 310). The Polish identity illustrated in the narrative is made up of resentment to foreigners, stereotyped versions of one's own culture and understatements implying that the religious interpretation of Polishness should be deemed so obvious that it might just as well remain unarticulated, or – because of the presence of a young teacher accompanying the schoolchildren – it may not be openly verbalized. The novella jokingly reconstructs the social framework of the 1960s collective identity, one that consists of national auto- and hetero-stereotypes, religious symbolism, infantile pedagogical persuasion, and the official propagandist spiel of the secular state – here only implicitly present as the teacher's most likely stance and, as the text's opening scene seems to suggest, practically invisible in eve-

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[294] T. Różewicz, *Nawet bydlątko…*, "Odra" 1968, no. 12. The novella was also published in the first edition of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, but in *Utwory zebrane* (2004) it came out in the second volume of prose, that is before the final editing of *Przygotowanie* published in the third volume.

ryday life. The aggressive and false idiom in the novella is the cliché, operating, however, not as the lexicon of the individual's quotidian, commonplace experience but as the ideological and cultural platitude which imperceptibly sneaks into interpersonal relations and becomes the code of one's identity.

When, in the 1960s, the writer faced the task of reconstructing man, this time "desolate" as a result of social engineering, Stalinist demagoguery, and the anomy of the "small stabilization", he turned to the average, slow-paced, provincial life. Thus the author of *Moja córeczka* reversed the inner logic of the cultural state's discourse. The authors of the progressive educational model assumed that Everyman's inner transformation can be imposed from above, like a top-down solution, by democratizing access to high culture and, by the same token, creating a consistent ideological identity, ethically grounded in everyone's participation in the same universe of art and tradition. Needless to say, Soviet education according to Lunacharsky was poles apart from the "halo" of great literature in Malraux's view. Still, the citizen of the cultural state was in both cases supposed to be the object of state policy. Tadeusz Różewicz formulated the task in a different way. Instead of programming the consciousness of the ordinary man, serving him much-reduced and trivialized takes on identity, he strove to differentiate between real experience from the crafted or the illusory one. Różewicz's narratives attempted to discover the ultimate meaning of the images and concepts of the *sensus communis* accessible to the consciousness of the "small stabilization" Pole, while at the same time exploring their meaning in the context of his own prosaic biography.

Two Educational Projects

In the history of Polish culture the years of "small stabilization" marked not only a revision of the Romantic tradition and heroic myths

– discussed in the previous chapter – but also attempts at reconstructing some positive models of collective identification. Władysław Gomułka's rise to and consolidation of power paved the way for building "national communism" in Poland, as the stance of the party faction affiliated with Gomułka was referred to in the 1956 debates. Simultaneously, with the end of the post-October clashes within the Communist Party, a new power balance was established in which, besides the Gomułka-led centre, a relatively liberal group emerged accompanied by the "partisans" of General M. Moczar. The latter faction, beginning with the early 1960s, strove to seize absolute power, utilizing nationalist ideology that combined selective and politicized collective memory with an attempt to define Poland's national interest in terms of ethnic antagonisms. Marek Grzelewski, analysing the mechanisms of social communication in the years 1963–1970, notes that, in the sense of a mental-cultural transformation, their offensive was a radical "neo-bourgeois" way of "limiting the realm of tradition, culture, its pluralisms and its values".[295] Moczar's

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[295] "There was a retreat from a certain level of intellectual accomplishments, a certain world of values, to the place where one normally retreats after losing faith, idea, and cultural maturity – namely, to what the Germans call a children's room, to the *Kinderstube*. […] Retreating there, those people would only find fragments made up of their xenophobic impulses, inarticulate prejudices, of past wrongs and equally unearned strokes of luck whose rationalizations, so painstakingly arrived at, were lost again. Retreating to the "children's room", they would find landscapes ravaged by the storm, which was connected with the history of occupation, the holocaust of the Jews, the destruction of cities, the smuggling and the looting". M. Grzelewski, op. cit., p. 43 (Grzelewski's article is, in that part, an exact repetition of Krzysztof Wolicki's diagnosis from his 1981 paper, see K. Wolicki, *Dziedzictwo Marca*, in: *Marzec 68. Referaty z sesji na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim w 1981 roku*, eds M. Gumkowski, M. Ofierska, Warszawa 2008, p. 188). The construction of the "public enemy" in the symbolic universe of Party nationalists was primarily based on the ideologeme of the ethnic-cultural otherness of one part of the state elites, "alien" to the rest of the homogeneous nation and acting to its detriment. According to Głowiński the word "alien" in the "March period" was no longer applied to "such phenomena as social class or ideological group", its point of reference now being the nation. Thus "alien" stood for "nonnative", which, given the enforced friendship with Slavic nations, led to the narrowing down of the "alienness" category to Jews and Germans. M. Głowiński, *Nowomowa i ciągi dalsze. Szkice dawne i nowe*, op. cit., pp. 24–25. The

followers, or the "Moczarites", as they were commonly called, basing their worldview on the writings of Zbigniew Załuski, among others, strove to construct the memory of the occupation days, the post-war period, and the October "thaw" in ways that would foreground them as the dominant patriotic formation, seasoned in the fight against German fascism, and representing the nation's best interests. At the same time, the Moczarites saw themselves as victims repressed by the Stalinists arriving from the USSR. The formula of transmitting that ideology to the masses was an educational-patriotic rhetoric, mostly a xenophobic vision of history and tradition, one that projected onto Poland's past the national, rather than class-based, social grid resulting, among other causes, from the highly instrumentalized and reduced vision of cultural heritage (and cultural memory).[296] The Communists, though

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practical criterion for evaluating the participants of the conflict was their factional-biographical identity. The attacks of the nationalist faction were, after all, targeted at the segment of Communist Poland's establishment holding the highest-ranking posts in the state apparatus and in the country's state-run economy over the first two post-war decades. Striving to take over that group's privileges, the nationalists from the Polish United Workers' Party appealed to the collective memory of their generation that still cultivated the language of the 1930s' Polish anti-Semitism (e.g. the radical nationalist rhetoric as an instrument in the struggle for political support and state power) as well as the experience of the extermination of the Jewish populace perpetrated by the Nazis during World War Two, mostly on the territory of our country, and that of the political terror and demoralization of the 1940s.

[296] As Adam Kersten explains, the previously emphasized "revolutionary and folk traditions, those that had evolved in the days of sharp social conflicts, after 1944 soon became an anachronism, all efforts at spreading them among the masses being thus a foregone conclusion. The withering class bonds were yielding to national ones; significantly, the post-1944 transformations had been preceded by the war, which contributed enormously to raising national consciousness in the country. The direct result of those processes was the takeover of the past's entire cultural legacy, without the division into 'folk' and 'noble' elements, or the 'bourgeois' and the 'proletarian' ones. The takeover and appropriation were accompanied by the presentist projection of contemporaneous ideas onto the past. [...] The illusions, cherished by some, that it was possible to eliminate 'gentrification' from the canon of tradition were unreal and, what is more important, eventually harmful. The new Polish society had to internalize its own past first." A. Kersten, *Sienkiewicz – "Potop" – historia*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 253–254.

also exerting an influence on the image of past eras, first and foremost strove to rule, in their own best interest, over the latest history – that of the 20th century – for example, by making it out to be an ideological extension of selected earlier epochs.

As Czapliński tells us, Załuski, the author whose books – *Przepust-ka do historii* [*A History Pass*] and *Siedem polskich grzechów głównych* [*Seven Polish Cardinal Sins*] – were reprinted many times in the 1960s, "fought against mock-heroic tendencies, attacking the 'ridiculers' and 'pacifists', the Polish Film School and theatrical grotesque, *Eroica*, *Lotna*, and *Zezowate szczęście*", while at the same time "bombasticizing the past" and endorsing "the Sienkiewicz version of Polishness and patriotism".[297] Creating thus a positive mythology of national history, Załuski in fact reduced the collective memory to war and insurgent motifs, and narrowed the patriotic ethos to a sense of pride in one's homey ways, conservative values, martyrological bravery, and military successes. What is more, he interpreted World War Two as an essentially Polish-German conflict, while in subsequent essays he connected the history of European revolutionary movements with the issue of Poland's independence in the 19th and 20th centuries.[298] This interpreta-

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[297] P. Czapliński, *PRL i sarmatyzm*, op. cit., pp. 168–169. The phenomenon of the popularity of "Sarmatism" in Communist Poland is discussed at length by Czapliński in *Resztki nowoczesności*, where he notes that "both *Siedem polskich grzechów głównych* and the film adaptation of *Potop* were created not only to cure historical complexes but also as a reaction against […] pragmatic interpretations" offered by such critics of "the Sienkiewicz lesson of Polishness" as K.T. Toeplitz, P. Czapliński, *Resztki nowoczesności. Dwa studia o literaturze i życiu*, Kraków 2011, p. 87.

[298] The author of *Siedem polskich grzechów głównych*, noting that "today [i.e. at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s – WB] already two-thirds of the nation are youth and children", emphasized the pedagogical aspect of his essays and insisted that both their protagonist – by whom he meant "the likes of Głowacki and Mastalerz, Poniatowski and Kozietulski, Sucharski and Ordon" – and their addressee is the same common man, an inhabitant of a country like many others. Z. Załuski, *Siedem polskich grzechów głównych. Nieśmieszne igraszki*, Warszawa 1985, pp. 180 and 208. That memory narrative was used in the 1960s in order to redesign the political scene

tion of Polish historical identity entered the public discourse of Communist Poland, affecting also the praxis of home policies implemented by Gomułka, while the popularity of Załuski's books among common readers and journalists reached almost a mass scale, thus really influencing popular opinion.[299]

An alternative, competing project of national community was the vision of Polish Catholicism developed by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.[300]

and create an official identity for the "partisans" and their circles. An important part of that identity was the public cult of Polish martyrology harnessed to the state machinery of "veteranship". The martyrology was grounded in the image of World War Two as a conflict between two ethnic nations, Germans and Poles, and the conviction that the sacrifice of the Polish people during the war was unique in its scope. Those who endorsed that ideology projected a positive identity, focusing on educating the youth in the spirit of heroism and martyrology, recognizing the significance of the traditions of insurgent and independence movements, and defending national solidarity against internationalism. The "kinderstube" of party nationalists was thus a vision of a closed native community, firmly rooted in the traditions of Romanticism and social naturalism, grounded in the affective and morally obligating collective memory unified by the disciplining myth of the nation's unity within the boundaries of a unitary state.

[299] Janusz Dunin, writing about modern book culture, including that of Communist Poland, confirms that Załuski was read by masses of readers. J. Dunin, *Pismo zmienia świat. Czytanie-lektura-czytelnictwo*, Warszawa-Łódź 1998, p. 172. *Barwy walki* by M. Moczar was on the curriculum for the 8th grade of elementary school, on the elective reading list. See *Język polski. Program nauczania ośmioklasowej szkoły podstawowej (tymczasowy)*, Warszawa 1970.

[300] This conflict over the "hearts and minds" was brutally described by Gomułka in his talks with Jerzy Zawieyski of 1 October 1958 (referring, among other things, to the Cardinal's Lublin sermon "revolving around the binary opposition: *Civitas Dei – Civitas Satanae*") and of 12 May 1959: "The church is waging a war against us, but it is not going to win that war. We are going to win it, and you are going to be swept away by history. Wyszyński keeps making claims, keeps demanding something. He wants to rule over the hearts and minds. But in this country it is socialism that rules over the hearts and minds. Socialism reaches out for the hearts and minds, the church has no right to do so!" J. Zawieyski, *Dzienniki*, vol. I: *Wybór z lat 1955–1959*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 580–590, 650. The Catholic Church, in the years preceding the emergence of strong political opposition, was the only real alternative to Communist Poland as the authoritarian state implementing its own cultural-educational agenda in a society stripped of civic institutions. Not only did the church have its own idea of Polish identity but also the means to implement it. As Robert Krasowski writes about the church in the 1970s and 1990s: "The very down-to-earth power of running a huge institution was crucial. One that had its own structures, people, money, buildings, and, first and foremost, the pulpits, that is its own media." R. Krasowski, *Gra z Kościołem*, "Polityka" 2011, no. 28,

The 1960s – as Jan Prokop tells us – was the decade of "the nation's deep and widespread spiritual awakening triggered by the millennial festivities and the Cardinal's pastoral activity, invariably focused on the Christian foundations of Polish identity".[301] At the cost of concessions to the Communist regime, amounting, among other things, to the recognition of post-war borders and economic reforms, the condemnation of the 1940s' anti-Communist resistance movement, and the maintenance of an official distance from the institutions of the government-in-exile, the Cardinal strove to implement the ideology of "the Christian nation's Church" and "healthy nationalism".[302] As Józef M. Bocheński, a theoretician of Catholic nationalism in the 1930s, explained:

> Nationalism is a social trend in the sense that it prompts realization, deepening, and expansion of certain cultural values embodied by a group of people; the effort is supposed to be a collective one, with personal interests being subjugated to large-scale social goals. Secondly, nationalism is a current that aims to cultivate and popularize certain cultural values. Finally, nationalism is an expansionist trend, an active one, that urges its followers not only to live in accordance with certain norms, but also to strive to make as many people as possible, at least within a given group, to live accordingly.[303]

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p. 20. The church's "organizational assets" in Communist Poland amounted to "real estate, telephones, printing houses, personal contacts, pulpits as communication media, and also the people's time, energy, and [political] alertness", all the more keen in an ideological secular state. K. Kosela, op. cit., p. 207.

[301] J. Prokop, op. cit., p. 19.

[302] See G. Kucharczyk, op. cit., p. 75.

[303] J.M. Bocheński, *Szkice o nacjonalizmie i katolicyzmie polskim*, Komorów 1995, p. 91 (Bocheński's book is a collection of essays and polemics from the years 1932–1938).

Polish identity thus conceptualized amounted to a blend of national culture, equated with the system of values and memory of the cultural nation and a religious mission within the state.[304]

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[304] The idea of national Catholicism , which seems to be the most integrated and consistent, was propagated in the 1930s by Bolesław Piasecki's *Falanga*, a radically nationalist movement. The aim of "bepists" (nicknamed after the politician's initials) was to create the "Catholic state of the Polish nation". Their programme featured a strong critique of "amoral" culture (i.e. individualistic-liberal, democratic and Communist) and plans for great social-economic reforms – with the ideological impact aimed not at intellectual elites but at the working masses – both resulting from the essentially romantic premise that it is the collective, mass-swaying experiences that are decisive for the nation's moral-ideological unity. The Catholic nationalism of *Falanga* opposed the nationalist tradition of *Narodowa Demokracja* (National Democracy) in which the nation constituted the absolute value. The only absolute value in the ideology of the "bepists" was God, the nation remaining the highest good and the loftiest worldly aim. The manifestation of that vision of Poland were the Jasna Góra Vows connected with the academic pilgrimage of 1936. The event was organized by the nationalists supporting the programme of the "Catholic state of the Polish nation". As Lipski reminded us, throughout the pilgrimage there was a continuous emphasis on anti-communism, the Christianizing mission of the Polish nation in secularized Europe, the necessity to make Catholic ethics an integral part of national culture, of social and familial life, and of youth education. See J.J. Lipski, *Katolickie państwo narodu polskiego*, London 1994, pp. 87, 97, 216–225. Ksawery Pruszyński, comparing in his reportage coverage of the Vows the model of the Polish Catholicism of the 1930s with the French and Spanish ones, noticed in the former not only an emphasis on mass participation and the national unity (of the people and the intelligentsia) but also some traits of Sarmatian religiousness. K. Pruszyński, *Podróż po Polsce*, op. cit., pp. 26–29. *Falanga*'s programme was continued after 1945 by the so-called Catholic-National Movement, whose leader, B. Piasecki, strictly collaborated with the Communist regime. The ideology of the "Catholic state of the Polish nation" was also on the agenda of the Polish Episcopate. In 1947, for example, the bishops postulated that the new constitution should "duly reflect the tribal character and the Christian ideology of the nation" (see G. Kucharczyk, op. cit., p. 72). Regulations implemented in the first years of Communist rule, such as "the introduction of the secular family, civil, and criminal legislation, judicial and administrative proceedings, secular hospital system, and, first and foremost, secular education" as well as the constitutional separation of church and state, radically reduced the Catholic church's impact on the social reality. M.A. Rostkowski OMI, *Kościół wobec procesu laicyzacji szkolnictwa w Polsce Ludowej*, "Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne" 1997, no. 30, p. 277. Nevertheless, the episcopate, also under S. Wyszyński's leadership, strove to carry out the pre-war political project of national-Catholic Poland, which presupposed a recourse to mass appeal. See A.L. Sowa, *Historia polityczna Polski 1944–1991*, Kraków 2011, p. 277. From Stefan Wyszyński's articles published in "Ateneum Kapłańskie" in the years 1932–1939, when he was Editor-in-Chief of the periodical, one can infer that the ideological stance of the future Cardinal

Creating and popularizing its own vision of the world, the Church – according to the sociologist – represented the social grievances about the *status quo*, while at the same time organized the means of expressing such grievances, defined the moral dimension of political problems and private life in Communist Poland (defining public space as the "clash between the forces of good and evil"), offered identity patterns and behavioural norms to individuals, and devised long-term strategies for collective action.[305] Cardinal Wyszyński, understanding the realities of applied socialism, addressed his message not to the intelligentsia – which, until the mid-1960s, was rather critical of national-Catholic traditions or considered religion a private affair, while at the same time accepting the values of Christian personalism – but to the average Pole suffering from an identity crisis.[306] Aimed at creating his/her communal identity were such rituals as the 1956 renewal

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and Primate of Poland was resolutely anti-Communist and anti-liberal, simultaneously stressing the value of "social justice". After all, the periodical in those days would often feature lengthy articles on cultural nationalism and its pedagogical principles, whose authors looked favourably upon National Socialism and "anti-Judaism", blaming them only, if at all, for their insufficient acknowledgement of Catholic values. See e.g. Rev. Dr P. Tochowicz, *Zasady wychowawcze nacjonalizmu i politycyzmu*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie" 1937, no. 2 and 3; Rev. Dr Józef Pastuszka, *Filozoficzne i społeczne idee A. Hitlera*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie" 1938, no. 1. On the subject of distinguishing within Polish nationalism the current of Catholic nationalism, see the polemic: B. Grott, *Idee mają konsekwencje* and M. Zmierczak, *W odpowiedzi na uwagi Bogumiła Grotta*, published in "Przegląd Zachodni" 2011, no. 1, pp. 273–282.

[305] K. Kosela, op. cit., pp. 146, 155.

[306] If, after the period of "privatization" of religious worldview in post-war Poland (as the 1958 polls indicated), denominational identification and collective religious rituals were to recover their original function of "group symbol and banner", a conducive psycho-social undertow was needed. This undertow is reconstructed by the sociologist as "an accumulation of links between socio-political stands and attitudes to religion, and an acknowledgement of those links among big social groups". The process resulted in the "politicization of one's attitude towards religion on a massive scale". By way of historical analogy, Nowak points to the victory of Catholicism among the Polish gentry in the 17th century. The nobles, after a period of divisions and reformational transformations, re-integrated their ranks, using religion as "weapon and banner" in the struggle for their group interests, elevating, one could add, the latter to the rank of national interest. S. Nowak, op. cit., pp. 294–296.

of King John Casimir's Lvov Vows and the celebrations of the Millennium of Poland's Baptism, followed ten years later by the act of entrusting the Polish nation to Mary.[307] Concomitantly, creating the image of the Church as the third power mediating between the regime and society (and, later on, the opposition) strengthened the link between religious and national identity.[308] Each of those gestures reinscribed within the public space the Catholic-national community, the image of the religiously united nation, re-enacting – in a ritual manner – the relation between the present moment and the collective memory.[309] This staging of Polish cultural identity was aimed against the state's dominance in the realm of education and communication. Indirectly, however, it also targeted the "derisive" intellectual elites, ironically detached not from religion as such but from its anachronistic, "inherited form produced by this religious-patriotic identity over the centuries".[310] In Wyszyński's teachings the constitutive element of Polish

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[307] The 1956 Jasna Góra Vows of the Nation, scheduled for the tricentennial anniversary of the Lvov Royal Vows of John Casimir and clearly referring to them, expressed not only the recognition – identical to that from the past ages – of Our Lady as the patroness and protectress of Poland, but also a vision of national unity in the face of a similar enemy, i.e. one representing a threat to the nation's political liberty and cultural-religious identity. The Vows were also a tacit reminder of the historical shape of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its eastern territories annexed by the USSR. The historical-geographical parallel resuscitated the Sarmatian myth of the Polish community as a blend of Latin culture, politicized Catholicism, xenophobic patriotism, and conservative mores.

[308] See S. Nowak, op. cit., p. 293.

[309] "A cult practised collectively, in public, often builds collective bonds, provides emotional experiences, is sometimes a manifestation of national affiliation, a testimony to one's respect for tradition, and sometimes – even a political demonstration." S. Opara, op. cit., p. 48.

[310] J. Prokop, op. cit., p. 19. This detachment was manifested, for example, by the memorial of the "Znak" magazine circles, addressed in 1958 to Cardinal S. Wyszyński, advocating the separation of religious life from politics and a reduction of mass religious ceremonies (referred to by J. Zawieyski as "pseudo-mystical madness"). See A.L. Sowa, op. cit., p. 277. Czesław Milosz in his conversation with Zawieyski argued that "in Poland the church identifies itself with nationalism and, by and large, the nationalist movement is so strong that one should erect a monument to Dmowski. The church Millennium action is, in fact, the religious version of the pre-war programme of The Great Poland Camp [*Obóz Wielkiej Polski*]." J. Zawieyski, op. cit., p. 577.

identity was the family viewed as a "natural" organism, superior to public institutions. This educational project strengthened the family-nation relation, subordinating to these two organically linked communities other interpersonal structures as well as the individual's ethical obligations.[311] As a conservative utopia, however, such a vision of the Polish community was not representative of those experiences of the modern individual that were constitutive of the ideological and moral transvaluations of European cultural tradition after World War Two.

Tadeusz Różewicz viewed the phenomenon of the *Kulturkampf* over national identity in the 1960s not through the lens of great educational projects as such but from the perspective of the individual operating in that sociosphere. Creating the character of Communist Poland's Everyman, Różewicz sought a means of expression for the worldly, material, and nondescript character of his existence, simultaneously particular and typical because described by identity patterns that manifested themselves in the public sphere. Those patterns formed the individual's identity on a massive scale, creating a reduced matrix of his national and historical imagery. Różewicz reversed that relation. Rather than discovering the Polish *universum* in the commonplace and the quotidian, acknowledging the dominance of a certain tradition or its propagandistic version, he would strive to capture its real meaning in the context of the individual's imagination and experience, his/her personal affairs, familial bonds, memories. That is the format of the humoristic novella *Towarzysze broni* [*Brothers in Arms*], which was published in "Odra" in 1970. The leitmotif of those several vignettes (meeting an old friend from the guerrilla days, a conversation with the writer's son, editing one's own poem) is the unbearably bombastic atmosphere in "mid-January of 1962", the omnipres-

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[311] Wyszyński's conservative stand on family manifested itself, for example, in his sharp criticism of women's right to abortion legislated by the parliament of the Polish People's Republic in 1956.

ent rhetoric of armed struggle and resolve, ignoring everyday life with its common problems, prevalent both among members of the state-sponsored veterans' organization (*ZboWiD*) and at elementary schools. "We, at our school, my entire class" – a child explains – "are currently looking for old insurgents, prisoners of Nazi torture chambers, partisans, and other heroes who could tell us about their past deeds" (I 351–352). From the point of view of the novella's narrator-agent, all that "veteranship" seems fake and infantile. There is no axiological or motivational connection between the lives of his literary characters and the pedagogical ideal of ideological projects ignoring or mystifying the individual's real biography. Therefore, the only points of reference for one's identity in the 1960s were not those projects but elementary individual experiences defined by personal relationships, carnality, physiology, loneliness, and death. Only those experiences were considered representative by the writer.[312]

In *Moja córeczka*, the embodiment of such experiences is Brudas [Soap Dodger], a street peddler and beggar, a social outcast, the embodiment of uncleanliness and mundane, anonymous existence.[313] It is thanks to the relationship with him, the figure of the genteel/cultured person's Other, that the novel's narrator-agent tests and reveals his identity – not exactly that of a typical store clerk or an intellectual,

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[312] Although the writer explained his reluctance to publish *Echa leśne* in the 1960s by stressing the book's insufficient literary quality (E 69), it might also testify to his scepticism towards the "veteran culture" of that period.

[313] T. Żukowski, comparing Syn Człowieczy [Son of Man] from the poem *Widziałem go* with Waluś from *Do piachu*, writes: "Both characters are presented in ways that foreground their carnality and the attendant humiliation. […] Both Różewicz protagonists are social outcasts. Both embody impropriety and banality, defying the currently binding sense of decorum by their very existence. They represent Otherness. Różewicz's choice is particularly apt; after all, for the liberal society there is nothing more marginal than a beggar." T. Żukowski, op. cit., p. 129. Brudas is to a certain extent the civilian equivalent of Waluś, yet another incarnation of the Różewicz beggar figure. His role in the Job motif of *Moja córeczka* is analysed by Aniela Kowalska. See A. Kowalska, *"Moja córeczka" Tadeusza Różewicza (próba odczytania)*, in: *O prozie polskiej XX wieku*, eds A. Hutnikiewicz, H. Zaworska, Wrocław 1971.

but a combination of both.[314] At the sight of the beggar, he starts his interior monologue consisting of questions and doubts. "I wonder what a man like that thinks, what keeps him going, what is his attitude to God or to the Homeland's Millennium" (II 42). The peddler intrigues him, prompting him to assume – as he himself notes – the competences of the priest or the sociologist. What if Brudas "dies and never reads *Pan Tadeusz*?" What if he has already "turned into a rag"? What "else can he turn himself into?" That monologue has no conclusion except for the quote "Litwo, Ojczyzno moja" ["Lithuania, my Motherland!"] (II 42). The narrator, though abstaining from positing sociological or moral theses, still suggests that Brudas' life is contingent, incomplete, irrelevant, lacking a higher purpose. That character, as Aniela Kowalska writes, is a *nequam*.[315] The "empty" identity is a perfect mirror of identification for the protagonist who, speculating about the beggar, casually takes stock of its cultural universals. What matters is one's attitude to religion and public matters, scholastic erudition (*Hamlet* and *Pan Tadeusz*), and – first and foremost – one's familiarity with the canonical narrative of Polishness, the latter providing a framework for the whole novel.[316] The opening scene of *Moja córeczka* – called the "overture" by Kowalska – features a schoolgirl who, in her father's presence, recites

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[314] Cieślak writes: "The individual can receive a confirmation [of personal identity – WB] only from another person – during an encounter, at the moment of a real, already materializing, or only expected, projected dialogue." This identity is constructed by a system od mediations, primarily "thanks to the medium of cultural texts". R. Cieślak, *Oko poety. Poezja Tadeusza Różewicza wobec sztuk widowiskowych*, op. cit., p. 207.

[315] A. Kowalska, op. cit., p. 368.

[316] Grażyna Straus notes that in the 1984 polls most of the interviewees pointed out to Mickiewicz's and Sienkiewicz's works as the most important (literary) elements of national culture. Straus concludes: "And only those two names connected with literature (and book culture) can be considered cultural universals, or – as scholars put it – phenomena which are known and highly valued not only by society's most cultured members but by everyone or by a vast majority." G. Straus, *Powszechność i powszedniość lektury*, Warszawa 1993, p. 11.

the opening fragment of *Pan Tadeusz*. The literary picture of the idyllic native province, an integral part of the *universum* of national imagination, provides a contrastive background to the novel's subsequent traumatic scenes. The poem's fragment is accompanied by a humorous dialogue which exposes the uncommunicativeness of Mickiewicz's lexicon to a child, reducing the theme of Poland's national "Bible" to the suggestion of a generation gap between father and daughter, and the school-like, institutionalized reception of the classics.

Kowalska writes that the novel's protagonist is a "man in the street, naive and old-fashioned in his good-naturedness, modest, though at the same time excessively emphatic of man's dignity as such", but also devastated by his wartime experiences.[317] It seems that the author of *Moja córeczka* strove to describe the mental condition of someone plagued by martyrological memory, someone who is old-fashioned, unadjusted to the ways and mindset of the young generation of urbane cynics.[318] Viewed in the context of the Brudas scene, however, that seemingly typical and nondescript identity gains in ambiguity. Admittedly, the central character is a victim of fraud but also the subject of oppressive perception; though derided by demoralized youngsters and hard hit by the tragic death of his daughter, he also – in a symbolic manner – stigmatizes and excludes. Looking at Brudas and raising sublime questions about God, Millennium, Homeland and great lit-

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[317] A. Kowalska, op. cit., p. 372.

[318] The mentality of youth viewed as a separate social estate, which according to J. Jaworska emerged in Poland in the mid-1950s, was a manifestation of the youngsters' craving for privacy and individual self-creation, both habitually suppressed by the system. In those days, the young and earnest ideologist was replaced by the rather decadent "beautiful twenty-year-old", blasé and cavalier, stereotypically regarded as a symbol of social modernization, or even as a social threat. Conducive to youth culture, the scholar adds, following Marcin Czerwiński, was "the extended and institutionalized education, that is an increasingly longer period between biological and social maturity, media-endorsed behavioural patterns, sexual liberation (unrestricted flirting, premarital sexual initiation) the collapse of traditional role models". J. Jaworska, *Młodzież: piękni dwudziestoletni*, in: *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach*, op. cit., pp. 206–211.

erature, he perceives the Other through the façade of his material situation, behaviour, and looks. The poor and dirty street peddler, covering the top of his head with a "tiny black beret", is seen by the narrator-agent as someone radically different and inferior, reduced almost to an object and evoking immediately negative connotations. (The Brudas character is reminiscent of one of the negative stereotypes of the Jew.) Frykman and Löfgren tell us that the concept of uncleanliness is an "instrument of social control" exercised by those who are socially, racially, or culturally different. The criteria and representations of dirt are part of the cultured person's identity.[319] Poles apart from the "hollow" and "inferior" identity of Brudas thus construed is the normative identity, perfectly internalized and domesticated. Trapped on the one hand in the literary myth of spiritual homeland and the intelligentsia's sense of cultural superiority, and on the other – in the temporary rituals of the national-religious community, the latter identity proves closed and repressive. What is more, to the urbane individual living in the Polish People's Republic of the 1960s such an identity seemed detached from the real world, anachronistic, constricting, and ultimately useless. It is but a compilation of clichés. ("The Homeland's Millennium" sounds like a conflation of the slogans "The Millennium of the Polish State" and "the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland".) That is how one could interpret the novel's ending. "Neat-looking, well-dressed people", going to church with their families, still pray and listen to the priest, but the sermon does not seem to hold water anymore: "these days it's all kind of … mixed up … a real hodge-podge … no one can make head or tail of it" (II 91–92).

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[319] Anthropologists believe that "our ideas of cleanliness and dirtiness function as law enforcement services for our thoughts. Whatever does not fit in our world or collides with our beliefs is promptly arrested and imprisoned behind the walls made up of the concepts of taboo and uncleanliness. What ends up there depends on the particular culture. There is no such thing as absolute uncleanliness […]. Uncleanliness is always in the eye of the beholder." J. Frykman, O. Löfgren, *Narodziny człowieka kulturalnego. Kształtowanie się klasy średniej w Szwecji XIX i XX wieku*, trans. G. Sokół, Kęty 2007, p. 164.

Viewed from that perspective, *Moja córeczka* is not only an accusation of modern life, but also of traditional norms and values which – infiltrated by contemporary education, colloquial speech, public discourse, and popular culture – have lost the ability to make sense of one's immediate environment.[320] If one accepts the popular thesis that the model for Mickiewicz's poem was *Hermann and Dorothea*, then Różewicz's novel is approximately an image of a conflict between private life and public sphere that also features in Johann W. Goethe's poem. The life of the protagonist of *Moja córeczka* is, after all, grounded in typical small-town ways, not those of the manor house, and is as such transformed by large-scale social phenomena that are the source of the individual's moral and civilizational experience.

Described as a novella or a mini-novel by Różewicz, *Moja córeczka* is one of his longest works of fiction, presenting through a series of vignettes the "disrupted" identity of the 1960s man (W 266). In his review of the narrative, Jacek Łukasiewicz dismissed it as a mere tale that "poses" as a morality play, that is, featuring an ostensibly philosophical generalization on the protagonist's lot, it remains a mere melodrama with a message.[321] The critic was right about the novella's formulaic format. That characteristic, however, results to a certain extent from the text's compositional premises; it was originally intended as a film script and thus generically subject to the convention of separate scenes accompanied by a short commentary.[322] Also "Brudas", as a personified character trait,

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[320] Monika Brzóstowicz claims that *Moja córeczka* is an image of "modern destruction of traditional values and co-existence patterns" because in Różewicz's text, "moral and social traditions are no longer looked up to, they do not define behavioural role models anymore, but instead function as superficially treated customs and mores". M. Brzóstowicz, *Wizerunek rodziny w polskiej prozie współczesnej*, Poznań 1998, p. 134.

[321] J. Łukasiewicz, *O powiastkach z morałem*, "Odra" 1967, no. 4, p. 85.

[322] M. Szpakowska writes: "One can hardly blame a screenplay's author for merely sketching the characters" as it is only the film's actual shooting that is supposed to "fill out the picture's gaps". That is why film scripts are habitually "cleansed of the randomness of the human psyche and the real fabric of human behaviour". M. Szpakowska, op. cit., p. 138. The construction of

refers to the parable convention, like the exotic, cynical, and clownish Harry, a diabolic figure (cf. Lord Harry in J. Joyce's *Ulysses*). If, however, one applies Błoński's definition, *Moja córeczka* can be classified as a mini-novel. As Błoński argues, the novel

> does not merely translate the momentary discovery or experience into events, as usually happens in a short story, nor does it only outline the partial conflict. It is an account of spiritual growth, a quest for authenticity in a world lacking in authentic value … Consequently, it attempts to arrive at the formula of one's individual existence, to circumscribe – to the rhythm of diverse events – the protagonist's identity or at least the reasons why he finds it impossible to grasp it.[323]

Różewicz's *Moja córeczka* has an additional function: Kowalska notes the relationship between one of the text's motifs, that of pictorial civilization, and the novel's structure ("stage directions" in the main narrative, the dynamism of the scenes, and the collage technique) foregrounding the cinematic "mechanism of perception and thought". A. Kowalska, op. cit., p. 365. Written in the years 1964–1966, *Moja córeczka* was originally a screenplay, though it was never filmed, which the author mentions in the essay *Kilka słów o noweli "Moja córeczka"* (Ma 88) and in his conversation with Jan Różewicz: "I was doing it on order from a film crew, for Rybkowski [Jan Rybkowski – WB], but the filmmakers kept asking for modifications, improvements. Finally, Rybkowski wrote the script himself, and *Moja córeczka* turned into a short story" (W 270). The text was published as a screenplay in "Dialog" (1966, no. 5) under the title *Moja córeczka. Scenariusz filmowy*, and as a short story in the collection *Wycieczka do muzeum*. The stage adaptation of *Moja córeczka* was prepared by Jerzy Jarocki in 1968, whereas Andrzej Barański adapted Różewicz's text to the stage for the Polish TV theatre in 2000. See T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., pp. 329, 342. Różewicz also authored, or co-authored, screenplays that were subsequently adapted as the following movies: *Trzy kobiety, Miejsce na ziemi, Głos z tamtego świata, Świadectwo urodzenia, Piekło i niebo, Samotność we dwoje, Echo, Szklana kula, Drzwi w murze* (see *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik bioblibliograficzny*, op. cit.). One of Różewicz's early reportages entitled *Klaps i posłuszni gestapowcy. Migawki z atelier filmowego* ("Trybuna Tygodnia" 1948, no. 17, p. 7) features, among other things, the work on a film set and at the film studio of "Film Polski" in Łódź.

[323] J. Błoński, op. cit., p. 74.

Interpreting his own novel, the author of *Moja córeczka* pointed to the political and civilizational meaning of "the formula of individual existence", at the same time making it emphatically clear that "the writer – unlike the politician – is interested in individual histories, in the individual's psyche. The politician thinks of the human masses, the writer thinks of individuals."[324]

Moja córeczka meets Błoński's necessary criterion. It features the conflict between traditional and modern identity translated into events (episodes from the protagonist's life) and the reflections of the narrator-agent, who is also described from the outside as a character by the third-person narrator. The author juxtaposed the two narrations in such a way as to make the diagnosis of reality seem invariably negative, at both planes of the protagonist's experience – private and social. The narrator-agent, seeking authenticity in familial and provincial life as well as human dignity – in the symbols and artefacts of national culture, suffers a personal defeat that has larger reverberations. The existence of the *Moja córeczka* protagonist, outlined in accordance with the "loser's life" convention, constitutes a case study of a biography in the situation of social anomie which can still be viewed as a model one. The crisis of identity presented in the novel pertains to the individual who is "cultured" in the sense of being embraced by the intelligentsia, that is to someone who remains a conscious depositary, user, and interpreter of the symbolic code. Having failed to protect traditional identity patterns from the inflationary impact of the "small stabilization" clichés, he has not managed to cre-

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[324] T. Różewicz, *Kilka słów o noweli "Moja córeczka"*, op. cit., p. 41. The theme of the poet vis-à-vis the masses and the individual was also touched upon by Różewicz in his correspondence with Nowosielski. In one of his letters, dated 12 December 1980, he wrote that "given the current situation in the country and abroad, some 'family' issues in one little household may seem irrelevant …, but Poets are a weird race (very weird indeed) and for them one tear has the same billing as a sea of tears, and one smile equals the laughter of a big audience (or a football stadium)…" (Ko 292).

ate any "forms of recognition" (P. Czapliński) for them either, ones that would be intelligible and credible for the next generation. The concepts of the cultural community developed by the social formations and institutions active at the time were anti-modern, collectivistic, ethnocentric, and xenophobic. Secondly, *Moja córeczka* is about the inevitable defeat of the average individual, the man in the street, who feels at home in the static and seemingly obvious bourgeois world. Such an attitude also proves vulnerable to anomie, grounded as it is in the illusion of social order and the idealized image of the past, both of them merely hiding the martyrological trauma, a consciousness deferred and pushed back into the oneiric realm of nightmares. Kazimierz Wyka concludes that the protagonist in *Tarcza z pajęczyny* is "mobile" because "the entire realm of human attitudes, personalities, and evaluations he is surrounded by is mobile and contingent", which, in turn, "triggers longing for stability, that is striving for values".[325] By contrast, the actual "stability" in Różewicz's texts is synonymous with the rule of inauthentic models and values, directed against the individual, creating but an illusion of the social meaning of personal experience, memory, and biography.

Memory Problems

Describing relationships between the individual's identity and Communist Poland's culture and social communication, the author of *Uśmiechy* also noted operations carried out on collective memory. Such changes were not neutral – either ideologically or axiologically. The construction of memory in that period served, first and foremost, the purpose of temporary emotional integration of the society around shared representations of the past. Secondly, it was supposed to legitimize the postwar political and territorial status quo of the Polish People's Republic.

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[325] K. Wyka, *Różewicz parokrotnie*, op. cit., p. 97.

Assuming that official collective memory and historiography functioned in a similar ideological context, one can agree with Rafał Stobiecki that their shared metahistorical framework was established at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s. Stobiecki writes: "The regime aimed to create an ideological vision of the past that would legitimize the totalitarian system created by the party-state."[326] Such a meta-narrative presupposed, for example, the nationalist interpretation of the history of the so-called Western Territories or the official evaluation of the interwar years, radically negative in the Stalinist period. The tool for spreading the image of the past thus construed was school education, with its selectively constructed canon of national literature and art, museum premises, and popular culture. The result of those operations was sanitized memory, not only free of uncomfortable facts and seditious traditions, but also "infantile" – closed to a diversity of interpretations, provincial and anachronistic.

The classmates in Różewicz's *Wspomnienia ze "starej budy"*, a novella published in *Uśmiechy*, talking about their teachers and youthful pranks 25 years later, enjoy a perfect rapport with each other thanks to a shared generational memory which stores anecdotes and quotes, memorable characters, and scenes from the past. Despite the passage of time, the basis of their rapport is the experience of generational community, one that was facilitated primarily by school. In order to reactivate the emotional bonds it is enough for them to mention an old professor's name, a facetious remark of a rebellious student, the memory of cutting class, or a particularly bizarre lesson topic. This private dictionary of stock phrases makes the conversation between Kaziu and Wacek not only a perfect example of close rapport, seemingly free of ambiguities, doubts, or uncertainties, but also a persuasive-communicative system. A witness to their

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[326] R. Stobiecki, *Historiografia PRL. Ani dobra, ani mądra, ani piękna… ale skomplikowana*, Warszawa 2007, p. 189.

dialogue, a student from the next generation younger, is forced to accept the role of an outsider and uninitiated dilettante, humble and full of respect for his elders. He has to "heave a sigh" with them over the absurdities of the pre-war education system. The tongue-in-cheek tone of *Wspomnienia* makes the characters' confessions sound nostalgic and innocent. Their pronouncements, however, construct an antagonistic vision of the past.[327] The interwar junior high school is presented as an environment with weak intellectual credentials, restrictive towards any manifestations of individualism, dependent on an institutionalized religious worldview, and excessively commercialized to boot – and thus almost inaccessible to youth from poor families.[328] The narrator, reporting the dialogue of his former classmates, does not comment on the ideological message of their memory, focused as it is on a few political-cultural stereotypes about the interwar years, highly emotional and delivered in a clearly prefabricated form, as if "ready-made" (I 308). Needless to say, Kaziu and Wacek do have their own memories – which, incidentally, seem credible enough –

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[327] A. Erll lists four rhetorical modes of textualized memory: (1) experiential, (2) monumental, (3) antagonistic, and (4) reflective. The experiential mode (1) consists in presenting the past in such a way as to make it resemble a credible report of an eye witness; the monumental mode (2) is typical of narratives in which the past, represented by currently binding meanings, values, allegories, or symbols, assumes the characteristics of relevant tradition and a shared vision of collective history; the antagonistic mode (3) is based on those interpretations of the past that express the norms and identity of particular social or cultural formations in whose interest they strive to affirm or question a particular vision of the past; the reflective mode (4) is present when the text problematizes forms and functions of memory narratives. A. Erll, op. cit., pp. 242–244.

[328] The story is partly autobiographical; the characters of the school principal and the teachers, as well as the school's financial and organizational principles, are reminiscent of Radom's Feliks Fabiani Junior High School attended by Janusz and Tadeusz Różewicz in the late 1930s. As their Polish teacher Feliks Przyłubski recalls, in his school paper entitled "I co ty na to, szary człowieku?" ["And What Do You Say to That, Man in the Street?"] Janusz Różewicz came up with "a fiery philippic in defence of his classmates painstakingly striving to get an education, but given the cold shoulder by the heartless school administration". The paper – regarded as an instance of "Communist agitation" by the school principal – "played a role in refusing [Janusz] Różewicz permission to take his final exams" in 1937. See F. Przyłubski, *Wspomnienie o Januszu Różewiczu* (N 192–195).

but their narrative about the past proceeds within the framework of *sensus communis*, a socially acceptable vision of reality, constructed immediately after the war on the basis of a democratized school system and rational education.[329] Reading Różewicz's novella, one cannot but ask about the agency of the characters' memory rather than its truth value. The author managed to render what is stereotyped and communal through a private, spontaneous conversation about the past. *Wspomnienia ze "starej budy"* is primarily about the consciousness of forty-year-olds in the late 1940s and early 1950s, about the collective memory narratives accessible to them and endowing their generational experience and personal stand on Communist Poland with a meaning. It is a text about the two antagonistic visions of the interwar years emerging at that time – the nostalgic-arcadian and the propagandistic-critical one.

The connections between diverse memory narratives are also visible in *Wycieczka do muzeum* [*A Trip to the Museum*], a short story written in 1959.[330] Here, the memories of a former prisoner of a Nazi death camp are overinterpreted, as it were, by the very context, functioning within the framework of a tour guide's story who taps the ideological collective memory – anti-German and Polonocentric – "as if it was a book" (I 171). At the same time, though, those memories are underinterpreted, so to speak, because both the guide's and the Holocaust witness' accounts are addressed to listeners whose comments prove that their communi-

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[329] In those days it was B. Suchodolski, among others, who wrote about the new concepts of youth education in his article *Przewrót w wychowaniu*, "Nowiny Literackie" 1947, no. 36; S. Helsztyński, in turn, wrote about the pre-war "reactionary" and "pseudopatriotic" junior high school subject to the private owner's interests (*Podzwonne prywatnej szkole średniej*, "Nowiny Literackie" 1947, no. 24).

[330] The narrative format of *Wycieczka do muzeum* was analysed by Mieczysław Czajko in his article *Sytuacja narracyjna w "Wycieczce do muzeum" Tadeusza Różewicza*, "Zesz. Nauk. Wyższej Szkoły Nauczycielskiej w Szczecinie" 1974, no. 10. I write more about the story in the chapter "The Anatomy of Experience".

cative memory does not comprehend the experience itself but only its simplified "school book" version. The social and rhetorical framework that would make the witness' recollections intelligible enough and thus interpretable as a monumental supranational memory of Nazi crimes remains beyond the confines of the "rapport" featured in the Różewicz story. Instead, we are given the antagonistic forms of the Polish national memory of the Gomułka days, justified and visualized with references to stereotyped images of the tallith-donning Jew and the Teutonic-Knight German.[331] This story by Różewicz, viewed as a constellation of memory

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[331] This fundamental misunderstanding results not only from the ideological appropriation of memory by Communist propaganda and the Polonocentric historiography, but also, as Włodzimierz Mich explains, from the fact that for those who visit Oświęcim and other Polish locations of former German Nazi death camps those places are, first and foremost, the sites of memory, or "death sites", whereas for the Poles they are also "life sites". W. Mach, *Problem pamięci Zagłady*, in: *Przeciw antysemityzmowi 1936–2009*, vol. III, ed. A. Michnik, Kraków 2010, p. 516. The problem of regarding World War Two as belonging more to "the plane of Polish history rather than that of the global one" is discussed by Marek Zaleski, who argues that the perspective resulted both from the heritage of Romantic historiosophy and the enforced Marxist interpretation. M. Zaleski, *Formy pamięci. O przedstawianiu przeszłości w polskiej literaturze współczesnej*, Warszawa 1996, p. 158. Marek Kapralski writes more extensively on the subject, claiming that in the interpretation of Auschwitz in the days of "suppressed memory" (Michael C. Steinlauf) in Communist Poland, that is in the years 1948–1968, the Communist interpretation of that memory site harmonized with national tradition and individual memory as far as the ways of representing history in general and Polish-German relations in particular were concerned. The interpretation emphasized the post-partition mythology of the besieged and persecuted Polish nation, the mythology itself, Kapralski argues, eventually becoming "the cornerstone of Polish identity". S. Kapralski, *Od milczenia do "trudnej pamięci". Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau i jego rola w dyskursie publicznym,* in: *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010*, eds F. Tych, M. Adamczyk-Garbowska, Lublin 2011, pp. 533–534. Feliks Tych writes that the Poles' awareness of the Holocaust was in the post-war days shaped primarily by the popular media, i.e. by film, radio, television, journalistic texts popularizing historical knowledge, encyclopedic publications, school curricula, museum exhibits, and tour guides that would paint a much-reduced and Polonocentric picture of the past. According to Tych, the shortcomings of historical and cultural awareness implied the Poles' indifference towards the annihilation of their Jewish fellow citizens, or – as Alina Cała adds – even their resentment towards them caused by a repressed sense of guilt. F. Tych, *Obraz zagłady Żydów w potocznej świadomości historycznej w Polsce*, in: *Przeciw antysemityzmowi 1936–2009*, op. cit., pp. 122–123; A. Cała, *Kształtowanie się polskiej i żydowskiej wizji martyrologicznej po II wojnie światowej*, in: *Przeciw antysemityzmowi 1936-2009*, op. cit., p. 248.

narratives, implies also their reception via the reflective mode because all the accounts of the past, so juxtaposed, prove biased, trivial, secondary, or relative; a description of the past is thus possible only as a reflection on the mechanisms of its representation.

The problem of memory rendition is presented in still another way in the stories *Tolerancja* (*Przerwany egzamin*) and *Ta stara cholera* (*Wycieczka do muzeum*), written in the same period. The confessions of anonymous women featured in the stories, addressed to the narrator-agent – an accidentally encountered stranger – smack of an "autobiography" in which personal story blends with episodically evoked history (the dominant experiential mode with elements of the monumental one). Far from facilitating any understanding between characters, the narrative of collective memory in *Tolerancja* in fact reduces it. Likewise, the mediation of martyrological codes, imposing meaning on individual recollections, stands in the way of dialogue. The identity of the story's female protagonist is internally split because her identification with the nation's World War Two history under the German occupation (the death camp, the Warsaw Uprising) conflicts with her post-war experience that excludes her from the Polish religious-cultural community.[332] The narrator does not blur this contradiction. The conversation in the *Tolerancja* and *Ta stara cholera* stories does not become entirely subordinated either to the discourses of collective memory or to the existential narrative. The articulation of memory remains problematic because it is either stereotyped, that is detached from individual experience, or subjective, that is relevant and comprehensible only within the framework of personal experience. It is, then, either communicative or credible. The protagonists of the stories

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[332] A. Cała points out that the post-war Polonocentric martyrology in Poland, shared by both its leftwing and nationalist right-wing proponents, functioned as "building blocks of national identity" because, emphasizing the heroism and martyrology of "almost" the entire nation, it was aimed against the Other – the traitors and/or the Jews. See A. Cała, op. cit.

do not attempt to interpret the accounts they listen to, limiting their reception to the attitude of a friendly and patient witness. The situation reduces the social framework of memory to the direct relation between two individuals, mutually anonymous, liberating the chaotic and inhomogeneous tale from the authority of meta-narrative (both historical and existential), one that delineates the stylistic mode, value, and relevance of the past narrative.

Tadeusz Różewicz, looking at the narrative representations of the past in the 1950s and 1960s, focused on the speaking individual: talking, reporting, explaining, and interpreting. He viewed memory narratives as ways of defining oneself (self-creation) or communication between people rather than a record of past events. Analysing representations of the past, he reconstructed not so much the past itself as the symbolic and semiotic space of the "prosaic" individual and his "prosthetic memory" (A. Landsberg), that is the realm wherein individual consciousness and experience come into contact with the *sensus communis*. The official discourse of collective memory in Communist Poland was, essentially, an agglomerate of revolutionary, martyrological, military, and modernization myths and stereotypes, mystified history of the working-class movements, the anniversary symbolism of national uprisings, and images of the medieval/Piast origins of the Polish state and other turning points in Poland's history, especially those of World War Two and the German occupation.[333] Różewicz would, of course, refer only to some of those

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[333] Arguably, the acceptable contents of that memory were defined by the topics of nationwide historical conferences. "At the first conference in Wrocław [in 1948 – WB] it was the history of the so-called Reclaimed Territories and the Revolution of 1848. In Kraków [in 1956 – WB], despite the creation of nine thematic panels, at the centre of attention were the 19th-century ideological stands of the Polish society, with a particular emphasis on the insurgent tradition. In 1963 in Warsaw the discussions revolved around medieval culture, the January Uprising, and the history of the Polish People's Republic. In 1969 in Lublin the thematic focus was the national consciousness and its relation to civic consciousness. Sometimes the choice of the thematic focus

narratives (to me, though, the more important question is not about the choice of the narratives but about the manner in which they are evoked). Turning them into a social and cultural framework of the average man's memory, the writer did not search for the truth in the historiographic sense. He would not counter the historical reductionisms and manipulations with a "dissident" perspective, as antagonistic or monumental, in rhetorical terms, as the official stance. The novellas and sketches from *Przerwany egzamin*, *Wycieczka do muzeum*, and *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorksiego* are rather attempts to capture "at work" the typical, colloquial forms of memory, referring both to the past and to real-life experience in Communist Poland with the attendant ways of thinking, communicating, describing, and evaluating one's immediate environment practised by individuals living in those times.

The "Old Days" Identity

The title of a 1960 story by Różewicz, *Świt wielkiej epoki* [*The Dawn of the Great Era*] constitutes both an ironic closure of the era of "historical progress", one attendant on the disintegration of previously dominant discourses of collective identity, and the beginning of the period of mass proliferation of selected motifs and characters of the national *universum* based on the modern culture industry.

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was strictly connected with the current ideological climate and the authorities' expectations. That was, for example, the case of the 1979 conference [in Katowice – WB] whose keynote topics were: 'Nation-Class-Party' and 'Man and Work'. The title of the Poznań conference [in 1984 – WB], in turn, was 'History and Society'. Finally, the central topics of the Łódź conference [in 1989 – WB] included late 18th-century revolutions and their consequences, big urban agglomerations of the 19th and 20th centuries, and World War Two." After 1956 "the thematic horizon of Polish historiography would also start slowly changing. After the period dominated by works dealing primarily with the broadly conceived socio-economic history and the history of working-class movements, there resurfaced anew studies in cultural history, history of social structures, political history, and church history […]." R. Stobiecki, op. cit., pp. 131, 207.

Jurand single-handedly destroys ten Teutonic Knights! Based on the novel by the Nobel Prize Winner Henryk Sienkiewicz. The power of the Teutonic Order broken. The story of Zbyszko and Danusia's love in a new Polish colour movie. TEUTONIC KNIGHTS! TEUTONIC KNIGHTS – a great, colourful film epic about the victory of united Slavic armies over the Teutonic Order! TEUTONIC KNIGHTS – a colourful, panoramic film about our ancestors' heroism, about the breaking of the power of the TEUTONIC Knights! (I 375).

The above quote from a poster closes the story. Contrasted with fragments of a speech written in the official, "yada yada" style of Communist newspeak, snapshots of everyday life in Communist Poland and those of bookstore shelves full of Marxist classics that nobody wants to buy, the quote implies the co-existence in the Polish People's Republic of several separate and equally grotesque realities. Far from uniting these realities or endowing them with a new, authentic meaning, the movie advertisement merely promises a compensation experience typical of popular culture. The compensation, consisting in a temporary "transition" from the real world to the imaginary one, in this case would mean replacing the incredible collective memory – grounded in the revolutionary narrative of "the great era" – with a cultural memory of the nation conceived as a "natural" community, one following the Hollywood-style western-movie formula. Needless to say, this kind of memory is also politicized – it is anti-German and harmonized with the propaganda of the day depicting Communist Poland as a geopolitical continuation of medieval Poland – but it sticks to the attractive convention of representing the past, that is to the "war-and-love" plot formula used by Sienkiewicz.[334] If one interpreted

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[334] See T. Bujnicki, *Sienkiewicza "Powieść z lat dawnych". Studia*, Kraków 1996, p. 114. Also K. Wyka writes about the "western" convention. See K. Wyka, *O nową drogę do Sienkiewicza*, "Miesięcznik Literacki" 1967, no. 1.

Różewicz's story as the "dawn" of a new era, a tongue-in-cheek description of its first symptoms, then it would be an image of a massive pastiche of past cultural patterns, absorbed by Applied Socialism mainly through the mediating filter of curriculum-based literary classics, film, and television.[335] In addition, the "chivalric" and "courtly" gestures of the *Świt*'s all-too-common protagonists attest to the reduction of such patterns to a simplified canon of the nobility's traditions.

Film adaptations of Henryk Sienkiewicz's historical novels, directed by Aleksander Ford and Jerzy Hoffman, in the 1960s and 1970s popularized the image of infantile Polishness, heavily mythicized and combining the vision of Slavic-Sarmatian nativeness with Romantic heroism and the cult of patriotic martyrology, clearly hostile towards anything that smacked of cultural Otherness or ambiguity. It is these adaptations that created the most appealing vision of the past, alluring to the imagination of the "average man", hitherto fed by "shabby pictures" – as the narrator of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* puts it, referring to his childhood (II 204) – and at the same time providing an immediately accessible, popular identity pattern. What is more, they explained the nation's past not in the abstract terms of historiography but through pictorial narratives, rendering in an accessible form human biographies, characters, motives, and stands. At the same time, they did not collide with the rules of politics of memory and the legitimizing discourse of Communist Poland.[336]

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[335] P. Czapliński writes on "the time of the great post-war pastiche" in his article *PRL i sarmatyzm*, op. cit., p. 159.

[336] In 1975 Andrzej Garlicki proposed a "division into films about the more remote historical past that the filmmakers cannot remember and those dealing with modern history, still covered by generational memory". Most of the movies belonging to the former category, Krzysztof T. Toeplitz tells us, dealt with "national history", the "legal representation of state authorities" being thus "of lesser importance for them". T. Lubelski, *Historia kina polskiego. Twórcy, filmy, konteksty*, Chorzów 2008, p. 346. Tadeusz Ulewicz notes that the films dealing with history and the Sarmatian tradition that violated such rules were either prohibited in Communist Poland or restricted to a narrow circle of discussion-club cinemas. See *Czytanie szukaniem. O Sienkie-

Krzyżacy [*The Teutonic Knights*] and *Potop* [*The Deluge*] were among the most popular films in the history of Polish cinema, each movie boasting 30 million viewers; the audience of Jerzy Hoffman's *Pan Wołodyjowski*, in turn, was 10 million strong (not counting its huge television audience in the 1970s and over subsequent decades).[337] Henryk Sienkiewicz's historical fiction also enjoyed comparable popularity, with over 25 million copies printed.[338] It is difficult to establish whether the Sienkiewicz characters and motifs affected the Polish historical imagination after 1945 mainly through literature, or perhaps more via the cinema – and later the television – screen. This problem is discussed at length by Grażyna Straus and Stanisław Siekierski, who cite the results of research into the reading habits of the population of Communist Poland. Siekierski notes that "the common familiarity with Sienkiewicz's works might have been readily

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wiczu, o łacinie i o wojnie. Piotr Baran interviews Professor Tadeusz Ulewicz, "Bez Porównania. Czasopismo Komparatystyczne" 2005, no. 6, p. 117.

[337] *Krzyżacy* had over 32 million viewers (and before 1973 – 25.5 million), *Potop* – 27.5 million. See T. Lubelski, op. cit., p. 347; S. Ozimek, *Od wojny w dzień powszedni*, in: *Historia filmu polskiego*, vol. IV (1957–1961), ed. J. Toeplitz, Warszawa 1980, p. 187. *Pan Wołodyjowski* had 10 million viewers. See M. Haltof, *Kino polskie*, trans. M. Przylipiak, Gdańsk 2004, p. 136. "To all this we should add the (uncountable) television audience – the 13-episode series *Przygody Pana Michała* [*The Adventures of Sir Michał*] was first broadcast in 1969, and *Potop* is still shown on public television at least once a year." P. Czapliński, *Resztki nowoczesności*, op. cit., p. 86.

[338] S. Siekierski, op. cit., pp. 260, 457. Similar circulation, of 20 million copies each, were also achieved by the works of M. Konopnicka, B. Prus, J. I. Kraszewski, A. Mickiewicz and S. Żeromski. Ibid., pp. 260, 457. It is hard to verify the data pertaining to readership. J. Dunin cites the information attesting to the fact that, in statistical terms, for one citizen of Communist Poland in 1962 there were, on average, 2.5 books borrowed from Polish public libraries. Needless to say, a borrowed book does not necessarily mean a read one. Nevertheless, the indexes from Communist times are higher than those of today. OBOP announced that in 1994, 44% of Poles did not read a single book. J. Dunin, op. cit., pp. 206–207. G. Straus notes in the second half of the 1970s a decline, after a few decades of growth and stabilization, of the number of book readers in Poland, "which may result from a decrease in the relative number of sporadic readers". Those days also saw the beginning of a decline in popularity of Polish 19th-century classics, which previously accounted for a major part of the (declarted) reading preferences and the most important part of the literary canon that constituted the basis of the Polish "community of literary symbols and values". G. Straus, op. cit., pp. 13–14.

assumed had it not been for one fact characteristic of our times – some of the respondents got to know [Sienkiewicz's] *Trilogy* solely through film and television adaptations. […] Films, TV series, pundits' and journalists' debates permanently introduced selected elements of his literary output to families that simply do not read books, encouraging them to buy the texts that, thanks to the pictorial culture, had gained a recognizable cultural status."[339] Grażyna Straus adds that in those days "an erosion began in the popular awareness of the literary (bookish) provenance of certain symbols, scenes, protagonists, etc." because, as a result of film adaptations, the representation of reality constructed by the popular canonical texts (especially those of H. Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy*) ceased to be associated primarily with literature.[340] Thanks both to film adaptations and to large editions of his books, Sienkiewicz reached a mass audience.

Sienkiewicz's *Krzyżacy* and the trilogy (both the novels and their film adaptations) belonged to Communist Poland's popular culture.[341] What gave them the necessary popular appeal was their romance-like format as well as their living up to the expectations of the common reader/viewer when it came to their worldview, their vision of Polish history and national identity. The "Sienkiewicz Pole" (S. Brzozowski) they construed was characterized by an aversion to religious dissenters and foreign influence; he actively participated in the Marian cult, believed in the nation's political-religious unity, was interested in state matters, was much involved in family life, and – as a collective hero, Tadeusz Bujnicki adds – he originated from the "common gentry", thus representing the "average"

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[339] S. Siekierski, op. cit., p. 260. Bogdan Zakrzewski described a similar phenomenon exemplified by the comic-book version of *Ogniem i Mieczem* [*With Fire and Sword*] published in 1941. See B. Zakrzewski, *Sienkiewicz dla maluczkich*, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1962, no. 3.

[340] G. Straus, op. cit., p. 14.

[341] In addition, reading 19th-century classics (Sienkiewicz, Kraszewski, Tolstoy) in Communist Poland compensated for the absence of diversified trivial literature. S. Siekierski, *Czytanie Polaków w XX wieku*, Warszawa 2000, p. 166.

nobleman rather than the magnate class.[342] He habitually identified both with the noble concept of dignity and patriotism, the emotional-conservative attitude to the world and the coarse, hearty ways of his peers. Studying popular reading habits in the twilight years of Communist Poland reveals not only a widespread familiarity with this model of Polish identity but also a predominantly positive assessment of its pedagogical and educational impact as well as its role in the national identification process (such were also the educational goals of the film adaptations of Sienkiewicz's novels).[343] As Straus argues, because of their role models and patriotic stand, as well as the predominant cultural memory, the function of formative texts was habitually fulfilled by such literary works as Sienkiewicz's *Krzyżacy* and *Trilogy*, Kraszewski's *Stara baśń* [*An Ancient Tale*], and Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*.[344] Siekierski adds in the novels by

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[342] T. Bujnicki, op. cit., p. 226. This "commonality of the gentry" noticeable in the *Trilogy* is analogous with the commonality of the first Christians in *Quo Vadis*, becoming in *Teutonic Knights* an almost positive "rusticity". Ibid., p. 226.

[343] The argument for the purposefulness of film adaptations of the *Trilogy* did not stress the necessity of popularizing historical knowledge but the popular demand for a positive hero, a patriot endowed with the civic spirit, which was connected with the journalistic "small stabilization" debates over our native military and romantic traditions. See R. Marszałek, *Film fabularny*, in: *Historia filmu polskiego*, vol. VI (1968–1972), ed. R. Marszałek, Warszawa 1994, pp. 68–70. *Krzyżacy*, for example, as an apotheosis of effective foreign policy and a victorious military feat, was considered "an antidote of sorts" to the revisionist current of the "Polish School". S. Ozimek, op. cit., p. 187.

[344] "The past referred to by the respondents is indeed a mythologized, fragmentary version of history, or, rather, a syncretic collection of selected events, model characters – not only historical but also literary ones – coming from books that show 'the Poles' heroism' and what 'today's men should be like', offer 'uplifting experiences' (Sienkiewicz, *The Trilogy*), teach us patriotism, make it possible for us – as Tadeusz Łepkowski puts it – to simply 'feel what it's like to be Polish'. The version of the past most cherished by non-professionals is on the one hand linked to 'glorious' and 'victorious' history, one encompassing the story (more or less legendary) of the birth of the nation and its greatness. These are well known or learned from 'books that tell the truth about Poland's history', i.e. from Kraszewski's *Stara baśń*, Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*, the aforementioned three-volume series by Jasienica [*Polska Piastów, Polska Jagiellonów, Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów* – WB], Sienkiewicz's *Krzyżacy* and, first and foremost, from his *Trilogy*". G. Straus, op. cit., pp. 125–126.

Żeromski and Prus.[345] Różewicz mentions a similar canon in his sketch *Biruta, moja pierwsza milość* [*Biruta, My First Love*] (originally an afterword to *Syzyfowe prace*), recalling that Sienkiewicz's works, next to those by Mickiewicz, Żeromski, and Prus, shaped the imagination, emotions, intelligence, language, and "love for the country" of his generation (Ma 90, 94). While valuing Żeromski – primarily for being a "very contemporary writer", one well "attuned to his times" (M 89) – he was critical of Sienkiewicz's role in post-war education, suggesting in the essay *Words, words, words…*, published in "Odra" in 1973, that "for the sake of our youth's spiritual and mental health, their mandatory reading list should include, besides Sienkiewicz's works, also Stanisław Brzozowski's tract *Współczesna powieść polska* [*Contemporary Polish Novel*]" (III 182). Brzozowski, as we all know, viewed the historical novel as a document of the times in which it was created, a reflection of society's self-knowledge in a given historical period. He considered Henryk Sienkiewicz's works – like other literary texts by some of his contemporaries – to be literary expressions of the modern breakthrough in the "soul" of the Polish nation.[346] However, the critic argued, Sienkiewicz's work was also a manifestation of the false idealism, irrational optimism, mental immaturity, and social reactionariness of his contemporaries. The conclusion of *Words, words, words …* touches upon a similar problem. The sketch's narrator doubts whether the "hands" of the monument of "the nation's inner life" should constitute only writers like Sienkiewicz. Różewicz's opinion, though surrounded by disclaimers such as "perhaps", "I do not know", "it seems to me", or "apparently", is clear enough. The literary *Bildung* of the common Pole of the "small stabilization" days, reduced to the school

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[345] S. Siekierski, *Książka literacka. Potrzeby społeczne i ich realizacja w latach 1944–1986*, op. cit. pp. 260, 457.

[346] See S. Brzozowski, *Współczesna powieść polska*, in: idem, *Współczesna powieść i krytyka*, Kraków 1984.

canon, instead of touching upon important social issues primarily teaches the "high-flown" perspective on history, conserving Sienkiewicz's ideas of what constitutes one's Polishness. This reduced and anachronistic form of national awareness is part of the nationwide school curriculum embodied by mandatory canonical texts and encompassing both collective memory and collective identity patterns.[347] The suggestion that Sienkiewicz's vision should be supplemented by Brzozowski's thought – as well as that of Żeromski, Wyspiański, and Prus (III 182) – fits into the debate lasting throughout the 20th century about patterns of modern Polish collective identity, touching upon, among other issues, the nation's attitude to the traditions of the landowning gentry and the connection between state independence and the social/civilizational transformations.

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[347] What stimulated mass literary needs in Communist Poland, Siekierski writes, were school curricula based mainly on the classics. "Admittedly, there would occasionally appear opinions calling for a reduction of canonical texts in favour of contemporary writings, including expository prose, but they were isolated voices leading, at best, to short-term practices. It was generally agreed upon that school curricula not only affected the entire literary education of youth but to a large extent also educated youngsters about the norms of experiencing literature as such. School-accepted books constituted the basis of humanistic education." S. Siekierski, *Książka literacka. Potrzeby społeczne i ich realizacja w latach 1944–1986*, op. cit., p. 446. As one can infer from from the school curricula of the 1960s and 1970s, the literary canon of 19th- and 20th-century literature in those days was based – both in high schools and in vocational schools – primarily on the poetry and drama of the great Romantics and the Polish Realist Novel, mostly the works of E. Orzeszkowa, B. Prus, H. Sienkiewicz, W. Reymont, S. Żeromski, Z. Nałkowska, and M. Dąbrowska. See *Język polski. Program nauczania liceum ogólnokształcącego (tymczasowy)*, Warszawa 1966; *Język polski. Program nauczania liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Warszawa 1971; *Język polski. Program nauczania czteroletniego i pięcioletniego technikum i liceum zawodowego*, Warszawa 1971. The aims of literary education were defined in traditional ways. As Stanisław Burkot had it, "The teaching of native literature at school is one of the crucial ways of shaping modern man's awareness. It is here that youngsters are introduced to their culture's mainstream values, worked out over the centuries, passed on from one generation to the next, strengthening ideas and myths, ideals and norms of social life. Culture, understood as the collective memory of a group, tribe, or nation, provides a unifying principle, linking both today's generations and the present day with the ancestors' experience." S. Burkot, *Spory o cele i metody nauczania literatury w szkole średniej*, in: *Literatura polska w szkole średniej*, eds F. Bielak, S. Grzeszczuk, Warszawa 1975, p. 5.

Kazimierz Wyka claimed that it was Matejko's paintings and Sien-
kiewicz's historical fiction that formed in the 20th century the popular
image of our national history.[348] This image in Henryk Sienkiewicz's
"novels from days of yore" (the expression was used by P. Chmielowski
in his essays on Sienkiewicz's fiction) encompassed the conflict with the
Teutonic Knights and the Prussian state, the past ways and mores of the
gentry, and the naively optimistic prognosis for the future. Such a (me-
tahistorical) role was also played by Kraszewski's and Bunsch's novels,
their apotheosis of the good old Slavic days and way of life fitting into
the nationalist ideology of native lands and anti-German tendencies in
Polish politics after World War Two, when the "Western idea" became
reality.[349] Already in his 1947 piece *Światła na drodze* (*Most płynie do Sz-
czecina*), Tadeusz Różewicz, describing a village child reading Kraszewski's
Stara baśń, predicted that uniform, standardized education in history and
Polish Studies combined with technological progress would eventually
lead to an emergence on the "reclaimed territories" of new, strong social
bonds grounded in modern civilization and a homogenized culture and
national memory. That was, after all, how in the post-war period – be-
fore the Stalinist politics of memory excluded it altogether – reaching
to the cultural traditions of the landed gentry and the intelligentsia was
officially justified.[350] The embodiment of the projected object of educa-

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[348] See K. Wyka, *O potrzebie historii literatury*, Kraków 1969, p. 300.

[349] Contemporaneous interpretations of Kraszewski's historical novels actualized his ethnocentric
       ideological lexicon, stressing such concepts as "Germanic danger" or "tribal otherness". See
       W. Danek, *Powieści historyczne J.I. Kraszewskiego*, Warszawa 1966, pp. 96–97. See also W. Ra-
       tajczak, *Słowiańsko-germańskie pogranicze kulturowe w powieści Józefa Ignacego Kraszewskiego
       "Pogrobek"*, in: *Europejskość i rodzimość. Horyzonty twórczości Józefa Ignacego Kraszewskiego*, eds
       W. Ratajczak, T. Sobieraj, Poznań 2006. I write more on the "Western Idea" in the chapter
       "Place in the Narrative".

[350] Mieczysław Grad wrote in the first issue of "Pokolenie", a bi-weekly published by Union of
       Polish Youth: "The new folk masses that are becoming a nation must fully internalize the pre-
       existing traditions of national culture, that is the heritage of the gentry and the noble-bourgeois

tional activities in those pedagogical visions might have been – if he had survived the war – Waluś, the farmhand from *Do piachu*, who does not have the foggiest idea about Zagłoba, Pan Wołodyjowski, or Podbipięta, and as for Kmicic, his only connotations include the overheard news that he "killed off the AL guys [the People's Army partisans] nearby" (VI 152). The partisan is a *tabula rasa*, an individual reduced to physiological needs, bereft of any ideological awareness or historical memory, not identifying even with the – back then seemingly obvious – role of a Polish soldier. Even though Waluś keeps saying "I dunno" or utters inarticulate, meaningless sounds, when other partisans demonstrate their "erudition", referring to the characters of Sienkiewicz's gorget-donning knights or the treacherous Teutonic Knights/Prussians, he starts asking questions about Częstochowa, Kraków, the graves of Polish kings, and Matejko's "Prussian Homage". This makes Stanisław Gębala argue that the farmhand "would like to be not only a human being, but also a citizen, a Pole comfortably at home in his nation's history".[351] This may be an overinterpretation as the partisan's words do not attest to his conscious will when it comes to identity choices; rather, they seem to testify to his curiosity about the world. In functional terms, Waluś resembles Brudas. Each of the two protagonists is a distorted mirror-image of Polish cultural identity ("cultural" in both senses of the word, i.e. related to one's culture and cultivation), one that is being verified in both dramatic and grotesque/

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intelligentsia – the classes creating national culture at the previous stages of its growth. The history of national culture is a continuous process. The new era can dawn only when grounded in the cultural legacy of the past." M. Grad, *Budujemy jednolitą kulturę narodową*, "Pokolenie" 1948, no. 1, p. 5. The regime's approval of such a concept of building the "new man" manifested itself in the 1949 publication of Sienkiewicz's *Ogniem i mieczem* [*With Fire and Sword*], a novel that otherwise definitely challenged the Stalinist dogmas of historical policy.

[351] S. Gębala, *Śmierci piękne i brzydkie*, op. cit., p. 108. Matejko's paintings have traditionally been interpreted as part of the Polish metahistorical discourse. As Różewicz notes in *Kartki wydarte z dziennika*, "Matejko describes, comments, judges, and provokes" (III 400).

trivial ways. Różewicz also utilized the anti-German message of Sien-kiewicz's *Krzyżacy* and Kraszewski's *Stara baśń* in *Wycieczka do muzeum*, creating the antagonistic rhetoric of a guide in the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum, grounded in the 19th-century Polish stereotype – still appealing in the days of "small stabilization" – of German cruelty and "treachery" (I 170).[352]

Ksawery Pruszyński noticed two reasons for Sienkiewicz's popular-ity after World War Two. Firstly – he wrote in his sketch *Znaczkown-icy*, published in "Odrodzenie" in 1948 – "*Krzyżacy* remains – exactly as almost half a century ago – the greatest anti-German book ever", and "Polish literature still does not have a text so clearly oriented towards the Reclaimed Territories as that particular novel". Secondly, the essayist argued, Sienkiewicz is a writer of national optimism.[353] The latter obser-vation was not original. A similar thesis in *Rodowód społeczny literatury polskiej* [*Social Origins of Polish Literature*] was argued in the 1930s by Ignacy Fik, who interpreted Sienkiewicz's fiction in sociological terms.[354] Fik's Marxian analysis pointed out to the literature's ideological aspect, connected with the formation of Polish ideological stands at the thresh-

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[352]   "From among the relatively rich, diverse relations of the Sienkiewicz Pole – who loves his coun-try and freedom, trusting in the perennial protection of Our Lady – with other close neigh-bours, the only one left is the relation with Germans. The German, associated with *Krzyżacy*, and found also in Karol Bunsch's novels, transformed into, and found his continuation only in the character of a Nazi, the Gestapo officer (that is in contemporary war literature, including death-camp fiction). Functioning as a foil, the evil German facilitated the foregrounding of our countrymen's fundamental character traits: noble valour, sacrificial fortitude, and the entire na-tion's martyrology (especially that of prisoners of German concentration camps)." G. Straus, op. cit., p. 199.

[353]   K. Pruszyński, *Wybór pism publicystycznych*, vol. II, Kraków 1966, p. 524.

[354]   As Fik ironically put it, "We'll manage somehow! We are now weak and subjugated, but once we gave Prussians a sound beating at Grunwald […] The cheap optimism appealing to common people and the consumptionist ease of Sienkiewicz's works cultivated passive social conservatism in his readers, making them turn a blind eye to relevant issues of the day." I. Fik, *Wybór pism krytycznych*, Warszawa 1961, p. 358.

old of the 20th century. Refusing to address the civilizational and social challenge of modernity, the author of *The Trilogy*, the critic argues, gave his readers an illusory and compensatory sense of the nation's unity, regarding the Polish nation as a supra-class community, united by commonly espoused values, mores, religion, and history.[355] Thus Sienkiewicz's vision of history was a projection of collective identity as well as a meta-narrative endowing cultural memory with ideological meaning. Also, after 1945 Sienkiewicz's narratives provided an imagined pedigree to society as a whole, whose origins were mostly peasant and proletarian. With time that society would regard the noble/aristocratic past – reconstructed along nationalist lines, that is assuming the weakening of social conflicts and the foregrounding of ethnic and cultural traits – as a shared, nationwide memory.[356] This memory was deemed both model and elevating.

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[355] "Between the bourgeoisie and the landed gentry there is an exchange of services going on. The former teach the latter how to run a business, the landowners, in turn, allow their teachers to partake of the nobles' social-historical traditions. Having secured their social standing, the bourgeoisie would feel threatened only by the lower classes, viewing the landowners as useful supporters. Consequently, nothing stood in the way of appropriating the nobility's entire ideology and mentality. […] The bourgeoise needed a heroic pedigree in order to bolster their self-confidence in difficult times […], since the bourgeosie and the nobles are one 'nation', the entire historical past is a common good." Ibid., pp. 257, 358.

[356] Adam Kersten described the phenomenon as follows: "In the social melting pot that we live in today separate concepts of the noble-bourgeois tradition, erroneously identified with the national one, the proletarian tradition, and the folk tradition are all melted down into one canon of national tradition. […] In today's society the social traditions of classes or groups are losing their character, while the nationwide historical tradition – including the history of the nobility's Commonwealth state – acquires a new meaning. The noble tradition ceases to dominate the scene to the degree it did back in the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century, becoming instead one of the elements of national tradition, admittedly still too emphasized in the consciousness of some social groups. At the same time our peasants today may consider, much more easily than thirty years ago, the fairy-tale protagonists of The Trilogy as their own, disregarding the fact that they lived in a manor house, not in a peasant's hut." A. Kersten, op. cit., p. 253. Masłowski sees it in an analogous way: "If the old Commonwealth Republic is still alive in the minds and hearts, if people of peasant origins identify themselves with the noble tradition, the credit is largely due to Sienkiewicz." M. Masłowski, op. cit., p. 390.

Analysing Załuski's essays and film adaptations of Sienkiewicz's novels in the context of the post-war "craving" for identity, Czapliński notes that the commercialized Sarmatism of the 1960s offered alluring and "clear-cut character types, a long lineage, and an undisturbed feeling of pride of belonging to a community".[357] Besides, film adaptations of *Krzyżacy* and *Trylogia* legitimized Polish claims to the Western Territories and the socialist state, creating an image of its republican or Slavic-Piast folk lineage, and strengthened the post-partition vision of national community.[358] This identity model combined – in a reductionist, declarative, and selective manner – two 19th-century concepts of creating a unified nation: (1) the concept of ideological "gentrification" of the common people by passing on to them the civic ethos of the gentry-intelligentsia (equated with a political nation); (2) the concept of encompassing all the estates by the same ethnic-cultural identity (customs and mores, language, religion, collective memory). Sarmatism in Communist Poland appealed to the sense of national unity (motivated, for instance, historically), pride in one's state and its specific character, and in aversion to foreign political solutions and social norms coming from the West.

Identity patterns (religious, civic, personal, cultural, and territorial) endorsed by Sienkiewicz's narratives were to the same extent, however, Sarmatian and 19th-century. As Marta Piwińska rightly argues, both the Sarmatian and the Slavic affinities of Sienkiewicz's and Kraszewski's novels had been filtered through late, trivialized Romanticism.[359] That is why

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[357]   P. Czapliński, *PRL i sarmatyzm*, op. cit., p. 175.

[358]   The film adaptation of *Krzyżacy* was accompanied by the jubilee aura connected with the celebrations of the Polish State's Millennium and the anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald, but also by anti-German sentiment triggered, among other things, by "Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's acceptance of the insignia of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order". S. Ozimek, op. cit., p. 182.

[359]   M. Piwińska, op. cit., pp. 29–31. On the connections between Sarmatism, Romanticism, and Communist Poland's culture see B. Sienkiewicz, *Sarmacka idea mesjańska w zwierciadle litera-*

in their visions of old Poland and old Poles there resurfaced – besides the peculiar image of Piast- and gentry-anchored Polishness – the Romantic sentimentalism, the cult of individual freedom and heroic personal transformation, the affirmation of the scenic landscape, native/local culture and the indigenousness of the local people, national solidarity, the primacy of a religious-linguistic criterion for nationhood ("Catholic speech"), the ethnic definition of one's religion ("Polish faith") and respect for religious simplicity,[360] a sense of detachment from civilization, especially from those viewed as alien, anti-German/anti-Germanic sentiment, and proclivity to martyrological thinking. This canon of post-Romantic identity matched the patterns, protagonists, and messages of such novels as *Krzyżacy*, *Quo vadis*, and *Trylogia*.[361] The image of the past cre-

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tury powojennej, in: *Nowoczesność i sarmatyzm*, ed. P. Czapliński, Poznań 2011 ("Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne", vol. LXIII), p. 34. The scholar claims that, apart from Gombrowicz and Dygat, the "argument over the elements of the Pole's identity" with the Sarmatian-Romantic legacy was also taken up by Konwicki, Brandys, Miłosz, Szczypiorski, Mrożek, and Różewicz (*Et in Arcadia ego*, *Do piachu*). Also Bujnicki wrote about Sienkiewicz: "For the writer the crucial context and the fundamental literary tradition is Romanticism. Its traces, numerous and clear, can be discovered in diverse texts in the form of allusion, explicit and hidden quotes, reminiscences, stereotyped characters and motifs." T. Bujnicki, op. cit., p. 227.

[360] Literary projects attesting to the attractiveness of such a vision of supra-regional, supra-class Polish identity in the 1960s were, for example, Augustyn Necel's "kaszubska sienkiewicziada" ["Kashubian Sienkiewicz-like epic"], the two-volume cycle entitled *Krwawy sztorm* (1960) and *Złote klucze* (1962), respectively. The texts' indebtedness to Sienkiewicz's models were pointed out by Witold Nawrocki. Based on pre-existing formulas, Necel would create his protagonists, Kasubian peasants at the time of the mid-17th-century Swedish invasion, to whom he anachronistically ascribed the pervasive Marian cult and national consciousness. Like in Sienkiewicz's fiction, a "Pole" was, as Necel aptly put it, "someone of the Polish faith and Catholic Speech". W. Nawrocki, op. cit., pp. 382–383. According to T. Drewnowski, this model of identity remained valid in Polish literature until the 1970s, for example in the poetry of Ernest Bryll, whose poetic persona, following the tradition, leads a "Sarmatian life", that is "he takes good care of his own business, praises the charms of his newly built house, feasts with his friends… He is, then, a person elevated by Sarmatism, worthy of a national poem." T. Drewnowski, *Porachunki z XX wiekiem*, op. cit., pp. 232–233.

[361] Readers polled for their symbolic-linguistic definitions of Polishness pointed to a narrow literary canon including Sienkiewicz's *Krzyżacy*, *Quo vadis*, and *Trylogia*, Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*, and, in fewer cases, also Żeromski's *Ludzie bezdomni*. G. Straus, op. cit., p. 128.

ated there met both the criteria of cultural memory, as it readily yielded to subsequent literary and cinematic adaptations, and those of collective memory, because it was simplified and adaptable to the educational role of the culture of the "small stabilization". This return of the Romantic idiom in a Sarmatian form entailed a strong emphasis on the continuity of national tradition renewable by popular interpretations. Secondly, it elevated, on a mass scale, the provincial, if not antagonistic, representation of the Polish community endorsed in those years.

Flying to Rome, the protagonist of Różewicz's *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* reconstructs in his imagination, before actually seeing the city for the first time, Sienkiewicz's vision of the cross over St. Peter's Basilica. Describing his cinematic preferences, he lists, among others, *Quo Vadis*. The protagonist of *Strawiony* [*Digested*] (originally *Sobowtór* [*The Doppelganger*]), an essayistic story dealing largely with the superficial, chaotic image of the world featured on television and in glossy magazines, is flying to the United States on the PLL "Sienkiewicz" aeroplane. On board there is a portrait of the Nobel Prize winner listing the titles of his works. "*W pustyni i w puszczy*, *Krzyżacy*, *Trylogia*, *Quo vadis* … Of course, it occurred to me right away: What about *Bez dogmatu*? And what happened to *Rodzina Połanieckich?* … Are these two works not good enough to crown the author's picture on a plane?", the narrator wonders (II 269). Flying for the first time to the US, the protagonist of *Strawiony* asks directly whether America will live up to his expectations, and – indirectly – about what "makes up" the narrator-traveller himself. As Helena Zaworska writes, Sienkiewicz represents in Polish literary tradition the type of travelling formed by the ideology of modernity and civilizational progress.[362] Consequently, as a patron of the most modern means of

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[362] H. Zaworska, *Sztuka podróżowania. Poetyckie mity podróży w twórczości Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza, Juliana Przybosia i Tadeusza Różewicza*, Kraków 1980, p. 41.

transportation, he should endow the aeroplane's interior – the plane itself functioning here as an extension and condensation of Poland's symbolic landscape – with a similar meaning. The selected novels, however, make up the image of integral Polishness, completely domesticated and purged of controversy, matching the collective imagination, rooted in the adventure, melodramatic, and martyrological vision of the past, one which is reductionist even in comparison to the core canon of national literature – anti-modern, megalomaniac, and xenophobic as it is. The Różewicz narrator suffers to the same extent from being "digested" by stereotyped visions of Americanness as from being "digested" by Sienkiewicz's image of Polishness.

As a legible and explicit identity code, the "Sienkiewicz Pole" – facing the post-war "intermingling of society, the nondescript character of the bourgeois tradition, the weakness of proletarian traditions, the gradual disappearance of peasant culture and the emergence of the new masses raised in Communist Poland" (P. Czapliński), embodied an understanding of national tradition that seemed not only the most accessible one but also the most established in the public sphere, present in the education, speech, and popular culture of the 1960s and 1970s. By the same token, it was accessible to the common man, who – Czapliński adds – "hungered" after social status previously available only to the cultural community of the intelligentsia.[363] What in Sienkiewicz's narratives limited the *universum* of that community the most, reducing its genuine rootedness in the complex social conditions of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries to the snobbish, bourgeois longing for cultural elevation, proved to be their biggest asset, also in the realities of Communist Poland's mass culture, replacing reality with its spectacular and compensatory representation. Różewicz regarded this aspect of Sienkiewicz's "uplifting" mission

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[363] P. Czapliński, *PRL i sarmatyzm*, op. cit., pp. 159, 163.

as ambiguous, noticing in it the Polish post-Romantic escapism that allowed one to forget about the country's actual situation (W 116).

The issue of giving some moral "uplift" to the Poles through a phantasmatic representation of the nation returned in the short note *Norwid pijany* [*Drunken Norwid*], a fragment of the essay *To, co zostało z nienapisanej książki o Norwidzie* [*What Was Left from the Unwritten Book about Norwid*], published in "Kwartalnik Artystyczny" (2002, no. 3) and subsequently added to the last edition of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* (*Utwory zebrane*). One of the topics discussed by the essay are the ideas of Norwid and Przyboś, who strove to transform the Poles' imagination through poetry, but their poems had the potential "to affect the imagination of selected readers rather than that of the 'nation'" (III 114). The note's thematic focus is precisely the national imagination and its organic connection to Romanticism and Sarmatism. Commenting on the act of symbolic militarization of Our Lady, declaring the Mother of Jesus to be the Hetman of the Polish Army, the narrator views it as infantile longing for the "transformation" of the defeated nation into the victorious and divinely protected one, a longing cultivated by the Romantic national mythology. This new fragment of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* was written after 1989, when a half-official union of some state institutions of the Polish Republic and the Catholic Church materialized in the areas of patriotic education and symbolic politics. Evoking the interwar tradition, the authorities reinstated the Military Ordinariate of Poland, whose tasks included, among others, organizing the peregrinations of the image of Our Lady in military garrisons and the ceremonies of confiding military units to Mary's care. This linking of the Marian cult to manifestations of the army's religious loyalties has a long tradition, dating back to medieval times (the Mother of God as protectress of Polish knights) and cultivated in the interwar years (by Primate A. Hlond, among others). Commenting in 1990 on the ongoing transformations of Central European and Polish societies,

Różewicz stated that, in his opinion, dismantling Communist structures in their cultures equates "returning to the forms that fell apart as a result of World War Two": "We are witnessing some pompous exhumation and funeral ceremonies rather than a rebirth" (Ma 282–283). The new set designs of collective identity were in fact quite old.

However, the contemporary reactivation of that identity model had to rely – if it was to be effective and common – on popular, nationwide mental images, copying identity patterns that had been popularized and appealingly visualized in the post-war years, being, by definition, addressed to the common man.[364] That is why the patriotic tradition (re)constructed in the post-1989 conservative discourse was given the Romantic-Sarmatian form, but was interpreted in ways typical of the communism, nationalism, and ritualistic Catholicism of Communist Poland. To Robert Jarocki's question about living amid the "new set designs", the writer half-jokingly replied that one's life is now "interesting, colourful, finally sublime, patriotic, and very solemn" (W 303). What links Różewicz's texts from the 1960s and 1970s to this fragment of the sketch *To, co zostało z nienapisanej książki o Norwidzie* is the problem of the simplified image of Polishness, one addressed to the immature, intellectually dependent individual, the image remaining worthy of attention because of its continuous and massive appeal. The writer associates the clichés of that narrative with "a pie in the sky" (III 127), not only because they attest to the derealization of Polish national

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[364] As Czapliński comments on the phenomenon: "Having inherited Sarmatian culture from Communist Poland, the contemporary neo-Sarmatians reproduced, predictably enough, the basic narratives that, though simulating their rootedness in tradition, were in fact circumscribed by the national-Cathlic model of patriotism. Neo-Sarmatians, after all, viewed tradition as a narrow, obvious and easily definable set of forms, not as a mobile network of values, attitudes, and motives. The foundation of their project was a highly patronizing and paternalistic concept of the rank-and-file Pole as a person of 'few properties'." P. Czapliński, *Konstruowanie tradycji. Sarmatyzm, uwłaszczenie mas i późna nowoczesność*, in: *(Nie)obecność. Pominięcia i przemilczenia w narracjach XX wieku*, eds H. Gosk, B. Karwowska, Warszawa 2008, pp. 384–386.

consciousness, suffused with compensatory Sienkiewicz-style visions, but also because they are as formulaic as that stock phrase – as stabilized, worn-out, and inauthentic as Gomułka-style "yada yada".

The Cultivated Person in Quotation Marks

Maria Janion, contemplating in retrospect "people's love of culture" in the post-war years, agreed with Piotr Bratkowski's opinion that in Communist Poland "there was a fairly common social obligation to be a 'cultivated person'".[365] The obligation was partly a result of the erosion of other group, regional, and class identity patterns as well as the lower classes' mass pursuit of the identification with cultural traditions of the *ancien regime* upper classes, which identification was seen as socially elevating. What is more, the lifestyle of the "cultivated person", realizing their potential through intellectual or artistic venues, was looked more favourably upon by the authorities than, for example, entrepreneurial skills in the areas of production or trade. The "small stabilization" years left many testimonies of a live cultural environment and democratization of access to the heritage and institutions of national culture, even though the Gomułka regime still limited freedom of speech and violated human rights in the spheres of politics and economics. Cultural ambitions of the citizens of the Polish People's Republic were also fuelled by the widely recognized prestige of education, which lasted throughout the 20th century. Significantly, in the realities of applied socialism, that prestige did not translate into material status or a consumptionist lifestyle, but into social recognition. This is what Czapliński emphasizes, writing that "joining the intelligentsia was becoming an end in itself".[366] When, with the enlargement of the cultural community resultant from the post-1945 social changes, its previous polit-

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[365] M. Janion, *"Czy będziesz wiedział, co przeżyłeś"*, in: *Literatura i demokracja*, op. cit., p. 123.

[366] P. Czapliński, *PRL i sarmatyzm*, op. cit., p. 159.

ical-property privileges had disappeared, the group's symbolic capital and intellectual traditions became all the more important, as they were now viewed as major criteria of its collective identity.

Who, then, was the cultivated person as an embodiment of model identity? Andrzej Tyszka, answering the question in sociological terms, states in his 1980 study that

> Polish cultural tradition and the entire way of looking at socio-cultural reality are overshadowed by the fact that the bringer and expositor of culture (especially when it comes to higher cultural values) was, over many decades, the intelligentsia of noble and bourgeois origins. Even today the idea of a cultured person connotes an image of the cultivated intellectual. This representation, because of its prerequisites and attendant expectations, is associated with the ideal of the cultured person in general.[367]

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[367] A. Tyszka, *Interesy i ideały kultury. Struktura społeczeństwa i udział w kulturze*, Warszawa 1987, pp. 233–234. In historical terms, the formation of such an identity model was resultant from the emergence of the modern, post-feudal cultural elite in Europe. The main reasons for this emergence in the 16th and 17th centuries included material well-being, an increase in leisure time, and the rasing of women's social position, which affected the customs of the entire upper class. Erudition and parlour etiquette, genteel ways, passion for highbrow conversations, an ostentatious cult of spiritual works and values, spending one's free time in theatres, at concerts, or, later on, at poetry evenings, and, notably, emulating literary role models – these are, approximately, the most important identity traits of the modern cultivated person. Viewed from the perspective of the transformations of the bourgeoisie in the 18th and 19th centuries, the emergence of this identity resulted from the middle class' identification with the old, and already passing, aristocratic class. Despite the model's lasting appeal, the process of its popularization beyond the metropolitan elites of Western Europe extended over almost three centuries, delayed especially on the continent's eastern fringes. For political and civilizational reasons the Prussian, Russian, or Polish middle classes were unable to realize the cultivated person ideal at the same time as their French or British counterparts, though they openly emulated it from the second half of the 18th century on. In addition, the limitation of civil rights, maintained in Central and East European countries throughout the next century, was compensated by intellectual aspirations of the German bourgeoisie, and in Polish and Russian conditions of the gentry-derived intelligentsia. See J. Frykman, O. Löfgren, op. cit.; A. Bocheński, *Kultura współżycia* and *Rola kobiet i literatury*, in: idem, *Parę refleksji o Polsce i świecie*, Warszawa 1984.

Thus conceived, the ideal of the cultivated individual comprises, firstly, participating in highbrow culture, secondly, intellectual origins and system of values, and, thirdly, a reflective, intellectual attitude to cultural problems, phenomena, and artefacts. Tyszka adds that "the intelligentsia, and especially its subgroup – the intellectuals – worked out a system of metareflection on culture and participation in culture", a collection of cultural ideals and normative standards.[368] Attendant on this belief was the conviction that a cultured person is also, but "not exclusively and not simply, a recipient of communication. S/he is also its selective seeker and interpreter, as well as carrier, co-author, expositor of, and spokesperson for, the communicated messages."[369] This was the idea that accompanied Polish culture up to the social chaos of World War One and Two, followed by the revolutionary period after 1945, which, according to Jan Błoński, caused a decline in trust – much bigger than in the interwar years[370] – in the elitist identity model.[371] The erosion of this ideal in Communist Poland's ambitious literature did not lead, however, to the emergence of new, equally appealing concepts of the cultured individual, nor did it undermine the model's important role in public and educational discourses or in popular culture.

Describing the Pole's identity in post-war literary texts, the critic noted that in the past two decades – the essay being dated 1972 – "nei-

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[368] Ibid., p. 234.

[369] Ibid., p. 217.

[370] Criticism of the cultured person's "inherited ways of thinking" was at the foundations of the programme of the interwar avant-garde. See T. Peiper, *Miasto. Masa. Maszyna*, in: idem, *Tędy*, Warszawa 1930, pp. 11–12.

[371] "Until the 1950s 'the Pole' identified with – vicariously through the heroes or, even more frequently, the narrators of – the enlightened class. He was formed by an educational ideal – sometimes more 'Sarmatian', sometimes more 'European' – that remained fairly homogeneous and commonly understandable. Today this identification has ceased to be literarily probable, if possible at all. The realist writer has to project his Pole onto the image of the anonymous employee – neither a proletarian nor a bourgeois, or a peasant, or a bureaucrat; [project it] onto the protagonist and social groups which are transitory, temporary." J. Błoński, op. cit., p. 279.

ther journalistic nor literary texts managed to come up with a symbolic image of Polishness that would prove so overwhelmingly appealing as once the stereotypes of the sacrificer, the Sarmatian, or the model social activist".[372] Does it attest to the continuity of national culture or, rather, to its crisis? To answer this question, Błoński reconstructed the gentry-intellectual "educational ideal" of the cultural community's representative as featured in the texts of Zofia Nałkowska, Jan Józef Szczepański, Jerzy Andrzejewski, and Kazimierz Brandys, among others. The ideal was questioned after 1945 by such writers as Tadeusz Borowski or Tadeusz Różewicz. The questioning did not, according to the critic, consist in simply contrasting the old model with its model antithesis, for example that of the Socialist-Realism-style worker, but, rather, in "juxtaposing the cultural pattern with the chaos of social behaviours" of the occupation and the post-war years.[373] As the agent or protagonist of the great changes of the mid-20th century, the cultured person ideal seemed too simplistic and improbable to retain its original credibility. Guided by this diagnosis, the writers created a protagonist who, viewed through the lens of the old models and projections, seemed intermediate, transitory, or even nondescript. The intermediate identity resulted from one's awareness of the existence of an ideal accompanied by the sense that the cultural community still sustaining it was undergoing a thorough transformation. The transitory man, as a literary character, embodied the ambiguous situation not of those who remained indifferent to the cultured/cultivated identity, but of those who still identified with, or aspired to it, but because the all-pervasive trivialization and popularization of the old model could attain, at best, only an incomplete, inauthentic, and increasingly common identity.

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[372] Ibid., p. 270.
[373] Ibid., p. 275.

Based on Błoński's diagnosis, Tadeusz Drewnowski concluded that in the four post-war decades, despite the variety of literary creations, such as "the model worker in the literature of socialist realism, the model Polish technocrat or manager from avant-garde continuations or from so-called labour literature, the model Polish soldier from popular literature, or the model civic activist from various historical periods", there, in fact, did not emerge "any new model Pole and, following on from that, any new stereotype of such".[374] It should come as no surprise that it did not because the cultured man's *universum*, which previously served as a source for such models and stereotypes, had been dispersed among the pastiches of popular culture, while bureaucratically democratized culture in the state that was almost homogeneous in national and religious terms, and habitually limiting the individual's political freedom and self-realization pursuits in many other areas, proved to be – with the exception of literature and high art – conservative and derivative. The embodiment of Communist Poland's "social magma" was the transitory man, a mixture of pre-existing identity models and cultural aspirations, who also displayed the traits of the Everyman. As Drewnowski explains, the literary Everyman in those days was "a character partly personally educated and partly collective: it is a typical average character who either identifies with or fights against a clearly defined hierarchy of values, a certain project, pattern, or even catechism".[375] This means that the cultured man still interacts with those patterns and values, negotiating them, using them as a linguistic medium to describe himself and the world, but it also means that they are common property now, accessible to e v e r y o n e.

When the boundaries and roles of the intelligentsia's cultural community – once clear mostly because of social and lifestyle differences

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[374] T. Drewnowski, *Porachunki z XX wiekiem*, op. cit., p. 222.
[375] Ibid., p. 227.

– get blurred, the connection between the individual and the representation of the elevating community needs to be constantly interpreted and maintained through discursive means. Consequently, a particular cultured individual in Communist Poland could not have been simply a cultured individual, one of many. They could have only pictured the model to themselves, thus coming to terms with their own consciousness and erudition. The cultivated person's reflective attitude to themselves, which previously had accompanied the lifestyle and social status of the cultured community, now – beginning in the 1950s – became the last distinguishing characteristic of their identity. The literary protagonist, as a carrier of this distinction, was therefore experiencing an inner split and engaging in excessive "verbalizations", suspended between identification with the ideal and a reflection on the meaning of such an identification; he was in the very process of becoming himself and establishing what it eventually meant in the context of his own experience. Acknowledging his own ambiguity, the protagonist had to enter into a conflict with himself, experience a rhetorical self-division, only to undergo reunification, however temporary, through self-reflection on his own "doppelgänger" identity.[376]

An example of such a discussion of the cultured man's identity problems is the essayistic *Sobowtór* [*Doppelgänger*] by Tadeusz Różewicz, published in the 1977 edition of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*.

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[376] The doppelgänger identity in modern literature (e.g. in T. Konwicki's fiction) denotes – according to Ryszard Przybylski – the narrator-agent's inner split into experience (self-awareness) and understanding (self-affirmation), into "acts of self-awareness and acts of self-affirmation". "The protagonist's voice evokes, alternately, what is comprehensible and what has been given in experience. These two realms, however, can never be ultimately reconciled because, as long as life continues, the two categories are not permanent and unchangeable but subject to constant modifications and transformations. What matters is both the baggage of past experiences and the projection of certain values into the future – but also the real chain of events as well as the mind's imaginings." R.K. Przybylski, *Autor i jego sobowtór*, Wrocław 1987, p. 189.

Różewicz published several texts under that title.[377] The narrative parts of *Sobowtór* from *Przygotowanie*, each time accompanied by the subtitle *fragment powieści* [*Fragment of a Novel*], came out in "Odra" in 1972 and 1973.[378] The same monthly published in 1972 another *fragment powieści*, under the same title, reprinted in the collection *Margines, ale …*[379] Also in 1973, the writer published in "Odra" a small drama entitled *Sobowtór*, and in 1974 a poem of the same title.[380] What can be considered the last part of the planned novel is the autobiographical sketch *Strawiony* [*Digested*], published in "Odra" in 1976 under the title *Sobowtór (fragment powieści)* and later on also included in the aforementioned edition of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* (the second, enlarged edition). It was deleted, however, from the *Utwory zebrane*'s third volume, *Proza* [*Prose*] (entitled *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*), featuring sketches, notes, and journal fragments. *Strawiony* was included in the second volume, though, among different "travel writing" texts.[381] Although, corresponding with Zofia and Jerzy Nowosielski, the writer did mention his "novel *Sobowtór*" (Ko 181), and in the 1967 letter to Paweł Mayewski revealed his dream to write an "autobiographical novel" (Ma 192), the novel as such was never published

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[377] Mieczysław Orski claims that this cycle of "doppelgängers" is grounded in the Różewicz death myth revolving around the sense of "incompatibility of the idea of humanity and its realization", which in the writer's texts manifests itself in the identity of the split or doubled individual who, although "dead", is seemingly alive, experiencing, consuming, and feeling emotions. M. Orski, *Mit śmierci Świata czyli tropem pewnych wątków twórczości Różewicza*, "Odra" 1987, no. 7–8, p. 34. I discuss the character and existence of the "dead" in the chapter "The Anatomy of Experience".

[378] T. Różewicz, *Sobowtór (fragment powieści)*, "Odra" 1972, no. 9 and 1973, no. 2. The writer mentions writing a novel, an expansion on *Sobowtór*, also in the conversation with Lidia Filipska-Wrzosek and Zygmunt Trziszka in 1973 (W 63).

[379] T. Różewicz, *Sobowtór (fragment powieści)*, "Odra" 1972, no. 11.

[380] T. Różewicz, *Sobowtór*, "Odra" 1973, no. 9; T. Różewicz, *Sobowtór (fragmenty)*, "Odra" 1974, no. 4.

[381] T. Różewicz, *Sobowtór (fragment powieści)*, "Odra" 1976, no. 12.

as a finished whole. The author himself pointed to the moment when he changed the conceptual framework, suspending his work on the text as a novel. One of his letters to Kazimierz Wyka, written on 13 August 1973, "on the flip side of the novel's text", which is probably the reason why it was never posted, includes the following excerpt: "the letter got 'mixed up' with the 'work' sheets (it's *Sobowtór*, which I will no longer write – I quit") (III 109).

Sobowtór from *Przygotowanie* is connected with the drama *Do piachu*, as it includes a commentary on the play itself and the history of its creation – more precisely, on the "song of Private Waluś's love and death" which is planned in the sketch. The literary idea refers to the tentative title of Różewicz's drama, "temporarily" called *Pieśń o miłości i śmierci szeregowca Walusia Kiełbasy* [*The Song of Private Waluś Kiełbasa's Love and Death*] by the writer in a letter to Nowosielski (Ko 160). In a short 1973 note, *Tytuły długie i krótkie* [*Titles Long and Short*], the drama's author described the process of changing the title as follows:

> The title of my last play, which I finished writing on the last day of December 1972, was changed several times. Originally, it was supposed to be very long: *Pieśń o miłości i śmierci jakiego tam człowieka* [*The Song of Love and Death of a Little-Known Man*], *Pieśń o miłości i śmierci głupiego Walusia* [*The Song of Love and Death of Waluś the Fool*], or *Pieśń o miłości i śmierci szeregowca Walusia* [*The Song of Love and Death of Private Waluś*].
>
> Finally, after several changes, each version containing *Pieśń o miłości i śmierci* [*The Song of Love and Death*], the title changes completely. The play begins its own life and peregrination under a new title: *Do piachu* [*Into the Sand*]. Under this title, the other, rejected titles remain hidden. Under this title I hand them over to the readers (Ma 76).

What underwent substantial changes was not only the title but also the generic form of the text. In his conversation with Dobrochna Ratajczakowa, which took place in the 1990s, he said: "*Do piachu* was supposed to be a novel, which I never wrote, probably for genetic reasons. My *Sitzfleisch* cannot take two hundred or three hundred pages." As the writer explained, "The play was based on notes taken for the novel […], so, this whole thing of my drama materializing not through acts but through images is connected with the fact that it was supposed to be either a short story or a novel" (W 266). Basing on Różewicz's comments, then, one can surmise that the writer originally planned on writing two novels, *Do piachu* and *Sobowtór*, and began to write the former in 1948 and 1955 (III 426).[382] However, once he made up his mind to definitely make *Do piachu* a play and started to work on it accordingly, which took place in the summer of 1972 (Ko 160), the only novel he would still intend to finish was *Sobowtór*, its narrative expanding on some of the "guerrilla" themes.

As one can read in *Sobowtór*, the title of "The Song of Love and Death of Private Waluś" is a "consciously ironic allusion to the famous, beautiful prose poem *The Song of Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke* by R.M. Rilke" (III 427). The sketch includes many other literary and philosophical references – to Elias Canetti, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Heinrich Heine, Hermann Hesse, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Michel Tournier, among others. Whether serious or ironic, the allusions and erudite observations represent in *Sobowtór* the realm of the cultured individual, attached to grand ideas and great works of culture, whereas Waluś stands for the human realities of the lowest order, nearly feral in nature, identified with physiological activities, dirt, stench, and obtuse-

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[382] See T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 235.

ness. The plebeian characters of *Jego honor* [*His Honor*] are viewed in similar ways. To Kwiatek, an intellectual partisan from a big city, they appear to be "creatures", almost beasts (O 85). Kwiatek's feelings of repulsion, disgust, and detachment when it comes to his coarse brothers in arms are fuelled by their social claims and political sense of entitlement, which seem highly inappropriate to him in times of armed struggle for national independence. Such a binary opposition was typical of modern secular social thought. Andrzej Mencwel reminds us that the image of the lowborn individual as an animal "with a human face" and "something like a speech", created from the perspective of humanity as such, inspired the writings of Jean de La Bruyère, Erich Auerbach, Walter Benjamin, and Stanisław Brzozowski, among others.[383] With the birth of the Enlightenment project of the emancipation of the simple folk, this image became its "form of acknowledgement", representing the object of the modernizing mission carried out by intellectuals and enlightened representatives of the upper classes; it became their figure of the Other. The end of identifying that character with the naive innocent was brought about by the ideology of class conflict as an organizing principle for interpersonal relations, depicting the folk representatives in terms of political rather than moral philosophy.

As a writer, Różewicz faced that stereotyped relation (the cultured man vs the "half-man"[384]) many times. One of *Sobowtór*'s protagonists gets down to writing about a "dull, benighted young farmhand whose

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[383] A. Mencwel, *Widziane z dołu*, op. cit., p. 33.

[384] This kind of perspective – the cultivated person ("a mister" beginning his lecture with the formulaic "Ladies and Gentlemen") and "half-reptile, half-man / but in one person" (identified with the poem's speaker) – was utilized by Różewicz in his early poem *Przystosowanie* [*Adaptation*], published in "Nowiny Literackie" 1947, no. 33, p. 2, and subsequently included in the first part ("Byłem na dnie") of a bigger diptych entitled *Przystosowanie (czerwona rękawiczka)*. The "half-reptile, half-man" identity in the poem denotes primarily the state of disintegration of the conventional model of humanity resultant from wartime dehumanization of the individual.

feet stank", aware of the fact that he is returning to an old problem. "Now, in 1972", he confesses, "I rehashed a story which I began to write in 1948, and then in 1955" (III 426). The Waluś motif, apart from the drama *Do piachu*, appears in the short story *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata* and – earlier – in the novella *Nogi ... nogi* [*Legs ... Legs*], as well as in several small pieces from the collection *Echa leśne*. The smell of cheese in the "famous café frequented by Existentialists" reminds the story's protagonist of the dumb partisan's (Waluś) stinky legs. This sensory connotation not only triggers the mechanism of Proustian reminiscence, evoking a particular picture in the protagonist's memory, but, first and foremost, sharpens the dissonance between the theatricality of human behaviour in "the world's most beautiful city", with its typically bourgeois forms of social life and entertainment (e.g. female nudity as a commodity), and the experience of corporeality, which represents what is real and elementary. The sleeping Rifleman W. in Różewicz's debut novella is presented as a part of an organism made up of several dozen male bodies asleep in a dug-out. The narrator of *Nogi … nogi*, refraining from editorializing or ideologizing descriptions, assumes the perspective of a detached observer viewing a live mass of people. This results in presenting the farmhand-partisan in zoomorphic terms, as a sleeping animal that "flashes its yellow teeth, grinning at some dream image while asleep, perhaps dreaming about a long sausage" (E 37). The text's title could be a humorous allusion to female legs as a recurrent theme in partisan folklore or a motif from interwar cabaret oldies and box office hits popularizing the exposed-leg mythology, typical of modern popular culture.[385] In the more discursive *Sobowtór*, in turn, the Waluś character is primarily a critical device, an interpretant of the cultured man's identity. This

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[385] An excerpt from T. Peiper's *Noga* [*Leg*] was quoted by Różewicz in his letter to J. Nowosielski (Ko 257).

"human beast", an embodiment of social and mental invalidity, moral depravation, and impurity, constitutes the antithesis of the "knight, astronomer, philosopher, saint", but also of the innocent and noble simpleton. As Danuta Szkop-Dąbrowska puts it, "Różewicz declares himself at this point as the anti-Rilke of *The Song of Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke*".[386] Like Kazimierz Wyka, the scholar interprets *Sobowtór* as a manifestation of the writer's anti-heroic stance, Różewicz looking at war through the lens of quotidian reality in which a soldier's or a partisan's death is not sublime and aestheticized, like in Grottger's paintings, but absurd, commonplace, unnecessary, and repulsive. This is, certainly, a possible interpretation of the short story *Tablica*, in which the literary source of "the image of imminent, beautiful death and effusive maudlinness" of the conspirator Gustaw is Rilke's poem, quoted and accompanied by a footnote. War, however, instead of being a setting for "great deeds", brings to the protagonist a sense of fear, humiliation, and the mundane character of "365 daily deeds" (O 23). *Tablica*, beginning with

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[386] D. Szkop-Dąbrowska, op. cit., p. 97. The problem of Rilke's image and his role in the poetry and drama of Różewicz's *Do piachu* was analysed by Katarzyna Kuczyńska-Koschany in her *Rilke poetów polskich*, Wrocław 2004. Rilke emodies here the falsehood of radical aestheticism, the moral emptiness of a poet bereft of elementary empathy for another human being – a specific, flesh-and-blood individual. Ibid., pp. 93, 265, 279. Kuczyńska-Koschany writes: "Różewicz himself links the Waluś-cornet pair with the doppelgänger motif […] Indeed, it would be hard to find a better antithesis of the lean knight, the forebear (according to the legend that Rilke himself believed in) of the author of this gorgeous, over-subtle rhythmic prose, than this 'stink-pot' Waluś. It is hard to imagine two initiations more different than, on the one hand, a beautiful night of love with an unknown lady of noble birth followed by a glorious death on the battlefield, and, on the other – shagging an ageing woman (which Waluś denies) only to end up being executed by a firing squad made up of one's brothers in arms. The former initiation is the experience of the standard-bearer, the hero, the knight of the rose petal; the latter is that of the private, the anti-hero and the soldier of shitty pants." Ibid., pp. 282–283. The scholar interprets the *Sobowtór* soliloquy as, among others, Różewicz's struggle with "that part of his artistic self which gravitates towards the modernist-avantgarde paradigm". The writer contrasts this paradigm with prosaicized poeticality, materializing itself in the realms of everyday life and plain speech. Ibid., pp. 282–283.

two mutually exclusive "bookish" takes on wartime experience (aesthetic-heroic and trivial-pacifist experiences), constitutes the antithesis of its literary aestheticization. Admittedly, however, the context of *The Song of Love and Death* does trigger in Różewicz's writings some more general meanings, for example the problem of cultural identity models and their influence on the individual's self-definition under circumstances different from times of war.

Sobowtór is a debate and an inner argument, at some points – a dialogue between characters with whom the text's persona identifies alternately, only to say at the end: "To był on. Ja" ["That was him. Me"] (III 429). The case of Private Waluś is the apex of their argument leading to the identification of "him" with "me". The debate is between the disgust towards a farmhand thug and the imperative of love for another human being, especially that of the lowest kind, between distrust of pedagogical ideals and their alternative – derision or withdrawal, between "cultural coercion" and detachment from speculations isolated from experience and – like in the short story *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata* – from cultural snobbery. Is Waluś's story merely the reverse of "the tales of heroes, cowards, enemies, wonderful boys"? In order to describe and comprehend the "human beast" is it necessary to evoke "the knight, astronomer, philosopher, saint"? Is it still so? Really? Such questions have acquired new meanings "ever since God left the human being", while "television pushes through" (III 423), trying to fill in the void that was once occupied by the soul. The Hamlet-like Cornet Rilke is no longer a moral or aesthetic yardstick for humans. Teilhard de Chardin's philosophical cogitations on the nature of the human self no longer enjoy the status of real wisdom. "What a pity", the doppelgänger ironically remarks, "That your stupid Waluś is never going to read these words. Pity? For whom? For whom, may I ask? For stupid Waluś or for Pierre Teilhard de Chardin?" (III 428). Concluding their argument about the farmhand in this

way, Różewicz does not claim that the difference between the man of poets and thinkers and the depraved private has disappeared. It has not, but, with the crisis of the status and tradition of the cultured classes, this opposition, as Błoński writes, has lost its normative obviousness.[387] The symbolic scale of humanity, which would authoritatively and exhaustively legitimize the differences between conscious existence, shaped by one's agency and conscious participation in culture, and the existence of "domesticated animals" (Z. Nałkowska) had become equally binding, the narrator of *Sobowtór* suggests, as any TV series.

The narrator of *Sobowtór* – if one adds up the utterances of both characters – still uses that opposition but rejects its source meaning.[388] Unable to reconstruct the "scattered" identity model as the ideal that would serve as a yardstick for comparisons, he cannot by the same token take a stand on the above-cited literary and philosophical images of man. He cannot reject or ignore them either so as not to lose the ability to come to terms with himself, to comprehend himself. As Jan Potkański puts it, "Searching for identity, one shapes one's life in imitation of the literary 'doppelgänger'. It is no longer possible to simply tell the story

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[387] J. Błoński, op. cit., p. 273. "Borowski, Różewicz, Białoszewski lived most intensely through, and best expressed the mechanism of, the clash between the cultural model and the chaos of social behavings that the occupation topples and reshuffles. The encounter with naked violence was even less important than the loss of trust in the pedagogical ideal. Hardly had it appeared on the teenager's horizon when it began to crumble before the very eyes of the prematurely grown-up. This is exactly how literature parted with the well-separated zones of the intelligentsia, the bourgeoisie, the traditional peasantry, or even the proletariat (because, after all, there was precious little left of the old working class after the war). It slowly submerged itself in the social magma, the fluidity of existence of 'the tribe of islanders or even domesticated animals'. Thus it elevated the intermediate element – anonymous and culturally nondescript …". Ibid., p. 275.

[388] Cieślak, basing on A. Kępińska's diagnoses, claims that in Różewicz's writings one does not come across "the death of man but across the erosion of a certain cultural model of selfhood" with the self losing their "unquestionable place in culture". A. Kępińska, *Energie sztuki*, Warszawa 1990, p. 114, qtd in: R. Cieślak, *Oko poety. Poezja Tadeusza Różewicza wobec sztuk widowiskowych*, op. cit., p. 210.

of *oneself*, one can only tell the story of oneself as *someone else* in the 'era of being' part of 'what has *already been told*.'"[389] As a schizophrenic character, searching nevertheless for full expression, for completeness, the Różewicz narrator finds himself in a logical trap. Never ceasing to quote, he also keeps mocking the paper identity of the cultured man. He automatically repeats memorized poems, treatises, slogans, and common observations, which used to explain the meaning of existence or history to previous generations, he argues with the doppelgänger, his opponent, even over trifles, eventually interrupting the discussion in mid-sentence. He accomplishes nothing, failing to relate to any of the cited biographies or role models. It is not the farmhand, then, who lacks identity, but the self-conscious speaking subject, who has lost his trust in the cultural realm, has distanced himself from the ideological and metaphysical assumptions stored therein, has parted even with the notion of himself as an individual, receiving in return the "television truth".[390]

In *Moja córeczka* [*My Little Daughter*], the "artificial world" was still inscribed into a clear hierarchy of values in which modern cultural industry ("artificial images") appeared to be the source of moral evil. *Cmentarzyk okresu małej stabilizacji* [*A Little Cemetery of the Small Stabilization Days*], a novella included in the first edition of *Przygotowanie*, features a relationship between a television show and its million-strong audience absorbing images and slogans in the "pompous-sentimental style", addressed to mediocre and smug individuals of an established social and material status. This bourgeois reality of the "golden autumn of 1965", marked with snobbery and phoniness, permeates – as a result of the pro-

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[389]   J. Potkański, op. cit., p. 214.

[390]   Theodor Adorno refers to the television "truth" as a "perversion of the truth" because the appealingly represented cultural stereotype plays the role of the truth in television, retaining the appearances of a realistic message. T. Adorno, *Sztuka i sztuki. Wybór esejów*, trans. K. Krzemień-Ojak, Warszawa 1990, pp.72–73.

liferation of the TV-promoted image of the world – not only one's life on earth but also the afterlife, effectively replacing the old images of the latter with new ones (II 300–301).[391] Television, Theodor Adorno tells us, leads to the atrophy of identity – both that of the individual and of the human community because it supplies viewers with an illusion of both individual experience and rapport with others.[392] The Różewicz protagonist (the protagonist of *Strawiony* staring at the TV screen) notices that the media-processed image "devours the real world … that nothing is interconnected anymore, or that everything is" (II 273). He does not, however, support his diagnosis with either an ethical or a cognitive authority, because he himself is disintegrating. The media-generated "mixing of realms which once constituted separate cultural worlds" is accompanied by a disintegration of the self as agent, capable of distinguishing between truth and fiction, representation and interpretation, original and copy.[393]

The narrative "I" in *Sobowtór* is split inside and self-antagonized. The narrator-agent, as the author of the story about himself and the world, has, by definition, a cultural identity. He cannot accept it, however, having witnessed the devaluation of the symbolic codes that constitute it.

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[391] The expansion of television culture in Poland reached its peak intensity in the 1960s. Four years after the opening of Warsaw Television Centre "in 1960 there were 238,000 TV subscribers, in 1964 – as many as 1,295,000, and in 1969 – nearly 4 million". It is from television that the "model family" and the "community of viewers" in Communist Poland "take over behavioural patterns, fashions, contemporary phenomena, and language", television functioning as a "drawing room for the masses". Kurz adds that, "As the number of viewers increased and their participation in other cultural media decreased, there was a strengthening of the stereotype of television as an alienating and disintegrating medium that fosters passivity. The attendant belief was that television produces a politically inert mass subject to the dictates of propaganda." I. Kurz, *Telewizja: "szyby niebieskie od telewizorów"*, in: *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach*, op. cit., pp. 383, 385, 388–389.

[392] "They [can] think only what has been thoroughly mediated, designed as an illusion with a sense of belonging which they crave." T. Adorno, op. cit., p. 62.

[393] A. Fulińska, *Media*, in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy*, eds M.P. Markowski, R. Nycz, Kraków 2006, pp. 460–468.

Jean Baudrillard differentiates between the modern doppelgänger resulting from the splitting of the self, and the original double appearing only when "a single being becomes multiplied, giving rise to a plethora of other beings, equally alive".[394] The philosopher also distinguishes both types from the sublime doppelgänger standing for "maturing into full humanity" (i.e. one's "hominization") which, according to Terilhard de Chardin, should lead to the emergence of universal values ("the idea of one God and universal morality") externalized in the image of the doppelgänger as the prototype of the soul and consciousness".[395] Meanwhile, the modern double denotes neither the mythical multiplication nor spiritual completeness and ethical universalism, but, to the contrary, it embodies the ambiguity of the individual's agency. Jean Baudrillard writes:

> [Viewed from] a historical perspective, the emergence of the soul terminates the exchange with ghosts and doubles, leading to the appearance of the new form of doppelgänger, one that would be from then on lurking in the nooks and crannies of Western reason, wrapping it in its diabolic aura, the doppelgänger that, after all, has much more in common with the Western figure of alienation than with the original double.[396]

With the arrival of the idea of man-the-subject endowed with inner depth, "there gradually disappears the original way of thinking about doubleness in terms of continuity and exchange, supplanted by the obsession about the doppelgänger visiting the subject and marking them with discontinuity".[397] The moment of internalizing one's consciousness begins

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[394] J. Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 179.
[395] Ibid., p. 178.
[396] Ibid., pp. 177–178.
[397] Ibid., p. 179.

an era when the modern, unified, and individual subject can face themselves only through the experience of alienation or the image of their own death.[398] The alienating doppelgänger, for example in Edward Abramowski's thought, denotes a social phenomenon that, though originating with the individual person, by expressing their individuality and agency through various conventions (ideological, religious, legal, ethical) begins to exist independently of that person. As a visualization of the condition of the modern individual, the Abramowski doppelgänger represents the individual's monstrous, partial, and defective identity, defined by an attitude towards other people and institutions which is degrading for the individual in question.[399] This is how one can interpret the split personality, followed by the emergence of the alter ego, of the protagonist of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novella *The Double*, who suffers from pathological incompatibility with his own ideal of himself caused by excessive social pressure. Polish Modernism has its own model of the doppelgänger, the character of Geniusz [Genius], the alter ego of the Romantic Konrad from Stanisław Wyspiański's *Wyzwolenie*. That double embodies the conflict between creative work, calling (the united nation viewed as the agent of its own history) for historic "action", and "messianic" poetry preaching the nation's salvation (liberation) through martyr-like death. Michał Masłowski claims that Wyspiański's drama initiated in our literature the tradition of "lampoonists".[400] One of the characteristics of that tradition would be combining the problem of liberating the arts from literary conventions with the liberation of man-the-subject from the framework of philosophical and social image of the world

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[398] Ibid., p. 178.

[399] E. Abramowski, *Pierwiastki indywidualne w socjologii. Pisma*, vol. II, Warszawa 1924, p. 161. This explanation of Abramowski's concept of the doppelgänger comes from R. Światło's article, *Koncepcje filozoficzno-społeczne Edwarda Abramowskiego*, in: *Polska myśl filozoficzna i społeczna*, vol. III, ed. B. Skarga, Warszawa 1977, p. 394.

[400] M. Masłowski, op. cit., p. 392.

falsifying the individual's experience. (Józio, the protagonist of Witold Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke*, also has a double, his individual personhood being threatened both by biologism and by maturity identified with culture and form.) Close to Różewicz's doppelgänger is Roland Barthes' "divided man", defined not so much by the classic binary oppositions such as "high/low, body/mind, sky/earth" but by diffusion. As Barthes puts it in his 1975 quasi-autobiography *Roland Barthes*:

> That is why when we speak today about the divided subject, it is not about acknowledging its simple contradictions, twofold postulates and the like; it is about diffraction, about diffusion, in which there is no longer either the core or the structure of meaning: I am not [self-] contradictory, I am scattered.[401]

As a clear-cut binary opposition, Cornet Rilke and Waluś do constitute a totality of sorts. However, the disintegrating subject of *Sobowtór* cannot relate to it in terms of an identity model.[402]

The doppelgänger in Różewicz's *Sobowtór* manifests himself both as a diabolic figure and the voice of the speaking subject himself, who has lost the sense – otherwise maintained by faith or social routine – of the two totalities habitually imagined and separated in Western culture, namely the *individuum* and the world.[403] Their erosion made the

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[401] R. Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, trans. T. Swoboda, Gdańsk 2011, p. 155.

[402] Kuczyńska-Koschany (op. cit.) points out that Różewicz created the character of Rilke as a double in the poem *Appendix dopisany przez "samo życie"* [*An Appendix Written by "Life Itself"*] dealing with the suicide of Ruth (27 November 1972), Rilke's daughter. The poem was originally published in "Odra" (1974, no. 5) under the title *Appendix dopisany przez "samo życie" do pamiętników Malte Luridsa Brigge* [*An Appendix to The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge Written by "Life Itself"*].

[403] The modern representation of the individual as a part and a whole is analysed by Marilyn Strathern, who writes that the person thus conceived is simultaneously a totality in the physical sense and a part of the world distinguishable from him/her in the social sense, one defined by

novel – understood as an attempt to totalize the individual's experience – a suspect, if not an altogether impossible, enterprise. As Adorno argues, simultaneously with the disintegration of that narrative form there takes place the disintegration of "the identity of experience, of integral and well-articulated life". That is why modern novels as "reversed epics" are manifestations of a state in which the individual terminates his/her own individuality.[404] *Sobowtór* is a case in point. When the narrator of *fragment powieści*, included in the volume *Margines, ale…*, explains, watching the TV coverage of the Moon flight rocket launch, that he is unable to "connect the fragments of that story into a meaningful whole whole Whole", he mocks with the voice of the double the idea of "a real novel" and "a meaningful whole" (Ma 50).[405] The world is no longer such a whole, being, as it is, experienced as an unreal and media-multiplied image. Likewise, the individual-liberal subject, whose very existence was made possible by the distinction into what is internal and one's own, and what is mediated, represented, cited, and external, is not such a totality either. In fact, having lost this kind of differentiating capacity, the subject

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socialization, relationships, and conventions. M. Strathern, *Części i całości. Przeobrażenia związków w świecie postpluralistycznym*, trans. G. Kubica-Heller, in: *Badanie kultury. Elementy teorii antropologicznej*, eds M. Kempny, E. Nowicka, Warszawa 2003, pp. 185–186.

[404] See T. Adorno, op. cit., pp. 176, 180.

[405] Apart from *Sobowtór* other attempts to arrive at a "whole" included *Przerwany egzamin* [*An Interrupted Exam*], *Próba rekonstrukcji* [*A Reconstruction Attempt*] and *The Card Index* (see Ma 174). The same opposition – the individual's impossible totality vs the world featured on television ("intimate soup is prepared – and the soup is pouring from the switched-on TV set") – constitutes the compositional and philosophical backbone of Andrzej Falkiewicz's book *Takim ściegiem*, referred to by the author as "an attempt to write down the entire human being", scattered into fragments and reflections. The only totality left is, eventually, the body, *prima substantia*, "my body entire, once and for all". A. Falkiewicz, *Takim ściegiem: zapisy z lat 1974–1976 przepisane w 1986 przeczytane w 2008*, op. cit., pp. 109, 119, 127–128. Bernhard Waldenfels links totality to the idea of truth and identity. Totality, in his view, denotes in Western philosophy "the all-encompassing order within which everyone can be for themselves, and together with others, whatever they are supposed to be". B. Waldenfels, *Topografia obcego. Studia z fenomenologii obcego*, trans. J. Sidorek, Warszawa 2002, pp. 180–181.

turned out to be a mere historical convention, much like the bourgeois novel. Like a character from the Leo Tolstoy story commented upon in *Sobowtór* (*Margines, ale…*), Różewicz's protagonist is authentic only at the moment when, in the heat of an inner debate, he discovers and tries to come to terms with his own inauthenticity – when, like Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich, he seeks in the experience of mortality and alienation from the all-too-obvious world the truth in a moral sense.[406] On the other hand, all the fragments of *Sobowtór* are grotesque or metaliterary, while the sketch included in *Przygotowanie* is stylistically and generically diversified, made up of its narrative, dialogic, and lyrical parts. Presumably then, the novel as a potential totality would be, first and foremost, an ironic and intertextual play, a self-reflective display of erudition on the part of the cultured individual of the second half of the 20th century, and not a morality play produced in earnest. Still, its compositional axis would be the relation between the erosion of the novel and the disintegration of the cultured man's universe which was grounded in the image of God, the modern concepts of the individual's agency and the world, and the hierarchy of values of Western cultural community. Although this "horizon of meaning" does not disappear in *Sobowtór*, it becomes problematic in the sense that it is no longer usable as an integral and credible worldview. One can merely recognize (and represent) it as one of the discourses offered by cultural tradition. In a similar manner, the idea of the novel as a t o t a l i t y does not disappear, even though this kind of totality can only be attained in the form of a pastiche.

As the protagonist of the poem planned in *Sobowtór*, Waluś, rather than eliciting disgust, seems to function primarily as an exponent of the identity narrative with which the individual aspiring to the cultured

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[406] The worldview and impact of L. Tolstoy in Różewicz's writings are discussed at length by J. Adamowska, op. cit.

community entered the 20th century. When Różewicz ironically adapts the farmhand to the role of Cornet Rilke, endowing him with a form which is "beyond his means", he utilizes the literary pattern which in itself is a construct of the socially elevating lineage and Tyrteian anaesthetization of the soldier's death.[407] Thus he demonstrates the pressure exerted by the imagined and the repetitive on what is real and unique, which was increasing in the era of "false" cultural norms.[408] "The Song of Love and Death of Private Waluś" does not mock heroism as such but only its mediated and inadequate form of expression. A dumb and smelly farmhand translates a beautiful cornet into a pastiche, a "chivalric" genealogy. Arguably, the source of Różewicz's literary concept may have been his observation of contemporary phenomena, such as the proliferation of visual communication in the Western world after World War Two and the revision of memory and collective identity in the Polish culture of the "small stabilization" days. The culture of Communist Poland, though largely trivialized, was nevertheless fully accessible to, and increasingly appropriated by, the average man, whose lineage was more often than not that of a farmhand or a proletarian than of the elites of old. Despite the propitious social climate for being a "cultivated person", no new, authentic post-war patterns of this type of cultural identification eventually emerged. The demand for such a pattern was vicariously supplied by the Sarmatian-Romantic *imaginarium*, ideologically reduced and mass-reproduced, which, in fact, gave only an illusion of identity because the experience of the socialist Everyman was not genuinely reflected in it. The Sienkiewicz of the "small stabilization" days was – aphoristically speaking – the song of Cornet Christoph Rilke for the masses identifying

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[407] *Do piachu* and *Sobowtór*, as works displaying, in literary terms, a "generic memory" referring to Rilke's poem, have been discussed at length by Aleksandra Ubertowska. A. Ubertowska, *Tadeusz Różewicz a literatura niemiecka*, Kraków 2001, pp. 148–166.

[408] Ibid., p. 157.

with pop culture images, Communist-nationalist propaganda, stagings of collective memory and patriotic educational campaigns. Just like Rilke's fictitious aristocratic genealogy in the bourgeois world of the early 20ᵗʰ century, the transitory man of Communist Poland found himself in the national cultural community only in quotation marks, so to speak, marking his new identity. This modern cultured man, put in quotation marks in *Sobowtór*, turned out to be a sum total of quotes, allusions, parodies, and paraphrases – a totality made possible solely as a sum total of fragments and imitations.

Death in Culture

Tadeusz Różewicz travelled abroad many times, most often during the "small stabilization" days. Traces of those journeys can be found in his reportages, short stories, and poems. The most important topic in Różewicz's travel writing was the "Italian theme" (K. Wyka) connected with three trips that took place in the 1960s.[409] Kazimierz Wyka writes:

> Among the countries Różewicz visited, one was particularly privileged, its presence in the writer's work being most prominent – Italy. […] It is easily noticeable that both the "plot" of the poem *Et in Arcadia ego* and that of the prose parable written ten years later [published in 1970 – WB] – *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* – are reflections of primarily that journey. Except that in the poem the focus of events and observations was mainly Naples, whereas in the parable it was Rome.[410]

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[409] As K. Wyka tells us, the dates of those trips were: 17 May–14 August 1960, 21 May–8 August 1964, and 24 October–9 November 1967. K. Wyka, *Różewicz parokrotnie*, op. cit., p. 39. I list the writer's other trips in the chapter "Place in the Narrative".

[410] Wyka based that opinion on his thesis according to which the "Italian theme" best illustrates the phenomenon of the generic substitute, that is Różewicz's attempts to utilize the same theme in various generic forms (referred to as "limitrophe" because of that). Ibid., p. 20. Janusz Waligóra points out, however, that, simultaneously with generically "limitrophe" texts, Różewicz also cre-

The Italian theme encompasses, apart from lyric poems, also narrative poetry and prose: *Et in Arcadia ego*, *Opowiadanie dydaktyczne*, *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*, *Tarcza z pajęczyny* (referring to the writer's stay in China, Paris, and Rome) and the short *Sorrento, 4 V 1960*.[411] Janusz Waligóra writes: "The longest 'Italian' text reflecting the vast scope and extraordinary intensity of Różewicz's work in the 1960s is *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*".[412] In Różewicz's prose, *Śmierć* is also the most comprehensive take on the issue of cultural identity of the typical Różewicz protagonist, the average man (here I focus solely on this problem whereas other issues, for instance those linked to somatic identity, are discussed in the chapter "Anatomy of Experience").

Helena Zaworska gave her 1977 essay on the art of travelling and Różewicz's poetry the title *Podróże daremne* [*Futile Travels*]. In the book's introduction she accounted for the title as follows: "Różewicz's terrible disappointment seems to me to result from his utopian expectations. […] Travel in Różewicz's writings becomes a phenomenon of little value, a hasty move leading nowhere, that is incapable of generating value".[413] As she later adds, it is hard to say why the speaker of Różewicz's poetry "keeps embarking on those futile trips if they also, like everything else, make no sense, unable to save either his personality or culture".[414] The

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ated fairly traditional short fiction, e.g. *Wycieczka do muzeum*, *Ta stara cholera*, or *Na placówce dyplomatycznej*. Therefore, one cannot speak of a clearly marked formal evolution of the writer's work in the direction suggested by Wyka. J. Waligóra, op. cit., pp. 147, 161.

[411] The "sprawl" of the theme in Różewicz's lyric poetry was traced by Wyka (*Różewicz parokrotnie*, op. cit., p. 22), whereas in his prose it was traced by Waligóra (op. cit., p. 147). The title of *Sorrento, 4 V 1960* contains a wrong date (also in the original publication in "Odra" 1970, no. 10; reprinted in Ma 28–29). If, as the itinerary of Różewicz's Italian trips cited by Wyka (*Różewicz parokrotnie*, op. cit., p. 39) has it, the poet visited Naples and its surroundings at the beginning of the first trip, then he was in Sorrento after 17 May 1960.

[412] J. Waligóra, op. cit., p. 160.

[413] H. Zaworska, op. cit., pp. 61–62.

[414] Ibid., p. 276.

travels do not save anything, nor do they give a sense of self-fulfilment in the "land of beauty" (R. Przybylski) because the cultured individual – the subject of this self-fulfilment – turned out to be an anachronistic ideal, disintegrating upon contact with the experience of modern existence and mass culture. As the essayist explains, "Man-the-culture-bringer is a myth; the truth is feral corporeality, fear, futility of culture, biology's dark power."[415] The Różewicz protagonist cannot escape the awareness that man's spiritual church is lying in ruins and the aesthetic beauty residing in works of art is only a mask hiding despair, imitativeness, and ennui, the nothingness of modern civilization. Zaworska, reconstructing the poet's travel motivations, finds in his texts the expectation of an inner transformation, a hope for a return to the paradise of Sense and Wholeness. From her perspective, the futility of Różewicz's peregrinations to the Arcadia of European cultural heritage results from the unawareness and naivety of the writer, who fails to notice that "after all, the utopian myths of Winckelmann and Goethe have long been lying in ruins".[416] This suspicion remains ungrounded, though. The idea of man's moral reconstruction, developed by Różewicz in his post-war texts, is, after all, based on the assumption that the cultured man's myths are in ruins, but one cannot but refer to them, searching for a language to describe their erosion. As Paweł Hertz, the writer belonging to the same generation, explained in his 1947 poem *Z warsztatu nowoczesnego poety* – published in "Nowiny Literackie", where Różewicz also occasionally published his work – to understand that everything has changed one needs to refer to cultural models and tradition. "There is no more Rome today", the poet

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[415] Ibid., p. 269.

[416] Ibid., p. 273. The connection between *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* and German literature, especially with Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, has been extensively discussed by A. Ubertowska, op. cit., pp. 133–148.

wrote, but this merely denotes the twilight of the old era, not the end of the world.[417]

Kazimierz Wyka noticed that the theme of cultural travel in Różewicz's work does not amount merely to "the condemned Arcadia. It is also about the most intimate and most personal experiences brought from the country: son and mother. Mother has died".[418] The critic, discovering the traces of that experience in the poems from the 1960s, notes not only the demystification of the myth of Western civilization and its tradition, but also an attempt to re-establish the values which were fundamental for Różewicz.

> The writer's Italian theme proves that whatever constitutes indisputable value for him also keeps that status on the Apennine Peninsula. The moral pros and civilizational cons are equally distributed across his entire oeuvre. However, poised against the background of the centuries-long stereotype and myth of Italy, the country's civilizational cons come across in Różewicz's writings as particularly poignant.[419]

The top value in the writer's axiological system is, according to Wyka, a distrust of consciousness, form, and convention, which hide and belie what is real, namely human existence as such. Consequently, the poet's hopes attendant on the Arcadian journey do not attest – at this point I am fleshing out Zaworska's diagnoses – to his infantile belief that somewhere out there there still exists the uncorrupted earthly paradise of truth and beauty. This is not, then, the naive disappointment of the artist arriving in his "real spiritual homeland" and finding tourist sites instead. It is, rather,

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[417] P. Hertz, *Z warsztatu nowoczesnego poety*, "Nowiny Literackie" 1947, no. 1, p. 3.

[418] K. Wyka, *Różewicz parokrotnie*, op. cit., p. 31. J. Potkański, interpreting this motif in psycho-analytical terms, claims that Italy as the "Mediterranean 'cradle' of our civilization" is precisely the "metaphor of the mother". J. Potkański, op. cit., p. 124.

[419] K. Wyka, *Różewicz parokrotnie*, op. cit., pp. 34–35.

an experiment on the text-generated identity, on today's average man, the nondescript, middle-of-the-road individual, with the aim of finding out whether that individual's cultural imagination is grounded in the real, material world, or perhaps only in the "old set designs". The Różewicz protagonist strives to commune, as far as it is possible, both with commonplace objects and with works of art in a personal, sensuous way – that is with the thing itself rather than with its ever-sprawling, overwhelming representation. Jerzy Ziomek is not right when, in his otherwise interesting essay *Scyta w Arkadii* [*A Scythian in Arcadia*], he states that the protagonist of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* "is unaware of the importance of his own journey".[420] *Śmierć* does contain the explanations of the goal and meaning of the Italian trip, although these comments, scattered throughout the narrative, do not necessarily make up a coherent motivation.[421]

The Arcadian myth derives from the ancient Greek tale of a happy pastoral land, located on the Peloponnese, later on identified by Ovid and Virgil with the ideal homeland of beauty and art. In Renaissance culture, in turn, the Arcadian life of simplicity and authenticity was juxtaposed – like in Jacopo Sannazzaro's poem *Arcadia* – with the experience of death of a close person or – like in Torquatto Tasso's pastoral drama *Aminta* – with the enslavement of man in modern civilization. Giovanni F. Barbieri and Nicolas Poussin, the Baroque painters, would place on their paintings the inscription "Et in Arcadia ego" next to other symbols of *vanitas*, the skull and the sarcophagus. The words, which also became the motto of J.W. Goethe's Italian trip, are usually translated either as "I, too, have been to Arca-

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[420] J. Ziomek, *Scyta w Arkadii*, "Nurt" 1971, no. 4, p. 32.

[421] Kostkiewiczowa, collecting the protagonist's textually confirmed motivations, writes that "an encounter with the works of art collected in Rome, an unmediated contact with them, considered to be the highest existential value, is supposed to change and enrich the protagonist's way of life". T. Kostkiewiczowa, Śmierć w starych dekoracjach *Tadeusza Różewicza*, in: *Nowela – opowiadanie – gawęda. Interpretacje małych form narracyjnych*, eds K. Bartoszyński, M. Jasińska-Wojtkowska, S. Sawicki, Warszawa 1974, p. 328.

dia" or "I am even in Arcadia", which can be understood as a "statement" of the deceased person, who once also lived a happy life, or that of Death himself, present even in Arcadia.[422] Thus the modern Arcadian motif combines affirmation of art with the vision of death or life in a dehumanizing civilization. This is how the sentence is explained by Stanisław Stabryła, who claims that "Różewicz, like many writers before him (Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche), misconstrued the sentence as 'I, too, have been to Arcadia'".[423] The scholar, however, does not take into account *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* in which the motif's meaning seems closer to the latter sense, one connected with the presence of suffering and death in a supposedly Arcadian environment. The message does not appear explicitly in Różewicz's novel, but the narrator's comment on Rafael Santi's painting *La Fornarina* alludes to his visit in the Roman museum Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica where the well-known painting by Guercino (Barbieri) *Et in Arcadia Ego* is located.

The context of the death of a close person is noticeable in *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*; it can also be traced in the story *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata*, thematically linked to Różewicz's first trip to Paris in March 1957. As Janusz Waligóra put it,

> What best illustrates the writer's mental state in those days is an entry from his notebook included in the book *Nasz starszy brat* [*Our Elder Brother*]. Różewicz reminisces there how he made arrangements with his brother Janusz to meet him after the war in Paris, in front of Adam Mickiewicz's monument. Janusz was executed by a firing squad in 1944.[424]

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[422] J. Wegner, *Et in Arcadia ego…*, "Nowiny Literackie" 1947, no. 35, p. 3. I summarize here Wegner's lengthy explanation.

[423] S. Stabryła, *Hellada i Roma w Polsce Ludowej. Recepcja antyku w literaturze polskiej w latach 1945–1975*, Kraków 1983, p. 143.

[424] J. Waligóra, op. cit., p. 144.

Dziennik gliwicki [*The Gliwice Journal*] also provides evidence that *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata* was written at a time when Różewicz had to confront multiple deaths. The entry of 1 June 1957 speaks about the passing away of Leopold Staff, a mentor and a friend; on 16 July, after a long illness, the writer's mother died; while the entry of 30 June begins with a comment on Henry V from *Ocalony z otchłani* [*Saved from the Abyss*] burying "corpses and live people" in a death camp (M 100). If one was to interpret *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata* as a *roman à clef*, the real-life prototype of the character of Samuel, afflicted with the trauma of death-camp memories, was Henryk Vogler.[425] One of the characters in the story is also the terminally ill woman painter M. (Maria Jarema, who died in 1958).

The symbolic transformation typical of Modernist art proceeded from the experience of death (e.g. of a close person) to sublimated aesthetic expression. In Różewicz's prose, however, this type of change does not take place because beauty, even that at the source of European culture, turns out to be kitschy, mass-produced, tiresome, and dead. Admittedly, the protagonist of *Śmierć* does dream about the transformation, but simultaneously – with every new aesthetic "experience" – it becomes increasingly clear to him that such a transformation is impossible. Maria Janion, discussing the connection between death and form as an acceptable way of the individual's objectification, deemed the tragic perspective the only credible basis of such a connection, one that involves a despair "creating detachment from life equipped with all the sentimental, secure, and intimate stereotypes, from nestling in what is gone, from a loss of identity resulting precisely from the process of identification gone too far".[426] While the modernist, perfect form would habitually overcome modernistically expressed death, giving the artist an adequate way

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[425]   Ibid., p. 131.

[426]   M. Janion, *"Czy będziesz wiedział, co przeżyłeś"*, op. cit., p. 66.

of expressing it in culture, the death linked to 20th-century experience – the mass, physiological, commonplace, nonsensical, or nonaesthetic demise – can only be juxtaposed with a state of disintegration and discontinuity of artistic expression, with life that is corporeal and trivial, unprotected by the idealized identity of the cultivated person. Tomasz Żukowski rightly argues that the dead body in Różewicz's poetry, as contextualized by the myth of Italy, does not "refer to any superior spiritual order", but solely to the "irreducible specificity of particular deaths", enabling the poet to attain "the perspective facilitating his denouncing of the cultural mechanisms of appropriation of what is unrepeatable and unique in the name of superior totalizing ideas" such as – I would add – the ideas of totality: that of a text, culture, or the thinking subject, the *individuum*.[427]

Śmierć w starych dekoracjach is nonepic prose, consisting mostly of dialogues aboard an aeroplane and a long, digressive conversation between the narrator-agent and himself, interior-monologue style. Ziomek perceives Różewicz's text as an instance of a "degraded" – that is unheroic – "epic", arguing that the epilogue at the end of the text, coming as if from the publisher, combined with the protagonist's having "no future", attest to the text's epic closure. However, Ziomek interprets the narrative details referring to really existing space-time as having novelistic properties. Considering the scholar's diagnosis, I would argue that it is exactly the text's ending – standing out in terms of composition, closing the plot of *Śmierć* but not concluding the myth of Italy (in epic terms) as an integral, self-sustaining totality – that seems to corroborate the latter thesis. Fleshing out Ziomek's analysis, one could argue that the world depicted in the novel does not end with it, but, what is generically characteristic of the novel as such, finds its continuation and completion in other texts by Różewicz, such as, for example, the earlier

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[427] T. Żukowski, *Mit Włoch jako punkt wyjścia krytyki kultury w twórczości Tadeusza Różewicza*, "Polonistyka" 2005, no. 5, p. 38.

Tarcza z pajęczyny [*A Cobweb Shield*] or the later *Sobowtór*, because it constitutes a f r a g m e n t – a part and a "quote" – of the author's worldview.[428] The Epilogue openly informs us that such a world – situated beyond the just-interrupted narrative – exists. Besides, the narrator of *Śmierć* operates with the individualist-novelistic type of time, looking at his life in retrospect ("biographically") and musing, at the same time, about his own future: "Who am I?" "Where am I going?" (II 136). *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* is also called a novel by its author (W 63).

The novel's central character is the "average man" of Communist Poland, an impecunious tourist going for the first time to Rome in order to take stock of his life. Różewicz equips his character with commonplace experiences and traits. The narrator-agent confesses that he lives in a "big housing project", meticulously plans his expenses and puts aside a one-dollar bill "for a rainy day", and reminisces about the shortages of toilet paper in his country. From the text one can infer that he must be around 40 or 50, or perhaps even 65, which, in Magdalena Lubelska's view, attests to the character's "hybrid" nature.[429] He is accompanied by the talkative and bourgeois-savvy Jadziak, embodying the type of the socialist official-trader on a business trip abroad. The narrative is dripping with clues that we are faced with people who are "quiet, small, unknown", "rank-and-file, common", "practical and down-to-earth". From the facts

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[428] Teresa Kostkiewiczowa is also right, though, when she claims that *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* is not epic prose because "the numerous tasks of presenting man's personality and life as defined by the convention, the tasks fulfilled in the classic novel by a number of factors (such as the narrator, the characters) were assigned solely to the protagonist". The scholar views the text's composition as "oscillating between the duties of the epic writer, who presents an image of the world that is appealing thanks to its very expressiveness and vividness, and the ambitions of the lyric poet and moralist, whose main goal is to reflect [on the human condition] and to form discursive diagnoses of this world". T. Kostkiewiczowa, op. cit., pp. 325, 339.

[429] M. Lubelska, *Rozrachunek z rozrachunkiem. O* Śmierci w starych dekoracjach *Tadeusza Różewicza*, in: *Lektury polonistyczne. Literatura współczesna*, vol. I, eds J. Jarzębski, R. Nycz, Kraków 1997, pp. 183–184.

scattered all over the text one can infer that the episodic action takes place around 1960.[430] "The Belgians are leaving the Congo. There will be no world war because of the Congo. The summit conference has definitely collapsed. Khrushchev in Austria, German actress is marrying a Polish writer" (II 214) – these news headlines are quoted by the narrator in the novel's conclusion.

Śmierć w starych dekoracjach also displays some affinities with the poetics of the philosophical novel. These include: the inconsistent character of Everyman, an individual with intellectual and cultural ambitions, the episodic plot interspersed with lengthy digressions on general subjects – religious, political, historical, social – and the characters' conversations and anecdotes; the narrator-protagonist's mini-lectures are crowned with a paradox, unexpectedly transforming into realistic observations or, simply, interrupted *in medias res* with humorous scenes. The main goal of the classic philosophical novel was, after all, to expose the relativity of an order of things otherwise taken for granted – usually employing a comparative perspective – and of rational systems of thought accounting for the meaning of social reality. By contrast, in Różewicz's narrative it is the digressing subject-intellectual that comes to the fore, focused mostly on existential problems. The erudite stock-taking exercise does not ultimately enable him to test any philosophical discourses or theories, but constitutes instead an attempt to regain existential authenticity through personal contact with works and symbols of culture in its original version. (Incessantly proving how many diverse images and pieces of information he stores in his memory, the protagonist of *Śmierć* states at one point that he does not remember his own face.)

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430 Lubelska meticulously analysed the temporal construction of *Śmierć*, discovering some anachronisms in the novel. Ibid., 181–182.

The cognitive logic behind this kind of travel writing is not that of the philosophical novel but, rather, of philosophical peregrination created in the 17th and 18th centuries, simultaneously with the identity pattern of the cultivated person, a reader of literary texts and scientific treatises, valuing "epistemological individualism" and capable of understanding the intellectual journey as a form of discourse about oneself and the world.[431] Although travel for Montaigne, Descartes, or Rousseau – the forerunners of this type of literature – had by definition an "existential and discursive aspect, [and] was something to be experienced in concretized and sensuous ways", the travel narrative itself, addressed to the aforementioned reader (the cultured individual) "was becoming a rhetorical figure, helpful in articulating abstract contents".[432] As Anna Wieczorkiewicz tells us, the most desirable destination for such peregrinations in those days was Italy which, judging by contemporaneous educational ideals, promised valuable aesthetic experiences and moral insights.[433] The metaphor of a journey in their accounts was the metaphor of the cultured man's identity, the identity that "travelled" between the self's external and internal space, between the community of culture and thought and the self's re-

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[431] A. Wieczorkiewicz, *Apetyt turysty. O doświadczaniu świata w podróży*, Kraków 2008, pp. 100–102. The sources of such travel writing are located by Dorota Kozicka in works by Sterne, Goethe, Chateaubriand, and Byron, among others. In their accounts, Kozicka writes, "Journeys are pretexts, or perhaps stimuli (in most cases much-desired, prepared and expected) for creative work, for facing issues which are new for the author, for attempting a closer look at oneself, for going beyond one's current sphere of interests." Kozicka also points to "the presence of all the elements of the autobiographical pact" and the "grammatical dominance of the first-person singular" form in such reports. D. Kozicka, *Dwudziestowieczne "podróże intelektualne". (Między esejem a autobiografią)*, "Teksty Drugie" 2003, no. 2–3, pp. 46–47.

[432] A. Wieczorkiewicz, op. cit., p. 105.

[433] "The itineraries of those thinkers differed but also had some common characteristics. Each of them featured Italy, which in the Europe of those days constituted a secular equivalent of the Holy Land. Esteemed for its educational, historical, and aesthetic value, as well as its capacity to function as a catalyst for moral reflection, Italy was a source of both exotic and familiar knowledge. Being no longer an economic or artistic centre, the land itself remained a place where Europeans would acquire refinement and cultural polish." Ibid., pp. 106–107.

flection.[434] Travel writing was supposed to provide insights into one's self, the self which was now capable of looking at its mirror-image *alter ego*, transformed as a result of the encounter with a world which was different but "one's own" at the same time, because it represented the same symbolic universe. By the same token, it was also possible to relate, in existential terms, to "the journey as the metaphor of human life headed for death".[435] Italy played a particularly important role in the writings of such Romantics as Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński, and Norwid because, Kwiryna Ziemba tells us, making Rome part of "Poland's spiritual space" is one of the "cultural accomplishments of Polish Romanticism".[436] Ziemba points to Norwid's epic poem entitled *Quidam*, its protagonist referred to as just "a man" arriving in Rome from the Greek countryside, lonely and lost, who is accidentally killed in one of the city's back alleys. The philosophical-historical theme of that *Parable* (as it is subtitled) is the experience of chaos and breakthrough accompanying the twilight of ancient civilization being supplanted by Christianity. As a parable, however, the text can be interpreted as a depiction of the Romantic crisis of the existential, cultural, and axiological identity of the individual belonging to the author's generation. The Norwidian context of the "Italian theme" reveals itself also in the poem *Et in Arcadia ego*, in which – as noted by Waligóra – Różewicz refers to Norwid's poem *Italiam! Italiam!*[437] Another trace of 19th-century tradition is, possibly, the novel's ending in which the protagonist comes across an oilcloth wooden sphinx. However, while in (post-)Romantic literature – for example in J.I. Kraszewski's fiction – the Sphinx symbolized the artist, enigmatic and hybrid because both belong

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[434] Ibid., p. 130.

[435] H. Zaworska, op. cit., p. 29.

[436] K. Ziemba, *Rzym romantyków polskich*, in: *Święte miejsca w literaturze*, eds Z. Chojnowski, A. Rzymska, B. Tarnowska, Olsztyn 2009, p. 85.

[437] J. Waligóra, op. cit., pp. 142–143.

to the here-and-now world and are detached from it, timeless as it were, in Różewicz's text the oilcloth giant does not embody any mystery or ambiguity. As a parable-like story *Śmierć* would resemble Kraszewski's *Sfinks* (1847), mostly because of the protagonist searching in Italy for spiritual sources of European identity, threatened in his own country, and for some genuine experience through contact with art. Instead, however, he experiences art's commercialization and trivialization combined with what could be deemed the alternative meaning of the Sphinx symbol – dead decoration.

The idea of historical progress and the call for authenticity, both increasingly important in the European sensibility from the 19th century onward, questioned the validity of the self's external identification space. From that time on, every person of culture had to ask themselves the question whether their accessible *universum* had maintained its value, while simultaneously keeping a constant check on the difference between themselves as an individual and themselves as a member of the cultural-civilizational community.[438] Disinterested travelling, visiting well-known places, historical monuments, and art galleries becomes all the more necessary if one is to overcome the discontinuity of individual identity, assembling, as it were, the bits and pieces of modern experience into a personal whole.[439] Max Weber noted that, ever since the invention of the idea of progress, the agent of philosophical peregrinations cannot find fulfilment in pre-existing artistic or intellectual patterns as the modern self is always facing the prospect of change and the attendant new, unpredictable forms and values of existence. Unable to realize the meaning of life, the modern individual can, at best, accomplish a sense

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[438] Taylor argues that the modern self has a fundamentally "dialogic character". Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności*, op. cit., p. 37.

[439] A. Wieczorkiewicz, op. cit., p. 33.

of "being tired of life".[440] Human beings have to make sure all the time that they are agents of their own existence and subjects of perception, meanwhile remaining fully aware of their being merely parts of overwhelming social, cultural, or economic processes. When the narrator of *Śmierć* naively confesses that he is flying to Rome in order to "change" his life (II 108), he self-critically hastens to add: "If you are not Saint Paul or Napoleon, all you can do is 'quit' smoking, and even that proves too difficult sometimes" (II 124). The vacillation and chaos of the tourist's thoughts are justifiable, given his excitation, the radical change of immediate surroundings, and the very experience – untypical for the average man from behind the "iron curtain" – of a trip abroad without any practical purpose, that is psychologically and emotionally unpredictable – both promising and contingent. The narrator-agent experiences a sense of duality, of being split into two persons: the calm one on the outside and the feverish, "fluttering" one on the inside. "Something like a great conversation, a debate between two parties took place inside of me. As if I was divided into two individuals" (II 150) – there are several confessions of this kind in the novel. The travelling condition, the expectancy of existential changes combined with a sceptical attitude to the prospect, the sense of unreality in a strange, crowded city – all these experiences expose in the narrator-agent the "restless and fluttering" image of his own inner life, revealing in the discontinuous and agitated self the identity of the modern doppelgänger .

Such a doppelgänger appears in *Sobowtór* as a figure of disintegration of a totality representing the educational and intellectual ideal of the cultured individual, still acknowledged but no longer credible because s/he is constantly disintegrating. The protagonist of *Śmierć*, described as a "nondescript [individual] who once, admittedly, did have other ambi-

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[440]   M. Weber, *Polityka jako zawód i powołanie*, trans. A. Kopacki, P. Dybel, Kraków 1998, p. 122.

tions", is a carrier of the identity of a member of Western cultural community, feeling comfortably at home in the symbolic space of European art and erudite memory, affirming beauty and reason.[441] Communist Poland's Everyman in Różewicz's texts, though remaining a typical, average, rank-and-file individual – to repeat Drewnowski's observation – is constantly confronted with the intelligentsia's model of man and the attendant catechism of values. While the other passengers leave with a few dollars in their pockets in order to "buy a coat or a pair of trousers", the *Śmierć* protagonist takes cultural capital with him, which he intends to use for renewing the ties with "Rome" (the imagined one), for regaining the sense of spiritual belonging to Mediterranean culture, for strengthening the imagined ideal within himself.[442] If the nondescript, rank-and-file intellectual, feeling the "obligation to be a person of culture", found it impossible to relate to the narrow-minded, cramped, inauthentic *sensus communis* of the Communist Poland of the 1960s, his possession of such an ideal could legitimize his being a "real" European, enabling him to demonstrate before himself his – personal and collective – ideal identity of someone who was, "at least a little bit, on familiar terms with the cul-

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[441] The theme of Rome as the "home" of the cultivated person appears in post-war literature, e.g. in *Listy z mojego Rzymu* [*Letters from My Rome*] by Gustaw Morcinek (Rome 1946, p. 7), who quotes "some Englishman": "Rome, it is the city where every person of culture finds his second home; the home of spirit." The theme is also developed by Mikołaj Rostworowski, who writes: "For a Pole even the first trip to Italy is only a return. [...] We were raised on the same fodder: alphabet, code, faith. Wherever we are – we are native to the place. We are simply from the City." M. Rostworowski, *Czas niecierpliwych. Artykuły wybrane*, Warszawa 1962, p. 261.

[442] This self-colonization mechanism of Polish culture (and the attendant Polish ideal of the self) – present in it from the beginnings of Poland's ties with the West, but particularly intense since the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries – is connected by Jan Sowa to its irreducible "negativity" which can be "defined solely by the lack of what has appeared in the West", beginning with the lack of Roman tradition: "Self-colonization pertains to countries which are not sufficiently remote from powerful civilization centres to retain cultural sovereignty, but also prove too weak to be equitable parts of those centres. They self-colonize, then, in the sense that they symbolically identify themselves with the cultures of the centres, locating there their ideal of the self too." J. Sowa, op. cit., pp. 373–374.

ture of our Europe and the Mediterranean region" (II 133). If he could find himself in the personalized, particularized experience of "Rome", he would also be able to overcome the split into the average man and an active member of the cultural community, thus liberating himself both from his own duality and the conformism of the collective Polish identity of those days.

Interpreting *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* as a pastiche of the interior monologue, Lubelska claims that Różewicz's novel is a parody of the reckoning-with-life convention (following in her footsteps, I would add that a trace of this convention would be, for example, the phrase "Please have a good look around" [II 206] suggesting, in a manner typical of the interior monologue, the narrator-agent's addressing the reader). If one bears in mind that between the time of the action (1960–1961) and the date under the text (1969) there is a noteworthy decade, the novel can be read not only as a reckoning with literary form but also with the narrative of social and cultural experience of the 1960s. In that case, the scholar concludes, "the decade in question appears to be a mystification of life".[443] The inauthentic life.

Charles Taylor, discussing the meaning of the modern striving for authenticity, distinguishes between two types of the individual's self-realization. The first type comes with the idea of a better or superior kind of life, with the categories "better" or "superior" remaining undefined in terms of our current needs or cravings, but pointing, instead, to a certain ideal – the model which should be desirable for us.[444] The second type refers to Herder's idea that everyone exists in their own unique way. Authenticity, in this sense, boils down to staying true to one's own originality, that is to what can only be discovered and articulated by oneself.

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[443] M. Lubelska, op. cit., pp. 185–186.

[444] See Ch. Taylor, *Etyka autentyczności*, op. cit., p. 22.

By articulating their uniqueness, individuals define themselves.[445] The authenticity of any ideal, then, is the authenticity of a moral or cultural obligation defining for the individual the socially binding and credible pattern of life's superior goals. The latter-type authenticity, equated with originality, translates into a constant concern with one's singularity, specificity, naturalness, one's independence of typical and acquired feelings, and one's ability to express oneself through words or images that are unpredictable and unique.

The Różewicz protagonist leaves for Rome with an idea of self-fulfilment, a vision of a new, better life. It follows, then, that he must have assumed, at least at some point, that at the sources of civilization he will find faith in its value, its saving power facilitating a strengthening and renewal of his identity and selfhood. Gushing about the purpose of his trip and explaining his tourist impressions, calling himself a "chosen one", he abuses the mystic-humanist language: "there is a great light above me", "the greatest masterpieces of the human spirit", "the entire humanity, its cultivated part, of course", "the spirit's treasure trove belongs to all of us", "eternity and infinity", "the community of Latin culture and civilization", "my soul has expanded and started to absorb", "I felt the spirit rising", "the history of the human spirit", "the shared riches of the spiritual treasure trove of civilized and cultivated nations", "the mystery of art", "I was lucky enough to see the greatest treasures of art and architecture", "the work of human hands and human thought, of the human being", etc. On the other hand, he knows from the start that he is unable to change his own life, to become a different person. Neither does he believe that it is possible to "be yourself" because "it is precious few inhabitants of Mother Earth, this great contemporary container of people, that can afford being themselves" (II 138). The narrative of the "spiritually chosen

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[445] Ibid., pp. 34–35.

one" clashes with the image of the "buzzing, bustling human mass", the "anthill", the "anonymous, homogenized mass".[446] The language of the cultured community does not come into contact with the real world, failing to explain it, let alone control it, proving to be a mere lexicon of abstract and useless terms.

Lubelska suggests that Różewicz contrasts the mendacious revisions and the sterilizing decade with the grace of art. Still, the scholar adds, the novel's protagonist dies before the hope of transformation through beauty can materialize itself.[447] Significantly, however, the hope dies before him. The protagonist of *Śmierć* is trapped by the anthill civilization and alienated from it – both submerged in the human mass and alone in the crowd. The antidote for his lack of identification with himself – with his own image of himself – was supposed to be great art, a personal relationship with what is sensually accessible and unique. The crowds of tourists hastily passing him by in museums make him realize, though, that he is not in the temple of art. Likewise, the admiration for Rome's masterpieces is suspiciously common, facilitated by the accessibility of ready-made aesthetic recipes, detached from individual sensibility. What was once considered unique and remarkable is, at best, a surrogate-like *Biblia pauperum*, a cultural product for the masses.[448] The dead and decorative face of "Rome" becomes "terrifying" before the novel comes to an end (II 175). Consequently, the protagonist of *Śmierć* cannot renew his covenant with the man-of-culture ideal because the *universum* of the European community he has brought within himself finds itself in a void, or, rather,

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[446] *Śmierć* is interpreted as an illustration of the "termites' civilization" by J. Ziomek, op. cit., p. 32.

[447] M. Lubelska, op. cit., p. 186.

[448] Zygmunt Bauman writes that culture has transformed into "one of the departments of a gigantic shopping mall, which the world, as experienced by people who have transformed into consumers first and foremost, has become". Z. Bauman, *Kultura w płynnej nowoczesności*, Warszawa 2011, p. 30.

is suspended in the sphere of derivative, typical, and artificial impressions designed for the "omnivorous" mass tourist, not the pilgrim-connoisseur. The experience of the world's artificiality accompanies many protagonists of Różewicz's fiction. This is how the story *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata* begins. Its central characters, arriving from Communist Poland, are confronted with the myth of Paris: "Castles, lanterns, ostrich feathers, gondolas … horrible. Now listen, all this is unbelievably kitschy. And I tell you that this entire city is like that – kitschy" (I 139). This is also what the big city's reality seems like to the protagonist of *Moja córeczka* coming from the countryside: "They live in an artificial world. Their world is made of covers of glossy magazines, film stills, stupid songs, artificial light, artificial images" (II 89).

When the protagonist of *Śmierć* looks around with the eyes of a cultured person, the boundary between what is real and what is imagined becomes blurred.[449] This looking at the world "from memory", as it were, annuls for a moment the bleak living conditions of Communist Poland, as well as the memories of the poverty-stricken interwar years, symbolically compensating for the tourist-pilgrim's tight budget and lifting his provincial complexes, his alienation in the crowd, and the feeling of loneliness.

> I heard the humming of cars permeating the air, the walls of buildings, the human bodies of the Eternal City, my thoughts ventured far into the past, into the history of this empire, by whose cradle stood a she-wolf breastfeeding the twin founders of the city, and then the

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[449] The attitude of Różewicz's protagonist to the world's "theatricality" differs from the experiences recorded in, say, the travel writing of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, who experiences it in terms of an artistic sensation. What the two writers have in common is the "pictorial" reception of Italy. Iwaszkiewicz wrote: "Everything here is a picture – and there is no need to supplement it with a brush or a word". However, while for Iwaszkiewicz the meaning of life and that of art find their fulfilment in beauty, in Różewicz's writings beauty neither explains nor dignifies life. See J. Drzewucki, *Smaki słowa. Szkice o poezji*, Wrocław 1999, pp. 15, 107.

martyrdom of the first Christians. Nero, the myopic, red-bearded murderer, matricide, composing his poems against the background of the burning Rome. My soul has united with those souls and begun to comprehend the unity of Latin culture and civilization (II 152).

The operatics lasts for a moment. The recurrent motif of *Śmierć* are the words of the old housewife – "Did you f***ing see the Holy Father?" (II 142 and passim) – uttered in defiance of the clichés and bombastic gestures. Likewise, the narratives of cultural memory are constantly accompanied by ironic remarks and personal, trivial reminiscences. The mystical-humanist discourse of *Śmierć* is dripping with mockery and the questioning of the "temples of art" (II 201). Comparing Iwaszkiewicz's, Parandowski's, and Herbert's travel writing against the works of Różewicz and Mrożek, Wojciech Ligęza views the evolution of the "Italian theme" into derision as a norm.[450] Ligęza is right. One might add, though, that affirmation and derision appear simultaneously in *Śmierć*, defining the mental state of the split protagonist. The Różewicz narrator does indeed move between the discourse of the man of culture and the individual's comprehension and experience, reclaiming the individual identity only at the level of negative reflection – and, again, only temporarily. Every much-anticipated "discovery" of a work of art or a scenic view gives him a sense of unity with this world ("spiritual rapture"), but takes his "selfness" away from him. Every critical remark reduces this identification process to a cold, abstract discourse, triggering instead a feeling of unfulfillment and poignant isolation.[451]

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[450] W. Ligęza, *Peregrynacja włoska*, "Odra" 1975, no. 12, p. 102.

[451] According to Kostkiewiczowa, the protagonist of *Śmierć* "displays two mutually exclusive inclinations: that of automatic submission to established ways of thinking, talking, and behaving, and that of full awareness of the determinants and limitations of one's own situation. One might say that this character is equipped with a superconsciousness of sorts." T. Kostkiewiczowa, op. cit., p. 335.

The protagonist of *Śmierć* is touched at the sight of aqueducts, yields to the "habit of looking at things in a certain way", and displays a deep-rooted gut response of "associating certain sights with particular meanings".[452] Kostkiewiczowa writes that the protagonist looks at the world through the "lens of culture".[453] Anna Wieczorkowska, tracing the origins of the topical representations of culture, locates their sources in everyday reality. Thanks to film images, photographs, story-telling, reportage, postcards, correspondence, and colloquial speech, the imagined "other" world becomes part of the *sensus communis*. "When a tourist in Paris sees two people kissing" – the author of *Apetyt turysty* tells us, quoting John Urry – "their gaze will register 'romantic Paris'; in a small English village they will see 'good old England'".[454] The protagonist of *Śmierć* brings to Rome the unreal "Rome" as a part of the consciousness of an intellectual from Communist Poland, a part of his (personal) identity narrative, his cultural memory, his education, and mythic image of the world.[455] Each time, then, the Różewicz narrator discovers that "Rome"

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[452] A. Wieczorkiewicz, op. cit., p. 169.

[453] T. Kostkiewiczowa, op. cit., p. 332.

[454] A. Wieczorkiewicz, op. cit., p. 169.

[455] Western Culture was regarded as the source (model reference point) of identity for the intelligentsia in "younger Europe", especially in Communist Poland. As Barbara Toruńczyk wrote in 1987, "Only a few years ago, if an East European intellectual had been told that the Europe of his dreams and beliefs does not exist he would not have been able to process the very thought. The West has always been for those inhabiting Europe's eastern outskirts something of the cathedral of culture." B. Toruńczyk, *O królach duchach – z opowieści wschodnioeuropejskich*, "Zeszyty Literackie" 1987, no. 20, qtd after: "Res Publica" 1990 (numer specjalny: "Zeszyty Literackie", wybór 1983–1989), p. 71. Representative of that relation is Zbigniew Herbert's work. *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* could be viewed, therefore, as the antithesis of the philosophical-moral pattern of Herbert's early essays depicting travels from the realm of cultural disinheritance to the European's "real" spiritual homeland. The Różewicz protagonist, rather than leaving behind him the (anti)utopia of communism, exposes the utopia if mirror identity, inspired by one's craving for belonging-return to the Western world. This latter identity is an expression of self-colonization of Central European cultures as peripheries defining themselves in relation to norms and models of an imagined centre (see J. Sowa, op. cit.).

is just an assortment of "dead images" his own erudition comes across to him as analogously artificial and trite, and his language as gushing and suffused with mysticism (II 212).

Just as the narrator of *Śmierć* carries "Rome" within him, roaming the city streets, so does the narrator of *Sobowtór* (and later of *Strawiony*) brings his own "America" to New York. Describing his trip to the United States, he can "see", in his mind's eye, not the New York cityscape as such, but the panoramic screen with familiar images projected onto it:

> the skyscrapers are black and blue … sky-blue … and here – the red suburbs … it's all surface-like, it is all reflected in some mirror … no surprise no astonishment I saw it all in the cinema on television on postcards and in books I can't see anything (II 274).

He cannot simply see things as they are because he collaterally remembers their images; he remembers seeing them. He is unable to see New York "for the first time" as the city's images are already within him; he can only tell and remember, compare and order, despair and – eventually – mock. The world as filtered by the subject's experience will always have been "digested" by culture, mediated by increasingly accessible narratives and reproductions. The creed of the modern anti-traveller in Różewicz's prose is uttered by the narrator of *Przerwany egzamin* who comes to the conclusion that "the best way to watch is with your eyes closed" because, under your eyelids, "all the biggest European cities are actually one city. Street toilets. Billboards. Masters in the galleries, restaurants, cars, cinemas, some temples" (I 220).

Śmierć w starych dekoracjach is – up to a point – an account of a pilgrimage to the sources of culture undertaken by the transitory man of Communist Poland in search of a better-articulated, purer meaning of life, a renewal of mirror identity through a personal encounter with the

prototype. However, from the very beginning of the novel, the narrator makes it clear that his hope is unrealistic and whatever he thinks or says about the world only deepens his inner split. Neither in the experience of communion with the "Latin culture community" nor in the detachment from images and narratives created therein can he find his "human standard". He cannot, therefore, arrive at an authentic and coherent personal identity. If one was to read *Śmierć* in terms of its concern with the meaning of life, measured by one's proximity to the man-of-culture ideal, the whole trip is, of course, useless. Cieślak argues that Różewicz's man, by participating in culture with an awareness of the incompleteness and fragmentariness of his own creation, simultaneously participates critically in the "process of exchange of meanings", thus giving it (his creation) "a chance to claim an adequate place in the structure of the diversified cultural field" and, by the same token, providing himself with a new type of identity. This new kind of identity denotes an existence conceived as a "network of cultural references activated by diverse cultural texts".[456] This concept works for most of Różewicz's later texts, especially those whose narrator plays the double role of creator-reader of texts and consumer of works of art. In *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*, however, the problem of the individual's identity was solved in a different way. The protagonist – the "average man" of Communist Poland – can-

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[456] "Modern man, then, arrives at his own identity thanks to his openness to the cultural universe and his constantly active cognitive presence therein. Only in such conditions does reconstructed identity become the source of what is new in art, progressive in culture and capable of saving the individual's subjective integrity in the world. Making the most of – thanks to one's openness to the world of culture – all the available possibilities of reaching diverse codes, deciphering and reinterpreting their meanings followed by a second creation process, as it were, is the only chance for progress in one's understanding of reality. The right to agency in today's world belongs only to those who are capable of constructing a new type of identity for themselves" – agency "executed through a system of references triggering interpretive procedures for texts of culture". R. Cieślak, *Oko poety. Poezja Tadeusza Różewicza wobec sztuk widowiskowych*, op. cit., pp. 219–220.

not find his own place in cultural space. Likewise, he does not recognize himself amid cultural references as the subject of the *universum* of signs and symbols, a creator of his own identity. Playing the "culture game" does not save him, nor does it make him feel special or provide him with identity because the works and values of culture that enter the mass circulation of a symbolic-commodity exchange lose their "personalizing" power and uniqueness, and instead become commonplace, replaceable, and replicable.[457]

When at the end of the novel the "central" character – now in quotation marks – is lying dead "amid old set designs (theatrical and operatic)", the third-person narrator of the *post scriptum* part (the fragment under the "PS" header, separated from the rest of the text) gives him a commonplace appearance, made all-too-real by such objects as dusty shoes, a newspaper, a crumpled suit. There is no trace left of the identity craving and inner debate that the narrator of the preceding part was engaged in; the novel's protagonist is not even there any more, only the dead body of the objectified "central" character, united and equated with himself. The epilogue distils from the preceding report only its strictly literary character, reducing the individual's identity thus reconstructed to a textual construct. Kostkiewiczowa, having assumed that Różewicz contrasted the "set designs" of norms and cultural representations with "the very fact of existence", was doubtful "whether the protagonist thus constructed and equipped has a right to pronounce on such a fundamental issue".[458] If one agrees, however, that the protagonist of *Śmierć* was excluded in the epilogue from the cultural identity discourse – now ostensibly fictitious – and irrevocably transferred to the personal identity narrative, defined by the individual's corporeal existence, then he "disappeared" at

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[457] See I. Kopytoff, *Kulturowa biografia rzeczy – utowarowienie jako proces*, trans. E. Klekot, in: *Badanie kultury. Elementy teorii antropologicznej*, op. cit., p. 254.

[458] T. Kostkiewiczowa, op. cit., p. 341.

that particular moment as the subject of ethics and symbolic *universum* (as an "oracle"), the very opposition (culture vs existence) also disappearing with him. The grand finale of Różewicz's narrative is not allegorical death, the pilgrim-intellectual's disillusionment, or derisive rejection of values as such, but literal, all-too-physical death amid litter and commonplace objects which accidentally happened to be scattered near the deceased; it is, in other words, Everyman's death.[459] The epilogue united the "central" character of *Śmierć* in the simplest, most commonplace human form – that of the material body amid other things, the body as a thing identical with itself and in this identity equivalent to other objects. Consequently, if the narrator of the *post scriptum* part presents the fact of man's "very existence", the opposition noticed by Kostkiewiczowa is not so much resolved to the detriment of norms, values, and works of art as simply nonexistent. There is no one left to pass judgement on things any more because aesthetic, moral, or ideological dilemmas of the dead protagonist have been left behind on the side of life together with the modern dissatisfaction and split of the self. Różewicz's experiment did work, but not in the ways one might have expected. What proved to be the yardstick and source of the individual's identity – the prototype – that the protagonist of *Śmierć* had been searching for was not culture but "biography" as the only totality guaranteeing everybody (e v e r y b o d y) a specific existence, that is one which is irreplaceable and literally unique, fulfilled and liberated from alienation thanks to reification in the mortal body, the most real and common one, as compared to other experiences collected in that story.[460] Such a reading also accounts for the "arbitrary"

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[459] As Różewicz put it in *Rozmowy ciąg dalszy*, "*Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* does not tell about life, about existence 'towards death', but about death which is accidental and meaningless. This story talks about a 'meaningless life' which still manages to undo and defeat death" (III 256).

[460] Like in the poem *To się złożyło* [It Fell Into Place] *(1885–1977)* devoted to Różewicz's deceased father: "pochyliłem się / nad grobem / pogłaskałem kamień // Zrozumiałem że 'To się złożyło'

composition of the text (the verisimilitude and the discourse as seen in the novel combined with the epic "objectivity" of the detached ending). It follows that for the experiment to work, Różewicz had to activate both the protagonist's memory and the reflection, plus the here-and-now experience of the world, while simultaneously both excluding the superior agent – the experiment's observer, as it were – from this network and emphasizing his special status in relation to it.

Identity for Everyone

Every epoch's culture popularizes identity patterns, modernity being no exception here. What is characteristic of Modernism, though, is, on the one hand, its radical distrust of traditional and elitist ideas of the man of culture, supplanted, in the name of continuous progress, by new projects, and on the other hand it addresses those projects to the mass audience, who are treated as objects of ideological and educational persuasion. Regardless of one's evaluation of the socio-political changes in Poland caused by the post-1944 Communist rule, these changes triggered a process of reconstruction of Polish cultural tradition, national awareness and memory, canons of literature and art, school curricula, etc. Total reconstruction of the political and economic systems was accompanied by cultural changes materializing under conditions defined by goals and procedures of the authoritarian state. The crisis of the whole enterprise in the 1950s revealed – as is corroborated by sociological research – not only scant social approval of the Marxist worldview but also the disintegration of "old axiological structures" (S. Nowak), a general decrease in

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/ wypełniło zamieniło się w koło / zamknęło się w sobie stało się / doskonałe / To co było bezkształtne / niespójne niestaranne / wypełnione pracą i zabawą / rozdzierane" ["I leaned over / the grave/ patted the stone // Understood that 'It fell into place' / was now completely turned into a circle / closed in upon itself became / perfect / What was once shapeless / inconsistent sloppy / filled with work and play / torn apart"] (IX 177).

interest in public affairs, a dwindling acceptance of heroic stances, and the strengthening of elementary Polish values, i.e. of family and national loyalties. Although the creators of ambitious culture (e.g. literature and film) did attempt a critical revision of such loyalties, it was in these elementary values – and not in the contemporaneous modernizing trends – that the institutions and circles engaged in large-scale propagandist or educational activities sought support for, and legitimization of, their political moves. Admittedly, reducing the "small stabilization" to a strengthening of nationalist loyalties, the conflict over historical memory between the state and the Catholic Church, and the activities of Communist Poland's cultural industry, making the most of 19th-century literary classics, is a gross oversimplification of the whole phenomenon. Still, it allows us to construct a model, however sketchy, of the social communication and interpretation of the Polish *universum* popularized in those days. Given the pervasive "craving" for a distinct and elevating identification, the most simple, domesticated, popular identity models appealing to fundamental axiological beliefs were the most desirable for the average receiver, and thus the most effective in organizing collective imagination and influencing the individual's choices, with political conflicts only facilitating their oversimplification, instrumental selection, and ideologization. The "small stabilization" as an evolutionary change of historical imagination and the hierarchy of values led to the strengthening of a narrow idea of national community, one defined primarily along cultural and religious lines. Needless to say, the concept itself emerged in the 19th century, but neither back then nor in the first half of the 20th century was it viewed as an obvious nationwide identity pattern. Nevertheless, it was on that pattern that the mass popularization of cultural-historical identity of the society in the 1960s and 1970s, marginalizing class and regional differences between its constitutive groups as well as other identifications present in Polish tradition, was based. This is how the modern idea of nation as a metabeing,

dominating other group and personal loyalties, was implemented by the ethnic community and one-dimensional collective memory.

Admittedly, Różewicz did participate, in his own way, in the post-war "reconstruction of man", diagnosing the collapse of the authority of pre-existing elitist cultural patterns and the necessity to turn to fundamental values and the means of expression adequate to them. He distanced himself, however, from the modern vision of total identity, one integrating all the individual's experiences. The necessity to return "to the sources" after the period of socialist realism was not equated by Różewicz with an affirmative rehashing of Polish Romantic myths, the intelligentsia's ideal of the man of culture, national stereotypes, and compensatory representations of the past allegedly attesting to the lasting bond with what had been preserved and was dominant in cultural memory. Instead, in those days Różewicz expanded on his formula of literature endorsing elementary values which, in his view, originated in quotidian experience, one that represented the *sensus communis* of the "small stabilization" and was therefore full of linguistic clichés, popular culture patterns, as well as anachronistic and reductionist representations of collective identity. The accepted language of culture was not modern, while the propagated modern idiom sounded like the official "yada yada". This "duality" became an important trait of the 1960s Różewicz protagonist – the nondescript, run-of-the-mill, typical individual, representative in the social sense of the middle period of Communist rule in post-war Poland, but still referring to the *universum* of traditional Polish cultural community, as a rule accessible to him only through the trivialized mediation of school-curriculum texts, public discourse, or popular culture. He is still traumatized by the awareness of human corporeality and mortality stemming from his personal wartime memory, which can be neither subordinated to a higher purpose (e.g. the national cause) nor transferred to historical memory. It is to these issues that the writer devoted his most important narratives of the first two decades after 1956, for ex-

ample *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata* [*In the World's Most Beautiful City*], *Przerwany egzamin* [*An Interrupted Exam*], *Wycieczka do muzeum* [*A Trip to the Museum*], *Moja córeczka* [*My Little Daughter*], *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* [*Death Amid Old Set Designs*], *Sobowtór* [*The Doppelgänger*], and some sketches and essays from *Przygotowania do wieczoru autorskiego* [*Preparations for the Author's Night*].

Their recurrent protagonist is the transitory man, usually equipped both with traits of a typical intellectual from Communist Poland and those of a typical tourist or official. This identity is not grounded in the world's social construction – now too amorphous – but results from the literary character's self-definition and cultural baggage, thus becoming questionable whenever the Różewicz man has to express his identification. Every attempt at articulating it demonstrates, after all, that the identity's carrier does not have an authentic language with which to describe himself as an individual (or as part of an acceptable community) because the *universum* of symbols accessible to him belongs to the lexicon of propaganda, political/educational rhetoric, social rituals, and the attendant repository of ever-reproduced clichés of popular culture.

The author of *Moja córeczka* would construct the plot of his narratives in such a way as to make the problems of memory and identity result from the relation between the protagonists or to surface in the narrator's monologue-discourse motivated by the inner debate. The critical role of the partner in that relationship is played in Różewicz's prose by an anonymous character, or *nequam*, who appears to be "empty" or "worse" from the point of view of the model (the man of culture, the intellectual). The point here is not only that Brudas and Waluś, thus perceived, become convenient pretexts for depicting the *sensus communis* of Communist Poland's man of culture, made up of clichés and snobbish, derivative responses, but also that only in comparison to their "half-human" existence does the cultured man's identity display its ideological, social,

aesthetic, and ethical contents. Moreover, only then does it appear to be untrustworthy and unreal. Likewise, the doppelgänger, a figure of the split self in Różewicz's prose, serves, among other things, to make identity emerge in such a way as to confront, within the framework of the narrator's inner debate, the identification patterns binding for the individual, as well as the person's individual traits resulting from his personal and unique being. The patterns have lost their credibility; neither do they make up a meaningful or an original totality. Thus, the ultimate yardstick and totality that might serve as a reference point for the Różewicz man is existential experience, linked to sensual experiences, corporeal being, and one's self-understanding effected primarily in biographical terms.

The two "horizons of interpretation" of one's own being are separable only in the model situation because modern identity is a narrative unity of what is social and symbolic with what is individual and particular. Tadeusz Różewicz did not create a utopia of living beyond culture and civilization in imitation of the sentimental-Enlightenment vision of authentic man. The protagonist of his prose is not a naive innocent untainted by social experience. Quite the contrary – he is burdened with historical awareness, knowledge of mechanisms of violence, a sense of theatricality pertaining to interpersonal relationships, and familiarity with the entire canon of roles played by the individual who defines himself in relation to others. This experience is closely related to problems of daily existence in the Communist Poland of "small stabilization" – not described, however, from the perspective of social, cultural, and political principles of ruling that state but from the level of anomic reality of the provincial individual, nondescript and preoccupied with personal life on which facts of a national or global scale have only an ambiguous or indirect influence. Space travel, the political crisis in Congo, the Homeland's Millennium, or the Pope's death are viewed by the Różewicz protagonist as remote issues, over-represented in the public space, in newspapers, or on television. One can assume, therefore, that

other events –history-making ones – are experienced and evaluated by him in similar ways. More important for him is the fact that, although he does not participate in them personally, their coverage and visual representations shape his imagination, memory, and language, giving them a form typical for the *sensus communis*, shared by thousands of other people but not rooted in an experience that he considers his own. Identity based on political or cultural identification gives the Różewicz man a sense of living amid set designs and shadows of reality, which, at best, can only mask the genuine drama of existence. His derisive rejection of them deprives him of an ability to create his own image of the world perceived as a cognitive and moral totality. There is no way out of this aporia. Neither the "cultured" ideal nor the "empty" identity are capable of accounting for the transitory man. That is why he has to be simultaneously both – the modern double. Since he is nondescript as an individual, using different patterns of identification does not, by any means, bring him closer to identifying with any of them. It seems that, though evoking, in a narrative manner, the ideas and norms of the man of culture, the writer does not claim the right to question their extratextual meaning. Undermining their source meaning, he marks the limits of the revision by the biography of his protagonist – the body and death, literally speaking, of the individual presented. Różewicz's Everyman is a character typical for the modern novel rather than the morality play. In spite of the whole *universum* of myths and symbols that he uses, he embodies the socio-historical verisimilitude and statistical ordinariness on the one hand, and, on the other, the modality of the world of fiction on whose basis he tests his axiological orientation in his immediate environment.

3. I, The Reader

The autobiographical narrator of Tadeusz Różewicz's *Namiętność* [*Passion*], a sketch published in "Odra" in 1969 and later incorporated into *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, talks about his passion for reading.[461]

> I'm a big fan of the printed word. Ever since the day when, with great difficulty, I read my first nursery rhyme letters, when in the primer I read that Daddy has a moustache, Ala has a cat, and Mum has a poppy seed … – ever since that day I have been devouring any printed paper that came my way. […] My room is a repository of old paper. I'm probably addicted. Without the morning dose of two, three dailies I feel uneasy, I get restless, fidgety, I start looking for something, I have a regular craving and experience anxiety… Only after swallowing my dose of printed paper with the latest news […] do I get down, calm

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[461] *Die Lesewut*, the German term denoting a passion for reading, is part of the genealogy of a man of culture, identified in the 19th century with the Protestant bourgeois of intellectual and literary ambitions, whose identity was a product of the social and educational aftermath of the Reformation, the Enlightenment philosophy, and the individual's need of self-reflection typical of Romanticism. See C. Karolak, W. Kunicki, H. Orłowski, *Dzieje kultury niemieckiej*, Warszawa 2006.

now, to "creative" work. […] When I was a small boy, I used to read children's books with my brother, then short stories about Indians, cowboys, detectives. At night, under a quilt or blanket, we would read by the pocket flashlight, so that Mum couldn't see. After thirty years of reading by candlelight, by oil lamp, electric light, in the sunlight and by the moonlight, on trains, on buses, in waiting rooms, in the street … I ruined my eyesight. My eye doctor prescribed treatment, glasses, and told me to read less. Yeah, sure. I kept reading signboards, notices, old posters and announcements, calendars, postcards, receipts, prescriptions, books (III 197–198).

As Christian Vandendorpe writes, reading "may become a ceaseless occupation, a deeply ingrained habit, a kind of drug".[462] Różewicz referred to the newspapers and magazines he had read before the war as "my drugs" (W 384). Read cravings, Tadeusz Drewnowski notes, accompanied the poet from his early youth, Różewicz always having a "passionate attitude towards books, for it is with books that his own spiritual history is connected".[463] Reading for Różewicz, as described in his sketches and memoirs, amounts to voracious "devouring" of the printed text, "swallowing a huge newsprint pill", "snatching" old newspaper sheets and inhaling "the smell of freshly printed" ones, comparing the bulk of periodicals to so many "types of meats and sausages", and a newspaper stand to a butcher shop (*Namiętność*). Underpinning this organic lexicon is the idea of the starveling, an allegory of existential and creative insatiableness, but also the character of the doppelgänger, a figure of the writer's disturbing dependency on both the cultural legacy of great writers and second-rate texts – commonplace, utilitarian, occasional, deriva-

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[462] Ch. Vandendorpe, *Od papirusu do hipertekstu. Esej o przemianach tekstu i lektury*, trans. A. Sawisz, Warszawa 2008, p. 148.

[463] T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 41.

tive. The *lector* in Różewicz's prose combines both figures. An insatiable reader (*Hungerleser*) and the double of the hunger artist (*Hungerkünstler*), the narrator-agent is also an author acknowledging the crisis of verbal arts, a writer who, instead of creating an unprecedented Meaning and a new Totality, "keeps hiccupping books" (III 430). Asked in 1965 by Witold Zalewski "What are you writing these days?", Różewicz answered: "I think sometimes what you are reading is more important than what you are writing …" and changed the question into "What are you reading these days?" (W 27). This role of the writer is connected, among other things, with the democratization of access to culture and its mass popularization, the blurring of the clear-cut boundary between the artist as the creative agent and the audience, the collapse of the grand narratives of modern art, and – despite the growing literacy and the huge publishing production[464] – the stagnation of readership in the second half of the 20th century. When the writer's occupation consists increasingly of interpreting what has already been written, of generating reproductions, paraphrases, or rewritings, the artistic hierarchy in the literary world is replaced by a "horizontal" dialogue.[465] When nobody can claim the right to absolute originality and artistic independence, the writer is simultane-

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[464] Janusz Dunin estimates the global book market "these days", i.e. at the end of the 20th century, at half a million new titles yearly. J. Dunin, op. cit., p. 142.

[465] If we assume that Tadeusz Różewicz debuted after World War Two as a poet struggling for a new artistic language of his own, then, with time, the avant-garde rejection of the literary heritage would yield to a dialogue based on critical readings of others' and one's own texts. Łukasz Józefowicz views the evolution of the poet's role in Różewicz's work, from the "fight against the – all-too-clear – light of Przyboś" to one's self-definition as "the poet of shame", through the lens of Bloom's anxiety of influence, beginning with the motif of the search for a master in his early poetry. See Ł. Józefowicz, *Między lękiem a wstydem – tożsamość poety w świetle bloomowskiego i gombrowiczowskiego paradygmatu wpływu (na przykładzie Różewicza)*, in: *Pamięć modernizmu*, eds M. Gorczyński, M. Mordarska, Wrocław 2011, p. 100. Another scholar who analysed Różewicz's attitude towards literary masters was Anna Szóstak. See A. Szóstak, *Rozpacz* Logos *czy nadzieja* Mythos: *Różewicz wobec poetyckich nauczycieli i mistrzów*, in: *Ewangelia odrzuconego. Szkice w 90. rocznicę urodzin Tadeusza Różewicza*, ed. J.M. Ruszar, Warszawa 2011.

ously a reader indebted to other writers, just as the text's reader becomes its co-author. The category of authority-precursor who gives his subjective voice to the entire literature of a cultural community or generation is supplanted by the category of Baudrillard's double without a prototype, audible only within the framework of an equivalent and inconclusive dialogue with other authors. What disappears from this dialogue is not so much the first/original creator as the very problem of succession.[466] As Różewicz put it in his conversation with Mark Robinson, "This is how I engage in a dialogue with those I read, whenever I read them. I always ask them about something. All the time, all the time. […] Reading for me has always been a dialogue" (W 161).

The list of the dialogue's partners, noted in Różewicz's literary texts and correspondence or mentioned in his interviews, can be partly reconstructed (also on the basis of the aforementioned studies by Kłak, Drewnowski, Ubertowska, and Majchrowski). Among the authors of his favourite poems, the narrator of the note *W roku 1962? 1964? Kiedy ja to pisałem? (To, co zostało z nienapisanej książki o Norwidzie)* [*Was It in 1962? 1964? When Did I Write This? (What, Has Been Left of An Unwritten Book About Norwid)*] lists Janicki, Kochanowski, Sęp-Szarzyński, Andrzej Morsztyn, Trembecki, Mickiewicz, Norwid, Lenartowicz, Mieczysław Romanowski, Wyspiański, Staff, Leśmian, Tuwim, Lechoń, Broniewski, Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, Czechowicz, Przyboś, and Miłosz (III 130). Tadeusz Kłak, arguing that the "pre-war" Różewicz was a consummate and critical reader of contemporaneous poetry, cites his pastiches and

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[466] This is how Harold Bloom's concept is interpreted by Marta M. Kania, who contrasts Bloom's idea of earnest struggle for liberation from the Authority's influence (that of the poetic forerunner) with ironic imitation and rewriting of the forerunner's legacy (Jean-Nőel Vuarnet) combined with replacing the precursor with a number of doubles functioning as simulacra, i.e. copies without the original that has disappeared amid them (Jean Baudrillard). See M.M. Kania, *Prekursor i jego sobowtóry. Sukcesja autorów według Blooma i Vaurneta*, "Dyskurs" 2009, no. 9.

parodies of poems by Kazimiera Iłłakowiczówna, Kazimierz Wierzyński, Stanisław Czernik, and Julian Przyboś.[467] As Majchrowski tells us, "the family canon [of the Różewiczes – WB], shared by both generations, fathers and sons, featured Sienkiewicz, Prus, Żeromski, and Reymont".[468] Majchrowski also quotes "the notebook with Tadeusz Różewicz's texts, devoted to Żeromski, with summaries and excerpts from the texts copied as a memento", in which several works by Żeromski were included. Among Różewicz's most important pre-war reads there are certainly Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night*, Russell's *In Praise of Idleness*, Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke*, Conrad's *Lord Jim*, novels by Proust and Dostoyevsky, and as for literary magazines, "Skamander", "Wiadomości Literackie", "Pion", "Kuźnia Młodych", "Okolica Poetów", as well as "Express", "Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny" with its supplements "Kurier Literacko-Naukowy", "Raz, Dwa, Trzy" (sports supplement), and the Sunday "Tajny Detektyw" (W 384). In the Różewicz household one could also come across, among others, such periodicals as "Gazeta Polska" (N 157), "Przewodnik Katolicki", "Przegląd Sportowy", and "Mucha". Janusz and Tadeusz Różewicz borrowed books from Towarzystwo Uniwersytetu Robotniczego [Workers' University Society] (N 158).

As a soldier of a Home Army forest unit, Różewicz would carry *Król-Duch* [*King-Ghost*] in his haversack, a gift from his brother Janusz (N 132). It was "a middle-sized, hardcover book, with a black title embossed on brown covers" (O 20). From fragments of the writer's journal, novellas, and stories dealing with partisan days one can infer that he was also in possession of *Słowo o bandosie* (O 19) [*The Tale of An Itinerant Farmhand*], confiscated works by Żeromski, Makuszyński, and Ossendowski (*Echa leśne*), and that he would also read Shakespeare (W 259),

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467 T. Kłak, *Reporter róż. Studia i szkice literackie*, Katowice 1978, p. 225.
468 Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., p. 46.

Conrad, Nietzsche, and Dostoyevsky (W 161) during the occupation days.[469] After the war the writer discovered for himself, among others, the poetry of Rimbaud, Villon, and Hölderlin, the works of Kafka, Mann, Tolstoy, Beckett, and various philosophical texts, mostly by German-speaking authors – Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Jaspers.[470] He also valued Rilke, Apollinaire, Supervielle, Eluard, Eliot, Blok, Yesenin, and early Mayakovsky (W 9). From *Dziennik gliwicki* [*The Gliwice Journal*] we know that in 1957 he read, among others, Sienkiewicz's *Bez dogmatu*, Camus' *The Fall*, Vogler's *Ocalony z otchłani*, Flaubert's *Letters*, Kruczkowski's *Szkice z piekła uczciwych*, printed in "Trybuna Ludu", an interview with Céline in "Express" (probably "Express Wieczorny"), and some French writers published in "Twórczość" (M 88–103).[471]

In answer to the question about the ten most important 20th-century novels – from a 1977 magazine (Warsaw-based "Kultura") poll (*Dlaczego piszę* [*Why I Write*]) – Różewicz listed "*The Trial*, *Lord Jim*, *Ulysses*, *The Magic Mountain*, *And Quiet Flows the Don*, *The Good Soldier Švejk*, *Journey to the End of the Night*, *Pożegnanie Jesieni*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*" (Ma 133). The tenth title was crossed out by a state censor. Majchrowski tells us that it was Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*.[472] Stolarczyk, in turn, claims that "Tadeusz Różewicz no longer remembers the missing title, but he doesn't rule out the possibility that it could have been Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* or George Orwell's *1984*" (Ma 311). A gen-

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[469] "I used to read Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Conrad, Proust (in Boy's translation) – that was also during the occupation." K. Braun, T. Różewicz, *Języki teatru*, Wrocław 1989, p. 123.

[470] Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., pp. 100, 205.

[471] The "special French edition" of the "Twórczość" monthly came out in April 1957 and featured poems, artistic prose, and essays about existentialism and Marxism in France, as well as sketches on the modern novel, theatre, literary criticism, sociology, and colonialism (by such authors as H. Lefebvre, J.-P. Sartre, A. Camus, L. Aragon, G. Bataille, S. Beckett, P. Eluard, R. Queneau, E. Morin).

[472] Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., p. 202.

eral idea about the diversity of texts read by Różewicz's in the 1960s and 1970s can be gleaned from his correspondence with Zofia and Jerzy Nowosielski. In the letters, the writer fills his friends in on what he was currently reading, which included Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil*, *The Secret History* by Procopius of Caesarea, John M. Todd's *Martin Luther: A Biographical Study*, Hermann Kesten's *I, the King*, Pascal's *Pensées*, Julius R. Oppenheimer's *Atomkraft und menschliche Freiheit*, Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*, Mieczysław Porębski's *Ikonosfera*, *Diary of a Mad Old Man* by Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*, Jacques Monod's *Zufall und Notwendigkeit. Philosophische Fragen der modernen Biologie*, Anton Chekhov's *Aphorisms*, Zygmunt Kubiak's *Muza rzymska. Antologia poezji starożytnego Rzymu*, Carl G. Jung's *Man and His Symbols*, Paul Valéry's *Things Left Unsaid*, André Malraux's *Obsidian Head*, and, probably, Georges Ifrah's *The Universal History of Numbers: From Prehistory to the Invention of the Computer*.

As Albert Gorzkowski puts it, reading is "an act both intimate and communal, one in which a particular circulation of actions, choices, feelings, and imaginings is reflected".[473] Reading opens up the reader to others through his/her participation in a cultural-communication community, at the same time enlarging the realm of the person's individuality, giving them an opportunity to engage in self-creation within culture (the symbolic *universum*), to discover or construct a different self-image. This is so because reading is a potentially unpredictable, irreversible, and unique experience, not only engaging our emotions and worldview but also disposing us towards interpretation of them.[474]

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[473] *Szukam biedy… Z dr. hab. Albertem Gorzkowskim rozmawia Aleksandra Motyka*, "Bez porównania. Czasopismo Komparatystyczne" 2005, no. 6, p. 41.

[474] Classifying modern ways and goals of reading, Siekierski distinguishes between: (1) reading as a result of one's "need to participate in official culture"; (2) "treating literature as a source of, or tool for, shaping patriotic, social, or political stances; (3) reading as self-education; (4) looking

The focus of this chapter is the identifying role of reading in Różewicz's prose – both in its personal and collective identity aspects. The figure of the narrator-reader (*lector*) in his works combines the narrative "I" with the reader as a character reporting on his reading experience in an autobiographical and cultural context, and by the same token defining his worldview and hierarchy of values. The reader's experience thus textualized can be regarded as an identity narrative or an important part thereof. As a participant of an imagined cultural-communication community (space) Różewicz's *lector* is also a fulfilment of the social and ethical role of the writer, redefined in the 1960s and 1970s. These are this chapter's main hypotheses.

The Birth of the Modern Reader

Jan Assmann, studying the connection between writing and memory in ancient civilizations, concludes that ritualistic culture is based on imitation (e.g. liturgical recitation), whereas as soon as writing becomes widespread, what gains in importance is interpretation of the text and metacommunicational cultural space where works temporarily out of use are stored.[475] This leads to Assmann's thesis that, admittedly, both repetition and interpretation ensure the coherence of cultural communities through the "circulation of meaning", but they effect it in different ways. "The crucial difference between ritualistic and textual coherence is that the former consists of repetition, thus excluding all other variants, whereas the latter not only allows but even provokes them."[476] The necessity to constantly renew the meanings of the most important

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in the text for "sources assisting in the process of personal growth"; (5) the text as a "source of emotional experiences"; (6) "reading as a way to kill time"; (7) "reading as an act of fulfilling an educational obligation". S. Siekierski, *Czytania Polaków w XX wieku*, op. cit., pp. 16–17.

[475]   J. Assmann, op. cit., pp. 34, 103.

[476]   Ibid., p. 112.

works of literature combined with the concern about establishing and preserving the text's original (authorial) version was one of the reasons for the emergence of an intellectual elite (*litterari*) as a social group with an identity of its own sustained in communication practice. An example of a modern elitist communication community is the Enlightenment's *Republica literaria* or the 20th-century "Republic of Letters", a European community of intellectuals afflicted by fascism, nationalism, or communism, or, by contrast, directly involved in totalitarian movements and described by Tony Judt as a "virtual community of conversation and argument whose influence reflected and illuminated the tragic choices of the age".[477]

To repeat, according to Assmann, collective identity "emerges as a result of identification with it on the part of individuals partaking of it. It does not exist 'in and of itself', but only to the extent to which particular individuals subscribe to it" in relation to its representations.[478] Similarly, personal identity "refers to the individual's social recognition and classification" within the framework of the signs, representations, values, and symbols circulating in culture. In conclusion, Assmann states that "in order for an individual to be able to generate personal identity in encounters with others, s/he has to be with them in a shared" symbolic *universum*. What is more, s/he needs to be aware of the community's existence and of his/her own attitude to it."[479] By the same token, mere participation in a system of culture does not automatically provide the individual either with community awareness or with identity. It is only

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[477] T. Judt, *Reappraisals. Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, London 2009, p. 14.

[478] Ibid., p. 146.

[479] "Encounters with others are for the individual simultaneously encounters with himself/herself. We do not experience our consciousness, that is our personal identity, otherwise than through communication and interaction. Personal identity is self-awareness which is concurrently an awareness of others." Ibid., p. 149.

the acknowledgement (recognition) of its identifying function that transforms adherence into identity.[480]

Reading as an act of unassisted interpretation of the text is largely considered in European culture to be one of fundamental ways of individual, conscious participation in the symbolic *universum* of one's social, national, religious, or cultural community. Christian Vandendorpe, discussing modern ways of reading, notes that in Europe, until the middle of the 18th century, the dominant model was that of reading "from cover to cover", presupposing one's "complete identification with what one reads", acknowledging the pre-existing, authorial worldview.[481] The intensive model, however, in the second half of that century was already yielding to extensive reading as a result of an exponential increase in the number (and accessibility) of printed texts, books, and newspapers. The extensive approach consisted in a quiet, fast, one-time, and not necessarily systematic reading which gave the reader a much wider margin of freedom, or even agency, in the search of the text's meaning. The Gutenberg Galaxy gave rise to the "typographic man", a new individual identity and a new type of relation between individuals partaking of culture.[482] The unprecedented success of the novel in the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century contributed to intensification of the recep-

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[480] Assmann maintains that in a "primary, or, paradoxically speaking, natural state of culture […] all its norms, institutions, or interpretations of reality become obvious, naturalized, as it were, reduced to a simple, inescapable, natural order of things, their specificity and conventionality remaining invisible to the individual". That is why culture as a *universum* of meanings presupposes identity only when it "has been acknowledged as such", in short – once it loses its "invisibility, obviousness and implicitness". Ibid., pp. 148–149.

[481] Ch. Vandendorpe, op. cit., p. 152.

[482] Andrzej Mencwel writes: "The Gutenberg Galaxy meant not only an expansion of the printing press, multiplication of volumes and popularization of reading, but also a new type of rational man (the 'topographic man') and a new type of interpersonal relationship (abstract-calculation); the print as a medium constitutes the type of person corresponding to the primacy of textual knowledge, just as book and newspaper circulation generates corresponding social environments." A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., pp. 269–271.

tion of literary works as complete, integral visions of reality. It was also grounded in the belief that there exists a strong, autonomous, rational, individual subject capable of interpreting the text on its own.

Janusz Dunin describes yet another type of reading – the defensive one – well-adjusted to the situation of textual excess, of too many texts and their interpretations out there:

> The defensive reading tactic, based on modern forms of encounter with books, protects the individual from excess of information. From textual abstracts, introductions, indexes, summaries, etc., the seasoned reader can winnow out the crucial, most relevant matters, rejecting the necessity to study the text page by page, line by line.[483]

This transformation entails another one. Reading in the second half of the 20th century is already – what can be considered an unprecedented fact in the history of Polish culture –

> an everyday activity, a part of quotidian reality, not a memorable, festive act worthy of special note […], and one which – unlike theatre, for example – does not require any special preparations. It is not, however, a common phenomenon because a substantial segment of the society can do without it.[484]

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[483] J. Dunin, op. cit., p. 48.

[484] Ibid., p. 15. Lucjan Adamczuk's study of the Polish reading audience, taking into account readers aged over 15, shows that already in the 1980s the written word loses ground "in the face of the rapid growth of other media such as television, radio, tape, record, CD". Having defined the reader as someone "who reads at least six books per year", Adamczuk calculated that such persons made up 36.3% of his 1988 sample group. L. Adamczuk, *Społeczny zasięg uczestnictwa w kulturze*, in: *Kultura a życie codzienne Polaków*, eds L. Adamczuk, T. Koprowska, Warszawa 1991, pp. 38–39. This was, among other factors, due to the dominance of television, the deepening economic crisis, and the political awakening of Polish society that the "percentage of individuals declaring an interest in books and reading rapidly decreased in 1979 and then, in 1985,

As a follow-up to Vandendorpe's and Dunin's remarks I would add that the modern reading model combines extensive reading with the defensive one, that is a selective and critical approach to texts (the textual world) with an active, subjective involvement in their interpretation.

> This liberalism coincides with the growth of the humanities with their increasing acknowledgement of interpretation. From then on the ideal reader would be someone who can, on their own and in harmony with their goals or even mood, choose the right filter for their selection of texts to read.[485]

Encounters with great literature became in the 20th century the realm of intimate, unpredictable. and unique dialogue between the subject-artist and the subject-reader. Reading as such, in turn, became commonplace, considered now to be a widespread, quotidian, and commonly accessible practice.

Thus reading, from a "gentrifying" activity typical of social elites, turned in the 20th century into a practical skill exercised on a daily basis, retaining, nevertheless, some of its traditional meanings and functions.[486]

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almost reached back the 1972 level, which was 59.8%". Thus one can hardly speak of reading as a common pastime in Poland, even in the peak years of the mid-1970s. Around 1975 stagnation (or even decline) sets in, affecting most of all the reading of public library books and periodicals. S. Siekierski, *Książka literacka. Potrzeby społeczne i ich realizacja w latach 1944-1986*, op. cit., pp. 232–233, 256. Janusz Dunin also considers 1977 to be the final year of Poland's increase in readership. J. Dunin, op. cit., p. 216.

[485] Ch. Vandendorpe, op. cit., p. 77.

[486] Siekierski claims that disinterested reading, characteristic of the Polish intelligentsia's cultural habits, was rooted in "the patterns of gentry culture" and traditionally denoted one's "adherence to the dominant higher culture", even though in the 19th-century gentry and bourgeois culture reading was, in fact, a pleasurable pastime. S. Siekierski, *Czytania Polaków w XX wieku*, op. cit., p. 32. Analyzing Polish reading habits of the 1980s, Grażyna Straus states that the motivation behind reading among persons regarding it as a "preferable type of activity" resulted from their ingrained habits and their considering reading to be an indispensable cultural activity for modern individu-

Confronting the ideal model of literature receiver with the real situation of readership in Communist Poland, Henryk Bereza stated in his essay *Sztuka czytania* [*The Art of Reading*] that the literary culture of the second half of the 20th century was still burdened by the socio-pedagogical tradition of "spirit raising", which held that reading was to "propagate ideas, to convert, to increase the number of believers, not the number of thinkers".[487] However, Bereza argued, modern humanist culture should first and foremost shape "the individual spiritual culture of man, who is aware of his autonomous existence, who is willing to, and capable of, regulating, in his own ways, his relations with the world, who wants to, and does his best, within the limits of what is humanly possible, to exercise his right to think freely and to judge whatever comes with his life's experience", because "the meaning of life can be defined by each and every person only for themselves and at their own risk".[488] Reading requires, then, independent and critical thinking, grounded in an intimate attitude to the text and to its author's personality. That is why reading should result not from a need to "strengthen one's belief" in the collectively endorsed (or rejected) vision of the world, but from one's "interest in another human being, who expresses their moral nature. Reading as such should be an act of spiritual confrontation between two different – but equal – partners".[489] Reading as a dialogue of two intellectually autonomous individuals would be, in this context, an attempt to understand both others

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als. This reading model was typical primarily of big-city dwellers aged 25–49, looking in books and periodicals for knowledge about contemporary world and history, and appreciating the "possibility to choose freely the subject matter" from the canon of masterpieces of national and global literature, school texts, and popular fiction. G. Straus, op. cit., p. 60. The sense of reading masterpieces because of an imaginary obligation resultant from one's status of an intellectual or one's bonds with a cultural community is critically discussed by Tomasz Jędrzejewski in his article *Dlaczego warto nie czytać Jamesa Joyce'a*, "Przegląd Powszechny" 2010, no. 7–8.

[487] H. Bereza, *Sposób myślenia. O prozie polskiej*, Warszawa 1989, pp. 13–14.

[488] Ibid., pp. 13–15.

[489] Ibid., pp. 14–15.

and oneself.[490] This kind of textual encounter, of the extensive-defensive type, plays a significant role in the individual's cultural emancipation and accumulation of (self-)knowledge.

As a narrative structure, Różewicz's *homo lector* presents textual prerequisites for such reading. Tadeusz Sławek, discussing the problem of the reader as a literary character, described two types of reading. The "bad" reading amounts, in his opinion, to searching in the text for a ready-made and total (definitive) proposition of the meaning of the represented world, one with which the reader fully identifies, thus ignoring the presence of an interpretant, as between the text's object and its meaning. By contrast, in the "good" reading practice, the object, rather than meaning s o m e t h i n g, manifests its meaning as a relationship – a conversation – between the reader, the text, and its reference. In a situation where the literary character is simultaneously the reader, Sławek tells us, "good" reading brings together the reader, the text, and the world, at the same time revealing their mutual positioning in semantic relationships.[491]

Reading as Totality and Dialogue

"Good" reading puts consciousness to work, or, more precisely, puts the receiver-subject to work on the text of his/her consciousness which engages in a dialogue with the text of someone else's consciousness (self-knowledge).[492] Henry David Thoreau envisaged the most competent and profound reading of *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* as an act of the reader's

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[490] Ibid., p. 16.

[491] See T. Sławek, *The Character as Reader*, in: *Discourse and Character*, eds W. Kalaga, T. Sławek, Katowice 1990, p. 53.

[492] "The text that, while being read, is not a repetition of pre-existing reading experiences, appearing on the horizon of recognition and subsequently moved, as part of the acquisition process, to the ever-widening horizon of further expectations, enforces a more or less fundamental and far-reaching reconstruction of the receiver's consciousness." R. Handke, *W świecie tekstów i wartości. Szkice z teorii lektury*, Warszawa 1991, p. 60.

self-knowledge, just as writing this multigeneric, autobiographical-essayistic work was an act of self-knowledge on the author's part, his attempt at self-explanation within the framework of a historical-cultural context.[493] If we assume that the text constitutes culture's memory, the reader's self-understanding results from the kind of attitude to cultural codes that foregrounds the very process of one's identification or detachment from them. Ewa Rewers, following Richard Rorty, views reading-interpretation as "an activity implying the interpreter's selfhood (subjectivity) rather than a tool for understanding the world, or decoding cultural texts […], and thus making it possible to think in terms of a difference in identity and the difference between identity and non-identity".[494] Reading viewed from this autotelic perspective translates, therefore, into evoking such a "Not Me" that, though retaining its otherness, is still comprehensible and indispensable to the self for self-definition, for defining one's aesthetic, political, social, or intellectual preferences. "Not Me" in Różewicz's prose is the "Me" of another text or the "Me" of his own text, but read with a sense of temporal and experiential distance. This distance is transgressively crossed over and keeps making itself felt because the *lector*'s narrative is simultaneously an ostensible *textus*, a dialogue, a comprehensible web of text-identities as well as their makeshift *summa*, acquiring a new meaning in the narrator's utterance.

The subject-self in Różewicz's world is scattered, "mobile and open" (I 226), whereas the textual "self" promises, based on the principles of readability, a meaning. Reading as a process of discovering/constructing meaning equates to a totalization of the component texts, "bringing together" the read text and the text of the consciousness (the cognitive-perceptive context), that is one's erudition, memory, habits, interpretive filters, etc.[495] Thus,

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[493] See A. Waśkiewicz, *Obcy z wyboru. Studium filozofii aspołecznej*, Warszawa 2008, p. 181.

[494] E. Rewers, *Interpretacja jako lustro, różnica i rama*, in: *Filozofia i etyka interpretacji*, eds A.F. Kola, A. Szahaj, Kraków 2007, p. 27.

[495] Ch. Vandendorpe, op. cit., p. 65.

Vandendorpe writes, "meaning is a result of an aptly executed synthesis of context and information data. It results from understanding and is felt by the subject to be an act carried out at the highest level of consciousness".[496] Compared to audio and visual messages, which invariably have a greater impact on the receiver's senses, reading has the most active character since understanding any longer text as a meaningful whole requires agency and an active attitude to the text on the reader's part.[497] Vandendorpe writes:

> Reading as such is unlike any other activity and it requires total attention of its subject. […] What makes reading fundamentally different from other semiotic operations boils down to the extraordinary value of the signs it operates with as well as its reader-addressed promise of finding a meaning.[498]

Reading in search of the text's meaning is a practice engaging the reader's worldview and emotions. It is also a new, revised narrative of the reader's identity as encountering the Other through reading is also a dialogue with oneself. Marcin Adamiak describes this dialogue as a cognitive and ethical relation which the reader is aware of:

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[496] Ibid., p. 71. Such a reading "calls forth operations of a higher order, dealing with what the person knows and with who they are", and – Vandendorpe continues – "consists of systematically collecting signs that make up the shared universe of meanings. For such a reading to be properly carried out, at least two conditions need to be simultaneously fulfilled: (1) the reader has to have a guaranteed possibility to engage with pieces of information in peace, i.e. to re-read any fragment, to have insight into what follows later, to move freely from the text itself to the table of contents or the index; (2) the reader needs to be able to juxtapose the signs featured in the text – at least in a general way – with socially accepted procedures, so that s/he can locate most of the meanings given to the text by its author. The more identified, the more successful the reading. This does not rule out the possibility of the reader coming across elements of meaning unintended by the author, hidden in their subconscious." Ibid., pp. 123, 147.

[497] Ibid., p. 71.

[498] Ibid., pp. 147–149.

The act of reading, after all, cannot be separated from the entire apparatus of contextuality in all its diverse aspects – historical, creative, referential, moral, and the like. It is, on the one hand, an act of opening into something new, hitherto unexperienced, and on the other – bringing to this meeting with otherness (and marking an ethical relation) one's own mental baggage; bringing in what is "already" familiar and endowed with a potential for being activated and used. […]

This activity has a complete and holistic aspect: reading annexes the reader, each time making them face a different experience and thus changing them. No reading can be repeated. The textual encounter is irreversible in the sense in which an ethical experience is irreversible, reorienting all the perspectives of thought and action that it pertains to. The individuality of a reading act materializes in its inexplicability vis-à-vis another reading act or an act of creation. The reader's point of view, despite their openness to otherness, is always their own perspective, not the perspective of the Other. A considerate response materializes itself only with individual involvement vis-à-vis an individual text.[499]

In modern culture, the reader's opening to the meaning of reading often denotes not an automatic internalization of another worldview, but, rather, interpreting that worldview as a creative act of another subjectivity with which the reader starts a dialogue.[500] As Wojciech Kalaga argues, the reading "I" is a

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[499] M. Adamiak, *Autor – dzieło – czytelnik: trzy wymiary zwrotu etycznego w literaturoznawstwie ponowoczesnym*, in: *Filozofia i etyka interpretacji*, op. cit., pp. 244–245.

[500] "Acknowledging a particular value results from recognizing it in an act of communication having the form of an interaction between its subjective participants (as with a value either demonstrated or revealed by someone) or the form of individual inquiry (as with a value discovered in something that embodied it, communicating its existence). In both cases there has to be a medium of value." R. Handke, op. cit., p. 7.

text constructing itself out of the texts encountered […], it is enmeshed in ceaseless dialogicness: external dialogicness with other texts, which starts with the uttering/thinking of the first word/sign (concomitantly with entering the symbolic realm of the Other, in Lacan's terms), and internal dialogicness, grounded in continuous interpretation and reinterpretation [of the text of one's own consciousness – WB].[501]

As the narrative subject's role, the *lector* is indeed a dialogic construct. The narrative "I" in Różewicz's prose creates its own identity through a dialogue with another "I", mediated in the text. An analogous construction of the reading "I" as dialogue can be discerned in Wisława Szymborska's *Lektury nadobowiązkowe* [*Nonobligatory Reads*].

In Szymborska, the individual meets another individual in the world of texts, […] for every text is a sign of another being, a record of thoughts ready for dialogue. One could say that reading is "deciphering another person", building one's knowledge about another self – it is an attempt to define oneself vis-à-vis the Other, an attempt to construct questions, to collect dubious findings, and – ultimately – it is an act of conscious participation in communication.[502]

Like Szymborska's *homo lector*, Różewicz's reader-narrator, whenever reading a text by another author, finds himself in a personal relation with him, accentuating both the textual and the existential prerequisites for such a dialogue. In order to demonstrate the intricate character of

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501   W. Kalaga, *O tożsamości czytelnika*, in: *Tekst (czytelnik) margines*, eds W. Kalaga, T. Sławek, Katowice 1988, p. 105.

502   J. Wciórka, *Homo lector*, "Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne", Seria Literacka, Poznań 1995, no. 2 (vol. XXII), pp. 106–107. It is from this article that the term *homo lector*, used throughout this chapter, comes from.

reading/dialogue in Różewicz's prose, I will give another example. Piotr Śliwiński, utilizing the *poeta lector* figure for his discussion of Stanisław Barańczak's poetry, distinguishes between two variants of this role. According to the critic, the first variant, the postmodernist *poeta lector*, "is the One Who Writes and therefore he Reads, that is an artist who, in his own view, is doomed to repeat, or rewrite, what has already been created; sentenced – and sentencing the reader – to the *déjà lu* effect, someone who believes that the text is all there is out there". The second variant, in turn – one which could be provisionally labelled modernist – "is the One Who Reads and therefore he Writes, that is a person authorized and inspired by culture to make attempts at enriching it, believing in the existence of reality and meaning". The latter-type *poeta lector* is a textual form of "the tension caused by conflicting values", an effect of acknowledging selected ethical norms, a sense of contact with a completed and closed work, but also of the need to reinterpret pre-existing codes and cultural problems in relation to "one's own experience and that of one's era".[503] Although the comparison with Szymborska and Barańczak does not exhaust the subject, one could assume that the *lector* in Różewicz's prose approximates the second variant – the modernist one – when it comes to his ethical stand and his constant readiness to search for authentic human values in culture. Still, he is also a carrier of the post-modern awareness of the disintegration of any extratextual meaning that literature habitually refers to. As author-narrator he is capable of reclaiming it only locally and momentarily, contextualizing – while reading – the literary texts as well as other, non-artistic utterances in ways that make their meaning play an important role in the individual's process of self-understanding, description of their emotions, moral dilemmas, and prosaic, quotidian experiences, facilitating a rapport with another human being.

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[503] P. Śliwiński, *Przygody z wolnością. Uwagi o poezji współczesnej*, Kraków 2002, pp. 113–114.

Although the transformation is spread over years, Różewicz's *homo lector* attests to an axiological turning point in his writing. Krzysztof Krasuski, interpreting the poem *Czytanie książek* [*Book Reading*] from the volume *Płaskorzeźba* [*Bas-Relief*] (1991), argues that the text demonstrates a turning point in Różewicz's poetry. The poet, the critic tells us, who used to depict "the world with a destroyed hierarchy of values is now rebuilding a system of norms".[504] These norms are not only confirmed by the personalized, autobiographical persona of the poetic "life-writing", but also by a system of connections with other cultural personas – those of Karol Irzykowski, Witold Wirpsza, Zbigniew Kubikowski, Stanisław Gębala, and Jerzy Grotowski. What is more, the moral and existential subject of these norms is the poet in his new role of culture bringer, defending its sense and values in the prosaic context of daily life.[505] Krasuski is right, but, as for Różewicz's prose, the beginnings of the breakthrough should be located in the first half of the 1960s, when Różewicz wrote the essays, later on collected in *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, not only depicting the state of spiritual traditions and intellectual stands in late, mass-oriented modernity, but also featuring his personal representation of the "horizon of meaning" of the individual partaking of the culture of the day (e.g. the sketch *Dziennikarz i poeta* [*The Journalist and the Poet*] in which Różewicz, confronted with culture-sterilizing practices of the mass media, tabloid press and radio, expresses his "faith in the power, sense, and relevance of poetry").[506] Complementary to this writing-read-

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[504] K. Krasuski, *Poeta czyta książki i świat*, in: *Światy Tadeusza Różewicza*, the "Obrazy literatury XX wieku" series, eds M. Kisiel, W. Wójcik, Katowice 2000, p. 114. R. Przybylski notices some traces of that change in the volume *Regio* (1969), initiating in Różewicz's poetry the process of rebirth of his faith in the sense of "the dead communing with the living in culture". R. Przybylski, *Droga do Emaus*, "Odra" 1970, no. 5, p. 127.

[505] K. Krasuski, op. cit., p. 124.

[506] J. Ward, *Thomas Stearns Eliot w twórczości poetyckiej Tadeusza Różewicza*, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1999, no. 1, p. 26. Anthony P. Cohen states that in the 1960s the "community of meanings" in

ing are columns from the "Margines, ale …" series, published in "Odra" since the end of the 1960s. Those essays, sketches, and columns can be viewed as a number of attempts to reconstruct the symbolic space for people who want to communicate, or "read" each other, that is both for those who are primarily driven by their craving for dialogue about non-obvious, seemingly marginal, and outdated issues, and those who follow their loyal and disinterested passion for getting to know other people and their inner worlds. That space is neither abstract nor utopian because Różewicz's reconstruction of norms and meanings in culture is based on a "contract" between specific individuals.

The World "Seen" in the Text

Some of Różewicz's narratives, following the poetics of "reading", discuss the poetry of entire cultural formations (Romantics, Young Poland, the interwar avant-garde, socialist realists, etc.), but the broadly conceived analyses never overshadow such key figures as Leopold Staff or Julian Przyboś. Różewicz discovers in their texts symptoms of social changes and historic phenomena, but also follows the traces of the two poets' individual perspectives. Concretizing their poetic worlds, Różewicz does not try to objectify them. In *Oko poety (notatka z roku 1964)* he writes: "It is not about statistics: How many times did the poet use the words black, white, red, green, etc. For nothing follows from that kind of maths that would allow us to understand the construction of 'the poet's eye'" (III 44). It is not about a purely aesthetic perspective either. The essayist is convinced that the eye of the "real poet" is unique in the sense that it talks about the world, leaving in the text signs of the writer's

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Western culture became questioned as a result of the proliferation of mass media, an increase in the centralization of state power, and seemingly relentless urbanization trends. See A.P. Cohen, *Wspólnoty znaczeń*, trans. K. Warmińska, in: *Badanie kultury. Elementy teorii antropologicznej*, op. cit., p. 197.

biographical identity, worldview, or literary programme. How does the "poet's eye" perceive reality? Różewicz writes: "The most salient characteristic of Staff's poems is their translucence. The poem's contour is drawn by Staff with a diamond. Sharp and clear" (III 46). Kochanowski's poem is equally "transparent". As Różewicz adds, "This clarity, or transparency, that can be found in Leopold Staff's poems flows out of Kochanowski's poetry" (III 46). The material world featured in their poems is vivid in a peculiar way; the narrator-reader asking about the "how" of the poet's perspective, asks about the meaning of the imagery as a whole, not about that of particular images.

Robert Cieślak described in an interesting way the "techniques of vision" in Różewicz's poetry, pointing out their affinities with "the style of Art Nouveau and the painting techniques of expressionism" as well as particular works of art.[507] The scholar also noted the parallels between Różewicz's "eye" and that of Staff.

> Writing about the "poet's eye", Różewicz offers us an important clue – seeing, the angle of vision, is of utmost importance to the poet and his poetry. Thus the style of poetic thinking depends directly on one's ability to perceive and then interpret what is visible and, first and foremost, what has been seen. Poetry thus conceived is not an immediate record of the world, or a description of its nature, but an utterance taken over by the medium of art, this being possible thanks to an iconological interpretation of the perceived image or, more precisely, a set of images. […] For Różewicz, the realm covered by visual cognition includes both the paintings of old masters and 20th-century art, as well as the entire iconosphere as a component of modern culture […]. For Staff, in turn, this realm is slightly smaller in scope, including

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[507] R. Cieślak, *Oko poety. Poezja Tadeusza Różewicza wobec sztuk widowiskowych*, op. cit., p. 15.

the *universum* of art, enriched by personal encounters with particular artworks supported by detailed knowledge of antique and Renaissance sculpture or the 17th- and 19th-century paintings.[508]

Since the impact of fine arts on Różewicz's poetic perspective has been thoroughly discussed by Cieślak, I will focus on other, equally interesting, aspects of the issue. The author of *Oko poety*, following Krzyżanowski and Borowy, noted that both classics of Polish poetry, Kochanowski and Staff, share some "civic and spiritual affinities" (III 47). Expanding on Różewicz's analysis, I would argue that it is these affinities, among others, that give rise to the "clarity of vision", so conspicuously present in their texts. The landscapes and characters in their poems constitute not only an aesthetic image, but also a social and moral point of view. The construction of Kochanowski's and Staff's "poetic eye" is grounded in a similar perspective on the human condition, with man viewed as both part of the natural environment and an agent functioning within a civic, legal, ethical, and cultural community. The sharp and clear perception of space in their poems entails, besides the rules of classical composition, an emphatic formulation of the world's meaning, based on the republican and Renaissance-humanist ideal of the individual's social identity. Between this ideal and Różewicz's (post) modern consciousness, affected by anxiety and questioning civilization, there emerges a dialogue of irreplaceable and irreducible experiences, a relationship of difference and identification. Such a highly "articulate" way of perceiving reality by Kochanowski and Staff is incorporated into the (textual) dialogue of identity of the narrative self, though still remaining an external and extraneous text with which the full identification – ignoring the "how" question – is impossible. The

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[508]   Ibid., pp. 52–53.

narrator's monologue is a dialogue, writing is reading and vice versa, whereas interpreting the text and image of another self results in self-interpretation. Admittedly, the affirmative image of the civic and moral community does not lead in *Oko poety* to full identification with it, but it constitutes a social horizon of the interpretation's meaning, one that stresses the uncertainty and non-obviousness of the collective identity of the essay's narrator-agent.

Różewicz's *lector*, describing the world through the writer's "eye", operates at the junction of his own or somebody else's text, an artistic movement or programme, a biographical anecdote, the narrative of history, and collective memory. Thus assembled reconstruction of Mickiewicz's, Norwid's, Prus', Bunin's, or Kafka's experiences is partial, at some points self-contradictory, sometimes following the modality of a nonfiction documentary, at other times only probable or even fantastic. The narrator-reader's position vis-à-vis the world represented and the story itself keeps changing, that is his perspective remains mobile – it may be that of a "regular" reader, the writer, the essay's author, a friend or acquaintance, a student, or the aesthetic-ideological opponent. On the one hand, this horizontal narration reduces all the narrator's roles to intertextual relations, while on the other it facilitates his engaging in a dialogue with "Hierowski" or "Kuryluk" in different styles of understanding and reality-explaining codes. This is the most important tool at the disposal of Różewicz's reader, who strives to enrich the text of his consciousness with experiences of others, with their understanding of the world, collected and recognized in diverse texts. *Homo lector* as the text of one's consciousness – if one views the essays from *Przygotowanie* as a totality – moves through late, prosaic "Mickiewicz", realistic "Bunin" and "Prus", ironic "Norwid", transparent and civic-minded "Staff", or modern "Przyboś", with each external dialogue beginning a new internal dialogue, thus opening yet another identification space.

The Cultural Space Project

Andrzej Mencwel, referring to communication theory, claims that the identity of the reader in the age of printing is a combination of a peculiar selfhood (his/her sensibility type and mental disposition) and the reader's concomitant social constellation, that is the "dominant type of interpersonal bond".[509] If one was to read Różewicz's non-fiction prose in the light of Mencwel's thesis, the effect of showing such a bond would be, first and foremost, a representation of writing and reading communities. *Lector*, the narrator-protagonist of Różewicz's notes, reviews books and newspaper articles; analyses poems, essays, or biographies; tells anecdotes about their authors and protagonists; corresponds with artists; makes notes in the margins of text currently being read; or polemicizes against their theses. The narrative self is simultaneously a mediator between partakers of symbolic culture, a witness or editor of their textual encounters, and sometimes a discoverer of their intellectual affinities. Reading in this sense equates an intensified communion with the text, but also a subjective (extensive and defensive) way of being in cultural space, consisting in spotlighting and expanding on its hidden contents or relationships. Kafka, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Rilke, Shklovsky, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Brzozowski, Żmichowska, Staff, Czechowicz, Tuwim, Przyboś, Borowski, Witkacy, Prus, Wyspiański, Przybyszewski, and others appear in Różewicz's prose as co-authors and partners of a communication community. I do not mean here direct inspirations; it is more about an expression of indirect rapport, a "horizontal" dialogue through culture and (co-)participation in the *universum* of meaning rather than traces of real artistic or mental consequences or rivalry.

Marcin Czerwiński writes that a community of communication is a community of culture participants who share some "fundamental

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[509] A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., p. 261.

rules of articulation – in all its different orders (such as language, artistic codes) – and a certain repository of information necessary for an exchange of ideas". Consequently, what is crucial for such a community to exist is "cultural integration in the sense that stresses its communicative potential, which equates an increased articulation potential". As for the individual's belonging to the communication community, in turn, the decisive factors include "both cultural training and the opportunity to find adequate stimuli and appropriate wordings in the treasure trove of cultural heritage".[510] Such a social group is a community on condition that its members not only communicate with each other but also respect certain norms and values that come with scriptural/literate cultures. The axiological, cognitive, and social sense of "literacy" is emphasized by David R. Olson, who defines it as

> the ability to participate actively in a community of readers who have agreed on some principles of reading, a hermeneutics if you will, a set of texts to be treated as significant, and a working agreement on the appropriate or valid interpretation(s) of those texts.[511]

"Literate thought" as a symbolic form (E. Cassirer) constitutes, according to Olson, a cultural basis for one's outlook on the world, for wording an argument, drawing conclusions, and making descriptions, value judgements, assumptions, and presuppositions which – once discovered in the text – give the reader an idea of both human individuality (subjectivity) and the possibility of transcending it through assum-

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510 M. Czerwiński, *Wspólnota komunikowania*, Warszawa 1985, pp. 3, 21. From Czerwiński's definition it follows that the communication community is by the same token a cultural one, that is why I use the term cultural-communication community.

511 D.R. Olson, *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading*, Cambridge University Press 1994, pp. 274–275.

ing the perspective of another user of writing. This particular role of "literate thinking" is all the more visible when it becomes supplanted by non-textual "thinking" with its own ways of reasoning and value judgements.

In his essays, sketches, memoirs, columns, and notes Różewicz constructed a model of such a community, covering – it is worth stressing – the relations between texts and other utterances (e.g. films, television and radio shows, artworks). In stylistic and structural terms, those narratives of Różewicz's where the narrator-agent plays the role of the reader are *silvae rerum*, collages, fragmentary, and multigeneric works, connoting a quasi-documentary record or expository prose. It is a structure in which the narrative "I", ruling over a mobile and temporary totality, is foregrounded. As Vandendorpe argues, breaking the narrative down into fragments makes the narrator's identity subject to constant modifications. It becomes a totality that is lost and regained (at another level of textual consciousness, however) with each added particle-text.[512] The narrator-reader's identity is also defined by his belonging to the community of communication, which is continuously updated in the text. The individual (individual identity) is conceivable only in relation to a community, just as Różewicz's fragments refer to an idea of the whole – both indispensable and inaccessible to the writer. *Homo lector* is a participant in the debate on the state of art or the canon of masterpieces, the author of an intellectual biography of a well-known writer or philosopher, or an informal reviewer comparing different ways of writing about artists and their works. This character's identity is part of the textual consciousness of the narrative "I", every operation on the cited or discussed text becoming thus the individual's act of self-interpretation, a move in the direction

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[512] Ch. Vandendorpe, op. cit., pp. 193–194.

of difference or identification, an experience of a new meaning or a challenge to pre-existing outlooks on the world.[513]

Różewicz utilized the *lector* figure primarily in his reviews, columns, sketches on literature and afterwards, letters, stories about artists, and journal entries collected in the volumes *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, *Nasz starszy brat*, and *Margines, ale...* A short sketch from the first of these collections, entitled *Czytanie* [*Reading*], is made up of the writer's projects, quotes, and comments on works that he was reading at the time. Fragments of Viktor Shklovsky's dissertation appear next to Hebbel's *Journals*, Bohdan Pociej's article on music, and Wańkowicz's critical essay. The narrator-reader also adds his own poem materializing "here and now", an unrealized idea for a play and a letter to the critic, plus his own prose read after a year. The unifying principle of this otherwise heterogeneous note is the self-referential commentary, supplemented by a precise chronology of the protagonist's actions as well as a story about lost and found quotations. What, if anything, is gained through these juxtapositions? The mental meanderings of the narrator-agent of *Czytanie* do not clarify the meaning of Hebbel's mysterious formula, whereas the concomitant essay is not a sequel to the old prose. If the *lector*'s reading was "wrong", the world in his narrative would disintegrate into separate, closed meanings that the constituent texts bring with them, or would become subordinated to a new, superior interpretation of the subject. In fact, the opposite is true – reading in Różewicz's essay consists of exposing and problematizing the conditions for their meeting as a com-

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[513] "Reading a text teaches us how to commune with a world full of meanings, in which nothing can be taken for granted, but in which being and being something invariably means something. […] It becomes, therefore, both a challenge and a task. It bids us to identify our existence with a cognitive effort, with comprehension, thus making it something more than just keeping on living. At stake is no longer some festive access to cultural goods, but the quality of life". R. Handtke, op. cit., p. 125.

munication "event" in culture, one whose witness and participant is the narrator-reader.

As a character, the *lector* in Różewicz's note is a concrete and singular human being, represented by the textual persona close to the author, but also a representative of his "kind". The concomitantly constructed community is made up of the remaining partners of the literary communication inscribed into *Czytanie*. The narrator evokes their utterances from historical and contemporary texts, building new relations between them. First and foremost, however, he restarts the circulation of their thoughts, as it were, himself also joining in the mental process and contributing to it. The communication community in Różewicz's prose is not a permanent institution of public life but, in each text, a one-time event involving artists and writers grouped by the *homo lector* into a temporary constellation of their statements supplemented by connotations or conclusions. Różewicz's narrator-reader does not cast himself in the role of a conductor of such an ensemble, remaining in the position of an individual who merely differs from other – equally autonomous and independent – individuals only when it comes to his biography or habits.

> One's readiness for a message, as a trait characteristic of the interpreting consciousness, may be possessed only by a person who engages in a dialogue with others, becoming fully involved in the process – with all their knowledge, curiosity, needs, beliefs, etc. Such a person makes sense of the world and themselves only on condition that they check – explain, test, confront – their own attitudes to it with respective attitudes of their neighbours. In this way, thanks to interpretation, a community of meaning emerges, one which is ethical by nature, allowing for closeness, for mutual domestication of each other's strangeness and opacity. The process has its limits though. The limits

of comprehension overlap with the limits of being together – the latter is made possible only by retaining one's ability to be separate. Interpretation, therefore, is not a problem of intentionality, of the subject constituting an objective meaning. It is the labour of thought which replaces the audacity and confidence of the egoistic self with complete devotion to the Other, with respect for, and acknowledgement of, the Other.[514]

Różewicz's *lector* is not a fully modern subject, subordinating to himself the textual identities of other persons, or their works and casual statements – to his own story. He does not "dissolve" them in his own discourse, creating a derealized and sterile illusion of originality. Instead, he gives them a place of their own in the narrative, preserving – in the text representative of them – their ways of thinking, the context's style and details. The textual event is more a dialogue of individuals' experiences than a new creative act.[515] *Homo lector* remains a subject not because he dominates narratively over the subjects of the cited utterances, but because in the "horizontal" and "autobiographical" structure of his account all the selves are represented in similar ways, as a (textual) expression of the individual's experience, imagination, or stance. Jacek Łukasiewicz, describing the community of painters and writers in Różewicz's poetry, explains that the author of *Płaskorzeźba*,

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[514] J. P. Hudzik, *Interpretacja – tożsamość – etyka*, in: *Filozofia i etyka interpretacji*, op. cit., pp. 218–219.

[515] This is the kind of reading that Bourdieu describes, on the basis of selected scientific texts, claiming that reading in this case does not require "contemplation or discoursing but a practical confrontation with experience. To truly comprehend these works means to apply to another object the way of thinking that is expressed through them, to reactivate it in a new creative act, as inventive and original as the initial act, and the exact opposite of the *lector*'s derealized *commentary*, a barren and sterilizing metadiscourse". P. Bourdieu, op. cit., p. 277.

by introducing them into his poetry, communicates with their lots, preserved in their works. It is a special type of communication with works and people. Those people are, in the order of values, probably more important than the works, but it is through art that the deepest communication with them is made possible.[516]

In several places in the essays from *Przygotowanie* it is remarked that a character often emerges who is very human and close to the writer, even from imperfect and second-rate works – or perhaps especially from them, because modern intellectual and aesthetic criteria, when faced with such texts, either fail or reveal their existential, rather than artistic, meaning. Reading this way, the narrator of *Mój egzemplarz "Zbrodni i kary"* [*My Copy of "Crime and Punishment"*] tells us, "is no longer a reading, but a part of my life" (III 202). Reading finds itself in the narrative because it is "an event". Not every read is a source of information or aesthetic experience, but each one is an experience that can be interpreted in the context of individual identity, for example as the beginning of an (auto) biographical novel and its subsequent parts, the metaphor of a passage of life, a background for existential reflection, or an episode in one's daily schedule. An example of such a record of everyday life and daily reading practices is *Kartki wydarte z dziennika*, e.g. the entry dated "26 June 1982. Yesterday (June 25th)" and beginning with the sentence: "If I wanted to reconstruct yesterday?" (III 346), in which minor events, comments on the state of Polish culture and thought, and meetings with various people are interfused, in a matter of-fact, almost imperceptible manner, with reads or a craving for them.

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[516] J. Łukasiewicz, *Inni ludzie w wierszach Różewicza*, in: *Przekraczanie granic. O twórczości Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 324.

Essays on reading do not follow a repetitive and predictable scenario. Their composition is open and associative, the narrative self emphasizing the fact that he is jotting down his reading impressions as they come. The *lector* puts on the hat of an explorer and polemicist, who is more than willing to share his opinions but does not consider them more important than any single voice in a democratized exchange of thoughts; only temporarily and locally can he play the role of a coherent, sole and sovereign subject. For he often stops his current reading to move on to another read (external dialogicness) and returns to the first one only after a long time as the reading self with another text of consciousness (internal dialogicness). He also reads his own texts, given the same billing as those of others, and reads other writers' and critics' commentaries on writers and their works, among others – those on the texts by "Tadeusz Różewicz". Whenever he is external to the narrative he is simultaneously internal to it. Finishing one read usually means beginning another one, while the passages between the two are moments of intensified – and textually magnified – existence of the Różewicz "self" conceived as a dialogic identity.

"Good" reading places the subject/agent of narration-reading not in the very text or outside of it, but in the transition zone, which is the *homo lector* as an intertextual identity construct. The text and its reader, who is also a character, are thus brought closer to each other and situated at the same level of ambiguous verisimilitude. The borderline between the two is consciously crossed, becoming as a result more clearly marked but also denaturalized, as it were, as it turns out to be as arbitrary and mobile as the *lector*'s position. This, in turn, entails a reinterpretation of the textual "selves" participating in the meeting of texts within the text. The narrator-reader-protagonist of the prose, explaining and negotiating his ways of reading, makes intercommunicative space, which he updates with each reading, subject to the same kind of revision. Różewicz's *lec-*

tor is part of the very cultural relations that he observes as if from the "outside". He is, after all, the reader of various textual accounts and one of the textual characters, a culture-maker and one of many culturally constructed meanings, an "event" materializing between real texts and a dialogue of texts within the self's consciousness.

Różewicz would, as a rule, apply the textual "event" format to his sketches, essays, and columns, among others, most of them published in Wrocław's "Odra" in the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, and later on collected in the volumes *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* and *Margines, ale…* Following his column-writing practices, the writer combined narrative accounts, short dialogues, poems, reviews, and short travel-writing pieces in those texts, without establishing any clear-cut hierarchy among them. The texts' equality and diversity manifest themselves in their collage-like structure, breaking down the narrative continuum into fragments, interjections, commentaries (added also after some time), quotations, comments on the quotations, and self-referential remarks, as well as the texts' stylistic variety, multi-topicality, digressiveness, and the associative nature of the narration itself, which limit its coherence, stressing the subjective and makeshift character of the text's overall meaning.[517] As Piotr Stasiński explains, this column-like dialogicness results from its pre-textuality because, as a passing reference, response, parody, or polemic, it implies that it is part of the dynamic *universum* of literary, scientific, political, journalistic, and other types of utterances.[518] A narrative of this type is particularly focused on the text's agent, who shows his emotions, ethical stance, sense of intellectual liberty, freedom of imagination, and – through the autobiographical signals – also his connection with the author. The narrative is, concomitantly, concentrated on the agent's dia-

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[517] On the compositional structure of the column form see e.g. P. Stasiński, *Poetyka i pragmatyka felietonu*, Wrocław 1982.

[518] Ibid., p. 7.

logue with another writer and reader, whose presence within intratextual communication is signalled by the narrator's familiar tone, references to their shared knowledge of the world, and, finally, treating the narrative's components as personal utterances assigned to particular characters.

An example of such an "event" in between textual utterances is the sketch *Dziennikarz i poeta* [*The Journalist and the Poet*], featuring several quotes from "radio news shows" scattered among the narrator's commentaries and digressions. Różewicz's text begins with an account of the "Sunday Express" journalist "Robert Pitmann's" (actually Robert Pitman, the London-based columnist and reviewer from the 1950s) victory over the then 70-year-old T.S. Eliot, interviewed by the journalist.[519] The interviewer managed to lampoon the old poet.[520] The tabloid's cynical journalist turned Eliot and his private life into a media product, attractive for the average reader of the tabloid press, adapted to their needs and perception. Viewed as an "event" within culture, Różewicz's narrative not only presents connections between textual and non-textual utterances, based on numerous citations and paraphrases, but also the attendant ways of thinking, the needs and intentions of mass communication participants in general, and the concomitant concept of man and social reality.

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[519] The interview was published by "The Sunday Express" (London) on 21 September 1958.

[520] Zygmunt Greń explains: "What was ridiculed back then in London were also the writer's personal problems. Eliot had just remarried, this time with a much younger woman. Robert Pittman [actually Pitman – WB] had first managed to solicit an interview with the poet and then had the cheek to write that Mr Eliot throughout their two-hours-long conversation did not utter a single sentence that was not surprisingly banal". Z. Greń, *Teatr i absurdy. Szkice*, Warszawa 1967, p. 120. Agata Wiącek suggests that mocking a celebrity is not only a way to attract the tabloid's readers' attention but also an *ersatz* primitive community (of a rapport) between the sender and the receiver, one grounded in aggression against the Other who is excluded from that community. A. Wiącek, *Sposoby przedstawiania życia prywatnego osób znanych na łamach tabloidu (na przykładzie Kazimierza Marcinkiewicza i Cezarego Pazury)*, in: *Tabloidy. Język, wartości, obraz świata*, eds I. Kamińska-Szmaj, T. Piekot, M. Poprawa, Wrocław 2011 (the "Oblicza Komunikacji" series, 2011, no. 4), p. 206.

> He has a wife forty years his junior… – listen up, listen up, readers!… – this Eliot fellow has a wife forty years younger and they are holding hands… holding hands, gentlemen… – Pitman laughs at the old, not particularly attractive guy, simultaneously winking at a hundred, two hundred, three hundred thousand readers – Eliot has a new little lady, brand new, forty years younger… ha-ha… peek-a-boo!… They are holding hands, oh my goodness, I'll be darned… This is really funny (III 212).

This is not merely mockery. Travestying Pitman, the narrator defines the premises and format of the tabloid press: ridiculing a public person and violating their intimacy, a locker-room rapport with the indiscriminate reader combined with acceptance of their cognitive horizon, a focus on social-erotic topics, a hidden endorsement of the *per fas et nefas* principle. The tabloid interview, summarized "with schadenfreude" in a Polish newspaper that was subsequently cited in the radio news, seems to have lost its original reference to particular persons as it is the dynamic, diffused *universum* of messages – ceaselessly cited and commented upon, accessible to the receivers in the form of an information garbage heap – that is eventually foregrounded.[521]

> The crisis in Nigeria still unresolved; black weekend on highways, over the three-day New Year weekend in the USA 439 people were killed in car accidents; T.S. Eliot is dead; pansies are blooming in Bucharest, the chaos in Saigon continues; T.S. Eliot is dead; the fiasco of Taylor's efforts; new protests by students and Buddhists, Malaysia increases its military; according to Western agencies the British aircraft carrier "Eagle", with

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[521] Kazimierz Ożóg points out that it is tabloids that best reflect the "post-modern idea of the world as chaos", the disintegration of the world's image as a whole. K. Ożóg, *Człowiek – język – świat według współczesnych polskich tabloidów*, in: *Tabloidy. Język, wartości, obraz świata*, op. cit., p. 74.

a displacement weight of 50 thousand tonnes, was supposed to leave port at Kuala Lumpur and head for Singapore on Monday evening; the poet T.S. Eliot is dead… (III 209).

The message is mosaic-like and elliptic, structurally open, detailed and precise, formulated in the declarative language, but also unverifiable, stereotyped, referring to colloquial generalizations, current and detached from the listener's local experience.[522] The narrator of *Dziennikarz i poeta*, exposing the above-mentioned characteristics of the journalistic (radio) message in his account, also lays bare its ideological claims. The model of the world in "the constellation of Marconi" (M. McLuhan) is based on the premise of the listener's perceptive passivity, noncommittal transience of the oral message, identification of its status with the intensity (e.g. frequency) of its emission, the suspension of temporal and spatial contact between the receiver and the message's real frame of reference. Różewicz's narrator, adding to Pitman's interview subsequent layers of commentary, does not change the rules of the "constellation's" growth. Instead, he fills it up with autobiographical experience, adds footnote-like comments, ponders the journalist's future life, reveals himself as a reader of Eliot's poetry and editor of his own notes, eventually pointing to the year of their composition ("the 1964 notes") and the timing of the second edition ("now, several years after the poet's death"), which was probably in 1969.[523] Ostensibly a collage of texts,

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[522] "Journalists have been ruining language probably ever since newspapers were invented. This is nothing new. They have a different pace of work, a different reflex. Their business is quick, relatively fake news", says the poet in his conversation with D. Ratajczakowa (W 261). This does not change the fact that Różewicz remains a "passionate reader" of newspapers, admitting, after all, that a typical poem of his is as of "cut out of a newspaper" (W 261). Magdalena Mateja claims that tabloids have finally broken the "factographic pact" (Zbigniew Bauer) between the sender and the receiver of the press, as they no longer describe the world but create its fictitious image instead. M. Mateja, *"Świat przedstawiony" zamiast obrazu rzeczywistości? Kreacyjny potencjał mediów brukowych*, in: *Tabloidy. Język, wartości, obraz świata*, op. cit., p. 58.

[523] The note *Dziennikarz i poeta* came out in "Odra" 1969, no. 10.

the sketch becomes a dialogue between moral stands and hierarchies of values of particular individuals, a rapport between two poets[524] equally affected by trivialization or objectification in interviews.[525] The columnists' polemic turns into an "event" between participants in the cultural-communication community who are not only held accountable for the effectiveness (communicativeness and "impressionability") of their temporary rapport ("daily information"), but can also be held responsible, after reclaiming their existential dimensions, for their role in culture, for the consequences of publishing their works and opinions. When a narrative becomes a biographical text, meaningful in the context of the author's (i.e. the agent's) existence and that of the work as a whole, Różewicz's narrator can read "well" his protagonists from this liminal, ambiguous position – both as textual or media constructs and as people who create, pass on, and receive them. Being a textual-autobiographical "self", the *lector* measures himself and other, equally textual, constructed, and human, "selves" with the same yardstick.

The Reading and the Read

The protagonist of Różewicz's non-fiction prose is a concrete individual – both singular and historical. As an identity carrier, though, he is a textual construct. This rule applies both to the identity of someone

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[524] Jean Ward argues that T.S. Eliot's works belong to the "closest kin" among Różewicz's favourite reads. As the scholar reminds us, Andrzej Braun compared him to Eliot in 1951, pointing out (with a critical intention) some important similarities. In his 1967 selection of J. Czechowicz's poems, Różewicz included three out of the four poems by Eliot translated before WW2 by Czechowicz. He also started his essay *Do Źródeł* [*To the Sources*] with an account of how he had discovered immediately after the war an article on Eliot by W. Borowy, whereas in the note *Wstyd* [*Shame*] he reveals that he learned how to read Dante "following Eliot" (III 224). J. Ward, op. cit., pp. 21, 24-26.

[525] See the 1969 sketches-essays *Rozmowa* [*Conversation*] and *Rozmowy ciąg dalszy* [*Conversation Continued*] included in *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* as well as comments on a "conversation with a journalist" in the dramas (e.g. *The Card Index*) and in the collection of interviews *Wbrew sobie* [*Against Oneself*].

writing or reading – "Tadeusz Różewicz", for example – and to that of the Other, i.e. someone who is being read, described anew, or (re-)discovered through comments on his/her biography and works. Each of Różewicz's narrators delves into "who s/he was", reconstructing the textual network accompanying the character or his/her life's work. That is how, for instance, Leopold Staff appears in the essay "*Kto jest ten dziwny nieznajomy*" [*Who Is That Weird Stranger*]. Grappling with the titular problem, Różewicz's *homo lector* reads Miriam and Brzozowski, authors writing directly about Staff, but also other Polish and European modernists, whose words constitute a background for the textual image of the poet and the epoch. This image is explicitly constructed. It is not only the narrative self's semi-private attitude towards Staff, but, first and foremost, the choice of commentaries about him, and, in particular, the gesture – stressed in the narrative – of their selection, citation, or discussion, that expose "Staff" as a construct. "Staff" in the "good" reading is presented as a result of a temporary arrangement of texts, carefully selected by the narrator-reader.

The narrative of the Różewicz agent-editor is intentional, bent on comparing alternative images of the characters emerging from the collected texts. Not all of these images are equally appealing in their authenticity, not all of them are therefore worth expanding upon. The narrator of "*Kto jest ten dziwny nieznajomy*" realizes that "Staff's" intellectual-artistic genealogy can be reconstructed in a variety of registers of Young Poland's style of speaking and writing. Nietzsche's formula *Nur ergangene Gedanken sind gut* assumes in Polish Modernism the degraded form of *naturlaut* which, in Przybyszewski's and Miriam's version – "the really totally worn-out rain boots" – muffles "the reasonable and sober voice of Bolesław Prus, the clairvoyant voice of Stanisław Brzozowski" (III 37). "Staff", caught in between different Young Poland "voices", becomes a part of the communication community of his era, the com-

munity of language and representation of ("seeing") the world. Like that community itself, his contribution is peculiar, but also ambiguous, self-contradictory. The "Staff" of quotidian, commonplace experience, closest to Różewicz, would have found himself in the trap of tautological idiom, reconstructing only the nostalgic or apologetic intentions of the narrative's agent, had the narrator of "*Kto jest ten dziwny nieznajomy*" not supplemented him with the "Staff" of the "Young Poland's bluff". This genealogy of the poet is a trial run, functioning as an essayistic structure, teeming with questions, unfinished, semi-private. Różewicz's sketch is a search for a way of telling the story that would be personal enough – so that the "stranger" became stylistically, existentially, and historically real and authentic – but also polyphonic enough, so that the image of a friend, mentor, or writer was not a foregone conclusion, circumscribed by an all-too-complete and arbitrary interpretation. The narrator of "*Kto jest ten dziwny nieznajomy*", by adding poems, maxims, memories, and critical and philosophical statements to his outline of "Staff", finds this way of telling a story in his role as reader, the attentive *lector*, focused on every single quote, carefully moving between reports, reconciled to the omnipresent quotation marks. In between the narrative "self", the text, and the central character there emerges no illusion of "Staff" that would change his construction into identity because the narrator-editor's actions and commentaries remain circumscribed by the modality: *how* can one tell a story about him with these fragments?

This silent *how* can be discovered also in Różewicz's other (auto) biographical sketches and notes from subsequent editions of *Przygotowanie*, such as "*Zostanie po mnie pusty pokój*" [*All That Will Be Left of Me Is an Empty Room*], *Tożsamość (wspomnienie o Karolu Kuryluku)* [*Identity (In Memory of Karol Kuryluk)*]), *Gawęda o Staffie, Tuwimie i różach…* [*A Tale About Staff, Tuwim, and Roses…*], *Zamknięcie* [*Closure*], *Młodzian Głowacki Aleksander obyczajami wzorowymi zalecający się…* [*The Young*

Squire Głowacki, Alexander, of Impeccable Manners and Exemplary Ways…]. [526] The narrator of these sketches does not simply tell stories about Staff, Tuwim, Kuryluk, or Hierowski with a text of his own. Rather, he assumes the role of an editor, a collector, who refrains from closing the reconstructed character within the rigidly constructed framework of an introductory and explanatory narrative. In between the narrator's utterances and the sketch's constitutive texts there operates the Różewicz reader, guaranteeing the integrity of their quotation marks. Such a reading/writing, besides its cognitive function, is also a polemic with the rituals of constructing and sustaining an identity of a public figure, a celebrity. The protagonists of Różewicz's prose transcend the stereotyped frameworks that critics, historians, politicians, or journalists habitually impose upon them in the process of constructing their social representations – or, in other words, the writer protests against identifying a person with their all-too-often simplified and one-sided image. As Krzysztof Kłosiński tells us, the author of *Namiętność* [*Passion*] pays particularly close attention to those who are "affected by the readers' injustice, manipulation, or even intolerance […]. What is always foregrounded here is the 'quiet monologue-dialogue' that gives voice to the absent ones."[527] His *lector* does not give up on reading narratives already rooted in culture – as it is from them that, logically speaking, the reconstruction of the characters described begins – but he constantly moves in their textual, generic, and stylistic margin. He quotes fragments of statements, casual remarks, interviews, reviews, letters – unknown or lost over the years – accidentally discovered newspaper articles, forgotten trivia and indiscretions, but he

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[526] The differences between the contents of the first (1971) and the second (1977) editions of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* and the 1990 two-volume edition of Różewicz's prose are described in detail by J. Waligóra, op. cit., pp. 216–217. *Gawęda o Staffie, Tuwimie i różach* was added to the 2004 edition of *Przygotowanie* included in *Utwory zebrane*.

[527] K. Kłosiński, *W stronę inności. Rozbiory i debaty*, Katowice 2006, p. 65.

does not attempt to erase the traces of his editorial operations. He does not unite them in a single identity, but – as Kłosiński puts it – he "pluralizes" its testimonies. The identity of Różewicz's characters emerges at the junction of a temporary, arbitrary totality and fragments which explicitly refer to alternative readings or unexplored possibilities of giving meaning.

Różewicz's *homo lector* is reminiscent of the narrator of Szymborska's "reads" only up to a point, at the level of critical cognitive activities, when revising manipulations, half-truths, and simplifications. According to J. Wciórka,

> The privilege of approval or rejection of the official version of events, the unambiguous and unchanging portrayal of the world and man results from one's finding himself in the role of a successor. Hence the revisions, requests for kindness towards those unjustly maltreated by history, expressions of surprise at non-stereotyped portrayals of artists and writers.[528]

This is so in Szymborska's readerly narratives. Różewicz's reader, in turn, though reacting to simplifications in a similar way, does not revise them from the position of a culture's successor, but from the position of its egalitarian participant. Culture in his narratives is a web-like rather than linear construct. And, within the web, the order of "succession" – the dignified consecution and chronological transfer of legacy to subsequent owners – is at times unclear or given equal bidding among other, many-sided accounts. Różewicz's *lector*, as a user of texts within a cultural web, is – or at least that is how he portrays himself – more of an amateur polemicist than an heir, more of a prosaic "devourer of paper" than a successor to literary heritage; he is more often an editor of a fragmentary,

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[528] J. Wciórka, op. cit., p. 108.

scattered archive of a well-known person than the arbiter of biographical and historical justice.

The identity of the individual who is a character within a textual web is located at the border between privacy and public communication. Crossing the author-reader border in both directions, Różewicz accentuates its identifying function. He leads his characters out of the official space, adding to their portrayals private letters and memoirs. The reading of correspondence by Tadeusz Borowski, Mieczysław Jastrun, Józef Czechowicz, or Kazimierz Wyka complements the reconstruction of those "characters" with facts and statements that hitherto have not been part of their public image. Such revisions of celebrities' identities do not have a gossip-like quality, however. The *lector* reveals his sources of information and lays bare the tricks of his readerly-writerly trade. He also extensively explains and comments upon his links to the text's "protagonist". The field of his critical interests encompasses both the narrated and the narrating persona. The critical reading of the individual's image pertains, in equal degree, to the narrative "him/her" and the narrative "I", nominally and biographically close to the author. For example, in the affectionate remembrance of Karol Kuryluk entitled *Tożsamość* [*Identity*], the narrator's focus is not infrequently on the character of "Różewicz", one of the sources of the poet's portrayal being the sarcastic commentaries of the readers and reviewers of his debut poems. Both protagonists have been created along the same lines, in accordance with the rules of textual portrayal construction. The Różewicz narrator, particularly in his workshop-oriented texts, plays the role of the reader of his own work. In those texts the writer-protagonist discusses literary issues that pertain primarily to his poems and dramas, but also to his fiction prose, notes, and memoirs. Whenever he returns to his own writing, he is the same – and simultaneously different – person as before. As someone different, though, he is already significant and partly intelligible. This identity split

is typical of Różewicz's narratives, which foreground and problematize his creative agency. The length of the distance between the reading self and the read self is proportionate to the state of the given self's literary awareness, or – to use Kalaga's terms – to the dialogic tension between the texts of the self's consciousness. In the entry dated 13 August 1955 from *Kartki wydarte z "dziennika gliwickiego"* [*Pages Torn Out of "The Gliwice Journal"*] we read the following:

> I flipped through the chapbook *Wiersze i obrazy* [*Poems and Images*]. Half of the text is expendable – just think how many words that is! It is, indeed, true that "paper is patient". So many mistakes, so many sins, so much wretchedness. It's all dead, hollow. So this is what the fight with poetry can lead to – to newspaper talk. After all, what did you expect? You fought against "poetry", you wanted (and you still do) to destroy it in order to make it "new" (III 321).

"Różewicz", as a character-reader in a note from *Kartki wydarte z "dziennika gliwickiego"* commenting on his own poetry volume, takes stock of a difficult period in his own artistic history, as *Wiersze i obrazy* – published in 1952 – represents the Socialist Realism phase of post-war literature. The poet's critical distance towards his own poems is doubled for it results not only from his wariness of the journalistic tone of Stalinist poetry but also from the personal sense of his own artistic maturity facilitating an honestly self-critical perspective. As a rule, the Różewicz reader's reflections combine external dialogicness with the internal one, bringing several texts together within the self's consciousness, and allowing for a debate between two selves – the read and the reading one. Such an "event" becomes a stimulus for a new identity, the beginning of a new self-narrative, one which starts with a discovery (reading) of one's own – already alien – "self" within one's own text.

The reader of one's own texts is a figure of the ambiguous role of the subject-character of any identity narrative. The *lector* returns to himself through his own text and within it, as it were, acquiring an attitude – temporal, ideological, moral, and autobiographical – to his previous self. Whenever Różewicz narrates, or is narrated, he engages in a debate with his own views, raises questions addressed to himself and gives answers, and evaluates himself and his work as a writer. One might say that *homo lector* is a "technique of the self" (M. Foucault), an identification tool, enabling the narrative self to express who/what he no longer is (to himself) and who/what he still wants to (or may) become. Reading one's own texts is an act of delimitation of one's own unwritten "autobiography". Różewicz's critical and discursive prose pieces are documentary and, in numerous parts, personal. Caesuras and experiences, even those noted in journal entries, arrange themselves not so much in the order of external events – social or biological – but in accordance with the rhythm of internal events (dialogues). When the *lector* declares: "I read what I have written with indifference, if not disgust" (III 322), he expresses not only a critical opinion about his text, but also reports on the dialogue taking place in his own textualized consciousness. His rejection of his former self or dissatisfaction with his own poetry are episodes within his "autobiography" – including its components and objects, commentaries, and propositions of alternative meanings.

Lector and Biography

The act of reading in Różewicz's prose complements the (auto)biographical identity emerging from the texts, each reading constituting another "event" in the narrated life text – one's own or somebody else's. The *lector* reports on those readings and talks about himself as a reader, thus not only describing the text of the receiver's consciousness, but also textualizing the connections between the read's meaning and the iden-

tity articulated in the narrative. Identity thus conceived invariably entails non-identity. As Danuta Ulicka explains, such a narrative's polyphony makes its subject "appear to be composed of n-subject-likes, aware of the possibility of playing a role in accordance with pre-existing [writer's] scenarios" – for example: "I write so because I have read that" – thus providing an identity pattern and concomitantly precluding the possibility of complete identification.[529] The reader of texts who functions in the text as the subject of "discourse-diverse utterances signed with his/her own name, equating them with their diverse speaking selves", is unable to put them all together.[530] The totality is, after all, still fragmentary, broken into parts that come out in a chronological order as orderly and one's own (or somebody else's), but in the textual order they seem simultaneous and strange. Their total meaning, therefore, subject to explicit contextualization and reinterpretation as it is, emerges as unready, open to subsequent totalizations. Although the *lector*'s biography is his own concise totality, the individual's identity narrative built upon it remains a literary work, constructed "here and now".

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[529] D. Ulicka, *Ja czytam moje czytanie*, in: *Narracja i tożsamość (II). Antropologiczne problemy literatury*, eds W. Bolecki, R. Nycz, Warszawa 2004, p. 168.

[530] Ibid., p. 178. Ulicka, describing this type of identity in critical literary texts writes that "encroaching on the boundary between a literary utterance and an utterance about literature […] makes the frame separating them turn into an osmotically permeable membrane, so to speak, through which there flow freely atoms of texts originally classified as belonging to different discursive orders and therefore habitually assigned to different writing agents. In a multi-agent text that does not respect boundaries between utterances, one whose author is simultaneously a scholar and a writer, a historian and a theoretician, an interpreter and a theoretician of interpretation, a poet and a translator of poetry, an essayist and a diary writer, a commentator on current affairs and a diarist referring to intimate reflections, there also circulate elements regarded as contextual, referring to biographical experience (in the broadest meaning of the phrase – as both a historical-cultural experience and an inner one), to values, beliefs, and obligations that one acknowledges and subscribes to. Their manifest, because thematized, unskippable presence undermines, in turn, the barrier separating the authorial agent of action from diversely-named agents of writing". Ibid., pp. 176-177.

Identity formulated in accordance with such a poetics is a story about the reader-protagonist's "adventures", the events of the world depicted as well as the reader's confession; it is a story about the experience of reading or the physical encounters with books or newspapers ("I spent a lovely day…"). One of the most significant memories for Różewicz's writing was that of burning down *Król-Duch* in the guerrilla days in the forest. His "autobiography", however, scattered amid his diverse statements and documents, tells of a life spent more searching for, saving, and acquiring books than destroying them. It is the story of gifts from his brother Janusz, who would leave him written dedications in volumes of Kazimierz Wierzyński's and Leopold Staff's poetry (N 243, 248); of collections of aphorisms and satires by Witold Zechenter (N 254); the occupation days' "expropriation" of an anthology of German poetry from a *nur für Deutsche* bookstore in Częstochowa;[531] reaching for Witkacy's works, discovered in the autumn of 1945 amid the rubble in Wilcza Street in Warsaw (W 175, 225, 260); of coming across some old issues of "Przegląd Współczesny" ["Modern Review"] that featured, among others, Borowy's old essay about Eliot, thrown away at the end of 1945 from the headquarters of Kraków's *Związek Literatów* [*Writers' Union*] (III 143). It is also a private history of Kafka's *Trial* received immediately after the war from Kornel Filipowicz in exchange for Nowosielski's painting (W182); of Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, ordered from Paris in 1949 by Mieczysław Porębski (W 183); of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, bought in a Budapest second-hand bookstore, from which a splinter of a bomb fell out on opening (I 352, W 386); of works by Goethe and Shakespeare saved in a Hungarian farming cooperative (K 40-41); of German editions

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531 A. Ubertowska, op. cit., p. 5. According to the writer's account, however, it was a German translation of an anthology of Italian poetry published in Breslau (probably *Italienische Dichtung von Dante bis Mussolini. Eine Anthologie*, von Wolfgang Schwarz (Hrsg.), Breslau 1942 – WB). *Tadeusz Różewicz: twarze*, op. cit.

of Mann, Dostoyevsky, and Nietzsche (all gifts from his wife) abandoned in "attics, cellars, backyards" of post-war Gliwice (ma 292); or, finally, of the novel crossed out by Communist Poland's censorship from the writer's answer to a poll by Warsaw's "Kultura" in 1977.

The reader's observations and confessions make up a second motif of this "autobiography", being an interior dialogue, a signal of the biographical narrative's textuality, and, primarily, a way of constructing a literary character and the agent, who are given more concrete identities by the writer. The *homo lector* describes in detail his encounters with the printed word, accentuating the material and concrete aspect of the experience. The title of a book or article and the writer's name are only the beginning of the micro-narrative on his encounter with the text, its intellectual message, and at the same time with a publishing product, a social fact, and an object of economic exchange and literary circulation. Różewicz's *lector* has the "book's interior orientation apparatus" at his disposal, which means he discovers, as a mature reader, different connections between the text and the *universum* of literature, the author's life and the empirical world.[532] Spinning his biography of the omnivorous reader, he also notes the text's date of publication, its volume, its standard and reduced price, and when it comes to newspapers, he even looks into their classified sections. He notices and absorbs what constitutes the printed word's spiritual culture, but also what belongs to its material aspect and to transition zones, generically impure as for their cultural affiliations but still relevant as far as real life is concerned. The *Hungerleser* considers himself, to the same extent, the double of highbrow artists and producers of transient, utilitarian literature – largely ignored or dismissed as second-rate (e.g. Kraszewski).

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[532] "Aparat orientacji wewnętrznej książki" [the book's interior orientation apparatus] and "uniwersum książek" [the *universum* of books] are terms used in J. Dunin's work, op. cit. pp. 142, 189.

Located at the junction of a literary character, the text's agent, and the autobiographical "self", Różewicz's reader-protagonist can make the most of all these identities, though none of them is stable or ultimate. Each one needs to be (re)defined as the *lector*, in every fragmentary narrative wherein he plays the roles of the agent, receiver, or object, or positions himself differently vis-à-vis the extratextual reality, signalled, for example, by different ways of understanding the modality of the text being read/written. Treating reading as a biographical event makes it possible to draw a line between everyday reading and experience (everyday life), or, rather, to define these terms in ways that enable their overlapping, explaining, or complementing each other. Because of his status, the *lector* functions on both sides of the border, which, in turn, enables him to engage in an interior dialogue, to discover and create new relations between consciousness texts of the narratorial "self" and the biography's text, between textual and existential identity.

The Meaning of Reading

The *lector* in Różewicz's prose can be interpreted as a decisive opening on the part of its agent or protagonist to others, identified thanks to a shared cultural-communication space. On the other hand, this figure is also a "technique of the self" because its dialogicness is both externally oriented (towards texts-works and texts-biographies of other people) and self-oriented (towards the narrative "self" seeking an external frame of reference). Such a construction of the reader-narrator entails axiological and ethical problems attendant on interpersonal relationships, because for the *lector* the boundary between the text and its author's identity and existence is changeable, dependent on interpretation, in the same way as the boundary between the reader's story and the autobiographical narrative. Similarly, the writer's new role, which Różewicz created and implemented in his sketches and essays, expands on the

role of the modern extensive-defensive receiver (more generally, of the agent in culture), who reads with an awareness of his responsibility for establishing a connection – the "how" connection – between work and life, the text and its author, the individual's symbolic-semiotic expression and the cultural-communication community (space) wherein the individual identity acquires, changes, or loses its meaning. The axiological breakthrough in Różewicz's work in those days did not consist in a simpler reconstruction of the traditional cultural community, one grounded in "inheriting", because his *lector* operates in "horizontal" and mass-accessible space, dialogic and dynamized by manifold and polysemous relations, complicating the receiver's attitude to the message's sender, the relation between the imitator and the master, or the copy and the original. Consequently, if the writer projected some communication space in his sketches and columns from the 1960s and 1970s, his vision was neither utopian nor nostalgic, that is referring to the idea of the *status-quo-ante* culture, but rather an attempt to draw conclusions from the real situation of the modern author, editor, translator, scientist, reviewer, journalist, and reader. The situation resulted, among other things, from the crisis of Polish society as a community, anomie-afflicted after the deep transformations of the post-war decade, affected by the crisis of modern urban society – still rooted, after all, either in traditional village or small-town culture or participating *en masse* in popular culture, one that reflected the new reality in highly superficial, illusory, or false ways. Constructing his reading space, Różewicz would both diagnose that state and test which pre-existing values and meanings had retained any capability of bringing people together, of creating among them a live communication community.

Operating from the perspective of the Polish liberal intelligentsia tradition, Tomasz Żukowski claims that "the more inter-communication with others there is, the more cultural cooperation and the more

freedom".[533] Różewicz's *lector* engages in reading which is passionate and attentive, involving searches for quotation marks and other textual traces that not only attest to the author's identity, but, once incorporated into the reader's order of life, become the "techniques" of his daily self-identification (mostly biographical). The *lector* pursues such reading in the name of agency of all the partners of cultural dialogue, the independence of personal perspective on the world, the autonomy of the modern self vis-à-vis the mechanisms of infotainment industry that in the second half of the 20th century was becoming an integral part of reality, a major tool in depicting and explaining it, and even the source of its commonly accepted prototype (model). This hegemonic "author" – the media and mass culture – is also "read" by the writer, who acknowledges them in his narratives, but makes their ways of "looking" at the world a part of the egalitarian, polyphonic, and inconclusive dialogue of various ideologies, experiences, vested interests, and ethical stances manifested in culture.

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[533] T. Kozłowski, *Liberalizm jako polska ideowość w polityce*, in: *Ideowość w polityce*, ed. M. Szyszkowska, Warszawa 2007, pp. 102-103.

4. Anatomy Of Experience

Michel Foucault, describing the "techniques of the self" practised in the first centuries after the birth of Christ, identified a change in attitude towards one's body and everyday reality in the Stoics' thought and in early Christianity.[534]

> Marcus Aurelius tells us about himself, his health, about what he has eaten, about his sore throat. This is characteristic of the ambiguity pertaining to the body in the cultivation of the self. From a theoretical perspective, it is all about perfecting the soul, but, still, every single concern about one's body acquires huge significance. […] Going to bed, Aurelius consults his notebook to compare what he has planned with what he has accomplished.[535]

For the Stoics, the ideal was the authentic life, based on getting to know oneself in relation to one's body, the natural world order, and what

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[534] The "technique of the self" is, in other words, the "art of living" (Greek: technē tou biou). M. Foucault, *Historia seksualności*, trans. B. Banasiak, T. Komendant, K. Matuszewski, Warszawa 2000, p. 419.

[535] M. Foucault, *Filozofia, historia, polityka. Wybór pism*, trans. D. Leszczyński, L. Rasiński, Warszawa-Wrocław 2000, pp. 258–259.

constituted the quotidian, daily experience. Christianity broadened the meaning of this introspection. To make individual salvation possible, a Christian had to fulfil the "obligation of the truth" about oneself and transform himself/herself into a new person. The point was not only to acknowledge one's sinful nature but also to carry out *publicato sui*.

> Everyone is obligated to get to know who they are, that is to attempt to get to know what has been going on within them, to acknowledge one's sins, recognize temptations, localize desires. Besides, everyone is obligated to reveal all that before God or before other members of the community.[536]

The Christian duty of introspection was not a formal analysis of one's sins, but a drama, an expression of human nature and humans' entanglement in worldly affairs. As Foucault puts it, "What had been private for the Stoics became public for Christians."[537]

Stoic and Christian traditions (e.g. the Augustinian one) were adopted by Jean Jacques Rousseau, who in the second half of the 18th century created the model of authentic identity.[538] The complication of interpersonal relations and social atomization, caused, among other things, by the expansion of urban civilization, turned modern existence into make-believe life, one that threatened the individual's personality and self-fulfilment, or even gave rise to the emergence of the "falsified individual" type.[539] Rousseau pro-

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[536] Ibid., pp. 268–270.

[537] Ibid., p. 270.

[538] See A. Waśkiewicz, *Obcy z wyboru*, op. cit., p. 366. Magdalena Środa argues that whereas the Augustinian "interiority" of humans leads them to transcendental realms, Rousseau's inner voice can do without any external sanction. M. Środa, *Indywidualizm i jego krytycy. Współczesne spory między liberałami, komunitarianami i feministkami na temat podmiotu, wspólnoty i płci*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 70–71.

[539] B. Baczko, *Rousseau: samotność i wspólnota*, Warszawa 1964, p. 17.

posed four solutions to the problem, ultimately limiting their import to the autobiographical "technique of the self". As Andrzej Waśkiewicz explains,

> In the republic featured in *The Social Contract* Rousseau wants all the people to be saved as citizens, in the *New Heloise* it is only a group of people living on the outskirts of the civilized world that are capable of accomplishing that goal, whereas in *Emile* it is the select, carefully educated individuals living apart from the corrupt society. In *Confessions and Reveries of the Solitary Walker* the author implicitly reserves that ability exclusively for himself.[540]

Rousseau would juxtapose civilized life to the natural state, one that constituted a philosophical vision of identity of individuals "oriented towards the depths of their own souls, wherein the primordial innocence and unity of human essence was preserved",[541] rather than a real social alternative. Individuals thus conceived transcend, within themselves, the "city-village, nature-civilization, or community-solitude dichotomies", accomplishing the naturalization of culture and interpersonal relationships, in order to live in harmony with their own nature.[542] Authenticity and self-fulfilment became prerequisites for genuine freedom.[543] Constructing in the *Confessions* his autobiographical identity, Rousseau assumed the "rhetoric of candour", promising intimate confessions but also detailed descriptions of trifles and daily business.[544] Not, according to Philippe Lejeune, for the sake of verisimilitude – as, given the imper-

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[540] A. Waśkiewicz, op. cit., p. 315.

[541] Ibid., p. 314.

[542] Ibid., p. 341.

[543] A. Giddens, *Przemiany intymności. Seksualność, miłość i erotyzm we współczesnych społeczeństwach*, trans. A. Szulżycka, Warszawa 2006, p. 55.

[544] P. Lejeune, *Wariacje na temat pewnego paktu. O autobiografii*, trans. W. Grajewski et al., Kraków 2001, p. 246.

fections of memory and the emotional tone of his report, that kind of "truth" was by and large impossible – but because he wanted his narrative self to be as coherent and authentic as possible from the perspective of the confessions' imperative.[545]

Concomitantly with the affirmation of authenticity in the individual's life there emerged a new, expressivist understanding of individuality – one which, as Magdalena Środa tells us, "can no longer express itself through copying, repeating, or reproducing anything. Individuality does not reveal itself but creates itself, is called to life in small acts, in details".[546] Thus Rousseau turned the detailed, intimate description of life, carried out vis-à-vis the idea of alienating civilization on the one hand and an imagined state of nature on the other, into the "technique of the self". The description should not be understood in mimetic terms. The autobiographical "I" is not a reflection of the real self, but a repetition, an act of (re)creating oneself from the past, establishing a relation with another "I". Needless to say, objections to a life focused on oneself, on one's small, private affairs, were raised already by Alexis de Tocqueville, who saw it as a manifestation of egoistic individualism which threatens to disintegrate society (the political community) or lead it to ideological stagnation.[547] The charge can be easily dismissed though. Rousseau's individualism was, after all, grounded in referring the individual's experience and life project to the "horizons of meaning" marked out by culture and political rules, and thus required a constant dialogue with the latter.[548] From a historical

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[545] Ibid., p. 252.

[546] M. Środa, op. cit., p. 71.

[547] See ibid., pp. 164–165.

[548] Ibid., p. 62. An analogous problem is posited and solved by Foucault, who notes that the twilight of the Greek *polis* in the Hellenistic period did not result from the aristocrats-citizens' withdrawal into private life, but from their economic and political degradation in the great empire's system. Therefore, "in order to account for the interest ascribed by those elites to personal ethics, to morality focused on everyday behaviour, private life and pleasure, one should talk not of decadence,

perspective it seems clear that the emergence of modern autobiographical identity is a result of both the expressivist turn in philosophy and the civic and legal emancipation of the individual connected with the process of the emergence of republican and democratic social solutions in the 19th century.[549] Herder, "at the threshold of Romanticism, clearly stated that individuals had a right to their own expression, to expressing themselves and their feelings".[550]

The key role in the autobiographical "technique of the self" is played by the body – both real and perceived, holistic and fragmentary, material and discursively constructed, identical with the subject in a sense and simultaneously belonging to external reality, because the entire "experience of humankind is a personal experience, but it materializes through the body".[551] Mieczysław Dąbrowski writes:

> Corporeality, the experience of the body, became a major determinant of 20th-century culture, our sensibility being primarily the bodily one. Expelled from the social discourse by the Counter-Reformation, the body returns in the days of Modernism, still completely dressed, but already flirtatious and complex, only to take an increasingly important place in the image of man. Vis-à-vis the breached, uncertain,

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frustration, and sulking withdrawal, but, rather, one should note there a search for a new way of thinking about the desired attitude towards one's status, function, actions, and obligations. The old ethic presupposed a very strong connection between one's power over oneself with power over others […]; new rules of the political game make it increasingly difficult to define what a human is, what they can do, and what they should accomplish; making oneself an ethical agent creates more problems". M. Foucault, *Historia seksualności*, op. cit., p. 460.

[549] E. Kasperski, *Autobiografia. Sytuacja i wyznaczniki formy*, in: *Autobiografizm – przemiany, formy, znaczenia*, eds H. Gosk, A. Zieniewicz, Warszawa 2001, p. 11.

[550] M. Dąbrowski, *(Auto-)biografia, czyli próba tożsamości*, in: *Autobiografizm – przemiany, formy, znaczenia*, op. cit., p. 40.

[551] J.M. Kurczewski, *Praktyki cielesne*, in: *Praktyki cielesne*, ed. J.M. Kurczewski, Warszawa 2006, p. 66.

and often eliminated so-called higher values, the symbolic values of culture and the collapse of ethical models, the body begins to be treated as the source legitimizing human existence. It is with the body that exploring the world and establishing fundamental truths often starts. We remember how the protagonist of Różewicz's *Card Index* studies his own hand at the beginning of the text, how he scrutinizes it from all sides and describes the I-my-hand relation as a relation of trust, and not merely of belonging.[552]

Autobiographical identity is based on experiences of corporeality and dailiness which for the individual denote his/her being between birth and death.[553] The individual's attitude towards the body is also the basis for social identification because one's sense of belonging to a national, cultural, or religious community depends on one's respecting the collective norms regulating, for example, sexual behaviour. The 20th-century social emancipation, which affected, first and foremost, women and homosexuals, separated eroticism from procreation and undermined the "segregation of sexual experience" into social and asocial, changing the scope of the concepts of norm and pathology.[554] That is how sexuality – conceived as a separate sphere of the individual's activity and a component of his/her private life, but also as a way of maintaining a special relationship with another human being – was born.[555] What is more, Foucault notes,

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[552] M. Dąbrowski, op. cit., p. 42.

[553] See M. Heidegger, *Bycie i czas*, op. cit., p. 328.

[554] A. Giddens, *Przemiany intymności. Seksualność, miłość i erotyzm we współczesnych społeczeństwach*, op. cit., pp. 207–217.

[555] "Sexuality", Giddens tells us, was thus "discovered" and is now accessible for various lifestyles. Today it is something that we all "have" and may form at will, not – as in the past – a "natural condition" which is considered naturally given. Sexuality, Giddens notes, has thus become a malleable aspect of the individual's "self", a key component that links one's body, identity, and system of social norms. See Giddens, op. cit., p. 27.

from that time on in modern industrial societies of the West "revealing the truth" about oneself invariably entails also the sexual discourse.[556]

This chapter discusses the connections between experiencing the body and the daily, material existence as described in Różewicz's prose or resulting from its interpretation in the social, historical, and cultural context on the one hand, and modern individual identity narratives on the other – particularly the biographical identity and discourses and images attendant on collective identification. The background of this connection is "the third dimension of Communist Poland". The phrase is Krzysztof Tomasik's and it pertains to the "quotidian, largely forgotten Communist Poland", "unimportant", and invisible to today's collective memory which is based on the binary opposition of a hostile regime leaving no room for any apolitical realm and the naive nostalgia for the past. In between these points of view there is still room for the history of daily life, with its sexuality, social customs, old age, illness, family matters, and the individual's private time.[557]

Existence and Daily Life

"The cradle for thought and the soul" – Różewicz said in his conversation with Stanisław Bereś – "has to be corporeality, physicality" (W 339). In one of his early post-war poems he wrote: "I have denied myself/I have kept the body."[558] The body and everyday life are major prerequisites of identity in his writing. Grażyna Borkowska, analysing the "events, emotions, and situations that are part of everyday, commonly

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[556] M. Foucault, *Historia seksualności*, op. cit., p. 17.

[557] K. Tomasik, *Trzeci wymiar PRL-u*, in: *Mulat w pegeerze*, ed. K. Tomasik, Warszawa 2011, pp. 9–11.

[558] T. Różewicz, *Obce ciało*, "Trybuna Tygodnia" 1948, no. 1, p. 9. The writer also argued in an unsent letter to Kazimierz Wyka that the source of mysticism and art is always a corporal experience (III 109).

accessible experience", concludes that the writer perceived in them "an opportunity to find a relevant experience, a source one".[559] According to the scholar, this kind of experience translates into "finding oneself in the mainstream of life, in its authentic course, [it means] touching – or, as Różewicz writes on a number of occasions – sensing the very foundations of being, which include endurance, perhaps also love, perhaps brother-hood, and certainly death".[560] Such a source experience, unlike in Rousseu's thought, does not preclude artefacts of culture and civilization. After all, one trace of the Różewicz man's identity is his biography, given to him in an unfinished, "scattered" form and, Borkowska adds, as "shallow and superficial communication patterns typical of modern society".[561] In between the self, diligently doing its truth-about-oneself duty, and the world there is an image of the world. Hence any experience in Różewicz's reality is authentic to the extent that it reconciles the subject with the image of man, and life itself with narratives about life.

To the protagonist of *Sobowtór*, lost amid the problems of culture and philosophy, his second, mocking self gives the following advice: "You'd better change one sock, you have a blue one on your left foot and a yellow one on the right"; "Stop salivating and start going on walks instead"; "Begin with small things, first of all you need to shave" (III 411-416). Trivial activities, such as personal hygiene, eating meals, household chores, relaxation, and everyday duties constitute here an alternative to other prerequisites of modern man's self-definition, too abstract, detached from the "here and now", too remote from his experiences.[562] Those basic

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[559] G. Borkowska, *Codzienność i wzniosłość w poezji Tadeusza Różewicza*, in: *Codzienne, przedmioto-we, cielesne. Języki nowej wrażliwości w literaturze polskiej XX wieku*, ed. H. Gosk, Izabelin 2002, pp. 180, 184.

[560] Ibid., p. 184.

[561] Ibid., p. 182.

[562] As in the *Card Index*, the *Bohater* [*Protagonist*] says: "Who on earth has political views at 5 a.m.? He's mad. He wants me to have beliefs at dawn! You need to wash, get dressed, relieve yourself,

actions make it possible to construct at least a temporary, existential *self-hood*, because, once verbalized and narratively ordered, they refer to the identity (identity narrative) which is most accessible for the individual, namely the "text of life". As Hanna Gosk writes,

> Grounded in everyday encounters with reality, the spontaneous world-ordering (i.e. life- and reality-ordering) rules emerge, proceeding from chaos and inertia to routine forms of being. […] Daily life here denotes both repetitiveness of the individual's practices, or what s/he does "day by day", and the sum total of the individual's experiences – what s/he accumulates "day after day" over a period of time.[563]

Sobowtór is an ironic argument over the meaning of the "fabric of life", one combining "deeper [matters] possessed of permanent and perennial values" with "trifles that litter the memory", weaved together to form a flattened and episodic structure making up modern man's existential narrative (III 418).[564] The metaphor of life's fabric in Różewicz's essay denotes also the subject's "technique of the self", the self's conscious focus on everyday life as a source of experience which, though low-ranking, is extraordinary and singular, as opposed to what is social, universal, and abstract. Such an alternative, however, leads to aporia because daily life can become an identity only through culture and language. Różewicz is well aware of that, as it is evident from, say, the discussion of existential

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brush your teeth, change your shirt, put on a tie, put on your pants… only then can you have beliefs..." (IV 40).

[563] H. Gosk, *Milczenie i (wy)mowa literackiego obrazu codzienności w prozie polskiej lat sześćdziesiątych i dziewięćdziesiątych*, in: *Codzienne, przedmiotowe, cielesne. Języki nowej wrażliwości w literaturze polskiej XX wieku*, op. cit., p. 40.

[564] The metaphor of text and the web in Różewicz's writing is analysed by Dorota Wojda in her article "*Tarcza z pajęczyny*". Mimesis *Różewicza jako naśladowanie twarzy*, in: *Przekraczanie granic. O twórczości Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit.

trifles in *Sobowtór*, circumscribed by the narrator's erudite associations and verbalizations, or the quotations from Dostoyevsky's *The Gambler*, matched with a colloquial story of quotidian reality in *Kartki wydarte z dziennika*. Individual identity, corresponding to the irreducible and unique singularity of somatic being, is replaced by the awareness of ongoing identification work in culture.

The aporia in Różewicz's prose is symmetric. The narrative self cannot define himself through dailiness unless he finds an expression for it in culture, nor can he do it by means of ideas or artworks, historical events or social issues, unless he situates them in the order of his life, a sum total of daily or biographical experiences. This is evident in Różewicz's journal entries, for example in *Kartki wydarte z dziennika*, which oscillates between official and private narratives, or between a subject involved in public affairs and the intimate "I" focused on trifles and material worldliness.

> The lunch is over now, it is 2.45 p.m. I talked with Professor R. about how he had written his film novella about Hans Frank, and with his wife (a Master's in English Studies) about Minc's failed staging (of Marriage Blanc in Teatr Mały). For lunch they served bean soup with noodles. Then potatoes and beans (canned) with chicken liver. I passed on the dessert (fruit with vanilla sauce) […]. It is a grey afternoon, I am not going to town, because it's muddy out there and the air stinks of exhaust fumes. Jastrun has died. The cemetery keeps growing (III 346).

"Pages torn out of a journal" as a parageneric formula facilitated the writer's discussion of the tools of his trade, the social and in-group issues of the 1970s and 1980s (the objects of his scrutiny are artists, writers, philosophers, politicians, journalists) as well as his handling of fam-

ily matters and descriptions of small practical activities. The journal's "important" issues, however, do not make up a coherent story, failing to provide the narrative agent with a narrative identity. The totalization principle is only realized by the narrative of daily business. The particular and colloquial "pages" give the story its beginning ("I got up quite early"), unfolding ("a short walk into the woods"; "I had breakfast"; "then I chatted about the weather"; "I guess I took a nap"; "they served cauliflower soup"; "after lunch I read something"; "I washed and hung my socks out to dry"), and the expected ending ("about 10.30 p.m. I went to my little room"; "I woke up several times"; I kept thinking about something again, finally I went to sleep"). All such information, plus the narrator-agent's reflections, are woven into the description of a single day (III 36–349). The glosses on cultural life and intellectual reflections are fragmentary, scattered across the journal's various entries. It is only childhood and home memories, as well as accounts of daily activities, that seem to make up a finished whole. Everyday topics include the writer's concern with personal hygiene, his looks (i.e. being presentable), meals, health and rest – in sum, his concern with the body and being in a good mood. The biographical-orientedness of the work endows the story of the journal's narrator-agent with purposefulness and credibility. Though ostensibly routine, when compared with the other discourses of *Kartki*, it is marked by authenticity and coherence in terms of the individual's experience, which, for Różewicz, remains a fundamental point of reference.

Presumably, this pages-out-of-a-journal formula emerged as a result of Różewicz's writing practice in the 1940s, when, as a partisan, he would describe the everyday reality of the "forest boys", or when later, notebook in hand, he would report on the work of boatmen, fishermen, factory workers, shipyard workers, farmers and their families, with whom, as he wrote, "I didn't only talk, but also slept, ate, and lived their life among

them in those days".[565] The subtitle "Kartki z pamiętnika" ["Pages from a Journal"] appeared already in *Echa leśne* (E 31), and "Kartka z prywatnego notesu" ["A Page from a Private Notebook"] was in the 1948 reportage piece *Wyprawa na złotą rybkę*. In the Hungarian reportages the formula recurs several times – both in the title of the whole collection and in the titles of its parts ("Kartki z dziennika" ["Pages from a Journal"], "Kartka z życiorysu" ["A Page from a Biographical Note"]). Likewise, the reportage piece *Dwa skoki i już Pekin* ["Two Leaps and It's Beijing"], published in "Odra" in 1959, is subtitled "Kartki z podróży" ["Pages from a Journey"] (Ma 8). "Kartki", as a para-genre, came into being as a result of the textualization of the boundary between literature and life, between a ready-made text and the process of its preparation.

It is the biographical story (the "life fabric") in *Kartki wydarte z dziennika*, ordered neither chronologically nor thematically, that integrates the narrator-agent. This results not only from the quantitative proportions of the topics touched upon in the journal – with private affairs clearly in the majority – but first and foremost from its reference to elementary experiences originating in the body and daily experience. The narrator-agent of *Kartki*, as a character in the text, is a somatic being oriented towards acknowledging and recognizing that kind of experience. The awareness of being a body, though circumscribed by other narratives and metaphors, remains the most integral and handy one, always at the protagonist's disposal. Should the identities constructed in isolation from existence fail, one can always reinvent/retell oneself, starting with the banal "I remember getting up quite early" (III 346). When contextualized by the political history of the 1970s and 1980s, *Kartki wydarte z dziennika* can be interpreted in similar ways to *Sobowtór*, since in both texts everyday

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[565] T. Różewicz, *Wyprawa na złotą rybkę*, "Trybuna Tygodnia" 1948, no. 33, p. 5. The pages-out-of-a-journal formula applied to journalistic texts, published in "Trybuna Tygodnia" in 1948, was also employed by D. Zasławski.

trifles form the backdrop for more "significant" issues, ones pertaining to highbrow culture and social phenomena. Though the latter cannot be ignored in the process of reconstruction of the textual self – invariably historical – it is the story of the body and one's personal relation with another human being, the concern with one's psycho-somatic well-being, the material, prosaic aspect of life, that superimposes the form of individual identity. A suitable motto for such "pages" would be Mickiewicz's "It is harder to live well one day than to write a book." Though, needless to say, the romantic-mystical endorsement of action cannot be equated with the stoical idea of small, everyday activities, both elevate what is real (close to life) over what is abstract, verbal, and conceptual.

Another aspect of corporeal experience is death, which closes and completes any biography. Death, Simmel tells us, forms life in its "entire course"; if there were no death, "life would be different in inconceivable ways".[566] German Ritz thinks the same, claiming that "for self-construction death is a relevant issue", and argues that in Różewicz's writing a key factor is the writer's perspective "on his own death and that of his mother's, his mother's death acquiring new semantic connotations only after the writer's insight into his own demise".[567] One could add at this point also the death of Różewicz's elder brother – since both deaths are extremely important in the writer's autobiographical texts, both of them acquiring new meanings in the context of Różewicz's own death, which is pondered upon in numerous texts.

Edgar Morin writes that only the death of someone considered a person is capable of evoking emotions. When death is anonymous, not individualized, we tend to remain indifferent to it.[568] The corpses of trai-

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[566] G. Simmel, *Filozofia kultury. Wybór esejów*, trans. W. Kunicki, Kraków 2007, p. 108.

[567] G. Ritz, op. cit., p. 256.

[568] E. Morin, *Antropologia śmierci*, trans. S. Cichowicz, J.M. Godzimirski, in: *Antropologia ciała. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów*, ed. M. Szpakowska, Warszawa 2008, p. 293.

tors or outcasts, stripped of human dignity, are treated similarly to animal carcasses that may seem revolting to us or evoke an emotionally detached, purely pragmatic interest. Needless to say, the greatest suffering is caused by the death of someone known or close to us, because even as a corpse, they remain a human being, similar to us.

> We are not afraid of a corpse as such, we are afraid of a corpse that resembles us […]. Fear of death, then, is an experience, a foreboding, or an awareness of the loss of one's individuality, a violent experience, of suffering, anxiety, fear. It is a foreboding of some kind of rupture, evil, defeat, i.e. a traumatic experience. It is an awareness of some void, nothingness, which gapes where once was individual wholeness. It is thus a traumatic awareness.[569]

For Różewicz, a liminal point of such autobiographical essays is the memory of the death of his closest relatives – his mother Stefania Różewicz and his elder brother Janusz Różewicz, an underground soldier and writer executed by firing squad in 1944. This is the source experience for Różewicz's traumatic awareness, defining his writing idiom for dealing with the dying and the dead. For example, in the aforementioned entry from *Kartki wydarte z dziennika (Nisko, przy ziemi…* [*Low, Close to the Ground*]*)*, those who are "under the ground" – family, brothers in arms from the partisan unit, and friends – are entitled to the status of (still) individual persons belonging to this rather than to "the other" world (III 350). "This world" for the entry's narrator denotes material reality and nature, situated "low, close to the ground", whereas the other world means "nothing". What remains traumatic is the death of one's near and dear ones, the description of his brother's corpse in *Tylko tyle*

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[569]   Ibid., pp. 293–294.

[*Just That*] (N) and his mother's agony in *Dziennik gliwicki* [*The Gliwice Journal*] (M). By contrast, the awareness of the approaching "nothing" is not equally poignant, because it is not part of one's experience. On encountering the death of one's close relatives, the individual's dead body proves resistant to verbalized expression ("I cannot touch it with my pen" [N 155]), whereas the great lexicon of eschatology – featuring "salvation", "condemnation", "hell", "heaven", "metempsychosis", etc. (III 350) – pertains to death in general, detached from the individual's experience, signifying "nothing". The entry's narrator, however, relies primarily on the lexicon of experience, the bodily-vital language. The "low, close to the ground" formula recurs in the text, belonging both to the semantic field of "life" in its various senses and "death", with "so much joy and fear, tears and laughter" (III 350) remaining in between. The emphasis on the material-corporeal, "low" perspective on reality transfers the discourse of death from the other world to man as a corporeal being, a real object and subject of daily experience.

Between the Body and the World

I have my world, I experience it – Merleau-Ponty tells us – thanks to my body.[570] The body marks the boundary between the self and reality (material and social) because it is a "general way of owning the world".[571] The body enables individuals to distinguish themselves from others, to separate from, but also to identify with, other human beings and the world. This kind of going beyond oneself by means of the body can be observed in Różewicz's short stories such as *Owoc żywota* [*Fruit of the Womb*], *Grzech* [*Sin*], or *Morze* [*The Sea*], in which corporeality is a medium of being in reality, but also of naming, comprehending, describing,

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[570] M. Merleau-Ponty, *Fenomenologia percepcji*, trans. M. Kowalska, J. Migasiński, Warszawa 2001, p. 373.

[571] Ibid., p. 166.

and evaluating it. Closeness to his beloved is expressed by the protagonist of *Grzech* in terms of physical identification: "We are one body. My hand is your hand, my eye is your eye" (I 7). This religious formula is not accidental. It is immediately followed by the account of "the most horrible event" in the protagonist's life, the story of a mysterious, sinful, perceived almost as demonic and yet at the same time perfectly casual event from childhood. Carnally united in the same way are also the man and the woman in *Owoc żywota* from the volume *Przerwany egzamin*, but the description of their intimacy is accompanied by an image of murdered people's naked bodies, abandoned on a garbage heap. *Morze*, in turn, a story from the same collection, closes with the scene of corporeal unity with the aquatic element experienced by a former partisan: "His weak human breath merged with the vast breath of the sea" (I 95). From Wiktor's hideout all had been killed except him. This kind of merger with nature or another human body in Różewicz's short fiction, then, is always placed within the framework of existential drama connected with experience of death, life's physicality, resurfacing of instincts, and fear of death. The language of the body in this prose encompasses both biological existence and an intensified, poignant awareness thereof. His protagonists, due to their corporeality, perceive themselves both as subjects and objects.

Merleau-Ponty, denying the idealistic dichotomy which holds that "one exists as a thing or one exists as a consciousness", concluded that the experience of the body "lays bare the polysemic mode of existing":

> Regardless of whether it is about the body of the Other or that of my own, the only way to get to know the human body is by experiencing it, which means internalizing the drama that permeates it in order to unite with it. I am, then, my own body at least to the extent that I own what has been acquired by it, and, conversely, my body is a natural agent, as it were, a temporary outline of my entire being. That is why

experiencing one's own body opposes the reflexive movement which severs the subject from the object, and the object from the subject, giving us only thoughts about the body, or the idea of the body, not the experience of the body, that is the real body.[572]

The authentic self is the embodied consciousness, referred to by the philosopher as the natural subject.[573] It is through the body that individuals anchor themselves in the world and actualize their existence, because "one's own body is the source of all other spaces", the latter, as a result, being capable of existing "as objects, under our hands, before our eyes".[574] The body expresses existence "not because it accompanies it from the outside, but because existence is actualized in the body".[575] Similarly, selfhood can be realized as identity only through one's corporeal presence in the world. As Merleau-Ponty explains, "My existence as a self is synonymous with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world", because "the particular subject that I am is inseparable from this body and from this world".[576] According to the author of *Phenomenology of Perception*, the body gives identity to the subject because, firstly, bodily parts and functions collectively define a person; secondly, experience creates a thing as a "meaning that descends to the world and begins to exist there, and which cannot be fully comprehended other than by searching for where it is with one's eyes";[577] thirdly, the body legitimizes the world as a totality – sensorially given and endowed with meaning. As the philosopher puts it,

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[572]   Ibid., p. 219.
[573]   Ibid., p. 192.
[574]   Ibid., p. 166.
[575]   Ibid., p. 187.
[576]   Ibid., p. 430.
[577]   Ibid., p. 344.

> My body is the shared contexture of all objects and, at least when it comes to the visible world, the general tool of my "understanding". It is my body that gives meaning not only to natural objects but also to cultural ones, such as words.[578]

Repeating after Heidegger that selfhood as such is not temporal in the empirical sense, Merleau-Ponty situates identity in time solely through the body, changeable but always concrete and identical with itself for the subject, who, thanks to the body, experiences presence in the real, historical world.[579]

Having thus solved the contradiction of the subjective and objective existence of the natural subject, the phenomenologist encounters an analogous problem with the corporeality of another human being.[580] The Other's physical body is an object, but the subject may regard him/her (the embodied Other) as the "real self", like that of the subject's, and expects to be perceived in the same way by the Other. This contradiction can only be solved by assuming that in human experience the Other is neither a pure object nor pure consciousness, but a psycho-physical and social behaviour,[581] with the body as a "node of live meanings" being the medium of such behaviour.[582] Richard Shusterman shares this opinion, and traces the origins of the word "organism" to the Greek *organon* or "tool", claiming that our body is the most fundamental of all tools, the primary medium of interaction with vari-

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[578] Ibid., pp. 256–257.

[579] Ibid., pp. 443–453.

[580] "In order to perceive him/her I would have to carry out a self-contradictory operation, because I would have to simultaneously distinguish him/her from myself, that is place him/her in the world of objects, and regard him/her as a consciousness, that is as the type of being without the outside or parts, which is given to me only because I am that being myself". Ibid., p. 372.

[581] Ibid., p. 375.

[582] Ibid., p. 172.

ous environments, "necessary for all our perception, action, or even thought".[583] To distinguish the sentient and purposive body from live tissue and bones, Shusterman uses the term *soma* when referring to the former.[584] Merleau-Ponty and Shusterman both agree that it is precisely in the corporeal sense that humans belong to the social world, one that constitutes a permanent aspect of their existence.[585] This is the meaning that the Greek *bios* corresponds to, denoting the individual's life in relation to others, i.e. moral and socialized.

Tadeusz Różewicz links the experience of the body primarily to the modern perception of the self and the world as fragmented totalities. The speaker of the poem *Rozebrany* [in Polish literally "undressed" or "disassembled"] (1956) says: "the memories images feelings messages / ideas experiences that assembled within me / do not fall into place do not make up a whole / within me / […] I am not a totality I have been fragmented and undressed" (VIII 75).[586] The permanent identity/ autobiography as a grand narrative of the subjective self is replaced by Różewicz with micro-narratives of dailiness and the body. The narrator of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* (1969) remarks: "[…] my body is the world entire, my body is both this irreducible world and, simultaneously, its impassable boundary, impenetrable in both directions" (II 185–186).

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583 R. Shusterman, *Świadomość ciała. Dociekania z zakresu somaestetyki*, trans. W. Małecki, S. Stankiewicz, Kraków 2010, p. 22. The body was also considered a tool modelled on social and cultural discourses by Marcel Mauss. See M. Szpakowska, *Wstęp: ciało w kulturze*, in: *Antropologia ciała. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów*, op. cit., p. 6.

584 R. Shusterman, op. cit., p. 15.

585 M. Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., p. 384.

586 Erazm Kuźma explains that the writer rejects the idea of a totality, similarly to Theodor Adorno. "In his argument with Hegel, Adorno sides with the fragment against the Whole which is supposedly the Truth, with fragmentation against synthesis, with difference against identity, with the constellation of ideas against their logical opposition." E. Kuźma, *Język – stwórca rzeczy*, in: *Człowiek i rzecz. O problemach reifikacji w literaturze, filozofii i sztuce*, eds S. Wysłouch, B. Kaniewska, Poznań 1999, p. 29.

The thought appears concomitantly with the experience of the crowd, the excess of sensory stimuli and the attendant shock generated by modern, urban Western civilization. The liberal world order guarantees the individual bodily rather than mental inviolability. The border of the body's "territory" (the skin) is more controllable than the flow of information. It is easier to evade physical intervention than political or commercial persuasion, and it is increasingly difficult to remain convinced that individual consciousness is the individual's autonomous property. It is only the control of one's own body in social relations that gives us an illusion of independence, of being in control and being "yourself". The identity of the self as *soma* is, under the circumstances, an alternative to the inauthentic and disintegrated consciousness. One's particular corporeality provides a sense of individuality and separateness, and – given the peculiarity, integrity, and limitedness of every organism – also of uniqueness. The body is, for humans, the most accessible form of wholeness.[587]

Nevertheless, the modern body, stripped of metaphysics, can be experienced only as representation or fragments, being otherwise recalcitrant to description or marking.[588] This is how the female body is presented already in the Futurist poetry of the 1920s – disassembled into its constituent parts and accessories, in line with the modern erotic discourse and the reifying male gaze.[589] This is also how the body functions in Bruno Schulz's and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz's fiction, wherein the act of cognizing or narrating the body equates violating its integrity, rei-

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[587]   M. Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., pp. 170–171, 354.

[588]   See A. Ubertowska, *Cielesna retoryka Brunona Schulza*, in: *Między słowem a ciałem*, ed. L. Wiśniewska, Bydgoszcz 2001, p. 243.

[589]   Zob. M. Kareński-Tschurl, *Czy dlatego, że my się* par example *nie kochamy? O erotyce futurystycznej na przykładzie poezji Brunona Jasieńskiego i Anatola Sterna*, "Teksty Drugie" 2000, no. 6, p. 50.

fying it, and subjecting the body to the power of a philosophical or aesthetic discourse.[590] As Baudrillard puts it,

> The entire modern history of the body is the history of charting its boundaries, establishing networks of markings and signs aimed to parcel it out, dismember it, fragmentize it, quarter it, deny its differences and radical ambiguity in order to transform it into structural material of intersemiotic exchange.[591]

Typical of modernity, the fragmented body's intersemiotic exchange takes place in the realms of fashion and advertising. It is not the human body as a whole but its parts that are subject to marking and functionalization, to "phantasmatic separation" with accessories and fragments of clothing, with ornaments and beauty treatments emphasizing or masking selected areas on its surface.[592] The phenomenon pertains also to the naked body, transferred from the realm of nature to culture, wherein nakedness does not stand for primordiality, innocence, or authenticity any more, but for the surface-screen of social communication. Nudity does not express the body as such, but is a promise of fulfilling an erotic or aesthetic phantasm or some other consumerist desire within the framework of the current value circulation system. Thus a fragment of a naked human body is not a synecdoche of individual identity but a meaning or image that facilitates popularizing and negotiating different patterns of identity.

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[590] See A. Ubertowska, *Cielesna retoryka Brunona Schulza*, op. cit., p. 23; D. Świtkowska, *"Pustynia okrutnych, bezpłodnych przeżyć". O erotyzmie w prozie Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza*, in: *Codzienne, przedmiotowe, cielesne. Języki nowej wrażliwości w literaturze polskiej XX wieku*, op. cit., p. 173.

[591] J. Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 128.

[592] Ibid., pp. 128–131.

The author of *Moja córeczka*, describing the body as a medium of identity in social relations, devoted most of his attention to the face and its meanings.[593] Andrzej Skrendo, Monika Brzóstowicz-Klajn, and Marcin Jaworski, explaining its meaning in Różewicz's writing, unanimously referred to Emmanuel Lévinas, for whom the face is a "starting point for the contact with the Other".[594] Jaworski writes:

> The face necessitates responsibility for the Other, but it eludes all description and remains forever unknowable. […] The body, remaining an inaccessible realm, simultaneously demands attention and affirmation; rejected or merely ignored, it would not settle into the world.[595]

The problem of another person's face – attention-grabbing, memorable, but elusive – gives rise to the problem of one's personal identity, one's rootedness in the world, and of one's ability to comprehend one's own life as a meaningful totality. Brzóstowicz-Klajn regards the face not only as a sign of the individual's uniqueness and mystery, but also as a trace of an absent God, the foundation of its ethics.[596] Having compared Lévinas' philosophical thought with the face motif in Różewicz's poetry and prose, the scholar concludes that by "denying the dignity of the human face", the writer elevates the somatic presence of his near and dear ones. This is an apt diagnosis, especially when applied to the (auto)biographical sketches from the volumes *Nasz starszy brat* [*Our Elder Brother*] and *Mother Departs*. The close relatives' corporeality is still (and all the more

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[593]   See D. Wojda, op. cit.

[594]   M. Brzóstowicz-Klajn, *Różewicz i Lévinas, czyli o* Głosie anonima *i (nie)obecności twarzy*, "Polonistyka" 2003, no. 7; M. Jaworski, *Ciało i nieskończoność*, "Topos" 2005, no. 5–6; A. Skrendo, *Tadeusz Różewicz i granice literatury. Poetyka i etyka transgresji*, op. cit.

[595]   M. Jaworski, op. cit., p. 75.

[596]   M. Brzóstowicz-Klajn, op. cit., p. 423.

so) ambiguous in the two texts, experienced as a fundamental familial bond, but also represented in the form of the dehumanized body – dying, decaying, and dead.[597]

Georg Simmel, positing that the fundamental formula of the individual's life is to put together the dynamic multiplicity of one's experiences, considers the face to be the highest visual benchmark of that unity.[598] The face thus actualizes man's individuality and originality, both of them being

> particularly facilitated by baring the body, especially since the arrival of Christianity […] and that is why Christianity, wherein the body-revealing tendencies make the face represent exclusively the phenomenon of man, became the school of individual consciousness.[599]

The body functions as a boundary and a social medium primarily thanks to the visage and the gaze, which in Western civilization participate most intensely and officially, so to speak, in interpersonal communication and, according to Baudrillard, in the symbolic exchange.[600] The exchange, though, acquired a new meaning with the expansion of the body's representations in modern culture. Whereas in traditional societies the body is incorporated into the ritual of symbolic exchange, which results in the "consumption" of the self's established identity, the modern society pre-

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[597] On the topic of the mother's body and her eyes in Różewicz's work see G. Ritz, op. cit., p. 251.

[598] G. Simmel, op. cit., p. 132. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty maintains that the "unity of experience" is not guaranteed by the "universal thinking subject" but by the human body in the world understood as *sensorium commune*. M. Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., pp. 318–319.

[599] G. Simmel, op. cit., p. 133.

[600] To illustrate his point, Baudrillard describes the following scene: "When an Indian […], answering the white man's question about his nudity, says: 'With us, everything is a visage', he means that the whole body […] participates in the symbolic exchange, whereas with us, it is usually reduced to the face and the look". J. Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 136.

supposes negotiating and reproducing identity (patterns). That is why "the body closes up within signs exchanged in accordance with the law of the self's equivalence and reproduction. The self, in turn, does not disappear in the exchange cycle, but reproduces itself, multiplies, speculates."[601] Overvaluation of the body, grounded in modern axiological hierarchies, results in the individual subject fetishizing himself/herself. The face partakes of the modern symbolic exchange as an image or copy rather than a legitimization of identity vis-à-vis another human being or a social group. As Andrzej Franaszek put it in his book on Zbigniew Herbert's poetry,

> While we get to know another person, first and foremost, as someone arriving with their own face, disturbingly different, our own face is something ultimately personal, summarizing – however imperfectly – our own self. It is a visual token of our presence.[602]

Likewise, in Różewicz's writing the face corresponds to, firstly, a particular person or their biography, representing one's personal existence. The face of "our host" in the autobiographical sketch *Twarze* [*Faces*], or the face, in the same text, of old Wtorek, the cab driver from the narrator-agent's hometown, belong in that category. "The red face peppered with zits, the stiff, black moustache with sprawling, brush-like endings" (II 284); the napping cab driver's countenance is self-identifying, but for the narrator-agent, returning home after thirty years, it also denotes a confirmation of a life stage. That is why he is scrutinizing Wtorek's face "like a conservator, an appraiser, whose job is to verify the originality and identity of a painting" (II 285). Secondly, then, the face of another person may constitute a part of one's own identity. Identifying the cabdriver's face, for example,

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601   Ibid., pp. 136–137.

602   A. Franaszek, *Ciemne źródło (o twórczości Zbigniewa Herberta)*, London 1998, p. 79.

equates confirming a certain image of the narrator-agent's childhood and his family home (*Twarze*). In *Próba rekonstrukcji* [*A Reconstruction Attempt*] the reconstruction of the face of "Ms H." is a necessary prerequisite for re-constructing oneself "from those days": "I will either create Ms H., together with those lips and ironic look, or all my work goes to waste. I won't be able to create myself from those days" (I 202). Significantly, it is all about the face's mental reconstruction from memory, not about its mirror reflection. Herbert's Mr Cogito looks at his own face in the mirror because he wants to confirm, with its reflection, the continuity of his identity; the speaker of Różewicz's poem *Zadanie domowe* [*Homework*], in turn, orders: "describe your own face / from memory / not from the mirror" (IX 388). Identity here is not pure perception or escrow from the past but an inner experience, an act of memory, a mapping-out of existence from the vantage point of the present moment – that is why the face of an acquaintance, as well as one's own, needs to be constructed, not seen. The mirror reflection of his own face evokes in the consciousness of the protagonist of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* an effect which is the opposite of identity confirmation – it is the feeling of inner split and of not being one's "true" self (II 105).

The ekphrasis of Caravaggio's painting *Narciso*, which concludes *Tarcza z pajęczyny* [*A Cobweb Shield*], presents a relation with one's own reflection as "loneliness isolation from the world / limiting oneself to one's reflection", an act of identification with a "dead man's face" (I 254). Analysing the story and the poem included in it, Dorota Wajda pointed out to the third possible meaning of the face in Różewicz's writing. The narrator-agent of *Tarcza*, "strung onto space" during a long journey, loses his individuality under the pressure of images, pieces of information, faces of numerous strangers. "A portable radio," Wojda adds, "becomes a figure of modern man".[603]

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[603] D. Wojda, op. cit., p. 104.

The proportions and dispositions are reversed: the self shrinks to the size of a needle's eye, becoming an object of action, whereas the outside, presented as a "string of images", looms large and acquires the status of an agent. The face is no longer a personalized sign but a hollow representation of individuality merged with other forms".[604]

Not so much "hollow", perhaps, as distorted by excess and mediacy of reference. The face does not stand here for a particular person or their identity but the entire reality accessible to the individual. The face as a "visual benchmark" of modern man is a reflection of his world. It is a site where "nothing connects with nothing or everything with everything" (*Strawiony*), failing to make up a coherent visage, not actualizing either the person's individuality or originality. The subsequent emancipations that created the modern individual on a massive scale would by the same token privilege the standard self, identical with many others and reduced to the outside, a mere reflection of the world's signals.[605]

"It seems to me that all the faces merge into one face, and it is a huge face , the face of billions", says the narrator of *Twarze* (II 284). The human face has lost its personal dimension and its immediacy. Lévinas, declaring the identity of face and body, describes the relation between the individual-agent with another human being as being-for-the-Other, the "face to face" relation premising mutual responsibility and respect.[606] This concept accounts for the moral sense of closeness between two people in Różewicz's prose, for example in narratives-conversations with the "anonymous" interlocutor, but fails when applied to the modern world's social problems raised in there. According to Lévinas, meeting someone

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[604] Ibid.

[605] See M. Środa, op. cit., p. 163.

[606] E. Lévinas, *Inaczej niż być lub ponad istotą*, trans. P. Mrówczyński, Warszawa 2000, pp. 151–153.

face to face inscribes the other person into the "decontextualized meaning" of being-for-the-Other, "detached from the world, its horizons and conditions".[607] This reasoning is too idealistic, though. Looking behind the Other's face, Różewicz notices also society shaping the individual's face (body and behaviour) as his/her representation in the self's memory or imagination. Though acknowledging society, Lévinas views its influence in terms of an extraordinary relation rather than an interpersonal norm, that is he considers society to be a special case, or even a complication, of the fundamental being-for-the-Other relationship. For the philosopher, society "begins with the appearance of the third person";[608] for the writer it operates in every cultural relation, including that between two people or between the self and its identity. Likewise, Lévinas' concept cannot account for the mediacy of the face's (and the body's) meaning in Różewicz's writing. For the philosopher, meeting with someone face to face cracks the face's representations, because the act itself is detached from reality and bereft of mediacy, thus translating into one's acknowledgement of the Other's pure selfhood. For the writer, in turn, selfhood does not exist apart from its own articulation, that is from its identity. Not given directly, for example in the mirror image, or forever, identity emerges as a result of one's continuous interpretation of experience, requiring the self's involvement in social discourse and culture.

Almost from his earliest prose texts, i.e. even in *Echa leśne* [*Forest Echoes*], Różewicz would describe collectives and interpersonal relations in collective terms, focusing on the place and situation of the individual living in cramped conditions, among people forcibly turned into an organic mass, herd, or urban crowd. "I do detest the herd", he wrote in *Dziennik z partyzantki* [*Journal from the Guerrilla Days*] in the entry

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[607] Ibid., p. 154.
[608] Ibid.

dated 13 August 1944. The writer reacted to the herding and the result-
ant homogenization of people with aversion, disgust, and pity, as well as
condescending, feral connotations referring to the Modernist individual-
vs-mass opposition. The human mass also draws the attention of the nar-
rator of the reportage piece entitled *Sen kwiatu, serce smoka* [*The Flower's
Dream, the Dragon's Heart*] featuring a trip to China in 1958. As an ob-
server, a reporter, a guest from a far away place, the text's narrator-agent
can afford a neutral, "statistics-oriented" approach to reality.[609]

> The sun has set over Shanghai, over six million people, who need to
> be supplied on a daily basis with: 5500 pigs, 500 cows, 800,000 DIN
> of fish, 50,000 chickens, 160,000 DIN of eggs, 55-60,000 DIN of
> vegetables. In this city, 20,000 children are born each month. That
> makes 240,000 newborn babies per year (II 261).

Such a perspective proves insufficient, though. The European
guests, looking at the panorama of the metropolis, share among
themselves such precise quantitative data about Shanghai. Every now
and then, however, echoes of the Western great-city narrative pop up
in their dialogues: "factories and skyscrapers", "the highest number
of beggars", "city gangs", "the biggest red-light districts" (II 262).
Still, despite the extensive usage of statistics and analogies, this "other
world" and its history seem incomprehensible to them. It is not only
about exotic otherness, typical of reportage. *Sen kwiatu, serce smoka*
is a story about the rapidly expanding reality of the mass man, the
city as the *biopolis*, the "civilization of big numbers" (M. Dąbrowska)
whose size and complexity are hardly comprehensible to the average

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[609] A critical commentary on that "selective" description of China can be found in the essay
W drodze [*On My Way*] (Ma 23).

man in the street because they exceed and outrun his experience.[610] It is also a commentary on the organization (and the language of description) of modern society, managed and described by means of "natality, mortality, life span, fertility, health state, morbidity, nutrition, and housing conditions".[611] As Barbara Sienkiewicz, writing about the writer's poetry, argues:

> Różewicz's city remains an organism *à rebours*, as it were, not because it becomes functionally ordered from a social perspective, modelling or regulating social life, but because life in it has become reduced to biological functions.[612]

The reportage's protagonist observes Chinese ways in the fields of housing and nutrition policies, consumption, sexuality. Each of these realms in the 20th century "becomes a stake in the game between the state and the individual – and a public stake to boot", because, taken together, they make up a system of regulations, bans, and analyses circumscribed by the biopolitical discourse.[613] A sailor who in Różewicz's Chinese reportage went downtown, looking for hookers, is forced to listen to an ideological lecture "on human dignity, on good morals, on good health. On women's lives in the new reality, on elimination of prostitution, on family life", supplemented with "numbers, facts" (II 263).

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[610] The critique of the values and civilization of the human herd, as the background for a reconstruction of the modern individual's experience, is one of the philosophical sources of modernism, stemming from F. Nietzsche's thought, among others. See A. Renaut, op. cit., pp. 240–241.

[611] M. Foucault, *Historia seksualności*, op. cit., p. 29. K. Wyka wrote that depersonalization of man in Różewicz's writing results, among other things, from "reducing a person to a piece of soma within the general 'birthrate'". K. Wyka, *Różewicz parokrotnie*, op. cit., p. 98.

[612] B. Sienkiewicz, *Poznawanie i nazywanie. Refleksja cywilizacyjna i epistemologiczna w polskiej poezji modernistycznej*, Kraków 2007, p. 512.

[613] M. Foucault, *Historia seksualności*, op. cit., p. 31.

The term "biopolitics" was coined by Michel Foucault, who referred to systematic control of the population, disciplining of the body, and "regulating sex by means of useful and public discourses" – applied in Europe from the 18th century on – as a new technique of government, consisting, among other things, in replacing "subjects" with "populace".[614] "The ancient power of death, the symbol of sovereign rule, is now meticulously covered by the administration of bodies and calculated management of life […], modern man is an animal in politics, to which the question of his life as a living being has been assigned".[615] Biopolitics, according to Foucault, is a "complex of actions transferring life and its mechanisms to the realm of cold calculation", with the "threshold of biological modernity" appearing "the moment when a species becomes a stake in its own political strategies".[616]

Based on the principle of omnipresent regulation of "living being" (M. Foucault), biopolitics circumscribes man and other creatures on a population scale; living beings that are controlled, raised, and eaten, industrially processed, or eliminated for the common good. Such regulation in Różewicz's reportage pertains to both humans and animals, as well as their habitats. Looming over the sea of clay and cardboard huts, on the area of "ten thousand villages […] without meadows, fields, trees, or grass", there stand the skyscrapers; the little palace featuring the Four Pests exhibit is adorned with a meander made up of "thousands of sparrow wings", whereas rat tails have been used to build "a small fence, the roof of a little house, and many other buildings" (II 264–267). The Chinese variant of communist modernity is not easily translatable into European terms, what with European sensibility retaining traces of somatic individualism even in the days of industrialization and massifica-

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[614] Ibid., p. 29.
[615] Ibid., p. 122.
[616] Ibid., p. 125.

tion. When the reporter's eye, focused on the human mass, finally rests on a single person, it is only because of a longing for a picture on an individual scale. But even a lonely Chinese man exercising at dawn on the outskirts of town does not exactly fit in the native concept of the individual (behaviour). His rhythmic, disciplined exercises seem to emanate the "logic of identicalness" (M. Środa) dominant in China, an internalized dictate of society aiming at "anatomopolitical power over the body" of the individual.[617] As Giddens explains, "the body becomes the focus of power and this power, instead of trying to "mark" it externally, as in pre-modern times, subjects it to the internal discipline of self-control".[618]

This anti-utopian note closes Różewicz's reportage, giving, indirectly, an answer to the question about the ultimate meaning of the observed otherness which, like Chinese exoticism from 1958, seems remote and unreal but, just as the individual's identity pattern in mass society, disturbingly universal.

The Somatic Aspect of History

The characters in Różewicz's prose, who keep changing in order to adapt to the current political situation, have "nothing within", no identity apart from their social role, metaphorically referred to as "the skin and the flesh". Only their mouths, eyes, ears, and noses are described individually – in contrast to their "flat faces" (I 117–118). As the narrator of *Nowa szkoła filozoficzna* [*New Philosophical School*] tells us: "There were Catholics and communists among them, as well as those who, before the very eyes of the gathering, would change from Catholics into communists; there were also common bugs, sponges, God knows what, the old, the young, idiots, moralists..." (I 117). Analysing *Próba rekonstrukcji*

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617 Ibid., p. 122.
618 A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford University Press 1991, p. 56.

[*A Reconstruction Attempt*], the writer's 1959 autobiographical sketch, Stanisław Gębala noted that Różewicz's "checking other people's identity has nothing to do with crude moralizing, for it is a necessary prerequisite for arriving at one's own identity".[619] The text's narrator-agent, Gębala argues, painstakingly attempts to reconstruct the face of an old lady friend in order to "create oneself from those days" (I 202). The idea of identity relativized in light of others, dependent on the images of their faces and bodies, is compared by Gębala to existentialist thought; the critic locates it, in historical terms, in the context of radical transformations in Poland after World War Two, which affected social groups and individuals alike.

> One can easily find out when it all started: the obsession with identity checks dominated Różewicz's texts after 1956. The obsession resulted from the permanent state of wonder that the writer experienced, observing metamorphoses of the people around him from the early 1950s onwards. In later years that surprise was only to deepen, transforming into puzzlement and even bewilderment, when it turned out that those metamorphoses had been by no means final, but only triggered an entire sequence of ever-quicker transformations – like in Stevenson's Dr Jekyll.[620]

From the literary-historical point of view the above hypothesis cannot be ignored. Undoubtedly, the meaning of the individual's experience in Różewicz's narratives needs to be contextualized by the ideological definition of personal identity in Communist Poland. Gębala focuses on ideological and moral metamorphoses connected with political breakthroughs in Poland's post-war history. *Tożsamość (wspomnienie o Karo-*

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[619] S. Gębala, *Sprawdzanie tożsamości – rzecz o Tadeuszu Różewiczu*, "Ruch Literacki" 1979, no. 6, p. 418.

[620] Ibid., p. 417.

lu Kuryluku) [*Identity (A Memory of Karol Kuryluk)*], Różewicz's essay published in the first edition of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, confirms the aptness of Gębala's perspective. Expanding on the critic's diagnosis, it's also worth discussing such issues as the imagery of the body and sexual difference, sexual discourse, social transformations and the attendant social tensions. These premises of personal identity in Różewicz's prose carry just as much significance as political history or the history of national or European culture.

The canonical body of Socialist Realism, Izabela Kowalczyk tells us, was to be functionalized, young, healthy, and strong, capable of cooperation with other employees and the machine, almost unmarked erotically, with functions modifiable within the framework of the Communist project of transformation – that of man, society, economy, and state.

> Athletic, muscular figures of workers and farmers, men and women, cooperating with each other while building a new, socialist order, which featured in almost every single painting from that period, all sing the praises of a body totally subordinated to the government. Bodies were needed only to the extent that they could serve socialist labour, to be useful in the construction of the socialist order.[621]

The woman in Socialist Realist paintings was either a conventional "sexless monolith", whose anatomic attributes were only there to signal professional equality between the sexes, or her eroticism implied a world of alien, bourgeois, and capitalist values. Despite the government's political offensive in the years 1947–1954, aimed at professional mobilization

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[621] I. Kowalczyk, *Ciało i władza. Polska sztuka krytyczna lat 90.*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 31–32. The modern project of the individual's identity, also outside Socialist Realism, presupposed as norm that a man's body was fit for work (e.g. in a factory) or combat, and must therefore be a "sturdy, resilient construction". D. Dzido, *Kulturowe kody płci*, in: *Praktyki cielesne*, op. cit., p. 199.

of women, Socialist Realism failed to come up with a credible image of woman beyond her traditional role. The "woman tractor driver" did not supplant in those days the images of "nurses, village teachers, cleaners", whereas representations of female figures performing masculine roles would not stress gender identity.[622]

One of the ideals of Socialist Realism was the body expressing rational and asexual productivity, entirely focused on the empirical world and official interpersonal relations. For that reason the working man, concentrated on his task, young and monumentally muscular, stylized to look like a heroic figure and usually featured in a group scene as a member of a social group or a professional collective, was symbolically elevated, while the "weak, useless body" disappeared from public view.[623] Tadeusz Różewicz did not entirely yield to those rules, even in his Hungarian reportages describing bodies that did not fit in the official model. Admittedly, among the protagonists of *Kartki z Węgier* [*Notes from Hungary*] there are also young miners and workers from farming cooperatives, but their representations are cursory, blurry, dominated by the superior social category. The concrete, embodied protagonist of those reportages is an old man, imperfect and individualized. One can regard him as anticipating Różewicz's future characters, typical of his writing of the "small stabilization" period, who are, as a rule, nondescript, unattractive, elderly, inept, and lonely, ideologically anonymous but at the same time real, somatically and existentially authenticated.

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[622] I. Kowalczyk, op. cit., p. 34. Perhaps, as Dorota Merecz-Kot argues, the images of "women tractor drivers blazed the trail and created room in the popular imagination for women breaking conventions", thus creating the popular pattern of modern female identity. See *Kobieta prosi, mężczyzna wymaga. Z Dorotą Merecz-Kot rozmawia Małgorzata Kolińska-Dąbrowska*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 17-18 September 2011, no. 217, "Wysokie Obcasy" 2011 no. 37, p. 61.

[623] I. Kowalczyk, op. cit., p. 32.

The Stockholm Appeal in *Kartki z Węgier* is signed by old villagers, until recently illiterate, their handwriting looking "as if it was transferred onto paper by a child's little hand, hesitant and weak" (K 9); at the cemetery there works a single employee, a "decrepit old man" (K 7) who tells stories about the past; old peasant women are enjoying their holidays at a nursing home (K 61); the most interesting figure in Tatabánya is Prusek, a miner, whose biography is of great interest to the narrator-reporter (K 74–78). The elderly and their personal narratives seem jarringly out of place when contrasted with the collective, idealized youth of the socialist state. It is they, however, who represent the embodied, mundane, personal, and somatically experienced identity. Were it not for Prusek's recollection of women, sexual discourse in those reportages would be almost limited to the academic lecture on "artificial insemination of livestock" (K 67). The characters of workers or party activists, typical of Socialist Realism, are carnally inexperienced or flat ("postcard-like" like "Hungarian cowboys"), represented only by ideological narratives, like the aforementioned monologue of Comrade Rákosi. What is characteristic of the realism of that period, vivid and individualized, are ideologically alien bodies, e.g. the bathing priest, "similar to a huge pink infant".[624]

Kowalczyk writes that after 1956 artistic visualizations of the body did not refer as frequently as before to social issues because the artists avoided political involvement in the name of the autonomy of art and the work's universal message. The body in the painting "was only an element of composition and formal play", reduced to its surface, whereas sexuality was masked by means of poeticization or aestheticisation[625] –

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[624] This somatic connotation may have had also another source. The poet's mother, Stefania Różewicz, recalled how the guests invited to Tadeusz's baptism ceremony would "say at his sight: such a plump and pink baby, maybe he will become a priest" (M 39).

[625] I. Kowalczyk, op. cit., p. 36.

with the exception of selected paintings by Andrzej Wróblewski, Zbigniew Dłubak, or Marian Bogusz, who would depart from that formula of physicality and corporeality in favour of the degraded body, symbolizing "man's degeneration".[626] Kowalczyk accounts for this phenomenon, citing political and social circumstances, the authoritarian regime's insistence on regulating the individual's freedom also in intimate, physiological, and sensory spheres, and the artists' reaction to the body's excessive ideologization.

> Arguably, the current government was still uncomfortable with corporeality. It found the body threatening, because of its potential ability to generate too wide a margin of freedom for the individual, which would be difficult to control. [...] In fact, the authorities in those days were extremely "moral", interpreting any manifestations of sexual liberty as an influence of the "corrupt" culture of the West. The "morality" of Gomułka's regime is linkable to its distrust of corporeality and sexuality, which was manifested in the arts.
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> In socialist culture pleasure was rationed and drastically limited, whereas in consumerist culture carnal pleasure is emphasized and fuelled. Excess of pleasure in socialist society might connote a turn to Western culture. The pleasure-oriented body can easily transgress the socialist society's moral norms. And the socialist society, after all, could not possibly be immoral or unhealthy.[627]

This otherwise apt diagnosis requires a few supplements. Communist Poland as a power structure was not the only agent of the "small stabilization" somatic discourses; the Catholic Church also displayed

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[626]   Ibid., p. 38.
[627]   Ibid., pp. 39–40.

strong aspirations in that realm. As Iwona Kurz tells us, "The centuries-old influence of the Church and tradition was strengthened by dictates of socialist morality".[628] Commenting on the historical situation of "sexual revolution in Polish literature", Wacław Sadkowski notes that, apart from the few openly outraged reactions, literary texts featuring erotic themes would face a "front of silent rejection" that joined together social circles otherwise radically different in their ideological orientations.[629] At the end of the 1970s, when mass and well-organized political opposition had emerged and enjoyed growing popular support, thanks to which traditional patterns of Polish identity transformed at the turn of the decade into a "general project" of national culture,[630] bodily experience became subject to civic, social, patriotic, and religious values or was ruled out altogether. As German Ritz explains, "Talking about sex was the best way to shatter the monoculture of 'Solidarity', which was essentially a culture of ethical norms, of fidelity (Herbert), and of powerful semantic points of reference."[631] The naked body in Polish culture of the 1980s, especially the male body, may have, for example, denoted a "confrontation of personal honesty with the social falsification of the world" – this is how Grzegorz Dziamski explains the meaning of Jerzy Bereś's artistic projects. Marking his penis with a white-and-red dot, the artist did not juxtapose the "naked truth" and the false ideology of communism, but he "contrasted

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[628] I. Kurz, *Topless*, in: *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach*, op. cit., p. 394.

[629]   "The front, in my opinion, encompassed people of different, sometimes even opposing stands and ideological orientations, with divergent political affiliations – all of them, however, having highly convergent, if not identical, aspirations and life expectations. It was precisely this convergence of pursuits, hidden under the façade of divergence, that made them thoroughly confused and consequently speechless on matters that would otherwise make them look like Siamese twins." W. Sadkowski, *W drzwiach do Europy. Szkice o polskiej kulturze umysłowej i literackiej*, Kielce 2006, pp. 158–159.

[630] G. Ritz, op. cit., p. 235.

[631] Ibid.

one dominant discourse with another".[632] Collective identity, grounded both in the socialist idiom and the religious or patriotic-romantic one, did not encompass the body and sexuality as a liminal experience, one that is ambiguous, intangible, constantly negotiated, open to different – also non-communal – interpretations. Such an experience, after all, was a threat to the coherence of any ideological identification.

Even though the body is not completely reducible to political or cultural meanings, for it is always linked with the *abjectum*, i.e. with "what is alien, revolting, but present",[633] the experience of the body cannot be articulated outside culture, apart from "ready-made clichés, formulas, preexisting representations well-established in language, and literature's ways of presenting the world – petrified in the form of literary conventions".[634] The body, then, can be analysed as a "product of a given socio-cultural context. The body experienced from the self's perspective is also the result of socio-historico-cultural influences, so linking it to some timeless and permanent essence of whichever sex is an illusion".[635] The historicity and culturalness of bodily experience (and the somatic imagination) manifest themselves in political as well as social, scientific, economic, and religious aspects. Whereas for medieval Christianity the model of reference for the body was the animal as a site of instincts and drives, for modern medicine "the perfect model of the body is the corpse", while from the perspective of the technocratic economy of the industrial age the ideal is the robot as an "extrapolation of absolute, rational, and sexless productivity". Within contemporary, consumerist symbolic exchange, in turn, the perfect body

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[632] G. Dziamski, *Dekodowanie ciała. Ciało komunistyczne / ciało kapitalistyczne*, in: *Człowiek i rzecz. O problemach reifikacji w literaturze, filozofii i sztuce*, op. cit., pp. 346–347.

[633] *Abjectum* is J. Kristeva's term. See A. Łebkowska, *Gender*, in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy*, op. cit., p. 392.

[634] Ibid., p. 396.

[635] A. Buczkowski, *Społeczne tworzenie ciała: płeć kulturowa i płeć biologiczna*, Kraków 2005, pp. 57–58.

turns out to be that of the model and movie star.[636] Her body, Jean Baudrillard explains, is "completely functionalized and subject to the law of value, this time, though, as a site of semiotic value production. In this case what is produced is not labour but, rather, models of sense production – not only sexual models of fulfilment but also sexuality itself as a model" of consumption of market representations and promises.[637] The list of model bodies can be supplemented, for example, with the nationalist one, wherein the bodily ideal for men is the warrior "for whom fight has become his element",[638] while for women it is that of the man's mother or life companion for whom the greatest personal and patriotic virtue is the sense of "feminine shame" perceived as a feminine variant of national loyalty and manly, military honour.[639] This equivalent of conservative-nationalist gender roles was grotesquely reversed by Witold Gombrowicz in his interwar short story *Dziewictwo (Pamiętnik z okresu dojrzewania)* [*Virginity (A Memoir of Pubescence)*], in which the feminine virtue corresponds to male "virginity" of the chivalric ideal and the colonial "purity" of the white man.

The meaning of the body in social discourse results primarily from ethical and political rules which define the purpose of bodily behaviours

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[636] J. Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 146.

[637] Ibid., p. 146 (the fundamental inspiration for Baudrillard in this case was Marx's *Capital. Critique of Political Economy*).

[638] K. Jaskułowski, M. Parus-Jaskułowska, *Nacjonalistyczne konstrukcje płci*, in: *Zrozumieć płeć. Studia interdyscyplinarne II*, eds A. Kuczyńska, E.K. Dzikowska, Wrocław 2004, p. 127. It does not pertain only to tendentiously nationalist literature (e.g. Roman Dmowski's novels). These patterns of somatic identity can also be found in J. Tuwim's early poetry, e.g. in *Symfonia wieków (Czyhanie na Boga)*, in which "a man fills the plan of history with war, revolution, violence", whereas a woman in the poetry is subject to "supervision and a doubled one at that", the power of public shame. See R. Cieślak, *Kobiecość i męskość. Problemy kulturowej tożsamości płci we wczesnej poezji skamandrytów*, in: *Tożsamość kulturowa i pogranicza identyfikacji*, eds I. Iwasiów, A. Krukowska, Szczecin 2005, p. 94.

[639] K. Jaskułowski, M. Parus-Jaskułowska, op. cit., p. 128. Monika Bednarczuk writes that in interwar doctrines of national culture, formulated from a nationalist perspective, the imperative of sexual purity appeared next to that of racial purity. M. Bednarczuk, op. cit., p. 244.

and experiences. Those principles manifest themselves in one's treatment of human corporeality, accompany intimate and official social practices, and explain one's attitude towards bodily autonomy – one's own and that of others. In his short fiction from the 1940s and 1950s, with the exception of the debut *Echa leśne* (discussed in the chapter "The Adventures of an Ideologist"), Tadeusz Różewicz used this code as a starting point for a moral discussion. The man in *Trucizna* [*Poison*] who intended to join the partisans in the forest sells a poison belonging to the organization and spends the money on visiting a prostitute (I 25–26). His sexual experience is marred by the fear of pain inflicted on the tortured body and, additionally, by remorse triggered by a sense of having acted disloyally towards his brothers in arms and breaking the conspiracy rules. The bodies of "two whores who sleep around with Germans" in *Spowiedź* [*Confession*] (I 53–55) also acquire a political significance. Executing those women is a "task" for armed men who regard it as something necessary and positive, justified by a higher cause. The private body, in the context of a struggle for the nation's physical survival, becomes a public cause and property, belonging to the political-biological community.[640] When it comes to their sexuality, women are "entangled in their corporeality", which is subject to ideologization, serving their social appropriation.[641] They carry the "burden of representation" (Nira Yuval-Davies) because nationalist ideology assigns them the role of "drawing a line between different national cultures, as well as the function of symbolic representatives of national identity" and dignity, for in this discourse the "cultural boundaries are constructed, for example, in terms of the proper behaviour" of both sexes.[642] Women's passive role in upholding a symbolic national identity traditionally implies that their sexual relations with strangers, especially with internal or external enemies

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[640] K. Jaskułowski, M. Parus-Jaskułowska, op. cit., p. 123.

[641] M. Janion, *Kobiety i duch inności*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 326–328.

[642] K. Jaskułowski, M. Parus-Jaskułowska, op. cit., p. 124.

of the nation, must be punished more severely than comparable relations of men.[643] The nationalist discourse of women's responsibility is undermined in Różewicz's short story immediately after the mention of the execution, when the partisans begin to crack broad jokes, in a semi-private tone, about the dead women's bodies. Both the first (patriotic) idiom and the second (sexist) one, though axiologically and stylistically different, boil down here to depersonalization of women's corporeality. Their juxtaposition produces grotesque effects, undermining the clarity of the executioners' arguments. This device is typical of Różewicz, who transforms the socially defined body into the incorrigible one, the body which is mundane, trivial, repulsive, comical, or grotesque, while, in fact, changing only the language of description and valuation used by the protagonists or the narrator.

It is casually, or almost in passing, that the narrator of *Kartki wydarte z "dziennika gliwickiego"* [*Pages Torn Out of "The Gliwice Journal"*] recalls an execution scene. The entry of "10 October 1955" describes the execution of "Wrona" as follows:

> As for "Wrona's" death sentence, what stayed with me were: the pit, the grave in yellow sand, the moment when he, instead of praying, relieved himself, taking off his pants clumsily. Then, as he was lying there, there was a sort of dark-ruby finger, almost black, springing out of his breast and hiding back in, with blood bubbling like a little spring through his clothes. Because he was still moving, X shot him in the face at close quarters, the bullet entering the skull just underneath the eye. I remember bending over to remove with a dry pine twig a clump of his brain off my trouser leg. Then I felt slightly sick, but was quickly all right again (III 323–324).

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[643] Ibid.

The narrator's language describes the experience of putting a human being to death in explicitly unheroic terms, applicable to any quotidian experience. Janusz Drzewucki interprets the colloquial, matter-of-fact tone of death descriptions in Różewicz's writing as stemming from the experience of someone who "lived through his own death, who looked death in the eye, who experienced the fluidity of the boundary between life and death".[644] The published journal fragment does not contain any persuasion justifying the execution in the name of the nation or a military-political organization, although the very term "death sentence" implies institutionalized punishment, in line with existing ethical norms, meted out and carried out in the name of some collective. Instead of such motives, the entry's narrator offers a commonsensical and merely hypothetical explanation: "He murdered his own sister with an axe and ran away to the 'forest'. That's what they said after the execution." The very term "execution", thus conceived, encompasses not only the administrative-linguistic procedures, masking the drastic aspects of killing a human being face to face, but also the image of annihilating the body as *abjectum*, linked to physiology, depersonalized and repulsive, inhuman, and – finally – of death justified by a *verdict* which is *arbitrary* in the etymological sense of the word (i.e. related to the words "arbiter" and "arbitration"). A legal killing of a person is also, besides the physical operation on the culprit's body, an act of strengthening an ethical-linguistic agreement, a social contract of sorts, relieving those who make decisions and pull the trigger of individual (moral and psychological) responsibility.[645]

Giorgio Agamben regards as typical of modernity the "transition from politics to biopolitics", the latter focusing not on social life, or *bios*, but on discursive interpretations of "naked life", or *zoe*, "to which

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[644] J. Drzewucki, op. cit., p. 52.
[645] The linguistic practices of handling a corpse are described by L.-V. Thomas. See L.-V. Thomas, *Trup. Od biologii do antropologii*, trans. K. Kocjan, Łódź 1991, p. 52.

man's all other political identities are reduced".[646] Totalitarian politics-
as-radicalization-of-modernity in the middle of the 20th century resulted
in depriving selected social groups and individuals of any other identity
but "naked life", the category serving as a foundation for a new political
order and a legal system reminiscent of a perennial state of emergency.[647]
This turn resulted in replacing the person or the individual with the body
as an object of politics (spoken and applied). The individual reduced to
such a state acquires an extraordinary identity, *homo sacer*, and is deprived
of all rights except those resulting from the rules and premises of manag-
ing "naked life" – race and sexual orientation, for example, in the Nazi
system, or reproduction in eugenic practices, or prisoners' slave labour in
Soviet labour camps.[648] "Naked life" as an identity is a product of biopo-
litical discourse, which is why it changes or loses its significance in other
somatic narratives.

This is, for example, the case of *Wycieczka do muzeum* [*A Trip to the
Museum*] (1958). The story's protagonist, a tour guide working for the
museum of a Nazi death camp, combines in his narrative "matter-of-fact
information, numbers, kilograms of clothing, women's hair, thousands
of shaving brushes, combs and bowls, millions of burned bodies" with
"moral and philosophical observations, homegrown aphorisms, quotes
from Polish classics" such as Sienkiewicz and Kraszewski, inappropriate
speculations which only underscore the incongruity between the phe-
nomenon and its description (I 172). "Sometimes, late in the evening,
dear ladies and gentlemen, I get pensive and begin to do my maths – four
million people were annihilated here – so I calculate and conclude that
if those people were stood one on top of another, those four million,

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[646] G. Jankowicz, P. Mościcki, *Projekt* homo sacer, in: G. Agamben, *Stan wyjątkowy. Homo sacer II, 1*, trans. M. Surma-Gawłowska, Kraków 2008, pp. 155–157.

[647] Ibid., p. 158.

[648] Ibid., p. 164.

we would get an altitude that might reach the heavenly bodies, and if they were stood side by side..." (I 170). Jacek Hugo-Bader in *Dziennik Kołymski* [*The Kolyma Journal*] employs a similar device:

> I calculated that if all the victims of the Kolyma camps from Stalin's days were laid one next to another, the road [the Kolyma road – WB] would be too short to accommodate them. Let's do the maths once again. 2025 kilometres is over two million metres. Divided by one metre and eighty centimetres, it comes down to one million, one hundred thousand men.[649]

One of the major problems of *Wycieczka do muzeum* and, more generally, of the Holocaust narrative is the modern "death discourse". The bio-arithmetic of victims in Różewicz's story exposes the protagonist's helplessness in the face of results of totalitarian practice, the methodical system of dehumanization and annihilation of people on a mass scale. The technical-economic details of the camp's operation are buttressed by the guide with his explanations, apparently out of concern that the "emergency state" idiom should prove meaningless, incomprehensible from the perspective of the tourists' quotidian experience, with only the symbolic or colloquial sense of human death capable of reaching them. The fallacy of the guide's reasoning is emphasized several times in the story, mostly through the characters' inadequate reactions and dialogues. "Naked life" cannot be translated into another discourse without erasing the fact that the camp's *homo sacer* was a state-of-emergency identity, one that precluded other definitions of man. Thus any attempt at describing humans by means of traditional political or martyrological narratives is

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[649] J. Hugo-Bader, *Dziennik kołymski*, Wołowiec 2011, pp. 18–19. The fragment was also published as a separate text in "Gazeta Wyborcza" under the title *Maszynka do mięsa* [*Meat Grinder*].

a mistake. The only option left for those who still try to tell the story in *Wycieczka do muzeum* – the guide and the prisoner – is to helplessly point out that, in fact, everything was totally different.

In special cases, the theme of a museum exhibit may be human death, as a rule physically absent from the premises, for in the museum discourse, Anna Wieczorkiewicz tells us, "the domain of death is being colonized, and the ruling discourse of the emerging empire is intended to cover everything, without leaving behind any wilderness enclaves that might harbour existential doubts".[650] The exception is death, which is regarded as a social or historical phenomenon of extraordinary significance. "This is, for example, the case with Holocaust museums, museums commemorating the martyrology of a nation, race, social group, or those featuring crimes against humanity".[651] The scholar emphasizes, after Julia Kristeva, that even in such exhibits it is not the images of death as such but everyday-use objects connected with the victims that invariably make the biggest impression due to their potential to appeal to the visitors' experience. Likewise, it is not the act of putting people to death, but the way of handling the corpses – cremation or industrial processing for commercial purposes – that proves most impressive. The museum game played between the tour guide and the visitors is, after all, not about interpreting the objects being exhibited, but, first and foremost, about the "horizon of understanding" of the receivers of the narrative/exposition. As Wieczorkiewicz argues,

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[650] A. Wieczorkiewicz, *Muzeum ludzkich ciał. Anatomia spojrzenia*, Gdańsk 2000, p. 268. The scholar writes: "The body discourse generated by museum institutions displays some peculiar characteristics. It is created in an authoritative manner, its expression frequently employing the Enlightenment formula of educating the public. The modern museum is a complex cultural construct, a medium of social, political, and ideological persuasion." Ibid., p. 16.

[651] Ibid., p. 268.

> [It is about] constantly going beyond the horizon, so that the horizon, through museum games, could march together with us, as it were. The self with all its interiority and externality gives rise to understanding, while the self's corporeality [experienced at the death museum – WB] becomes part and parcel of both the dialogic contact with the sight of other people's bodies and the understanding of one's own body.[652]

This "horizon" in Różewicz's story is marked out, among other things, by popular images of the Teutonic Knights/Germans, the body's "passion" in national martyrology, the stereotyped image of the Jew in his prayer shawl, the law of the land pertaining to the hanged persons, the stylistics of tourist behaviours, the down-to-earth family matters and private affairs. The visitors realize that they are watching an exhibit constructed after the war, which has been "captioned, dated, and annotated", not the real death camp. What is more, they note that the very exposition as such means nothing ("boarded-up windows and that's it"), so it takes someone to "show and tell how it was" (I 173) to make the site meaningful. As a result of this museum game, the visitors begin to comprehend the museum convention as a type of staging ("It has all been set up this way"), a game aimed to popularize the collective memory in line with the current historical-museum doctrine. The narrator-agent's focus in the story clearly shifts from the museum objects and their official interpretation (the guide's narrative) to the visitors' individual reactions – "the players' interpretive action", in Wieczorkiewicz's terms – which provide clues about their existential and cultural experiences of the body, nakedness, violence, hunger, empathy for the suffering and dramatic death of another human being, their sense of the value of life.[653] However, the "horizon

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[652] Ibid., p. 46.
[653] Ibid., p. 19.

of meaning" based on such experience is incompatible with the Holocaust phenomenon, because the awareness of the story's protagonists does not encompass a reflection on this extraordinary state of modern life, other than banalized martyrology or stereotyped common knowledge.

The usual "horizon of understanding", when it comes to death, clashes in Różewicz's story with the narrative of the body that has been dismembered, burned, treated like meat. "They say that once, after opening the bunker, the people were faced with the following picture… there was a corpse lying on the floor and next to him there was another one, in a half-lying position. The latter was holding in his hand his cellmate's liver. Death came to him at the moment of devouring what he had torn out of the other guy's body" (I 174–175). This excerpt is a reversal of common language practice. The concept of eaten flesh is always ambiguously suspended in between the concepts of corpse and meat, rhetorically separated. In typical language use the former is usually omitted.[654] Thomas confirms that in the linguistic usage

> we do not consume corpses, but eat meat […]. The passengers who survived the 1972 aeroplane crash in the Andes lived because they had eaten the flesh (*chair*) taken from the bodies (*corps*) of their fellow passengers – not because they'd eaten meat carved out of corpses […]; even when it comes to animals we resort to linguistic devices, listing the different carcass parts we consume.[655]

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[654] Associating a human corpse with meat may also serve the purposes of stigmatization and derisive depreciation. Mihail Sebastian wrote down in his journal, in the entry dated 4 February 1941, that the Jews murdered during a pogrom in Bucharest had been "hanged on slaughterhouse hooks instead of beef carcasses. To every corpse there was a tag attached that read: *kosher meat*." M. Sebastian, *Dziennik 1935–1944*, trans. J. Kotliński, Sejny 2006, p. 463.

[655] L.-V. Thomas, op. cit., p. 53.

By contrast, in the Różewicz protagonist's micro-narrative it is explicitly clear that the starved prisoner devours the corpse's liver at the very moment of his death, which eliminates the body-meat ambiguity, replacing it with unequivocality which is hard to bear. The language taboo has been flouted, but even this reinterpretation of the body's meaning, targeted at the visitors' emotions, fails to evoke the expected reaction. Towards the end of the "museum trip" someone simply declares: "I'm a bit hungry, you know, I wonder if there's a free lunch on the cards today" (I 176).[656] There is no idiom capable of simultaneously encompassing the act of devouring a human corpse and the mundane fact of eating bodies of other beings during a meal. The museum game is deceptive, because it does not result in the kind of interaction between the Holocaust memory and the experience of the "small stabilization" man that might change his perspective on life. The "horizon of meaning" of the story's protagonists remains unaffected, leaving the reader with a sense of misunderstanding and understatement, either masked by the museum mise-en-scene or "talked to death" by the colloquial idiom.

Rather than telling the story of the Holocaust, *Wycieczka do muzeum* talks about the mundane experience of life and the idea of the body confronted with the Holocaust memories in superficial or hopelessly fake ways via museum narratives and exhibits. Thus, the story's author does not call for a public, grandiose commemoration of World War Two victims, but for unadulterated awareness of post-Auschwitz existence, for its place within culture – once it became clear that we are

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[656] Jacek Łukasiewicz explains that Różewicz's story is not an accusation of the "man in the street" and his worldview. "The scorched earth after the war has been overgrown with new life (in both a physical and psychological sense). It may be good and bad, sublime and low, but, first and foremost, it is nondescript, middle-of-the-road. […] And nobody is profaning anything here, because the process as such – biological and historical alike – cannot be, in and of itself, a profanation of anything." J. Łukasiewicz, *O powiastkach z morałem*, op. cit., p. 86.

all invariably "potential carrion".[657] One of the recurrent metaphors in Różewicz's writing consists in identifying the human body with flesh and organic matter. The body of a sleeping partisan is thus described as a "chunk of flesh" (O 88), while lowlife people are "pieces of stinking flesh", "stinking buckets of muck" (O 85) and "piles of muck" (I 107). Similarly, the death camp hooks for human bodies (I 169), the meat wagon (I 199, II 140), the woman referred to as a "meat block" (I 87) or a "cut of meat" (I 218), the man made of "skin and flesh" (I 117), "bones, guts, fat" (I 146), with a mouth "resembling a beef brisket" (I 372) – all these associations imply the ultimate meaning of the Różewicz man's bodily identity, whereas the human body has the same billing as other bodies and objects. It is, simply put, an animal body, only arbitrarily and customarily distinguishable from meat which rots and eventually turns into matter. This is the conclusion arrived at by the titular protagonist of the long poem *Francis Bacon czyli Diego Velázquez na fotelu dentystycznym (Zawsze fragment)* [*Francis Bacon; or, Diego Velázquez in the Dentist Chair (Always the Fragment)*]:

> yes of course we are meat
> we are potential carrion
> whenever I go to a butcher's store
> I always wonder how astonishing it is
> that it's not me hanging on that hook
> it must be pure coincidence (IX 337).

The human condition reduced to the *zoe* state was not regarded by Różewicz as something unusual, a temporary deviation from life's norms, but as a permanent, ineffaceable situation pertaining not only to totali-

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[657] J. Drzewucki, op. cit., p. 69.

tarian stigmatization and killing of people following their dehumaniza-
tion, but also to the corporeal existence as such, i.e. an experience which
is liminal, subversive, and ultimately elusive for ethics. The biopolitical
"death" of civilized man's identity – though, in historical terms, particu-
larly linked to Nazism and Stalinism – paved the way for subsequent,
equally massive and unrelenting processes of reduction of the individu-
al's selfhood. The narrator-agent of *Przerwany egzamin* [*An Interrupted
Exam*] "died" many times because, among other reasons, having idol-
ized the body and material things, he allowed this "blind and ruthless"
god to "swallow, digest, and excrete" (I 221). The somatic observations
and associations in Różewicz's prose are accompanied by a permanent
sense of human physicality, mortality, physiology, and susceptibility to
disease and pain. The contemplation of a Parisian street in the story
W najpiękniejszym mieście świata [*In the World's Most Beautiful City*] is
concluded by images of death – individual demise and collective anni-
hilation in a Nazi camp. The nudes in the cityscape ("naked sluts") are
counterpointed by the painter's nude, M.'s self-portrait, in which she
paints "her hidden, innermost core harbouring a growing disease […],
the body divided into cells, nerve fibres, blood vessels", the body that
has been laid bare, exposed, and identified with an organism (I 147).[658]

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[658] A similar artistic experiment was also conducted by Alina Szapocznikow, who, as a former pris-
oner of a German death camp, had a number tattooed on her body. At the turn of the 1960s and
1970s the artist, suffering from cancer, created sculptures featuring bodily imprints and family
photographs, combining in the surrealist and pop-art convention the body's decomposition
with the disappearance of humans as individual persons. Kurz quotes in this context the words
of the sculptress, who claimed that "among all the manifestations of transience, the human body
is the most sensitive, singular source of all joy, all pain, and all truth – and that's because of its
ontological misery which is as irrevocable as it is – at the level of consciousness – completely
unacceptable". I. Kurz, *Topless*, op. cit., pp. 402–403. Różewicz employed the "Alina Szapocz-
nikow motif" in *Nożyk profesora* [*The Professor's Pocket Knife*], identifying the artist with a girl
riding on "cattle wagons / of the colour of liver and blood" headed for the Treblinka camp, dying
of hunger. T. Różewicz, *Nożyk profesora*, Wrocław 2001, pp. 8, 23–24. A commentary on this
fragment of the poem appears in the writer's conversation with Mieczysław Porębski, the poem's

The two images merge in the ambiguous body-meat opposition, wherein valuation signs are not distributed equally into what is human and what is inhuman. The painter Maria Jarema is also "a slim woman in a black sweater", and the sensuous singer on the stage is – which could be an echo of the existentialist body discourse – a "human apparatus" which, as a result of physical exertion, breaks out in sweat.[659]

Anna Wieczorkiewicz argues that the modern somatic game, the game of the body's visual representations, is "no longer played at the border between corporeality which is alluring and the one which is repulsive, but between flesh and meat".[660] Traditionally, in culture, there is a "clear-cut distinction between the stage and the laboratory-clinic, between flesh and meat", ignoring this division being regarded as breaching a taboo.[661] The history of crossing the boundary between the aesthetic or the emotional outlook on the body and the anatomical one, exposing the physiology of the human organism, begins with the popularization of the results of such examination techniques as the post-mortem examination, the microscopic examination, the surgical operation, and the X-ray fluoroscopy. Francis Bacon, "in whose footsteps the poet, as he himself

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"professor" (W 366). The literary characters of both artists – Jarema from *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata* and Szapocznikow from *Nożyk profesora* – are situated by Różewicz in the context of the Holocaust irrevocably altering the artist's somatic awareness.

[659] The question of the human body as an "apparatus" – an instrument of elementary experiences – is raised by Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel. See M. Drwięga, *Ciało człowieka. Studium antropologii filozoficznej*, Kraków 2005. Man as a "physiological machine" in Różewicz's poetry is discussed by Jan Marx, op. cit., p. 20.

[660] As in Jerzy Skolimowski's poem *Kobieta na ekranie* [*A Woman in the Screen*] (1958): "A long shot / Slender whiff / Oval motion / Full screen / Wispy trail / cutting through the eyes / A shape / flooding the hands / felt with hearing / The American shot (torso) / The body swells / into an exclamation mark / Medium closeup / and breaks / into a derisive smile / of the great makeup forger / Closeup / Wide skin pores / The closeup like a lancet / Flesh / Alien / Revolting / The end." Qtd in: A. Wieczorkiewicz, *Muzeum ludzkich ciał. Anatomia spojrzenia*, op. cit., pp. 43–44.

[661] Ibid., p. 45.

admits, he has been following for thirty years, and with whom he has been holding his biggest and most important debate – on art, on life, on the world",[662] said in a conversation with David Sylvester:

> Well, of course, we are meat, we are potential carcasses. If I go into a butcher's shop I always think it's surprising that I wasn't there instead of the animal. But using the meat in that particular way is possibly like the way one might use the spine, because we are constantly seeing images of the human body through x-ray photographs and that obviously does alter the ways by which one can use the body.[663]

It is from such an ambiguous perspective that Jules Michelet contemplates a woman's body, when, in 1849, looking at anatomical illustrations, he calls them "inner portraits of a person" that someone cared deeply about. Similarly, for Hans Castorp, the protagonist of Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, "the X-ray film, being the medium of a medical diagnosis, became a delightful inner portrait of Claudia, allowing him to penetrate into her core, hidden under the body's covering".[664] This look inside, into the corporeal human being, can be viewed as one of the reasons for the modern denaturalization of the quotidian, conventional image of the world. As a perspective on human beings it is unprecedented because it does not rely on metaphysical emotions or eschatological visions; it does not describe man's posthumous condition, nor does it of-

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[662] J. Drzewucki, op. cit., p. 69.

[663] D. Sylvester, *Rozmowy z Francisem Baconem. Brutalność faktu*, trans. M. Wasilewski, Poznań 1997, p. 46. The interview's text, taken from a BBC film recording from May 1966, was a basis for Michael Gill's documentary titled *Francis Bacon: Fragments of a Portrait*, aired by television on 18 September 1966. The interview was subsequently published under the title *From interviews with Francis Bacon by David Sylvester*, as part of the catalogue of the exhibition "Francis Bacon: Recent Paintings" (London 1967). Ibid., p. 201.

[664] A. Wieczorkiewicz, *Muzeum ludzkich ciał. Anatomia spojrzenia*, op. cit., p. 45.

fer any moral teachings, and is instead based on the awareness of man's physiological makeup and commonly accessible images of the human body's interior.

The human body in Bacon's paintings is for the writer "a carcass copulating carrion" which is presented at the liminal moment of transformation into a "lump of muscles and bones".[665] Just as the distorted or fragmented faces from the painter's portraits and self-portraits – for example, his 1949 *Heads*, *Study for Portrait No. 4* from the years 1956–1957, or the 1963 *Three Studies for the Portrait of Henrietta Moraes* – manifest the artist's despair and his sense of depersonalization, so do the unreconstructable, indistinguishable, or blurred faces of Różewicz's protagonists – superimposed upon each other, as it were – depict a decomposition of the individual's somatic identity under the impact of the modern, holistic experience of life and the body.

Several Embodiments of the Starveling

The protagonist of *Przerwany egzamin* is reminiscent of the Różewicz starveling. However, it is a starveling that suffers not from hunger but from insatiability, from excessive appetite, or, more precisely, from yielding to compulsory consumption which can never satisfy his craving for life, worldly experience, and wordly possessions. In the context of Różewicz's entire work, however, the starting point for the starveling theme is the word's literal meaning as operating in *Poradnik dziadka Pafnucego* [*Grandpa Pafnucy's Almanac*], a collection of several short humoresques about the everyday life of a Home Army forest unit that is constantly short on clothing, tuctufootwear, and vodka, of which fact the partisans keep complaining (E 63). This meaning is closest to the diction-

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[665] J. Drzewucki, op. cit., pp. 69–70.

ary one.[666] Another meaning of the Różewicz starveling can be linked to Żeromski's fiction, which is an implied point of reference for *Echa leśne* [*The Forest Echoes*]. Andrzej Mencwel cites one of Żeromski's letters in which the novelist states: "Only we are truly capable of evaluating what man's philosophical stone stands for, we – the former starvelings."[667] Similarly, Janaszek-Ivaničková, referring to representatives of early the 20ᵗʰ-century Polish intellectual elite (Stefan Żeromski, Stanisław Brzozowski, Wacław Nałkowski, and Ludwik Krzywicki, among others) – who did starve in their youth – as starvelings, borrowed the (self-definition) term from Żeromski's *Listy* [*Letters*]. Simply put, Żeromski combined in the creative intelligentsia's identity their memory of "going on an empty stomach" and their fascination with "Słowacki's melodious idiom", making them both part of the identity's modern condition.[668] This double meaning of the word was not unfamiliar to Różewicz. In his *Dziennik z partyzantki*, the entry dated 3 August 1944 reads: "Today I burned a copy of *Król-Duch*, it was lying under the cauldron with some fatback frying in it. Only you, Janusz, will understand that. The guy sitting next to me keeps squashing nits. We'll see what happens. I don't feel like writing. I am tormented by lice. Are they Dostoyevsky's lice from *Crime and Punishment*? No, they're just lice" (II 228). The entry, intended for the elder brother (also a poet-soldier), who gave Tadeusz a copy of Słowacki's book, gesticulatingly depicts the young writer's dilemmas, activating the corporeal and physiological components of his experience – as representative of his intellectual self-awareness as literary erudition. All things con-

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666 *Słownik języka polskiego* [*Dictionary of the Polish Language*] defines the starveling as follows: "Someone who is constantly hungry, has an insatiable craving for food, someone who does not get enough to eat, rarely: someone who starves". *Słownik języka polskiego*, vol. I, ed. M. Szymczak, Warszawa 1978.

667 A. Mencwel, *Przedwiośnie czy potop. Studium postaw polskich w XX wieku*, op. cit., p. 106.

668 H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, op. cit., p. 185.

sidered, adding one more potential meaning of the word – one that the writer was not unfamiliar with – may be apposite. Julian Przyboś, in his 1953 letter to Różewicz, used the word "starveling" in reference to Kornel Filipowicz, a young writer well known to both of them, rejoicing in the fact that, thanks to an agreement with his publisher, the Kraków-based author would be finally able to "bite into" the literary market (Ma 142). The ambiguity of the phrase "bite into" – which, in this case, has a social as well as a literary-professional sense – aptly renders the significance of the starveling motif. Thus contextualized, the starveling may stand for an author short on readers, artistic status, and, first and foremost – in line with the classic theme of the "starving artist" – for someone who is, simply, poor.

The character and motif of the starveling in Różewicz's drama, however, have, ultimately, a Kafkaesque provenance – traceable back to the short story *Ein Hungerkünstler*, whose title (literally: *A Hunger Artist*) emphasizes the problem of the modern artist's role and the situation of the arts.[669] This is precisely the meaning the writer employed in *Języki teatru* [*Languages of Theatre*], his conversation with Kazimierz Braun.[670] Małgorzata Klentak-Zabłocka explains the meaning of Kafka's starveling as follows:

The Polish title (*Głodomór*) of the story *Ein Hungerkünstler* is a little deceptive, as the Polish word, according to *Słownik Języka Polskiego*

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[669] Tadeusz Drewnowski identifies two dramas, *Odejście Głodomora* [*The Starveling's Departure*] (1979) and *The Trap* (1982), noting that in his commentaries on the former, Różewicz explores both meanings of the word "starveling": artistic and somatic. The commentaries, i.e. *Krótka rozprawa o głodomorach* [*A Short Treatise on Starvelings*] and *Z mojego warsztatu* [*On My Work*], printed together with the play also in the second edition of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, tell us that the writer came across Kafka's story in 1956. T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., pp. 282–283.

[670] K. Braun, T. Różewicz, *Języki teatru*, op. cit., p. 154.

[*The Dictionary of the Polish Language*], implies not so much the art of starving – which is what the original story refers to – but, rather, the constant craving for food of the title's protagonist. His need, however, is to abstain from food. In other words, as Politzer puts it, he has an "insatiable hunger for hunger" (Heinz Politzer, *Franz Kafka. Der Künstler*, Frankfurt/M. 1978, p. 466). "Ein Hungerkünstler", then, would translate as a "fasting or starvation artist", which could be rendered by the neologism "hungermaster".[671]

Admittedly, narrowly conceived, Kafka's starveling should be interpreted as a hunger artist, that is an insatiable writer, consciously cultivating his artistic "cravings". Broadly understood, however, the motif as such is inextricably connected with bodily identity and the individual's mundane experience, bringing to mind such texts by Kafka as *The Judgment* and *The Metamorphosis*. Gregor Samsa's transformation into an insect constitutes "an eruption of corporeality, flooding with a crushing, alien mass of unknown properties not only the protagonist's consciousness but also his real world".[672] Drastically transformed, but still his own, the Kafka protagonist's body makes him bid farewell to routine experience

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[671] M. Klentak-Zabłocka, *Słabość i bunt. O twórczości Franza Kafki w świetle Gombrowiczowskiej koncepcji "niedojrzałości"*, Toruń 2005, p. 17. Starving in Kafka's fiction has also a social and psychological meaning, because the starving individuals are alienated while the satiated or the eating ones do not experience alienation. "Generally speaking, one's willingness to receive food" is connected with "one's vitality and ability to be part of a given community […], the inability or conscious refusal to receive food is, by contrast, a metaphor of a profound dysfunction of the relation between the individual and his/her environment; it is an act of rebellion against the world as it is or as it is bound to be." Ibid., p. 123. The Kafkaesque contexts in Różewicz's work, mostly in his plays, are discussed, for example, by T. Drewnowski (*Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 282), A. Ubertowska (*Tadeusz Różewicz a literatura niemiecka*, op. cit., p. 66), P. Langemeyer, *Różewicza obrachunki Kafkowskie. Kilka uwag do sztuk* Odejście głodomora i Pułapka, in: *"Nasz nauczyciel Tadeusz". Tadeusz Różewicz i Niemcy*, eds A. Lawaty, M. Zybura, trans. J. Dąbrowski, Kraków 2003, p. 265; J. Potkański, op. cit., p. 34.

[672] M. Klentak-Zabłocka, op. cit., p. 111.

and the bourgeois consciousness of the integrated, self-identifying self. With time, this "rebellion of the body" encompasses his entire world, resulting in a profound and irrevocable "upheaval in daily life".[673]

Similarly, the Różewicz protagonist, recognizing in the post-war man "an animal", "carrion", or "meat", has to reconstruct himself and his world in full acknowledgement of this recognition, reinvent himself, as it were, after the total collapse of pre-existing identity projects – commonplace, bourgeois, cultural, humanist, etc. One of the phases of this reconstruction is the tragic worldview, the alienation from the familiar human image of the world, which does not complete his metamorphosis, though. The "dead man" in *Przerwany egzamin*, for whom "the most important thing in the whole universe" is his "corpse", needs "food" (I 221). Jan Potkański contrasts the Kafka hunger artist's asceticism with the hunger in *Odejście głodomora* [*The Starveling's Departure*], defined in its primary sense, i.e. one denoting malnutrition or, as a result of starvation, excessive food intake.[674] Not questioning this binary opposition, one could still argue that in Różewicz's prose from the 1960s and 1970s "hunger" is defined in terms of broadly conceived consumption – as hungering after another person's body or after material comfort, the cult of commodities and attractive looks, the appetite for pleasurable experiences: "even a razor, the ham of an eighteen-year-old, a leg, the boss' moustache, is a god" (I 221).[675] A starveling thus understood is "dead", i.e. he constitutes an

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[673] Ibid.

[674] J. Potkański, op. cit., pp. 34–35.

[675] Also in Różewicz's first Kafkaesque play, *Odejście Głodomora*, "hunger" and "feeding" have erotic undertones, among others (VI 199). Czesław Miłosz defined the term starveling in analogous terms, writing about the 20th-century civilizational improvement of living conditions among the lower classes as follows: "The masses are upwardly mobile everywhere, moving from villages to cities, learning to read and write, turning from starvelings scratching dirt for generations into the 'masses' craving for the movies, gadgets, entertainment and clothes." Cz. Miłosz, *Ziemia Ulro*, Kraków 1994, p. 34.

illusory being reduced not so much to his cravings as to cravings-needs produced by culture, the symbolic exchange, and social relations.

> Their [the dead people's – WB] numbers keep growing. Especially in big cities, on beaches, and in the mountains. They like contemplating scenic views, they admire nature, listen to light music. They eat not only with their mouths but also with their eyes and the entire surface of their skin. Nobody has written anything interesting about our dead yet. Watch them in stores, in restaurants, on trains (I 221).

The "deceased" in *Przerwany egzamin* approximates the elementary meaning of "starveling", denoting a person suffering from and dying of hunger. He dies symbolically, as a depersonalized and standardized identity, having been reduced – or having reduced himself – to a craving for consumption. Far from satisfying it, the excess of experiences, commodities and services on offer – really accessible or only "promised" – only intensifies the hunger. Neither consumption itself nor consumerist cravings can lead to the individual's genuine satisfaction, resulting, as they all do in Różewicz's texts, from mass management of human needs and the concomitant circulation of visual representations and offers rather than objects or experiences as such.[676]

The "deceased" has some Faustian characteristics as well. The human body as "carcass" in Różewicz's fiction has three points of reference: consumption (food), sexuality, and death. A schoolgirl reciting a poem in the short story *Róża* [*Rose*] is an erotic object, but the protag-

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[676] Focusing on the body and eroticism, Różewicz explained the phenomenon in an interview with Witold Zalewski as follows: "Despite the miraculous multiplication of the most gorgeous bodies by movies and television there is still sexual hunger in the modern world. Perhaps the ubiquitous and excessive whetting of the appetite became the source of the hunger. Apparently, nobody can be satisfied by mere images..." (W 36).

onist lusts after her body as if it was an anaesthetic for his fear of death. "I'd like to press my face against her face, her breasts, her cool smooth thighs, I'd like to swim, swim away into eternity with my face pressed against those thighs closed tight. It is the only boat in which I can sail across to the other side without any fear" (I 376). The Faustian motif – here denoting an old man, a renowned artist ("the Nestor of poets") lusting after a young woman – connected with the modernist Eros/ Thanatos figure corresponds to the feelings of emotional burnout, indifference to the world, loneliness, and depersonalization ("All the faces have merged into one huge face") expressed throughout the narrative. As a herald of fulfilment, the motif entails a utopian promise of sexual pleasure, phantasmatically elevated in modern Western culture above other experiences and "practices of the self" – the more the civilization's metaphysical sources seem dead, the more overvalued the pleasure. The story's title may refer to the flower the old poet gives to the beautiful girl or to the girl herself. Given the fact that the same name was given to the protagonist of *Tablica* (*Opadły liście z drzew*) [*The Signboard (The Leaves Have Fallen from the Trees)*], confined to a Jewish ghetto, the girl from Radomsko transported in *Nożyk profesora* to Treblinka, and Ruth-Róża, R.M. Rilke's daughter who committed suicide by filling her car with exhaust fumes (*Appendix dopisany przez "samo życie"*), the "afterlife" in *Róża* may also denote the spiritual condition of man and civilization after the Holocaust.[677]

The Consumption of Representations

Following in Jacek Kuroń's footsteps, the author of *Ciało i władza* [*The Body and Power*] argues that Communist Poland was home to

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[677] Also in his early poem *Róża* (from the volume *Unease*) the title refers to both: "Rose is a flower / or a dead girl's name" (VII 7). The poem was analysed by K. Kłosiński in the artile *Imię Róży*, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1999, no. 1.

a "consumerist society for the poor", with consumption functioning as an ever-elusive ideal rather than a real experience.[678] While in the West the accessibility of luxury goods testified to consumerist prosperity, in Communist Poland the purchase of even basic foodstuffs and everyday products would often prove nearly impossible. Różewicz's letters to the Nowosielskis, as well as his autobiographical and journalistic texts, contain traces of that experience. The writer described his problems with buying rationed meat, for example, in the sketch *Na dobre i złe zawsze z wami* [*For Good and Bad Always with You*] (Ma 295), and Gliwice stores appeared several times in his prose. It is not the run-of-the-mill state ceremony but the "Delikatesy" ["Delicatessen"] in *Świt wielkiej epoki* [*The Dawn of a Great Era*] that is an exceptional place, a "temple" where the socialist holiday is, out of necessity, celebrated by housewives who say that because of the anniversary "of their revolution" the store has been exceptionally well supplied with smoked sausage (I 373–374). As Iwona Kurz reminds us, Adam Zagajewski wrote in a 1970s poem: "Butcher shops – behold the museums of the new sensibility".[679] Presumably, the courts in those days must have also taken that "sensibility" into account when, in 1965, the judges sentenced to death the CEO of the Warsaw-based state company *Miejski Handel Mięsem* [*Urban Meat Trade*] who had been charged with administrative malpractice in the so-called meat scandal.[680] Kowalczyk argues that public opinion in Communist Poland was to a large extent shaped by the prices and accessibility of meat, as demonstrated, for example, by the collapse of the myth of Edward Gierek's economic success in "June 1976, when the

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[678] I. Kowalczyk, op. cit., p. 40.

[679] I. Kurz, *Konsumpcja: "coca-cola to jest to!"*, in: *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach*, op. cit., p. 154.

[680] Ibid., p. 155.

government decided to raise the prices" of meat products.[681] Meat was a "political" product because, after all, it was largely viewed as a foundation of the modern menu, accomplished in the 20th century only in well-developed countries with booming economies.[682]

The somatic problems of Różewicz's prose are contextualized by the government's social and economic policies, but also – as manifested, for example, in *Moja córeczka* – the mass, largely uncontrollable social phenomena of Communist Poland, such as anomie and migration to the cities, breaking rapport between parents and children as far as lifestyle is concerned, changing one's existential values or the idea of bodily shame, the nobilitation and popularization of erotic (hedonistic) discourse. One should add to the list the increasing – ever since the 1960s – fascination with the Western world or, rather, with its self-contradictory representation as a democratic, social, and market-materialistic "paradise on earth". The fascination manifested itself by the widespread demand for products manufactured in capitalist countries, accompanied by a cult of not only the products themselves but also their representations reproduced in films and the press, and subsequently on television. "Our little stabilization" in Różewicz's drama *The Witnesses* was also the time – as "Ona" ["She"] puts it – of citations in "Przekrój", the era of Western culture's rule manifested in a simplified, snobbish, and derivative form, popularized mostly by glossy magazines targeted for mass audiences.

The economic condition of socialist countries' citizens and the restraints on travelling abroad, combined with ever-increasing "import" of

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[681] I. Kowalczyk, op. cit., p. 41. Likewise, "The events of December 1970 (several dozen people were killed), which resulted in the ousting from office of 'Comrade Wiesław', were triggered by a workers' strike in response to raises in food prices (even up to 40%) announced on 12 December (and motivated by 'excessive demand')". I. Kurz, *Konsumpcja: "coca-cola to jest to!"*, op. cit., pp. 154–155.

[682] Ibid., p. 154.

popular (cinematic, television, literary, journalistic) representations of the West, endowed even the most humdrum and everyday merchandise with "special, sublimated quality, comparable to that ascribed to works of art or holy relics […], epiphanies of a better world, the paradise out of which the children of communism were expelled in Yalta".[683] One of the first impressions of any "middle-of-the-road" citizen of Communist Poland on his/her arrival in a big Western city – having been transported from a system grounded in the "economy of shortage to that of the economy of abundance"[684] – was the sense of experiencing bourgeois wealth, of saturation with objects and consumerist goods, an amazing plethora of everyday-use merchandise. This is how the protagonist of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* describes it:

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[683] J. Majmurek, *Pornodrogi "wolności"*, "Krytyka Polityczna" 2011, no. 27–28, p. 188. According to Kurz the "characteristics of Polish consumerist imagination", which had already materialized in the interwar years, include a "predilection for foreign merchandise, dislike of foreign capital, and the conviction that there are better markets abroad". I. Kurz, Konsumpcja: *"coca-cola to jest to!"*, op. cit., p. 147. Stalinism and post-war poverty combined with economic help for Europe through the UNRRA programme turned Western products, otherwise officially depreciated in the countries of real socialism, into synonyms of luxury. The "consumerist thaw" of 1956, connected with Nikita Khrushchev's promise that "The USSR will outrun America in the realm of consumption and individual households' equipment", paved the way for the discourse on consumerism rather than the phenomenon itself. Ibid., pp. 148–152. As for the political stance and discourse, Gomułka aimed to curb consumerist tendencies in Polish society, demonstrating at the same time his revolutionary penchant for ascetic lifestyle. By contrast, Edward Gierek's technocratic regime, whose attitude to consumption was like that of Western social democrats, was bent on modernizing the economy and opening the Polish markets to merchandise of capitalist origin. In reality, though, in Gomułka's days "one could buy a cheap washing machine or a car, get an apartment, after years of waiting, with a windowless kitchen, while television appeared in 50% of Polish households". The year 1970 did not change things radically. Even in the so-called "Gierek golden era", which only lasted from 1973 till 1975, the Polish economy remained a shortage one, ineffectively attempting to emulate the West. The symbols of that era included Coca-Cola, produced in Communist Poland since 1972, the Fiat 126p (since 1973), the modernization of the countryside, and, first and foremost, the "propaganda of success" which boosted consumerist tendencies in Polish society. The crash of Gierek's policies after 1975 resulted, among other things, from the socialist economy's inability to satisfy those consumerist cravings. Ibid., pp. 153–154.

[684] J. Majmurek, op. cit., p. 188.

I stopped in front of a huge window display. It was a paradise of women's shoes. For quite some time I contemplated the amazing diversity of colours, materials, and forms. All those little shoes lived a life of their own, bathed in the glaring light. Every single shoe seemed to constitute a separate world, as it were. Entire ranks, pyramids, alleys of women's shoes. The second window display was the children's world: tiny little shoes, little shoes. Tiny, teeny, small, real small, minuscule. The third display – men's shoes. I was standing in front of that display, staring at the world of shoes. […] large numbers, huge choice… I moved from one display to the next… (II 129).

The culture shock experienced by the protagonist of Różewicz's novel at the sight of a shopping mall in Rome not only results from his consciousness of a provincial, socialist Everyman, surprised by the sheer scope and diversity of Italian stores' commercial offer. The commonplace objects are, in his eyes, manifestations of Western civilization – on a par with aqueducts and art galleries. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, "Each of those objects bears the mark of the particular human activity it serves. Each one radiates human atmosphere […] The civilization I partake of exists for me, in self-evident ways, in the tools it creates".[685] As a man with intellectual ambitions, Różewicz's protagonist is prepared for an encounter with a civilization expressed through Rome's works of art and architecture and sites of cultural memory, but his tourist experiences imply an unexpected reality, as intriguing and ambiguous as it is commonplace, tiresome and unoriginal. As the writer himself pointed out, the protagonist of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* is "initiated" into the Western world not through the realms of culture and political freedom, but via a huge shopping mall,

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[685] M. Merleau-Ponty, pp. 370–371. Thus, according to the philospher, objects express what is human. Ibid., p. 344.

where the life of the modern metropolis and the consumerist society is concentrated (W 266).

Like the protagonist of *Śmierć*, the central characters of *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata*, *Strawiony*, and *Tarcza z pajęczyny* feel overwhelmed by an excess of commodities and services offered by Western economies; recognizing in their travelling experiences those that are typical, mediated by culture, commercialized or inauthentic, they operate amid reproductions and paraphrases of reality. The narrator-agent of *Strawiony*, during his stay in New York, admits that although he finds himself "among live, flesh-and-blood people", he wants to – and has to – "devour shadows" from television, films, newspapers, poems, and postcards. When, instead of a long-legged blonde, he is greeted by a "short, swarthy, stocky" woman, the jarring experience makes him realize that, within him, a clash was taking place between an American cover girl and a "real-life" one (II 270). As Michał Paweł Markowski puts it, "This is exactly what the modern idolatry of the body is all about: the body disappears and is resurrected as an image".[686] Modernity, unlike postmodernity, Markowski tells us, presupposed a "total representability of the body", the body being, as a rule, represented rather than experienced.[687] It became meaningful in this way because "the unwatched, unrepresented body means nothing, makes – literally – no sense whatsoever […]. The modern body, then, is being watched, or perhaps even voyeuristically peeped at; it has been reduced to an object – subject to scrutiny and the resultant metamorphosis into the represented body". Thus it becomes "either an object of perception or a concept".[688] Such control over the body is made possible on condition that the watching self is an agent

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[686] M.P. Markowski, *Nowoczesność: ciało niedoświadczone*, in: *Nowoczesność jako doświadczenie*, op. cit., pp. 82–83.

[687] Ibid., p. 90.

[688] Ibid., pp. 77, 81, 84.

that "places itself before the body, as its foundation, as its subject, as the factor that makes the body representable at all".[689] Just as the empirical body turns into a visible one, the object itself turning into its commercial image, so does the self-observer reduce himself/herself to a temporary watching relation. Aware of the fact that reflections replace their experiences, falsifying reality, the protagonists of Różewicz's travel narratives narcotically devour them. They remain under the impression that those representations are superimposed upon each other, become blurry, deformed, losing any connection with the very reality they were supposed to present, transform, or explain. The self participating in this exchange does not comprehend the world in terms of one's own personal experience and therefore fails to accomplish identity as an agent, remaining stuck instead in the circulation of images and meanings with which it can only constantly negotiate the transient, relative identity of the observer.

Critical images of the West in the literature of Communist Poland could be interpreted as instances of political correctness on the writer's part, or the Romantic/Wallenrodian mask of genuine affirmation of the free world behind the "iron curtain", or a construction of ideologized consciousness, shaped by Communist propaganda. However, if one defines the Różewicz protagonist as someone who is terrified by the 20th-century technocratic civilization and has lost trust in the European aesthetic tradition, then his distrust of bourgeois taste, prosperity, and stabilization begs for another explanation. In his interview with Kazimierz Braun, Różewicz confessed that his "problems do not acquire new forms as a result of changing location". In other words, the poet's "baggage" does not change "because of travel, a change of residence, or country".[690] It follows that if Różewicz's attitude to the West resulted from the ethical and

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[689]   Ibid., p. 87.
[690]   K. Braun, T. Różewicz, *Języki teatru*, op. cit., p. 187.

philosophical premises of his writing, then the diagnosis formulated in the aforementioned texts did not pertain to any given country or political system, but to the problems of modern civilization as such.

Contrasted with the homely reality of Communist Poland, experiences from New York, Rome, or Paris might have indeed acquired Arcadian undertones. In this context, it is all the more revealing that the welfare and easy living of their inhabitants did not soften the writer's criticism. Różewicz's autobiographical sketches, short stories, columns, and other narratives testify to the fact that the poet – unlike many Polish writers in those days – did not create an image of the West based on a sense of entitlement to his own, "rightful" reality that had been taken away from him in 1939 or 1945. His stance was closer to Miron Białoszewski's rather than Zbigniew Herbert's textualized experiences. As Marta Wyka rightly argues, the Różewicz man feels at home in the world of images and objects which are commonplace, imperfect, ugly, unattractive – or, in other words, in the material-sensory space of Communist Poland.

> It was difficult to come up with any identity among things manufactured by Communist Poland. Różewicz, however, did not give way under the pressure of those commonplace objects – he domesticated them instead. […] Man among objects remained the central character of Tadeusz Różewicz's fiction, and not only of his fiction.[691]

Those commonplace objects were at the same time testimonies to the ongoing changes in the perception of things as such. Ryszard K. Przybylski writes: "In the old days [objects – WB] were necessary and al-

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[691] M. Wyka, *Człowiek współczesny jest równoczesny*, "Tygodnik Powszechny" (the "Książki w Tygodniku" supplement) 2004, no. 21, p. 13. H. Vogler also writes about it (*Różewicz*, Warszawa 1969, p. 22).

most – like human beings – irreplaceable".[692] They were degraded by modernity: the mass and serial production techniques, their flimsiness and low price, and, first of all, their surplus.

Man would become hemmed in by objects, like the old woman from Różewicz's drama. The object had lost its hidden secret, once engendered by its creator and cultivated by all the subsequent owners. It had become an impediment, an obstacle, something that belongs in a junkyard, something easily replaceable, equal to another object, yet another piece of junk.[693] Attractive products in window displays in Rome or Paris were masking the trashy condition of modern things, whereas the flimsy commodities of real socialism – degraded from the start, unfinished and drab – were more open about it, making no bones about their trashy identity. As such, they were no less effective in reifying interpersonal relations, but – because their rule over humans resulted from the glaringly self-evident shortage economy of Communist Poland, not from the capitalist "must-have" status internalized by the individual – their rule was more explicit.[694]

The post-1956 fascination with ugliness and the revolting, physiological body was, most critics agree, a reaction to the ideological optimism of Stalinism and the style of the Socialist Realism art. However, the peculiar "turpism" of the author of *Moja córeczka* has yet another explanation. Różewicz's anti-aesthetics directed his gaze to "little dead

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[692] R.K. Przybylski, *Prześwit między przedmiotami*, in: *Człowiek i rzecz. O problemach reifikacji w literaturze, filozofii i sztuce*, op. cit., p. 350.

[693] Ibid.

[694] Karl Marx argued that poverty is not a natural phenomenon but a result of social injustice, being thus an inherently political issue. It follows that man can be liberated from poverty only by political means. Hannah Arendt adds that this liberation is illusory because it frees working people from their overlords only to make them subject to an even stronger oppressor, namely their "daily needs and cravings", that is forces in which necessity prompts and enslaves people, coercing them more than violence does. H. Arendt, *O rewolucji*, trans. M. Godyń, Warszawa 2003, p. 74.

creatures, rubbish, litter" (VIII 178). The narrator of *Przerwany egzamin*, the living "dead" man of the mid-20th century, is unable to reconstruct his identity because all of its sources have run symbolically dry, except for the body and physical objects (I 220–221). Whatever is still alive within the "deceased" is so thanks to the simplest, most commonplace things. It is these objects, Henryk Vogler writes, "the small, tangible, verifiable elements", that "restore his faith in the world".[695] Finally, if one looks at the problem from a biographical perspective, then making oneself at home among commonplace, low-quality objects – or "domesticating" them, as it were – may also in Różewicz's writing represent the writer's attachment to the materially poor world of his childhood. The horizon of things in his memoiristic narratives consists of several simple objects and furniture pieces that belonged to his family home: a small mirror, a table, an oil lamp, an inexpensive reproduction on the wall.[696] As the writer himself explained,

> Perhaps it was because of my small-town background that I was able to see those problems [of consumerism – WB] more clearly. When I found myself, all of a sudden, in Shanghai, New York, Naples, or Rome, I saw my immediate environment more clearly than the inhabitants of Rome, Naples, London, or New York (W 195).

A typical protagonist of Różewicz's prose, Marta Wyka adds, is "a man who by means of commonplace things, accessible to everyone" wants to "reconstruct the totality" of existence "hidden beyond objects".[697]

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[695]   H. Vogler, op. cit., p. 23. As the writer put it in a talk with A. Czerniawski, "To me, the mystery can be found in a matchbox or an apple lying on the table, or in a grain of salt. Reality is an epiphany. I do not hear voices from 'heavens'. Things talk to me" (W 166).

[696]   H. Vogler, *Tadeusz Różewicz*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 12–13.

[697]   M. Wyka, *Człowiek współczesny jest równoczesny*, op. cit., p. 13.

This is the totality of individual and generational experience, including also the down-to-earth, commodified aspect of life. Based on this premise, Wyka interprets the tenor of Różewicz's metaphor – "człowiek współczesny jest równoczesny" ["contemporary man is concurrent"] – as the writer's (concurrent) acceptance of both "beautiful, purifying artworks" and "commonplace things" typical of Communist Poland's living space. This explanation remains incomplete, though. The "concurrence" in question means also that the Różewicz man experiences all kinds of visual "representations" of reality (its depictions and reports) more often than the reality as such. Since the newspapers, radio, and television keep providing him with news from across the globe, he simultaneously partakes, however vicariously, of numerous phenomena or events, both in his immediate environment and anywhere else. The boundary between an experience and its description becomes blurred, unclear, which makes "making oneself at home" in a new environment more difficult, while the ever-increasing number of broadcast images that the self is bombarded with makes it more and more difficult for existence to form a coherent, comprehensible whole. It was already the avant-garde self, e.g. that of Futurist poetry, that experienced a comparable concurrence and multiplicity of sensations, but – while transmitting them simultaneously – that self would still not lose a fundamental sense of its own integrity.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed significant changes in the realms of social customs, mores, and lifestyle. The ideological identity of Communism, officially preached in Communist Poland and supported by totalitarian terror, had lost, after 1956, its status as a monopolistic social model. Despite its continuous endorsement of anti-Western propaganda, Poland's Communist regime could no longer isolate the elites and substantial segments of society from civilizational and cultural inspirations coming from democratic Europe and the United States. The citizens of the "First World" in those days experienced, or were capable of experiencing, women's eman-

cipation and sexual liberation, youth rebellion, the expansion of mass entertainment, and revolutionary technological progress accompanied by immediate implementation of its results in different areas of daily life.[698] Only some of those phenomena could have been achieved under Soviet-style socialism. The end of Stalinism, however, did translate for Poles into a genuine broadening of the intimate space, privacy, and free time, while also triggering the bourgeois, consumerist aspirations of the intelligentsia and white-collar workers. An opportunity to realize those aspirations appeared only in the second and third decade of Communist Poland, when the state had been institutionally and materially rebuilt following the destruction of the war, while the centrally managed industrial sector, which up till then had been subservient to the military goals of the Soviet Union, switched to production of civilian commodities. Needless to say, it is hard, on the basis of such a fragmentary and general description, to draw conclusions about the new model (pattern) of the individual's self-awareness, self-creation, or identity. In order to concretize this sketchy outline one could reach for analyses of the contemporaneous press. This was attempted by Justyna Jaworska in her essay on "the social mission of colour magazines". The ideal reader of "Przekrój", the scholar tells us,

> does not wear a jacket in the summer, but looks classy nevertheless; does not kiss women's hands, but always bows first, just in case. If the reader happens to be a woman, she chooses inexpensive but trendy clothes, in line with Parisian fashion, retaining a healthy self-ironic distance towards her (difficult) sartorial elegance. She skis, often complaining about her "empty wardrobe". She cuts out Picasso's repro-

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698 According to Cold War nomenclature, the "First World" included Western countries, most developed economically, technologically and civilizationally, the "Second World" encompassed socialist states, and the "Third World" were developing countries, e.g. those from Africa and Latin America. See M.W. Solarz, *Trzeci Świat. Zarys biografii pojęcia*, Warszawa 2009.

ductions from magazines and is capable of evaluating architectural proportions. She places a bunch of flowers in a cookie jar. She reads books, goes to the cinema and the theatre, comprehends abstract art, listens to jazz, does not shun the operetta. S/he dreams about his/her own car and is by no means ashamed of it. S/he daydreams about travelling, meanwhile collecting foreign stickers in order to satisfy his/her harmless snobbery. S/he knows how to match colours, is a big fan of Brigitte Bardot, keeps upgrading his/her professional skills, regardless of his/her sex, s/he knows how to cook one simple dish. S/he is interested in the world, has a sense of irony. Knows how to behave at a picnic, in the office, or a swanky hotel. Tries to be a civilized person, that is a person of culture in line with universal norms, without any national baggage or complexes. S/he thinks rationally. Today we would say that s/he tries to be a European.[699]

Jaworska readily admits that her reconstruction of the "ideal type" does contain several blanks. For example, the scholar skips over the "state advertisements" on the weekly's front pages, that is veiled declarations of political loyalty orchestrated across several otherwise different texts, adding in an aphoristic manner that Marian Eile's periodical "had to be a socialist magazine, wanted to be an avant-garde magazine, and unwittingly became a bourgeois one".[700] The latter term aptly renders the prudish character of the Gomułka era,[701] making references to bourgeois mores

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[699] J. Jaworska, *Cywilizacja "Przekroju". Misja obyczajowa w magazynie ilustrowanym*, Warszawa 2008, p. 265.

[700] Ibid., p. 270.

[701] On prudery in the culture of Communist Poland and the petit bourgeois morality of the 1960s, see A. Chałupnik, *Wychowanie seksualne: "sztuka kochania"*, in: *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach*, op. cit., pp. 422–423. This prudery had an official and relative character, because WW2 and the 1940s had already constituted a breakthrough in sexual mores. Thus, compared to pre-war days, intimate life in Communist Poland was not puritan.

perfectly justifiable including when it comes to the otherwise avant-garde/democratic "Przekrój". As Beata Łaciak tells us,

> an analysis of the colour magazines from the 1960s seems to prove beyond any doubt that eroticism as a subject matter was habitually shunned in those days; it does not even pop up in the context of marriage and family. […] The precious few articles in which sex is mentioned deal with promiscuous Western morality, dominated by a vulgarized approach to sex and the reduction of love to carnal pleasures only.[702]

These rules were observed even by periodicals focused on daily life and family matters, e.g. "Przyjaciółka", "Kobieta i Życie", "Zwierciadło". The situation changed only at the end of the decade. From 1967 on, Łaciak adds, the student weekly "ITD" would publish on a regular basis articles dealing with sexuality, and two years later Zbigniew Lew-Starowicz started there his regular column *Seksuolog radzi* [*Advice of a Sex Therapist*]. The 1970s witnessed some important changes. The newspapers would keep writing about the need for sexual education, citing medical and social arguments. Such education was eventually introduced, by way of an experiment, in 360 selected high schools in the mid-1970s. In 1978, Michalina Wisłocka published her immensely popular *Sztuka kochania* [*The Art of Loving*], previously published in instalments in "Perspektywy" and "Tygodnik Kulturalny" (1973–1974).[703] Western pornography in the form of glossy magazines may also have had a modernizing impact on Poles' erotic imagination. In the 1980s the magazines were supplemented by

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[702] B. Łaciak, *Obyczaje dotyczące ciała w Polsce okresu transformacji*, in: *Praktyki cielesne*, op. cit., p. 104.

[703] Ibid., pp. 104–105; A. Chałupnik, op. cit., p. 425.

video tapes, illegally brought into the country and circulated privately.[704]
These are but a few examples of a much broader phenomenon. Regarding
the 1970s as the first stage of the sexual revolution in Poland, Łaciak lists
among its symptoms the overcoming of an erotic taboo in the press, an
official interest in sexuality, publications on sexual education, the accept-
ance of not only the medical-social (procreation-oriented) perspective
on sex but also of hedonistic stances, awareness-raising educational cam-
paigns, and the younger generation's self-liberation from social restraints
in relations between the sexes.[705]

A literary symptom of the search for new forms of expressing one's
sexuality was, for example, the thematic issue of "Literatura na Świecie"
published in 1973, edited by Robert Stiller, and subtitled "Sex". The then
editor-in-chief, Wacław Sadkowski writes, in his sketch *Rewolucja sek-
sualna w piśmiennictwie polskim* [*Sexual Revolution in Polish Literature*]
that "the attitude to sexuality and its (verbal and literary) articulations,
to erotic customs, is a seismograph signalling the tensions and the scale
of egalitarian tendencies in society".[706] While in 1956, Sadkowski argues,
"the fight against prudery seemed to have been won, or at least intellec-
tually resolved", thirty years later, when the issue devoted entirely to the
work of Henry Miller had been published, it was no longer that obvious
– as the attack of the weekly "Stolica", charging "Literatura na Świecie"
with "depraving the nation",[707] demonstrates.

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[704] Ibid., p. 427.

[705] As Chałupnik emphasizes, the hedonistic approach to sex was by no means universally accepted.
A representative example of the sexuality-centred debate in those days is the "Polityka" columnist
Daniel Passent's polemic with Kinga Wiśniewska-Roszkowska, a "Tygodnik Powszechny" review-
er, outraged by "the vulgarization of the concept of love" in *Sztuka kochania*. The book, according
to the reviewer, focused "not on love but on the art of mutual arousal and achieving carnal satisfac-
tion". A. Chałupnik, op. cit., p. 425.

[706] W. Sadkowski, op. cit., p. 159.

[707] Ibid., pp. 155, 158.

Perhaps a more significant – than sexual emancipation – result of the changes of the 1970s was a rising appreciation of daily life: a growing concern with one's accommodation, health, and appearance.[708] That period has been referred to by Izabela Kowalczyk as "fake Westernization" since, the scholar argues, "pleasure was becoming increasingly accessible, but decidedly not so fuelled as it had been in truly consumerist cultures. […] The opening of the Western borders made it possible for more and more facial and body care products to appear on the market".[709] It was then that the identification of Western lifestyle and material comforts with authentic freedom took place. What is more, the products of capitalist industry were almost revered.[710] The economic and political crisis of the mid- and late 1970s led to a collapse of Gierek-style "Westernization". Then, beginning with the early 1980s, and especially after the introduction of martial law, "corporeality and sexuality were almost completely excluded from the public sphere and the realm of culture – it was the time of society's politicization", the ideologization of collective life in line with traditional patriarchal and patriotic models, which was marked, among other things, by an arbitrary division into "important" and "unimportant" matters.[711] In popular culture – film, television, fiction, reportage – eroticism was increasingly present but it was largely viewed as mere entertainment or a "non-serious" vent for "serious" collective emotions feared by the weakening Communist regime. The "non-serious" category in those days also encompassed women's social emancipation and non-normative sexual orientation.[712]

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[708] B. Łaciak, op. cit., p. 105.

[709] I. Kowalczyk, op. cit., p. 40.

[710] Ibid., p. 41.

[711] Ibid.

[712] See M. Janion, *Kobiety i duch inności*, op. cit.; K. Tomasik, *Gejerel. Mniejszości seksualne w PRL-u*, op. cit.

Obvious as it may seem, a disclaimer concerning different ways of "decoding the body", depending on the prevalent social system (discourse), may be in place at this point. Grzegorz Dziamski writes:

> One of the key differences between the East and the West, between the world of communism and that of capitalism, consisted in the fact that the same or very similar gestures or behaviours were decoded along totally different lines and thus acquired different meanings.[713]

The observation holds true for, say, the significance of pornography or, more generally, eroticism and representations of nudity. Modern "pornography was a form of political and social criticism", accentuating a materialistic worldview, vitalism, undermining the position of religious morality and social norms of feudalism.[714] 19th-century bourgeois culture altered its meaning, viewing pornography as entertainment and an instrument of sexual gratification, while at the same time stigmatizing it in moral terms. Anna Wieczorkiewicz reminds us that obscenities discovered in the ruins of ancient Pompeii and Herculaneum were also referred to as "pornography" and deemed morally perplexing by the contemporaneous aficionados of ancient culture because they violated the "rhetorical norm of corporeality".[715] The industrialization and massification of entertainment in the following century led to incorporating eroticism into the general consumptionist circulation, thus discovering its economic character and legalizing its presence in the official culture, especially after World War Two. Meanwhile, in socialist societies "pornography was still regarded as one of the symbols of

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[713] G. Dziamski, op. cit., p. 345.

[714] *Pornografia i kapitalizm*. Z Lechem M. Nijakowskim rozmawia Jakub Majmurek [*Pornography and Capitalism*. Jakub Majmurek talks to Lech M. Nijakowski], "Krytyka Polityczna" 2011, no. 27–28, p. 214.

[715] A. Wieczorkiewicz, *Muzeum ludzkich ciał. Anatomia spojrzenia*, op. cit., pp. 5–6.

the West's decadence and moral corruption. It was therefore a forbidden fruit".[716] If it did pop up, it would be invariably within ideological discourse – differentiating and stigmatizing. This, Lech M. Nijakowski argues, "resulted largely from the fact that Communist elites came from simple folk, whose rustic puritanism had been transferred to the public sphere".[717] This explanation is not entirely credible, though. Some of the Communist elites in Poland were of intellectual and urban origins, their puritanism in the 1960s resulting from petty bourgeois, rather than rural, aspirations and cultural patterns as well as from the official image of socialist rule. Communism as an ostensibly rationalist and emancipatory ideology imposed a scientist (and didactic) attitude towards corporeality and sexuality. Secondly, it would naturally distance itself from any "decadent" lifestyle, given the anti-bourgeois genealogy of Marxism and the labour movement. From the perspective of someone living during Poland's middle-Communist period, the modern rhetoric was an ambiguous phenomenon for it implied ideological and social claims of the state and the Church, while at the same time fitting in the consumerist utopia as a product of Western culture.

An element of the revolution in manners and morals in the West was, for example, the "emergence of first visible homosexual groups",[718] whereas in Communist Poland, active, recognizable homosexuals were

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[716] J. Majmurek, op. cit., p. 189.

[717] *Pornografia i kapitalizm*, op. cit., p. 216.

[718] B. Łaciak, op. cit., pp. 103, 106. As Giddens argues, the "coming-out" of homosexuality was a very important process with a huge significance for sexual life in general. Its distinguishing mark, the scholar tells us, was the popularization of the term "gay" by homosexuals themselves – an example of a "reflective process" consisting in taking up collective initiatives in order to adapt to the changing social environment. Gay cultural communities that were emerging in American metropoles and numerous European cities created a "new public image of homosexuality". At the same time, Giddens argues, at a more personal level, the word "gay" became an inspiration for an increasingly common treatment of sexuality as an aspect of the individual's identity. Everyone "has" some sort of sexuality, gay or not, which can be reflectively analysed, contemplated, and developed. See A. Giddens, *Przemiany intymności. Seksualność, miłość i erotyzm we współczesnych społeczeństwach*, op. cit., p. 25.

treated as social outcasts, excluded from the social "norm", or even blackmailed for political reasons.[719] In the wake of the modernizing debates and ideas, Kurz tells us, that penalization of homosexuality was lifted in 1932 in Polish criminal law, and the regulation was retained by the post-war lawmakers.[720] Still, restrictions on freedom of speech and civil rights resulted in the tabooing of that social group. Its emancipation was also impeded by the Catholic Church and public opinion, which dismissed open homoeroticism as such.[721] The conservative-religious project of masculinity and femininity, grounded in the bourgeois morality of real socialism in the Gomułka era, would invariably define as binary oppositions "the areas connected with gender identity. The traditional idea of the two mutually complementary sexes corresponded to the complementary definitions of their attributes. The discriminants of masculinity were invariably the opposites of what characterized femininity", the human body being perceived as endowed with one of the two, diametrically different sexes.[722] Androgynous or homosexual attributes and behaviours were officially excluded from that project, and placed way beyond the generally accepted social norm.[723] As Foucault explains, the growth of "biopower" in the 18th and 19th centuries led to the emergence of normalizing society and discourse, making sexu-

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[719] See K. Tomasik, *Gejerel. Mniejszości seksualne w PRL-u*, op. cit.

[720] I. Kurz, *Homoseksualizm: "niech nas zobaczą!"*, in: *Obyczaje polskie. Wiek XX w krótkich hasłach*, op. cit., p. 102. Homosexuality was a crime in some West European countries until the 1970s.

[721] Ibid., p. 103.

[722] D. Dzido, op. cit., p. 191.

[723] This, Beata Szulęcka tells us, is what the difference between the Stalinist era – during which the differences between the sexes were officially blurred and the cultural attributes of biological sex were limited – and the bourgeois "little stabilization" – wherein they were emphasized – amounts to, among other things. Szulęcka claims that in orthodox communism, sexuality was perceived in almost androgynous terms, as the Communist project of the New Man presupposed the overcoming of cultural conventions of sexuality and the 19th-century myth of the "sexual conflict". See B. Szulęcka, op. cit., pp. 27–28.

ality subject to state control because of its belonging to the realm of the public good of the population.[724] The norm in this realm expresses itself, firstly, by adapting human bodies and procreation to economic mechanisms, and, secondly, by the medicalization of eroticism, which results from the "biological responsibility" for the entire species.[725] The effects of applying sexual norms in public discourse included, among others, the stereotype of human beings' sexual nature and anti-nature, the "bashing of the peripheral sexual phenomena", and repression of homoeroticism and androgyny, regarded by such institutions as the state and the Church either as sins or transgressions against the law and morality or as something inherently unnatural. This should come as no surprise as both institutions "differentiated between the sexes and ordered their union" only for the purposes of procreation, and were quite strict about it.[726]

As one can infer from German Ritz's analyses, the emergence of homosexual experience in Różewicz's writing, connected with the figure, sexual orientation, and paintings of Francis Bacon, allowed the writer – thanks to its "cultural externality" – to problematize his vision of the bodily norm in Polish culture in non-conflicting ways.[727] This norm is

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[724] See M. Foucault, *Historia seksualności*, op. cit., p. 126.

[725] Ibid., pp. 105, 123.

[726] Ibid., pp. 40–45. Foucault writes that the "psychological, psychiatric, medical" category of homosexuality emerged as soon as it had been defined as a certain variant of sexual sensibility, a peculiar way of merging within the individual the masculine and feminine properties, rather than a type of sexual intercourse. Foucault points to the famous 1870 article on "contrary sexual feeling" by Westphal as the possible birthdate of the concept. Ibid., p. 44. Whereas sodomy was a deviation from man's sexual identity, homosexuality is an identity which is normalized, though still repressed.

[727] G. Ritz, *Między histerią a masochizmem. Utopijne koncepcje ciała mężczyzny*, w: *Codzienne, przedmiotowe, cielesne. Języki nowej wrażliwości w literaturze polskiej XX wieku*, op. cit., pp. 153–154. Still, because of *Marriage Blanc* the writer became an object of criticism from, among others, G. Herling-Grudziński and A. Sandauer, as well as Cardinal S. Wyszyński who on 9 May 1976, in his sermon delivered at St. Stanislaus church at Skałka in Kraków, condemned Różewicz's

directly addressed in the note *Miłość lesbijska w romantycznym przebraniu (Przygotowanie)* [*Lesbian Love in Romantic Costume (Preparations)*], devoted to Narcyza Żmichowska's *Poganka* [*A Pagan*] and the project of the novel's stage adaptation. Kurz reminds us that the interpretation of *Poganka* as a "record of homosexual love" was popularized in the interwar years by Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, who was inspired by the projects of modernization and emancipation.[728] The focus of Różewicz's sketch is not homoeroticism as such but its articulation in 19th-century Polish culture and that of the 1960s and 1970s, the latter still largely considered socially inappropriate and politically incorrect. The title's "romantic costume" is a type of sexual subversion (exchanging an image of one type of sexual desire for another, or the masculine role for the feminine one, and vice versa) characteristic of Victorian and modernist cultures, in which any direct staging of a homoerotic relationship was unthinkable and – the narrator concludes – it has remained so until "this day" (III 208). The

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drama and J. Grotowski's *Apocalypsis cum figuris* for their stance on family, marriage, morality, and Christian tradition. See T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., pp. 17–18. In the 1960s and 1970s the works that evoked negative reactions from the Episcopate or the Prelate included J. Kawalerowicz's film *Matka Joanna od Aniołów*, W. Terlecki's play *Odpocznij po biegu*, A. Wajda's film *Wesele*, and J. Rybkowski's TV series *Chłopi*. See A.L. Sowa, op. cit., p. 318. Commenting on the charges, Różewicz jokingly introduced himself in a letter to J. Nowosielski as "the author of *Marriage Blanc*... which is depraving the nation" (Ko 229), and in his interview with R. Jarocki he pointed to the impact of the Prelate's critique in the context of the "folk" axiological system: "Cardinal Wyszyński's sermon was heard by then-housekeeper of the Jarocki family, Anielcia, if I remember correctly. She was a Silesian, a very religious person. I guess she kind of liked me. [...] I was upset by the fact that the prelate-cardinal's sermon had completely changed my image in her mind" (W 283). The state of the contemporaneous journalistic and educational debate on eroticism in Polish culture was discussed by Jerzy Jarzębski in his sketch *Krajobraz antypornografii* [*The Landscape of Antipornography*]. The scholar cites the ideological definition of pornography, propagated, for example, by Jan Dobraczyński, a nationalist-Catholic writer who claimed that it was not the openly pornographic works, but those which "present a world subjugated to laws sanctioning erotic disorder", that most undermine the principles of Christian ethics. J. Jastrzębski, *Krajobraz Antypornografii*, "Odra" 1976, no. 4, p. 48.

[728] I. Kurz, *Homoseksualizm: "niech nas zobaczą!"*, op. cit., p. 102.

note's author does not diagnose any bans on problematizing homoeroticism in Communist Poland of his day, but, to the contrary, those on its representations and visualizations, which were subject to a stricter social control.[729] Homosexuality as a subject for rational discourse – medical, philosophical, or literary – was not unmentionable in those days. However, as an expression of the individual's sexual orientation manifested in public situations it violated the prevalent social norm linked to the then-dominant prudish image of cultural identity.[730] What seemed to threaten the norm was not the critical analysis of the phenomenon but, rather, the "visualization" of homoerotic behaviour in film, drama, novels, or colour magazines because it touched upon the most deeply rooted, almost knee-jerk forms of socially manifested identification with sexual norms.[731]

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* encompasses the most important somatic discourses of Różewicz's prose: from medical and rational narrative, through bourgeois and "adventurous" attitudes to eroticism, the polemic with gender norms, prostitution, and pornography, a reflection on the transformations of ideals of femininity and masculinity, all the way to a critical diagnosis of the body's function in the Catholic social teaching and the Western world as an

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[729] I do not mean bureaucratic control only. Ursula Phillips writes that Różewicz must have been aware of the fact that Polish society was not yet ready to embrace the image of lesbian love on stage. See U. Phillips, *Narcyza Żmichowska. Feminizm i religia*, trans. K. Bojarska, Warszawa 2008, pp. 22–23.

[730] Krzysztof Tomasik points out that in Communist Poland cinemas would not show Western movies featuring gay and lesbian eroticism, but in the 1980s the very same movies were discussed in Polish film magazines. K. Tomasik, *Gejerel. Mniejszości seksualne w PRL-u*, op. cit., p. 207.

[731] Judith Butler argues that despite their semblance of naturalness, sexual orientation and gender function as externally imposed roles, institutionalized performative acts that create the individual's identity within the framework of currently binding social norms and cultural patterns. Consequently, any subversive staging of sexual identity undermines the social and symbolic mechanism of the community's domination over the individual. See J. Butler, *Uwikłani w płeć. Feminizm i polityka tożsamości*, trans. K. Krasuska, Warszawa 2008.

accessible commodity and product of mass culture. The novel's narrator-agent employs, for example, rational reasoning, noting with satisfaction that "we have lived to see the days when these matters are dealt with in a human way and the bodily realm is the realm of knowledge" (II 164).[732] He contrasts sexual morality motivated by superstition, cultural, or religious factors with one grounded in commonsensical and medical premises. It is in this Enlightenment-like opposition of superstition and reason that the narrator-agent of *Śmierć* finds an element of his identity. Soliloquizing on the human body, he presents himself as a modern and tolerant person. It is of little importance that the narrator-agent's arguments are incoherent and formulaic, while his reconstruction of contending stances seems biased. The key element in the construction of the self is the (self-)persuasive efficacy rather than the consistency of the reasoning's logic. The tolerant attitude towards bodily matters is part and parcel of the narrator's rational worldview, but it becomes the source of the identity outlined in the text only after it differentiates itself from other discourses on manners and morality.

The androgynous sculpture of the sleeping youth in a Roman museum, "L'Ermafrodito dormiente", intriguing to the protagonist of *Śmierć* as an embodiment of the "mystique of art", serves, among others, the purpose of raising the topic of the obvious, dichotomous sexual norm, formed by religion, traditional upbringing, the habits and stereotyped thinking of "us, the normal people" (II 205–206). A norm thus construed ("brave boys in uniform") turns against the cultural model of masculinity, becoming entangled in the myth of the military male camaraderie with its affirmation of rakishness and unambiguity. As Tomasz Tomasik argues,

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[732] In his 1972 column Różewicz explains it in similar terms: "In my opinion it all went wrong the moment this entire beautiful realm of the body, 'sex', and earthly love had been given over to the night, sin, devil, etc. It seems to me that too many things were done 'in the dark', hence the delusions, diseases, neuroses, and even rape and crime" (Ma 31).

the experience of war in Różewicz's writing is "the first and at the same time most important event that had a disintegrating impact on masculine identity".[733] This is, indeed, how one can interpret that part of the novel. Masculinity as an identity bereft of romantic valour is here equivalent to blunt boyishness, an identity which is commonplace, vulgar, and functioning as something that can be taken for granted – that is, logically speaking, an anti-identity, the opposite of uniqueness and peculiarity. The narrator displays this state of heterosexual (self-)identification, employing colloquial language ("a guy is a guy, and a broad is a broad") and searching for its alternative in the Platonic tradition ("the ancients understood this dual nature of man") – intelligible as a modernist ciphertext for members of the cultural community that the narrator-agent addresses ("Please have a good look around"). Likewise, a pornographic brochure found on a park bench, with scenes featuring exclusively women (naked women who "play" with their "hands, feet, thighs, breasts, buttocks, bellies, mouths, noses") connotes "Plato's times" and the man as an already dethroned "lord of creation" to the narrator (II 185).[734]

The Platonic tradition kept the idea of androgyny as a variant of the universal model of a sexual union of two people, including heterosexual, homosexual, and lesbian relationships. Thus, up to a point, it would not offer any subversive meanings.[735] Such meanings became commonplace in the 19th-century philosophical, social, and medical discourse, when androgyny was given the status of either symbolic transgression or deviation (degeneration), or that of anti-social condition, in conflict

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[733] T. Tomasik, *Męskość bez męstwa. Mężczyzna jako antybohater Różewicza*, in: *Ewangelia odrzuconego. Szkice w 90. rocznicę urodzin Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 439.

[734] The topos of Plato as a signal of homosexual themes in the culture of Communist Poland is also noted by K. Tomasik, *Gejerel. Mniejszości seksualne w PRL-u*, op. cit.

[735] See M. Lizurej, *Mit androgyne – wzór łamania barier płci. Teoria* queer *wobec powieści Olgi Tokarczuk* Dom dzienny, dom nocny, in: *Zrozumieć płeć. Studia interdyscyplinarne II*, op. cit., p. 520.

with the best interests of family and procreation.[736] The emancipation of diverse orientations and the sexual revolution of the mid-20th century, however, caused non-normative gender identities to resurface socially as authentic identifications that would become again models for the self's construction of sexuality, now regarded as intrinsically arbitrary or ambiguous.[737] Szczukowski claims that the character of the hermaphrodite in Różewicz's novel, while transgressively problematizing – though not altogether abolishing – the binary sexual opposition, in fact stands for the "craving for androgynous completeness".[738] This is a debatable point, though. Given the degradation of art's identity-generating role in *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*, "L'Ermafrodito dormiente" as an identity pattern does not seem, after all, to be an articulation of the authentic self, remaining merely yet another image-association in the digressive monologue of the narrator who continuously, but ineffectively, negotiates – in the name of his imaginary uniqueness –what is typical, normal, deeply rooted, and considered relevant in culture. Therefore, the contemplation of the hermaphrodite figure does not have to translate into a desire for the androgynous completeness, as any cultural totality seems suspect in the Różewicz text. It may, however, be an expression of a need for an exceptional, subjective encounter with art, one that would transcend in-

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[736] Giddens writes that psycho-biological predispositions and physical traits eventually became, as a result of the emergence of modern institutions, to an ever-greater degree, subject to "social intervention". Thus, Giddens tells us, the invention of "deviation" consisted in the socialization of otherwise diverse attributes and characteristics, such as "poverty, vagrancy, and madness", that had been once considered "God-given", natural parameters of human existence. Once socially defined, deviation was, by the same token, separated from mainstream activities of "normal" human beings. See A. Giddens, *Przemiany intymności. Seksualność, miłość i erotyzm we współczesnych społeczeństwach*, op. cit., p. 207. In a similar manner, homosexuality and hermaphroditism were also separated from "normal" sexual identity, one that was socially displayed and valuated.

[737] Giddens demonstrates this ambiguity, pointing to Alfred Kinsey's research, whose conclusion was that only some "50% of all Americans" included men who were exclusively heterosexual, i.e. without any homoerotic desires whatsoever. Ibid., p. 24.

[738] D. Szczukowski, op. cit., p. 96.

strumental, knee-jerk interpretations of artworks, referring only to those model representations of man whose parameters remain in line with the existing norms of body and gender socialization.

Anthony Giddens offers several explanations for the overrepresentation of eroticism in modern culture. Following in Foucault's footsteps, the sociologist argues, though not without inserting some disclaimers, that the excess is accountable for by a transition from the capitalist order, based on labour, discipline, and asceticism, to an order grounded in "consumerism" and thus "hedonism". Viewed from a Freudian perspective, in turn, sex does play a revealing role, offering, Giddens argues, the "truth" about modern man. Finally, the omnipresence of eroticism is traceable to the compulsive character of today's erotic behaviours, addiction to pornography, smutty magazines, films, and other media products, as well as the frenetic pursuit of sexual experience.[739] The main reason behind the phenomenon, though, is, according to Giddens, women's social emancipation. The traditional 19th-century norm would limit their erotic needs, imposing instead the masculine, heterosexual pattern of sensibility and purposefulness of sexual behaviours. Its negation, that is a rejection of the biological (and also religious) justification for the norm, led to a recognition of diverse sexual proclivities followed by legitimization within culture of their role in the process of defining the modern individual's identity.[740] But the brochure found by the protagonist of *Śmierć*, despite all appearances to the contrary, does not really dethrone male domination in the realm of sex. The illustrations' homoerotic form notwithstanding, the naked women's bodies in promiscuous poses are typical projections of male desire (male erotic fantasies), not only allowed in but almost built

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[739] See A. Giddens, *Przemiany intymności. Seksualność, miłość i erotyzm we współczesnych społeczeństwach*, op. cit., pp. 209–211.

[740] Ibid., pp. 211–212.

into the economic system and culture of the Western city dweller.[741] The erotization of urban space and pornography had lost its subversive potential, just as women's and sexual minorities' emancipation in manners and morals had been turned into an offer of standard self-actualization. The hermaphrodite as a "closed system" is situated, after all, beyond any social relation between the individual and the satisfaction offered by modern culture which incorporates nudity and sex drive into the market economy. The sleeping youth's androgynous body expresses tautological perfection and indifference towards consumption-based sexual identity. The price for this kind of perfection, though, is isolation, immobilization, and the state of oneiric detachment from reality. Thus contextualized, the rapture and satisfaction on the part of the Różewicz protagonist seem all the more ambiguous.

A similar situation involving commodification of the body and sexuality is addressed by the narrator of *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata*, who regards a strolling girl as an offer, an exhibit, and an erotic animal in the cityscape, a promise of sensual satisfaction:

> Gothic cathedrals, cars, paintings, Blacks, columns, window displays were at that moment a mere set dressing, décor. It all bounced from that ass as if from a shield. The girl's buttocks were engaged in a dialogue between themselves. Full of meaning, perfect. The mane of red hair forged in copper promised an animal covered with red fur (I 156).

The woman thus perceived is probably a prostitute, the perfect embodiment of the commodity-symbolic economics that the modern body is subject to. Not only because the body thus construed needs more and

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[741] Erotic situations between women were perceived also by the 1970s and 1980s film criticism of Communist Poland often as "kitschy Western fodder for bored bourgeois males". K. Tomasik, *Gejerel. Mniejszości seksualne w PRL-u*, op. cit., pp. 190–191.

more room within the realm of civilization and the market economy, but also because, once turned into an image and fragmented into pieces, it begins to function in social communication as a privileged way of experiencing the world and projecting the individual's somatic identity. As Wieczorkiewicz puts it, when "everybody is obligated to seek for his/her body the form that is in line with the existing canons", the way of presenting one's body results from negotiations within the framework of the prevalent discourse – ethnic, ideological, aesthetic, medical, or religious.

> In the course of those negotiations special recommendations are produced, aimed at helping people work on the project of their own bodies. This project is in fact a vision of individual identity. […] The body that nature gives us is only a starting point for form-creating work that is our duty. When the final product (appearance) is ready for public display, one can gain more self-confidence in thinking about oneself as an individual. […] The storage space for all the various means of achieving such definitions of identity is supposedly the consumerist culture. Modern consumption is ambiguous – it can be interpreted as a site of manipulation of the passive client, but also as the realm of human self-creation.[742]

The girl's body from the story *W najpiękniejszym mieście świata*, fragmented by the male gaze, is engaged in a dialogue with the man in question and with itself. The woman, within the framework of this particular bodily practice, has to adapt to the somatic pattern which, though culture-generated, is internalized by the individual, the process referred to by Baudrillard as "succumbing to one's narcissistic ideal […], a libidinal

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[742] A. Wieczorkiewicz, *Muzeum ludzkich ciał. Anatomia spojrzenia*, op. cit., p. 195.

casting of oneself" in line with the rules imposed by it.[743] Forced to copy the pattern and manifest the copying itself (through her body), she closes herself as a somatic totality within a system of reflections. This holds true for men as well, whose corporeality in Różewicz's writing is defined by the norm of aesthetic-heroic masculinity, imposing on them the pattern of "clean, clean-shaven, good guys in uniform" – like in the story *Jego honor* (O 85) and the drama *Do piachu* (specifically the Ułan character). At the same time, however, the norm is denigrated and questioned in various ways as a symbolic, integral whole. Such "pure" masculinity is grounded in the cultural role of a soldier which, confronted with the day-to-day reality of military life in the forest, acquires caricatural – or even ideologically alien and hostile – characteristics. First and foremost, however, it connotes a fake façade, or a set dressing, as it were, detached from the scatological realities of war. This kind of idealized, literary image of "beautiful death" in *Tablica* is immediately countered by a memory of "another book", presenting war as a generational experience of the protagonist's peers, who collectively visit a military brothel (O 23).[744] Instead of sublime initiation into male adulthood there is fear and humiliation; instead of eroticism we have organized, collective sexual gratification which turns literary knights into common soldiers; and instead of attaining the aesthetic and heroic ideal there is physiology, subject to administrative control and stripped of illusions.

This theme in Różewicz's prose invariably invokes the problem of "flesh" – both in the sense of the animal carcass intended for consumption and the human body, the corpse. The boundary between the two, however, is blurry – especially when viewed through the lens of war experience, when the human body becomes a potential carcass. The partisan's

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[743] J. Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 142.

[744] The military brothel is a recurrent motif in interwar pacifist fiction and featured, among others, in Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk* and E.M. Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

body is a "piece of flesh", of live matter, because you can "stick your bayonet into it" (O 88). This kind of reification acquires a new meaning in *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*, becoming the only proof of individual identity. The corpse as a thing identical with itself breaks out of the vicious circle of the individual's never-ending identification with images, biological death interrupting his/her pursuit of the narcissistic ideal by giving the dead person the social and cultural status of the "deceased".[745] Masculinity, insofar as it is incorporated into the modern symbolic exchange, remains a site of manipulation and self-creation wherein men are both subjects and objects. Although, in relation to the images of the female body – extensively foregrounded in the social space – male sexual identity does acquire a frame of reference and confirmation, it is still only a cultural quote featuring the traditional gender norm. The woman reified as an image, fragmented, intended for entertainment, sold in reproductions, reduced to the colour surface of a glossy magazine or the utilized triviality of pornography and prostitution, does not affirm any essential masculinity, but merely demonstrates its market value, the temporary potential of her participation in the mass consumptionist circulation. The protagonist of *Śmierć*, discovering within himself a sense of detachment from the "normal" boy-in-uniform and the former "lord of creation" on the one hand, and the starveling – fed, but never satiated by, images of the body and promises of sexual experience – on the other, finds his ideal (model) in the androgynous completeness of the work of art only momentarily, because in the museum game that his entire Rome peregrination constitutes, identity is a fleeting state – non-committal, experienced on a par with tourist impressions and associations, childhood memories, and transient perceptions of the world "close to the ground" (II 206).

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[745]   J. Baudrillard, op. cit., p. 211.

Identity Embodied and Represented

The individual's modern identity is a primarily biographical narrative. As a "technique of the self", this narrative presumes the co-existence of one's personal story and discussions of historical, social, and cultural phenomena, which as a rule is viewed through the lens of the individual's existence and corporeal, day-to-day experience. If we regard Rousseau's "autobiographical" texts as a model for this kind of identity (identity narrative), then one cannot but conclude that insofar as Tadeusz Różewicz refers, in structural terms, to this type of writing, his idea of authenticity is nevertheless substantially different from the Genevan philosopher's. That it is not is only due to the fact that any presupposition of man's primordial innocence would lack credibility – or any usefulness, for that matter – in Różewicz's world, but also because it is the very cultural and linguistic means of expression available to the modern identity-searching individual that can no longer boast such innocence. The self in his prose is threatened with depersonalization insofar as the "text of life" approximates the form of a finished, literary totality. Like Rousseau, who eventually concluded that the authentic self could only be self-discovered, which entails giving up any hope of attaining an impossible community of agency-endowed individuals, Różewicz also seems to believe that the genuine self can be articulated only temporarily, each attempt being invariably different and unique. His "journal entries", notes, letters, newspaper columns, travel writing and metaliterary essays, in sum the "impure" narrative forms, are all generic manifestations of that writing-existential strategy. Each of these forms signals the contingent, trial-run status of any "autobiographical" story, by ordering in its own unique way a chain of biographical events and experiences, giving them different meanings when contextualized in philosophical, political, or social terms. Each new text rearranges this order, completing and perfecting the "autobiography" in an attempt at its arbitrary fullness and truthfulness.

Still, this kind of temporary order, stripped, as it were, of any higher artistic and cognitive legitimacy, remains the only "totality" accessible to the Różewicz man, the only point of reference that makes all other totalities seem secondary, fake, obsolete, or abstract.

In Różewicz's prose, this fluid and equivocal form of "autobiography" is also a function of bodily identity. Modern bodily consciousness situates it at the border of subjective and objective being, of an integral whole and a collection of parts, of the intimate and the public sphere, empirical experience and representation, intrinsic value and commodity. The ambiguity of corporeality can be contextualized in a number of ways, but viewed through the lens of this book's premises what seems particularly relevant is its social, historical, cultural, and linguistic aspect. One's own body simultaneously partaking of a collectively shared reality is an instrument of defining the relation between the individual on the one hand and other people and the world on the other. In Różewicz's writing such a medium is the face in particular, which serves not only the purpose of identifying another person but also that of reconstructing the self, or even diagnosing the societal organism, as it is through individual actions that the face's anatomopolitical power over the human body actualizes itself. With the ongoing civilizational progress, the human face has been increasingly turning into the "face of the millions", more frequently expressing the omnipresent and universally concurrent reality of the mass media and popular culture than one's own, unique, individual experience.

Individual bodily experience and its very idea, verbalization and imagery are all historical. Contrasted with the Socialist Realist canon of physical appearance and man's somatic functions, even small, irrelevant concessions characterizing the corporeality of some of Różewicz's characters featured in *Kartki z Węgier* seem to undermine the ideals of youth, physical fitness, and typicalness binding for representations of the body

in those days. What can be viewed as an exception in the Hungarian reportages becomes routinely present in Różewicz's prose, beginning with the collection *Uśmiechy*, which features comical and commonplace characters made to look more realistic through their bodily and physiological reactions, specific needs, habits, or defects. The author of *Moja córeczka* would not violate the somatic norm merely for humorous or grotesque effect. The protagonist of that mini-novel from the "little stabilization" days meets – to repeat – several times with Brudas, the two men constituting the traditional binary opposition of old-fashioned bourgeois neatness and repulsive appearance of the poor street peddler, a beggar, almost a degenerate. The opposition turns out, at the end of the novel, to be relative not only because the symmetry of opulence and indigence is reversible within the framework of the topos employed by the writer, but also because the "melodramatic" social world of *Moja córeczka* has – indeed, has to have – its dark, immoral side which completes the representation of reality with its equally conventional turpist reverse.

At this point it may be in place to mention also those Różewicz narratives from the 1950s and 1960s in which the exchange or verification of somatic experiences takes place during linguistic operations, with individuals' bodily behaviours acquiring new, non-obvious meanings depending on the chosen language of description. The writer would subject to such a revision notions of death and the corpse, the taboo of materiality of the human body/flesh, the individual's sexual identification with group interests and norms, and the linguistic practices of war and execution in stories from the collections *Przerwany egzamin* and *Wycieczka do museum*; "dziennik gliwicki" ["The Gliwice Journal"], published in fragments in the press; and the collections *Mother Departs* and *Utwory zebrane*. As a discourse problem, the bodily identity of the Różewicz man in those narratives would turn out to be a historical construct, entangled in the rules of communication between people and the circulation of

meaning, lacking any essence and thus open to cultural and linguistic reinterpretations. Still, when viewed against the background of diverse and changing descriptions of the body and the individual's physiological condition in culture and social communication featured in Różewicz's prose, it is its characters' somatic identity that constituted their fundamental, unique, and unavoidable way of being-in-the-world. One of the most intriguing examples of this linguistic ambiguity of corporeality in Różewicz's writing is the problem of the death of his brother and mother, the experience for which the author of *Unease* attempted to find adequate literary formulas for many years, each time touching upon the same issue in a new way.

The motif of the Różewicz starveling, at first connected with food shortages and excessive eating, was transformed in the 1960s and 1970s into the figure of the consumer, addicted to his systematically fuelled, inner appetite for things and experiences offered by modern civilization and mass culture. Merging the etymological meaning of "starveling" ("starved to death") with the identity of the insatiable modern consumer, the writer created in *Przerwany egzamin* the character of the "deceased man", who adored things, sensory stimuli, and the body. This starveling leads an illusory existence, not in a world of his own subjective experiences, but only in the reality of the commodity-entertainment industry, participating in the circulation of phantasmal promises of fulfilment that incessantly fuel his cravings but will never satisfy them. Such a condition was widespread among citizens of socialist countries in general and Communist Poland in particular, where the discrepancy between consumerist promises made by communist authorities, or unwittingly imported from the West, and the actual state of consumer satisfaction was particularly poignant. However, the craving experienced by the protagonists of Różewicz's travel-writing narratives, for example in *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* or *Strawiony*, cannot be appeased in Rome or New York ei-

ther. What stands in the way of their ultimate satisfaction is the equally poignant (post-consumerist) gap – typical of the civilization of excess – between satisfaction of current cravings and the ongoing production of new needs, increasingly numerous and passed on through the press, radio, film and television in increasingly efficient ways.

As Michał P. Markowski rightly argues, in order to join the circulation processes of modern culture, the body turns into its own image. By the same token, the body and behaviours transcending the community's somatic norm – such as, say, androgyny or lesbian relationships – either remain publicly unrepresentable or have to succumb to visual transformations that would deprive them of their original, subversive meaning. In the Polish People's Republic of the 1960s, this type of identity could not be staged or demonstrated in areas dominated by erotic "iconoclasm". In those realms, in turn, where sexual "idolatry" ruled, representations of such identities had either been reduced to the role of cheap, trivial entertainment and pornographic trash or isolated in museums so as not to violate social norms. *Miłość lesbijska w romantycznym przebraniu* and the episode of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* both refer to such social strategies – employed, incidentally, as Anna Wieczorkiewicz duly notes, ever since the invention of pornography. This juxtaposition of two otherwise dissimilar texts by Różewicz, both dealing with the problem of sexual norms, makes it possible to notice an important analogy between Communist Poland and the West pointed out by the writer. Despite substantial systemic differences, especially in the realms of politics and the economy, the key issue in both systems were not alien sexual orientations as such, nor their moral evaluation for that matter, but the way and scope of their public articulation. Control of this relied on the modern practice of symbolic exchange wherein, firstly, the objects of mass and, importantly, almost passive consumption are primarily images, and, secondly, was premised on the belief that only what has been represented and visu-

ally perceived becomes imaginable for the average viewer, and thus more obvious and domesticated. Consequently, "visible" corporeality as such would invariably gain in importance, acquiring in those days the status of the dominant, most universal representation of sexuality and social norms. This exchange of the body for its image ostensibly served the purpose of reproducing sexual normalcy – both female and male – but in fact was conducive to replacing the stable male-female relationship with a dynamic and reversible pattern-reflection one. Gender identity became a constant craving for new, attractive self-images, or self-representations of one's corporeality, whose value in the eye of the individual results from his/her participation in the market of consumer goods – rather than the subjective desire (project) to identify with the somatic ideal.

This transformation of the social status and experience of corporeality is in Różewicz's prose inscribed into a broader context of the individual's identification problems. The individual's dependence on identity patterns, imposed in the 20th century by the state's anatomopolitical coercion or the symbolic power of cultural industry, can be regarded as resulting from his/her way of being-in-the-world. The author of *Sobowtór*, searching for a supportive framework for the modern self's self-definition, discovered a growing disparity between individual ways of getting to know reality and the mediated partaking of it by means of global communication media, between one's links to a specific time and place and one's "abiding" within the increasingly virtual circulation of mass culture, between unique and integral being and the narcissistic internalization of various models of consumption, appearance, and behaviour – norms quickly destroyed or devalued, but also simultaneously manufactured, by modern civilization. The diagnosis did not lead Różewicz to a construction of the self's utopian space beyond society and history, an alternative world synonymous with the individual's conservative refuge. Quite the contrary – the writer experimented with identifying his characters

with the typical, middle-of-the-road man, attempting to settle into reality as it is. This would equate, among other things, to living among imperfect, quickly degradable "tangible" things and, simultaneously, living amid their ideal but ever-elusive reflections, which would amount to participating within the process of the circulation of man's images, the concurrence of the role of the observing subject and the observed object, a constant exchange of consumerist needs, but also addiction to basic carnal and existential proclivities that were changing at a different pace to that of technological change. Insofar as the effect of this writing does not translate into forgetting about modernity, restoring the concept of the individual's identity to the *status quo ante*, Różewicz's narratives are literary reconstructions of its experience in the authentically day-to-day aspect, inaccessible from a historical or sociological perspective and holistic in the sense in which the only totalities out there are one's biography and the body.

5. Space In Narrative

Sites and Space

Georg Simmel, sociologically analysing the experience of space, claims that for humans "there is only one general space, encompassing all other particular spaces, which makes each spatial fragment something unique".[746] The connection with space, experienced as unique and irreplaceable, can thus become a premise of individual, regional, national, or group identity. There are two model types of such a connection: 1) spatial exclusiveness and 2) localization. The former is, for example, an attribute of state or city, because the simultaneous co-existence of two states or cities on the same territory is officially impossible. Localization, in turn, is typical of such associations and social organizations which "according to their immanent sense do not have any reference to space".[747] Thus it is possible to co-exist non-conflictually for many formations of this type on the same territory, sharing the same territorial affiliation. As Simmel concludes, "Closeness or remoteness, exclusivity or pluralism as an attribute of the group's attitude to its territory, often becomes the source and symbolic image of its structure", one with which the individual may

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[746]   G. Simmel, *Pisma socjologiczne*, trans. M. Łukasiewicz, Warszawa 2008, p. 367.

[747]   Ibid., p. 369.

identify, even though in reality there are many intermediate states and degrees of ambiguity between one's exclusive connection with space and one's neutral localization therein.[748]

Citing the state as an example, Simmel also demonstrates the general space's divisibility in line with social needs. State borders integrate the nation, as the intensity of its internal, nation-cementing relations finds "spatial expression in the borders' perimeter [… and] generates the almost sensuously perceived image of the border line".[749] The border thus construed is a social experience (and not only a political or geographical fact) possessing a spatial dimension. Simmel does not stop at descriptions of static phenomena, such as territorial stabilization of group bonds, but also points out the effects of people's mobility. Migrating collectives, though often organized along authoritarian or even despotic lines, do not make up tight-knit and permanent structures, because what stands in the way of such permanence is their social diffusion and homogeneity, that is, among other things, their inability to come up with a modern division of labour. In line with the compensation principle, the individual's affiliation to the migrating group makes him/her prone to adopt the group's ways, for example in the realm of ideology. By contrast, sedentary societies diversify themselves from within more quickly, especially along political and economic lines.[750] Collectives that change places lose the fundamental, most obvious territorial stability. Instead, they develop a stronger symbolic coherence that balances out the sense of uprootedness and alienation typical of nomads. Mobile and relocated people ini-

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[748]   Ibid., p. 370.

[749]   Ibid., p. 371.

[750]   "Migration as such individualizes and isolates, because one is then left to one's own devices, which, in turn, makes one look for stronger bonds, beyond otherwise all-too-real interpersonal differences. Migration severs the individual from his/her family background with its established hierarchies, thus bidding one to compensate for loneliness and lack of support by an affiliation with some supraindividual totality". Ibid., p. 383.

tially "gather around remembered or imagined homelands"; that is why the foundation stone of their community is the "symbolic homeland".[751] Viewed from the individual's perspective, the nomads' identity (uniqueness) consists, first and foremost, in the distinctness and uniqueness of the emotions and experiences accompanying their wanderings. The sedentary person's identity, in turn, results from civilizational or social relations (differences). Migration occurred in Poland on a massive scale following the end of World War Two and during the first post-war years. Bogusław Bakuła notes that "the experiences of relocation, internal economic migration, and politically motivated relocation affected after the war almost one-third of Polish society".[752] One should add at this point that in Communist Poland migrants were often somewhat privileged as a group, being relatively more upwardly mobile, in social and professional terms, than people residing in their place of birth.[753]

Among the popular 19th-century representations of the Polish national community, it was the idea of homeland as one's ancestral land that proved most influential, Nikodem Bończa Tomaszewski tells us. The concept of the gentry-based political nation became in those days anachronistic and too exclusive, while the cultural, religious, linguistic, social, and economic barriers between the landed gentry, the intelligentsia, the bourgeoisie, the

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[751] A. Gupta, J. Ferguson, *Poza "kulturę": przestrzeń, tożsamość i polityka różnicy*, trans. J. Giebułtowski, in: *Badanie kultury. Elementy teorii antropologicznej. Kontynuacje*, eds M. Kempny, E. Nowicka, Warszawa 2004, p. 272.

[752] B. Bakuła, *Między wygnaniem a kolonizacją. O kilku odmianach polskiej powieści migracyjnej w XX wieku (na skromnym tle porównawczym)*, in: *Narracje migracyjne w literaturze polskiej XX i XXI wieku*, ed. H. Gosk, Kraków 2012, p. 172.

[753] Ewa Jaźwińska explains this phenomenon by citing the pervasive ideology of upward mobility in Communist Poland and its attendant affirmative-action policy in industry and administration, but also by strong educational motivation and high level of social and professional aspirations on the part of individuals migrating to big cities from small towns and villages. See E. Jaźwińska, *Migracja niepełna a przebieg karier zawodowych*, in: *Ludzie na huśtawce. Migracje między peryferiami Polski i Zachodu*, eds E. Jaźwińska, M. Okólski, Warszawa 2001, p. 336.

urban proletariat, and the peasants were so formidable that including all those groups in a single vision of civic homeland seemed totally unrealistic. Similarly, the romantic idea of "the nation's unity in history and blood" was not universal enough either, given the fact that in previous national history it was primarily the gentry that consciously partook of it, basing its sense of collective identity precisely on that idea.[754] By contrast, the concept of shared space, supplemented by supra-regional ethnic-cultural (e.g. linguistic) traits of the national territory's dwellers, was potentially a solid foundation for the sense of an all-encompassing national community.

> The only irreducible site of inter-class unity proved to be the landscape. Thanks to well-established iconographic motifs the peasants were part of the same "land" as the landlords. […]
>
> This is a particularly convenient solution, because it allows one to skip over social disparities as accidental and insignificant vis-à-vis objective material bonds. That is why it became the foundation of the community's national awareness.
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> In short, the nation is a community that partakes of the homeland's body. With time the homeland's corpus would begin to grow, the realm of material bonds becoming bigger and bigger. Ethnography then will add the concept of ethnos (grounded, incidentally, in clearly biological and material thinking), while linguistics will come up with the idea of a single, shared, written language. The concept of national culture is thus born as a material expression of national being.[755]

The 19th-century homeland *corpus* is, first and foremost, the idealistically presented Polish natural landscape, the image of land and nature

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[754] N. Bończa Tomaszewski, op. cit., p. 138.
[755] Ibid., pp. 138–139.

as the common good of the entire nation. Every single part of that good is either inscribed in the total meaning of its "body" or gets excluded from the native category. "The land of childhood days" or "family place" belong to the Polish native space insofar as they correspond to such values located in its Utopian landscape as idyllicness (rusticalness), naturalness, authenticity, hominess, traditionalism (sometimes the quality of being positively, nostalgically old-fashioned), or even innocence.[756]

Analysing the modern Polish concept of homeland, Stanisław Ossowski described the connection between space, community and national culture. In his *O ojczyźnie i narodzie* [*On Homeland and Nation*] he maintains that our national-territorial identity is more cultural than political in character, the "image of homeland as part of national culture" having been decisive in the emergence of that identity.[757]

> A territory becomes homeland insofar as there is a group of people who refer to it in a certain way and thus form its image in that particular way. […] Homeland exists only in the subjective reality of social groups that are equipped with certain cultural elements. The attributes of a territory are not dependent on what someone thinks about them. The homeland's attributes are always a function of images that are associated with its name by members of a certain community.[758]

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[756] This ideal of one's private "little homeland" was created in the 19th century by a fusion of nature and culture encompassing "not only pristine nature but also cultural heritage". Notably, whereas the Western European *Heimat* was ravished in modernity mostly by civilizational changes, the Polish "scenic homeland" in the private-little-homeland myth was destroyed by political history rather than industrialization, urbanization, or changes in manners and morals. See H. Salmi, *Europa XIX wieku. Historia kulturowa*, trans. A. Szurek, Kraków 2008, p. 19.

[757] S. Ossowski, op. cit., p. 58.

[758] Ibid., p. 18.

Ossowski gives two meanings to the concept of homeland, deriving them from different types of relationship between the individual and the particular space which is the source of the experience of identity. The first meaning (*Heimat*) corresponds to the personal and local relation, an experiential one, hence the sociologist's reference to it as one's private homeland. This type of territorial bond is closer to localization, because it is possible for various ethnic groups and their members to identify with one and the same "little homeland". In the second meaning, the ideological one (*Vaterland*), homeland is a territory usually identified with the land of a single nation, this type of identity being grounded primarily in "the individual's belief that s/he participates in a certain collective".[759] Such a relation with space, especially in modernity would, as a rule, be based on exclusivity or a demand thereof. Only in small communities can both understandings of the term overlap, whereas large social groups usually differentiate between the two, even though one's private homeland often constitutes a *pars pro toto* of the ideological one, representing it as a space that is particularly emotionally and morally marked. Such representations are mediated by the collectives' self-images, mythology, literature, and collective memory. Emphasizing the absurdity of the belief that "a native of Masuria should feel a natural, inborn attachment to Subcarpathia", Ossowski argues that only thanks to a sense of cultural community can the image of one's own personal homeland, the native landscape, interact with the concept of ideological homeland. As the sociologist explains, "Among

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[759] Ibid., p. 26. The post-war term "repatriation", for instance, implies the ideological fatherland, as it was used in reference to those who had left their "little homelands" for the ideological fatherland. The term was routinely applied to Poles relocated to the west from territories annexed by the Soviet Union in 1945, Germans relocated from the western and northern territories ceded to Poland, or even to former Polish emigrants returning to Poland from western and southern Europe after WW2.

readers of *Pan Tadeusz*, the poet's longing for his private Trans-Niemen homeland resonates with the entire Polish territory within its historical borders."[760] Thus, personal attachment to important sites of the national territory is, for most people, a function of one's affiliation with a community rather than a personal experience.[761]

Expanding on this diagnosis, Ossowski analysed the evolution of the image of ideological homeland in Polish culture, beginning with its romantic model featured in the patriotic narrative and characterized by the dominance of regional foci (such as Mickiewicz's "Trans-Niemen homeland") over the country's precise borders viewed as a whole. Already in the second half of the 19th century, however, there emerged a new concept of integral and homogeneous homeland based on spatial exclusivity, which was determined, in territorial terms, by clear-cut borders, whose "institutionalization is the modern nationalist state".[762] The two models were preserved in the 20th century. A well-known political antagonism expressing the discrepancy between "the concept of multilingual Poland within its old, historical borders and that of ethnographic Poland" was the dispute between Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski as well as – Ossowski adds in his 1946 article – "the fresh conflict between the Poland of Sosnkowski and that of Bierut: the Poland within the territorial framework of the Riga compromise and the

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[760] Ibid., p. 39. This model of native space is defined by the *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku* [*Encyclopedia of 20th-Century Polish Culture*] as follows: "When Mickiewicz called Soplicowo the centre of Polishness, where one can feel one's homeland in the air one breathes, his term covered such traits of national culture as patriotism, cultivating old estate and national traditions, rural lifestyle of the landed gentry, piety, attachment to local nature". *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku. Pojęcia i problemy wiedzy o kulturze*, ed. A. Kłoskowska, Wrocław 1991, p. 53.

[761] A community-building function was in the 19th and 20th centuries performed, for example, by the Mickiewicz myth of "the Nowogródek land". See *Święte miejsca w literaturze*, eds Z. Chojnowski, A. Rzymska, B. Tarnowska, Olsztyn 2009, p. 442.

[762] S. Ossowski, op. cit., p. 59.

Poland based on the Piast traditions".[763] The conflict was resolved with the arrival of the new, post-Yalta order in Europe, ultimately changing Poland into a modern unitary state. As Jerzy Jedlicki put it,

> We have lived to witness the ultimate demise of the project of the 19th-century romantics and democrats, with their hope of resuscitating the historical homeland of all the peoples of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the final implementation […] of the National Democrats' project, with only slight modifications.[764]

Poland's geopolitical situation in the 20th century depended primarily on the decisions taken by the world powers, but the narrowly conceived concept of national homeland resulted also from the country's domestic policy. Both in Poland and abroad the concept served to legitimize those in power and their decisions.[765] On the other hand, it was also a long-term result of the process of social emancipation of groups previ-

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[763] Ibid., pp. 27–28. Tumolska points out that, apart from Dmowski, the proponents of Poland's western and northern territorial expansion that would cover the "borderlands of ethnographically Polish territories" (A. Parczewski) included S. Żeromski and J.L. Popławski. H. Tumolska, *Mitologia Kresów Zachodnich w pamiętnikarstwie i beletrystyce polskiej (1945–2000). Szkice do dziejów kultury pogranicza*, Toruń 2007, p. 63. Popławski used in his journalism the term "ethnographic Poland", while opposing any narrowing down of Polish claims to ethnic lands and arguing instead that by means of adequate national policy and cultural work it is possible to strengthen the "Polish element" (and its national awareness) also in borderland regions which can be thus "reclaimed" for Poland (see J.L. Popławski, *Zadania polityki narodowej na Kresach*, "Przegląd Wszechpolski" 1903, no. 8 and 9). The concept of "ethnographic Poland" was popularized in international politics by British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who took an active part in the disputes over Polish borders within the framework of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and subsequently, during the debate in the British House of Commons devoted to the Polish-Bolshevik war. See N. Davies, *Lloyd George i Polska 1919–1920*, Gdańsk 2000, p. 39. The term "ethnographic borders" was used, among others, by one of the major experts appointed to establish the geographic shape of reborn Poland, the American historian Robert Howard Lord. See T. Komarnicki, op. cit., p. 326.

[764] J. Jedlicki, op. cit., p. 17.

[765] A. Gupta, J. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 274.

ously excluded from public life or the lower classes, which had become an equal part of the nation only in that period. Jedlicki writes:

> The modern nation is born because people need a place in which they can feel at home, a home in which they will not feel inferior to others. The history of the nationalist idea is the history of the sense of collective dignity, pride, and increased importance in the world, of a fight against the complex of humiliation and subordination.[766]

These changes in the ways of identifying with one's native space occupied a prominent place in Polish literature and culture. Ryszard K. Przybylski, in his sketch *Polska małych ojczyzn* [*The Poland of Little Homelands*], comparing the images of native land in the writing of Czesław Miłosz, Jerzy Stempowski, and Stanisław Vincenz, reconstructs the myth unifying their experience with "spiritual goods" of small cultural-territorial communities, the local country people or small-town dwellers.[767] According to Przybylski, the establishment of this mythology in our culture resulted from the situation in East-Central Europe after World War One and, first and foremost, after World War Two. Those were the days that witnessed the ultimate demise of Intermarium, a large area located in between the Baltic, the Adriatic, and the Black Seas, that until the 20th century

> had not undergone any significant changes, which in the West had already taken place the century before. Thus the [Intermarium] area had not made the most of numerous civilizational comforts of the era, but neither had it been affected by various deviations that had changed

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[766] J. Jedlicki, op. cit., p. 17.
[767] R.K. Przybylski, *Wszystko inne. Szkice o literaturze, sztuce i kulturze współczesnej*, Poznań 1994, p. 177.

social and political life in the West. Foremost among them were the uniformization of society, the increase in state power and the growth of nationalist ideologies.[768]

Although the so-called Second Polish Republic did not become a homogeneous ethnic-cultural organism postulated in the 1930s by then-influential nationalist formations – and neither did it change its dominant socio-economic structure from the agrarian model to the urban and industrial one – the birth of a nation in the modern sense can be linked to regained independence after 1918, the wars over the borders, the then-prevalent superpower interwar propaganda, and the historical politics (e.g. the official cult of "the independence struggle"). Equally significant in that process was World War Two, which boosted national awareness among the lower classes (peasants and workers), and the post-war territorial, social, and national changes which transformed Poland into a centralized state, nearly monocultural and monoethnic. From that perspective, the post-war mythology of "native lands" can be interpreted as

a critique of contemporaneous reality, of propagandistic campaigns aimed to impose a uniform, codified vision of state and society, wherein regional diversity could only function as a decorative addition, a bibelot placed within a socialist interior. In fact, the vision forced by the socialist authorities was that of a nation-state.[769]

Not all the regions of ideological homeland were equally covered in the 20th century by the mythologizing memory of one's native land. Some places on the nostalgic map of Poland – for example the Eastern Border-

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[768] Ibid., p. 177.
[769] Ibid., p. 183.

lands, Kraków, and Warsaw – were particularly present, others popped up sporadically or not at all. Despite the variety of literary perspectives, Bogusław Bakuła tells us, the Eastern Borderlands especially became, in post-war Polish culture, a "synonym of the idyll" based on simplified interpretations of their history and a utopian picture of their multiculturalness.[770] Analysing the state of Polish culture after 1989, Bakuła states that "through literary images, painting, music, chains of historical connections and associations" we can "participate in national history" and cultural community. If, he adds, it is a history that "happened on territories remote from us today", then "the nostalgic roving around Belarusian swamps and roaming the banks of the Dniester, the Borderlands ruins or Lwów" may be a "sign of an escape from contemporary times and dismissal of the true value of our country in its present shape".[771] That shape, after 1945, no longer included the Eastern Borderlands, which had been annexed in their entirety by the USSR, whereas in the west and north, German lands were incorporated into the Polish state, making up no less than one-third of its new territory.

The literary and journalistic texts after World War Two expressing an interest in Silesia, East Prussia, and Pomerania, would, as a rule, refer to the vision of a nation-state rather than that of a multicultural commonwealth. Not infrequently, for example in historical fiction, such references were accompanied by representations of European universalism, viewed as the *raison d'etre* for a supra-regional community. The Western Thought of National Democracy and the Communist propaganda of "native lands" derived from it, heavily present in such literature, featured strong nationalist, anti-German, and integralist sentiments linked to the ethnic-cultural idea of a nation and the territorial image of Poland within

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[770] B. Bakuła, *Polska i kolonialna przeszłość dzisiaj*, "Nowa Krytyka. Czasopismo Filozoficzne" 2011, no. 26–27, pp. 176–177.

[771] Ibid., p. 175.

the Piast borders.[772] The official interest in folk culture in Communist Poland, in turn, did not lead to the creation of a popular regional mythology, as regionalism was largely regarded as an instrument of the socialist state's national and cultural policy, or, at best, a folkloric ornament for its superior "folk" ideology.[773] Local and regional space in Communist Poland – with the exception of selected points on the map – was almost completely degraded to the role of an indistinguishable part of state and national space, to a large extent losing in the process the social and emotional status of a place of one's own, which provides people connected to it with the cultural sense of feeling-at-home there.[774]

It is, first and foremost, one's home, place of birth or permanent residence, home town, immediate environment, and homeland that are regarded as places of one's own, a realm of order isolated from the general space. Still, in Stefan Bednarek's opinion, "in Polish culture the structure of the place's value displays some bizarre dystrophies", as there is an empty space in between one's "home" and "homeland", the indefinite, or undervalued, site, no-man's land, so to speak, corresponding to a county, city, or region. Accountable for their exclusion from the category of Polish native

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[772] As Jürgen Joachimsthaler tells us, this particular need for history and continuation, the search for legitimization in the remote historical past as an element of the "Regained Territories" ideology, was "probably deeply rooted in the historiosophically constructed idea of the Polish nation during the partition days – 'your own' is what has been historically justified". J. Joachimsthaler, *Wielokrotnie wyobrażona prowincja. Śląsk między wizją a rzeczywistością*, trans. N. Żarska, in: *Śląsk. Rzeczywistości wyobrażone*, ed. W. Kunicki, Poznań 2009, p. 499. One of the forerunners of Polish geopolitics aimed at rebuilding Poland within the "Piast" borders in the west was Jan L. Popławski, an activist and journalist supportive of national democracy at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. See D. Jędrzejczyk, *U źródeł polskiej myśli geopolitycznej*, in: *Problematyka geopolityczna ziem polskich*, ed. P. Eberhardt, Warszawa 2008, p. 20.

[773] This function of the post-war folklorization of Upper Silesia has been critically analysed by Aleksandra Kunce. A. Kunce, Z. Kadłubek, *Myśleć Śląsk. Wybór esejów*, Katowice 2007, p. 257.

[774] Marc Augé claims that the modern model of division of the national territory resulted from the ideals of the French Revolution and originally presupposed an almost geometric division of the country into identical administrative units. M. Augé, *Nie-miejsca. Wprowadzenie do antropologii hipernowoczesności*, trans. R. Chymkowski, Warszawa 2010, p. 43.

places is the "Communist ideology of 'social ownership' that in practice translated into 'nobody's property' rather than 'communal property'. Nevertheless, the ideology would not have proved so devastating if there had not been in the pre-existing Polish axiological system that dichotomous spatial division", much older than communist ideology itself.[775] The scholar notes that already the old Slavic verb "mieszkać" ["to dwell/inhabit"] connoted procrastination, deferral, delay, dilly-dallying, while Polish literature from the Renaissance through Romanticism and the Partition days cultivated the idyllic model of staying at home in the country and minding one's own business, accompanied by a dislike of, or indifference towards, urban civilization. Emerging in the 19th century, the Poles' political identity was not grounded in an affiliation with the civic community of the modern *polis*, because civic awareness was in those days associated with conservative virtues of the landed gentry or subordinated to the ethnic-territorial definition of a nation. Already the Romantic discourse negated any social involvement exceeding the political goals of the Polish community. If the space beyond "ancestral home" was identified in positive terms, it denoted, first and foremost, national territory conceived as ideological homeland, not a community circumscribed by a city or region. This dystrophy seems traceable back to centuries-old dominance of rural culture, in which public space had been reduced to only a few common places (the local inn, church, road).

This void was more effectively filled by myth rather than a political project. One of the most important elements of the topos of "private homeland" (and native land in general) in 19th- and 20th-century Polish literature was the myth of one's birthplace, which was linked to one's family home and the local landscape. Viewed from the perspective of Cultural Studies, one's home, alongside its protective functions, "intro-

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[775] S. Bednarek, *W kręgu małych ojczyzn. Szkice regionalistyczne*, Wrocław-Ciechanów 1996, p. 27.

duces fundamental concepts and distinctions: your kin and the others, permanence and transience, order and chaos".[776] Thus the literary image of having or regaining a home in most cases is equated with renewing one's (sense of) life's purpose, or reestablishing a moral or social order of reality – for example, "Odysseus' return to Ithaca denotes a transition from an alien world to a native one, a recovery of one's property and the lost social roles in life".[777] This kind of identity requires leaving home first, experiencing the world, and, finally, unifying the experiences of familiarity and strangeness. In Małgorzata Burzka's words, "*Conditio humana* pursues simultaneously change and stability; to be truly happy it needs both a 'place' and 'space', the realm of familiarity and security, where one's home is located, and the realm of strangeness identified with the world."[778] The topos of homecoming in Adam Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*, in turn, expresses a desire for one's own place to dominate the entire known space, to re-order the world in line with one's home experience – a primary one. The poem's narrator in the scene of Tadeusz returning to "the innermost point of geography" returns to the "sacred places" with the eyes of the titular protagonist, recovering all of the "lost universe" of spatial and cultural identity.[779] The home space thus signified is referred to by Anna Legeżyńska as one's mental home, a symbolic ordering of experience around its axiological, cultural, and emotional centre resultant from "interiorization of space and psychization of the real world" and

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[776] Ibid., p. 18.

[777] M. Burzka, *Mickiewiczowskie powroty do domu*, in: *Dům w české a polské literatuře / Dom w literaturze czeskiej i polskiej*, ed. L. Martinek, Opava 2009, p. 45.

[778] Ibid., p. 44. "A place, then, is a sliver of space 'domesticated' by human beings, who give it a name and, by the same token, some value. It is usually the borders that are axiologically saturated, places marked out by natural elements of space or by civilizational and social activities of human groups. 'Place values' seem to belong to those considered most universal and most closely connected to human existence; they were also first targeted as objects of mythologizing, accruing rich symbolism, ritualism, magic practices and traditions". S. Bednarek, op. cit., p. 26.

[779] M. Burzka, op. cit., p. 48.

the work of "imagination projecting psychic states superstructured on material phenomena".[780] As a way of ordering the individual's experience, the mental home narrative is in its spatial aspect oriented towards one's most important place – the family home or place of birth. In its temporal aspect, in turn, it is oriented towards one's (auto)biographical story. This type of narrative became popular after the First and Second World Wars as the so-called *Heimkehrliteratur*, whose central problem was the protagonist's return home from the war, partisan unit, exile, or camp, which proves impossible because of political or psychological reasons.[781]

The Różewicz man's biography, derailed by modern history, makes it impossible to unify personal experience. Henryk Vogler writes that "the most representative situation for the protagonist of our times, of our half of the 20th century, is the in between situation. In between Home and World. One has left Home but has not reached the World. So, one is left suspended in the void, in between the two."[782] The homecoming motif features prominently in such works by Tadeusz Różewicz as *Twarze*, *Tarcza z pajęczyny*, and *Moja córeczka*. Although Różewicz's protagonist is allowed to return to his old stomping ground, to take a look at his hometown again, he is unable to reclaim the lost mental home. This is because modern man, Vogler explains, displays some "mediated and heavily-mixed traits, partly taken from the working class, partly from the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia".[783] Not representing any single social environment, lifestyle, or symbolic personal form conceived in exclusively monopolist terms, he

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[780] A. Legeżyńska, *Dom i poetycka bezdomność w liryce współczesnej*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 31–33.

[781] The "homecoming" motif is discussed at length by M. Czermińska. Among its major elements the scholar lists "arrival from a far-off place, recognizing the characteristic, familiar sights signalling one's approaching home, sometimes contrasting the changes that took place during one's absence". M. Czermińska, *Dom w autobiografii i powieści o dzieciństwie*, in: *Przestrzeń i literatura*, eds M. Głowiński, A. Okopień-Sławińska, Wrocław 1978, p. 245.

[782] H. Vogler, *Tadeusz Różewicz*, op. cit., p. 48.

[783] Ibid., p. 29.

represents many of them simultaneously instead. He does not have any Ithaca or Soplicowo of his own, a singular place that would represent his spatial-cultural identity in a coherent and credible way. The Różewicz man is "open", "mobile", and "concurrent" because wherever he happens to find himself, he is simultaneously somewhere else – here and now, but also everywhere and nowhere, like in *Tarcza z pajęczyny*:

> On the coast in the mountains in the park in the forest in his tent he listens to the Daily News the Press survey a Pop concert a Piano recital an Episode of Flaubert's novel the Opera Porgy and Bess Light music Alban Berg's works the Sports news the Top ten a Radio broadcast about a sixteen-year-old girl who left home and went missing. Breaking news. Modern man is concurrent he looks into the valley and says what a spectacular view or it's so beautiful here, isn't it look how beautiful it is he reads his newspaper listens to the music holds his girlfriend's hand remembers the trip to Prague talks about "Lord Jesus" price raises the war the Warsaw Autumn Festival Shakespeare the Atom. One million ten million one hundred million at the same time are watching the opening session of the United Nations (I 226).[784]

Information about recent events, works of culture, scientific discoveries, or the words and actions of celebrities reach the readers, listeners, or

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[784] Likewise, in his sketch *Z umarłych rąk Czechowicza* [*From Czechowicz's Dead Hands*]: "Łazuka sings simultaneously for Warsaw, Tomaszów, Radomsko, Łódź, Sieradz… Dior's models simultaneously parade before the eyes of the ladies from Kraków and Krzeszowice. Astronauts, Hamlet, Paul VI simultaneously address… 'Small town' is no longer small, 'the capital' is not the capital, there are no mountains, there are no pits. We are witnessing the emergence of a new landscape in our country" (III 64). The topos of the borders disappearing due to the media's influence features also in the poem *Zaczęte o świcie dnia 26 lipca 1965 roku (Regio)* [*Started at Dawn on July 26th, 1965 (Regio)*]: "through the cracks / squeeze / the news / finally here / where the two lakes / squinted / in the thick bulrushes / out in the sticks / in this backwater / the voice of a radio announcer" (IX 60).

viewers from Sieradz County just as easily as those from a big city. The consciousness emerging from interactions with these images and narratives, however, is homogeneous and mediated, isolated from the experience of a particular place. Heidegger refers to this state as "non-abiding", "diffusion", and "transience". Being everywhere and nowhere is the modern form of being-in-the-world. "This *modus* of being-in-the-world reveals a new, common mode of being's dwelling, a way in which it is constantly uprooting itself", explains the author of *Being and Time*.[785] Such being-in-the-world makes the subject perceive its existential identity not in terms of linear continuity (prospectivity and finality) of one's biography, but in terms of excess, fragment, and constant synchronicity (the here and now), that is – metaphorically speaking – in the form of scattered puzzles or, as Maria Janion puts it, a kaleidoscope.[786] "The contact of everything with everything and the influence of all on everything", Andrzej Leder writes, causes our "sensibility to be suffused with the current, all-pervasive excess rather than focused on linear becoming, stretched over time".[787] If biographical reconstruction of oneself loses coherence and credibility, narrating one's mental home also becomes impossible, which, in turn, makes one's settling into the world equally unattainable.

Settling into – or, literally, "domesticating" – a place of one's own translates, first and foremost, into a particular mental state, one in which a person's sense of attachment to a certain territory defines, in a unique way, the individual's identity, and is accompanied by a deep conviction that this kind of attachment is inconceivable as far as other territories/spaces are concerned. The figure of this kind of domestication in *Tarcza z pajęczyny* is the old shepherd Matusek, with his weathered face, cob-

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[785] M. Heidegger, *Bycie i czas*, op. cit., p. 144.
[786] M. Janion, *"Czy będziesz wiedział, co przeżyłeś"*, op. cit., p. 75.
[787] A. Leder, *Globalizacja a nadmiar. Rozdęta bańka teraźniejszości*, in: *Kultura w czasach globalizacji*, eds M. Jacyno, A, Jawłowska, M. Kempny, Warszawa 2004, pp. 87–88.

web-covered, "immobile" in time and space, corporeally attached – as Dorota Wojda rightly notes – to his native landscape.[788] Matusek, who has "never been anywhere beyond Wieluń County" (I 239) represents, in mental terms,

> an altogether different world, an alien civilization that already belongs in the past. That spirit of the place, the forest spirit, with the cobweb-covered face, will never understand the logic of transformation and the dialectic of progress, invariably interpreting the achievements of technology in superstitious ways.[789]

By contrast, the experiences of the narrator of *Tarcza z pajęczyny* are jarringly different: "I am being threaded on space. It goes right through me. Rivers, cities, clouds, faces, lakes, stars, airports, faces, meals, hotels, flowers, faces, faces, and faces" (I 238). When the narrator confesses: "I can be moved from one place to another, torn out from landscapes transplanted from one street onto another", he notes, in the first place, his inner "mobility" that constantly threatens him with "destroying all the images that make up" his "soul" (I 233-234). This Różewicz protagonist does not have a place he can truly call his own. His being-in-the-world translates into partial, skin-deep, and concurrent partaking of many different representations of reality which do not sustain his unique and unchanging bond with any space, forcing him to stay in subsequent non-places.[790] In Różewicz prose, it is a condition that one is aware of.

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[788] D. Wojda, op. cit., p. 109.

[789] J. Petrowicz, *Osjaków i okolice w literaturze*, in: *Monografia gminy Osjaków*, ed. J. Książek, Wieluń 2012, p. 708.

[790] As Augé explains, the archetype of a non-place is the migrant's or traveller's space. A non-place is a kind of space that cannot be defined in identitarian terms – it is a transit point, a palimpsest, or a place of temporary residence, a no-man's place in the anthropological sense, the world experienced "on the way, under temporary and ephemeral circumstances". M. Augé, op. cit., p. 53.

Consequently, the myth of "private homeland" loses, as a result of this awareness, its ability to unify experience or to give it meaning, breaking apart as a symbolic whole and failing to save biographical identity.

Analysing Różewicz's prose, I search in it – following the premises of geopoetics – images of space understood as articulations of the individual's existential and social experience, grounded, though, in Polish geopolitical traditions and cultural patterns.[791] Elżbieta Rybicka, following in Kenneth White's footsteps, regards geopoetics as the "study of intellectual and sensory connections between humans and the Earth [undertaken] in order to generate a harmonious cultural space".[792] Cultural representations of place, Rybicka writes, "create a landscape in which we live, thus being an indispensable part of our experience and our reality".[793] Literature, the scholar adds, "is not a simple reflection of the external world, but a part of a complex web of meanings and a phenomenon revealing the social process of signification. Literary landscapes – as combinations of literature and landscape – are social constructs".[794] On the other hand, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasizes, a point of reference for anthropological spaces is always an image of a "non-human" space belonging to the natural and material world. As the experienced reality, it remains a physical space of which one part – through the body and sensory perception – is man.[795] Though acknowledging the fact that space in litera-

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[791] E. Rybicka, *Geopoetyka (o mieście, przestrzeni i miejscu we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach kulturowych)*, in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy*, op. cit., pp. 477–478.

[792] Ibid., p. 479.

[793] Ibid., p. 483.

[794] Ibid., p. 478.

[795] "I never live entirely in anthropological spaces; through my roots I am always connected to the natural and non-human space. When I cross the Place de la Concorde and have an impression that I am entirely absorbed by Paris, I can always rest my eyes on a stone in the Tuileries wall, and then Place de la Concorde disappears and what remains is only that particular stone without history [...]. My total perception does not consist of such analytical perceptions, but can always break apart into them, whereas my body, which thanks to its habits ensures my embeddedness

ture has, as a rule, a symbolic-semiotic character, I also employ in this chapter – because of modern identity problems – the concept of natural space (environment),[796] which is an articulation of a certain philosophical or moral stance of the individual towards other people and the world.[797]

This chapter is devoted to links between identity and representations of space and a place of one's own in Różewicz's writing – both home, regional (local), and national-state space and natural space, all of which are regarded as parts of literary imagination and tradition, of national culture and social communication, and – last but not least – as elements of the individual's self-creation. I contextualize these by asking a number of questions. Is the representation of space in his texts particular and clearly defined, or dreamlike and unrealized? Does it correspond to patterns of representation in Polish literature? Is the represented space in Różewicz's prose valuated and, if so, how? Is it rustic or urban in character? Where can one draw the line in his literary geography between one's private homeland, family home, and homeland-state? How are these places ordered? Does the geopoetics of identity in Różewicz's prose correspond to the ideology and mythology of Romanticism or, rather, to the geopolitics of national democracy or the idea of ethnographic Poland? And, finally, what is a place of one's own in Różewicz's narratives from the point of view of their narrator or protagonist presented as a private, middle-of-

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in the human world, does it only insofar as it has first projected me precisely into the natural world, one that always shows through under the human world, like the canvass under a painting […]. Anthropological spaces themselves come out as constructed on the basis of the natural space." M. Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., p. 318.

[796] Nature, viewed from the human perspective, is, according to Tim Ingold, the "passive" reality of the "physical world", whereas the environment is an interactive reality, created through a relationship with an "organism or a person". T. Ingold, *Kultura i przestrzenie środowiska*, trans. G. Pożarlik, in: *Badanie kultury. Elementy teorii antropologicznej*, op. cit., pp. 77–78.

[797] Mieczysław Porębski admits that each human space is a "symbolic space […] in which we situate ourselves and are not – as in the physical space – situated once and for all". M. Porębski, *O wielości przestrzeni*, in: *Przestrzeń i literatura*, op. cit., p. 28.

the-road, nondescript individual? Do this man's existential and social experiences affect the way this special space is treated, and, if so, how? What is its role in constructing his topobiography?

Landscapes of the Beginning (Myths and Experiences)

The novellas by Tadeusz Różewicz published in his debut collection feature space organized in a way typical of occupation literature, that is divided into open/outdoor places, potentially threatening, and those that offer a relative sense of security, closed and isolated from the world. The geopetics of a space thus imagined has, according to Jerzy Święch, two variants in World War Two literature – civilian and military. *Echa leśne* belong primarily to the latter category. The safe places there include the partisans' forest hut, the entire forest, the underground bunker – all of them referred to as home. The dangerous places, in turn, are the town or the village. The fundamental world-home opposition translates here into "such binary oppositions as 'enslavement-freedom', 'disgrace-glory', 'duty-heroism'".[798] The note with the incipit "Las to mój dom ogromny" ["The forest is my grand home"], concluding the volume, is rhetorically organized around such concepts as "WOLNOŚĆ" ["liberty"], "SWOBODA" ["freedom"], "ŚMIERĆ" ["death"], "DOM BOŻY" ["house of God"], "DOM WOLNOŚCI" ["house of liberty"]. It is not the individual's concrete experience that endows this space with meaning, but the hierarchy of concepts and ideas superimposed onto it, which define the ideological and cultural identity of the narrator-agent. The partisans' action in "R.", described in *Echa leśne*, turns a quiet little town into the location of a national "carnival", because "machine gun salvos and grenade detonations" mean that, together with the partisans, freedom and Polishness entered the town.

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[798] J. Święch, *Stratyfikacja przestrzenna w poezji okupacyjnej*, in: *Przestrzeń i literatura*, op. cit., p. 313.

What remains of this sacred-heroic definition of partisan space in post-war stories is only a clear-cut binary opposition of open and closed space. When the partisan from *Pragnienie* [*Thirst*] learns that his sister has been arrested, the action stops and the interior monologue is weaved into the story: "I can see everything very clearly… there are pink trees standing all around me, and over there on a twig sits a little grey bird, but I have no idea what these pines are for, what is a little bird and what am I" (I 40). The forest loses its function of a freedom and ideological order asylum, as the consciousness of the partisan affected by the death of a close person is unable to "settle into" this space. It is no longer a place of his own. The geopoetics of Różewicz's subsequent post-war stories collected in the volume *Opadły liście z drzew* is based on the same contradiction. Places controlled by the partisans, despite the attempts to associate them with "hearth and home", homeland, and native nature, become the setting of absurd, inhuman, or inauthentic (fake) behaviours – the space of individual identity loss.

The aforementioned other variant of occupation-time space in Różewicz's prose – the civilian one – entails an analogous opposition of closed vs open. The former category includes home, wardrobe, cellar, places expressing one's craving for a normal life, but also one's sense of isolation, loneliness, sterile awaiting, fear of the world and people, the loss of hope. Contrastingly juxtaposed to these is the outdoor space, open or remote, encompassing the natural landscape and, first and foremost, streets and other public places that generate a sense of alienation, danger, imminent death. The terrified Jewish boy from the story *Gałąź* [*A Branch*] is hiding in a closet, while the protagonists of *Synowie* [*Sons*] find shelter in the cellar during a bombing. The hiding people are accompanied in Różewicz's prose by memories of the loss of near and dear ones or premonition of one's own death. Such signals make them realize that their confinement is a hiding place from the hostile world, but also a trap, enhancing the sense of alienation and fear.

The "lesson of closed space" (to apply Michał Głowiński's term) in Różewicz's prose yields two meanings. When his protagonist's identity is modelled with the heroic narrative, the underground bunker or zemlyanka becomes the sacred home of the soldier, the freedom fighter and protector of homeland. When such a narrative is at odds with his experience, Różewicz's partisan discovers that he is out of place there, the symbolic and sublime discourse of the "soldier's home", the romantic image of the forest as the temple of native nature, fails to articulate what is genuinely personal, authentic, within the individual. The narrator of *Dziennik z partyzantki* also views his own situation in terms of his distance to "R." – just like the protagonist of *Echa leśne* – but his account is kept within the stylistic confines of the commonplace and the quotidian, rather than heroic, poetics. The little town and home pictured in the journal fit within the framework of unofficial, everyday life – physiological, material, and family-oriented. The subject matter of the two works is almost the same, while the geopoetics are vastly different. The author of *Echa leśne* would "domesticate" the wartime space with the symbolism of home-motherland and the forest-national-temple. By contrast, the journal's author makes it more prosaic in the name of personal domestication, his own attitude to a particular house and town, the connection with a real place, irreplaceable with any symbols.

Henryk Vogler argues that the fundamental conflict in Różewicz's writing is that between "the closed space and the void which opens up infinity", with the former corresponding primarily to his hometown and the local landscape.[799] Tadeusz Różewicz was born in Radomsko, a county town located on the western outskirts of interwar Poland, between Częstochowa and Piotrków Trybunalski. The townscape in his texts consists of several recurring elements, such as the church with a steeple (or

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[799] H. Vogler, *Tadeusz Różewicz*, op. cit., p. 15.

a belfry), half-deserted streets, low houses with small curtained windows, a fire station, railway tracks, stores, the school building, the post office, a stadium, and furniture factories.[800] Różewicz's protagonists discover and recognize that kind of townscape in different parts of the world, finding the atmosphere of Skierniewice, Cieplice, Rzeszów, or Radom even in big cities (II 269–271). Henryk Vogler perceives huge social and axiological significance in this space.

> The social class of the Różewicz family was petit bourgeois, made up largely of lower-rank officials, with their provincial ways, manners, tastes, beliefs, rituals, and educational methods typical of that class in interwar Poland. […] So, first – elementary school, then middle school (one of those mentioned in encyclopedias), probably – boy scouts, the Sodality of Our Lady, Military Training and spiritual retreat, festivities to commemorate Marshal Piłsudski's nameday and the Constitution of 3 May, "Mucha" and "Wiadomości Literackie" that could be, here and there, bought at a newsagent's.[801]

A town thus imagined constitutes a spatial equivalent of petit bourgeois, half-urban, and provincial identity. According to Vogler, the war catastrophe means, first and foremost, the annihilation of that little town conceived as the socio- and psychosphere of the Różewicz man. The opposition outlined by the critic enhances the tension between "the mind

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[800] Feliks Przybylski recalls that because of several factories operating in Radomsko, the place was often referred to as an "industrial town" (N 175). At the beginning of the German occupation Różewicz worked for a short period of time in the furniture factory "Thonet-Mundus" in Radomsko. See Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., p. 8. The "Thonet" company contributed to the popularization of modern design in Poland, producing and selling in the interwar years furniture designed, among others, by artists connected with Bauhaus or inspired by that functionalist and minimalist style.

[801] H. Vogler, *Tadeusz Różewicz*, op. cit., pp. 14–15.

raised on uncomplicated, simple, small-town categories of thinking" and the post-war "void" denoting the loss of one's sense of belonging, a sense of rootedness. The "void", one may add at this point, was traceable to the change of spatial imagination on the part of the individual, who, after 1939, was faced with such phenomena as mass migrations and deportations, radical border shifts, and the break-up of small socio-territorial communities accompanied by the arrival of modern – and dehumanized – living conditions. Referring to the early poem *Maska* [*The Mask*], whose speaker calls himself "an inhabitant of a small town up north" (VII 8),[802] Majchrowski writes that Różewicz points to "the part of Europe where – as Czesław Miłosz put it, following Józef Wittlin – 'a meeting took place between the European poet and the hell of the 20ᵗʰ century'".[803] Only from that perspective, having lost his sense of being settled into the world, can the Różewicz man circumscribe his existential experience with a spatial identity formula of the type that features in his short prose *Pod murem* [*Against the Wall*]: "Do I see with particularly sharp eyes the small dead creatures, the rubbish, the refuse? I cannot see any big lights, but I can see little dead mice under the growing walls. Perhaps it is so, because I was born in a small town and before turning twenty-five I did not see much of the world" (VIII 178).

At the same time, the image of a "small northern town" viewed as a site of traumatic memories ("Archaeological remains in my country have small black / heads sealed with plaster cruel grins"), which contrasts with the vitalistic vision of the film on the Venetian carnival, is confronted in *Maska* with a northern-southern clash – traditional in European culture – wherein the south stands for values and accomplishments which are deemed universal and fontal, whereas the north connotes

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civilizational secondariness, provincialism and derivativeness accompanied by ceaseless pursuits of identification with a remote and archetypal model. Even though the location where history materialized itself is now Europe's northern periphery, the territory's peripheral, marginal status has remained unchallenged. The key term in Różewicz's text is that of "archaeological remains", which refers to both spaces. The historic events that took place in the "north" have by no means made it approximate or resemble the imaginary "south" with its civilizational and cultural heritage. In other words, the north has not become a space of common history of nations and individuals, ranking equally with the south. Its inhabitant feels trapped in the collective memory of people living in that part of the continent ("let's run away run away"), their awareness of the historicity and the historic rank of the local experience having a bitter aftertaste and a paralyzing impact.

The narrative of the "inhabitant of a small northern town" in Różewicz's post-war prose is told in retrospect. The narrator's awareness of the imminent annihilation of his little town, viewed as a place of one's own, makes the story susceptible to the myth's sense-generating power, like in the sketch *Z umarłych rąk Czechowicza*, in which the image of the narrator's provincial hometown is constructed in terms of a journey into the realm of memory or imagination, that is a signifying space saturated with universal values, rather than into past reality.

> Small-town folks have a particularly sharp ear for that distant breath of steam engines; longing for long-distance travels, walks between the post office and the train "station" fill many a late evening in their lives. In the breath of steam engines, in the voices of express and fast trains there is the siren song… the call of distant cities. Big lights. Big world. And then a walk back home along the familiar little street, among the familiar houses and faces (III 64).

The sketch can be interpreted as a combination of two provincial narratives – traceable to the myth of one's birthplace and the myth of modernity. Running through Radomsko, the international railway line (Warsaw to Vienna) was one of the biggest economic-technical projects of Congress Poland in the last decades of the 19th century, symbolizing a triumph of the civilization of iron, steam, light and metropoles. Such cultural experiences would, as a rule, create the small town anew, so to speak, marginalizing its dwellers as far as the history of technology and social progress was concerned. Contrasted with the "big world" out there, small-town stability translated into backwardness, whereas provincialism began to be equated with marginality, second-ratedness, which was particularly jarring when juxtaposed with the traditional myth of one's local homeland perceived as an anchor of civic values and patriotic ethos.[804] Despite a certain aversion towards big-city life, urban space was, at some point, also in our culture elevated to a higher cultural rank, becoming, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, an exponent of modern identity, a lifestyle that seemed alluring, promising, and risky – like the aforementioned siren song. As a representation or memory, the small town's annihilation in Różewicz's writing denotes a disintegration of the idyllic image of provincial life and the equally mythical "big world", undermining the symbolic sense of the two mutually interconnected spaces in the individual's consciousness. There is no returning to them – not because they have been materially changed, but because the narratives that used to facilitate one's settling into the two spaces have lost credibility. The

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[804] Stanisław Piskor writes that for the identity of the metropolis man, "the crucial factor is the innovative civilizational element, which is of great importance. However, the cost of such progress is uprootedness, social atomization, and, finally, depersonalization and spiritual emptiness. With the countryside and its small towns it is the other way round: backwater towns may be civilizationally backward, but are rooted in their multilayered past. Small-town people, if they only care to reach a little deeper, will always find a sense of their own spiritual space." S. Piskor, *Uniwersalizacja lokalnego*, "Dekada Literacka" 2002, no. 7–8, p. 26.

provincial landscape in Różewicz's prose is grounded in existential narrative rather than civilizational or cultural myth.

The writer's birthplace provided him with the image of the natural, idyllic landscape, which constitutes one of the model landscapes in his geopoetics. The family roots of the Różewiczes, as Jarosław Petrowicz tells us, are in the Wieluń region, not far from Radomsko. His mother,

> Stefania Maria, née Gelbard (1896–1957), was born in 1896 in Lututów, spent her childhood days in Szynkielów, and her early youth in Osjaków. Gabrielów, near Osjaków, in turn, was the birthplace of his father, Władysław Różewicz (1885–1977). In Osjaków, in 1918, Tadeusz's brother Janusz was born.[805]

The small area delineated by those villages, located a few kilometres from each other, is mostly rural plain, little urbanized in the interwar years, forested and overgrown with meadows. The entry for 26 June 1982 from *Kartki wydarte z dziennika* features the following description:

> The landscapes and plants of my native land and my childhood are rather meagre. Pockets of pine woods, birch trees, sometimes oaks, a bit of alder forest and aspen… Fields of rye, potatoes, lupine, sometimes patches of flax or hemp… in the rye fields – cornflowers, poppies, cockle corn… near the farmhouses – hollyhocks, nasturtiums, sunflowers, a little patch of broad beans and green peas, in the windows – myrtle and geranium (III 350).

Emphasized in the above description is the commonplace and provincial character of the natural landscape typical for the plains of cen-

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[805] J. Petrowicz, op. cit., p. 705.

tral Poland. This type of natural imagery in Różewicz's writing acquires the status of the native-place topos, a place of origins, the image of the world "close to the ground", recurring always in a similar form. As can be seen, for example in *Moja córeczka*, *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* or *Kartki wydarte z pamiętnika*, complementary to that image of nature is the social and cultural space, which is indispensable for the individual's self-understanding. That concept of space, however, presupposes the prior existence of a space that is indifferent to humans, clearly distinguishable from the socio-cultural world. Consequently, neither space is autonomous, independent of the other. The geopoetics of those narratives is an expression of the late-modern condition of the individual, one for which desacralized nature is an "inhuman" space, reduced to its physical aspect, while modern big-city civilization, though symbolically marked in a particularly pronounced way, cannot function as a place of one's own, because, being a space of mass and typified identification, it is not conducive to individual identity, but, to the contrary, it actually poses a threat to what is unique and singular in man's existence. In short, neither space provides an asylum.

The birthplace topos is also part of the writer's self-creation. That meaning was referred to directly by Różewicz in a sketch, published two years later, entitled *Mój wiersz* [*My Poem*], in which he states that the artist's "kolebka wyobraźni" ["cradle of imagination"] is made up of his childhood images (Ma 80). This essentially Romantic myth of the artist was also noted by Majchrowski, who pointed out the analogy with Goethe's well-known formula: "Wer den Dichter will verstehen, Muss in Dichters Lande gehen". This topos in Różewicz's prose, however, proves recalcitrant to Romantic mythologization. The landscape "close to the ground" is not the "temple of nature"; if it ever becomes – like in the above-quoted entry from *Kartki wydarte z dziennika* – a symbolic landscape of existence, the place of birth and death, it is then always presented

as a decisively material, down-to-earth space, not the topographical exponent of an artistic or philosophical vision, which is, ultimately, merely a lexicon of human ideas. Every mythically imagined place breaks apart in Różewicz's writing – beginning with the volumes *Uśmiechy* and *Opadły liście z drzew* – into material space and narrative practice which generates values and images of that particular place. Consequently, birthplace narratives do not make up an integral myth of the writer's native land, each time assuming the form of differently ordered memories. These cannot be united in a single myth; they can only be given the form of a temporary, fragmentary, and sketchy story, the autobiographical narrative remaining, as a whole, an intrinsically unfinished and inconclusive text.

Ryszard Nycz, comparing identity patterns in 19th- and 20th-century Polish literature, describes the "romantic myth of geographical-mystical symbiosis of man and his place of origin, the Polish soul permanently rooted in the Polish soil", which is particularly well-established in the poetry of the so-called lesser seers.[806] Modern writers take varied stands on this model. Czesław Miłosz, for example, in his poem *Po ziemi naszej* [*Throughout Our Lands*], expanded the concept of native land to include other experiences of man's bonds with the world, juxtaposing Polishness with humankind, the idyllic with the urban, symbols with existence and matter.[807] According to Nycz, Miłosz's strategy of rootedness corresponds to three variants of topographic identity. The first type, the regional-rustic identity literature (the Authenticists of the 1930s), is a "reaction to the ordeals of modern life and a vindication of the rights of peripheries vis-à-vis the centre". The second (post-war) identification is based on the nostalgic poetics of regional homelands lost in 1939 and 1945, which is "treated as a counterbalance to spaces of uprootedness and homelessness"

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[806] R. Nycz, *Literatura jako trop rzeczywistości. Poetyka epifanii w nowoczesnej literaturze polskiej*, Kraków 2001, p. 74

[807] Ibid.

of the post-war years (occasionally, this perspective tends to be ironic as well). Finally, the third variant, the most modern one, is "preoccupied, and even strikingly fascinated, with discovering: peculiarities in an otherwise familiar space; otherness within 'our' territory; strangeness at our home or in our city".[808] The formulas of geopoetics reconstructed by Nycz also feature in Różewicz's prose. He, however, gives them a meaning of his own.

Admittedly, mental topography in Różewicz's prose does display provincial and rustic properties. These, however, do not make up a geographic-cultural identity in the regionalist sense. The opposition of big-city space vs the natural one, featured in the prose, does not sustain the authenticist utopia, because idyllic enclaves in Różewicz's urbanized and crowded world provide no haven for modern man. Instead, like in *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*, they constitute traces of experiences expelled from the modern city's mythology: "dreams of dead trees flowers and meadows" and "sounds of meadows and fields" (II 206).[809] The protagonist's tenderness for the world "close to the ground" is not in this novel an expression of the rustic myth, but a trace of the biographical narrative, a sign of individual memory situated at the border of what has been experienced and what has been told (created). At least from the mid-1960s on, the main point of reference for Różewicz's geopoetics was the Mickiewicz-type imagination, which was fundamental for Polish culture and also rooted in a particular space and existence. In the sketch *Z umarłych rąk Czechowicza*, Mickiewicz is presented as a "provincial poet", always taking good care of his rowan berry tree in his garden abroad because it reminded him of Lithuania. This memory of the poet's daughter, cited

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[808] Ibid., p. 80.

[809] B. Sienkiewicz holds that Różewicz's metropolis is demythologized, "split", and therefore open to "recognition of signs of suffering and death expelled from the project of the modern city". B. Sienkiewicz, op. cit., p. 517.

in the text, is both a short commentary on his biography and part of Mickiewicz's narrative of private/regional homeland. Likewise, the "heap of dung and rubbish" – a fragment of Władysław Bełza's *Kronika potoczna i anegdotyczna z życia Adama Mickiewicza* [*The Colloquial and Anecdotal Chronicle of the Life of Adam Mickiewicz*], quoted in Różewicz's journal (III 370–371) – reminded the poet, then residing in Istanbul, of the environment of the Polish roadside inn. The excerpt refers to a representation of native land, but also to the aesthetic-spatial sensibility of a particular individual and an episode from his reconstructed biography.

The Mickiewicz motif of "kraj lat dziecinnych" ["the land of childhood days"] does not assume in Różewicz's texts the form of the synecdoche of national homeland. The region of Wieluń is not presented there as the country's focal point circumscribed by a vision of a mythical, Arcadian past. Admittedly, Majchrowski does call Gabrielów "the Soplicowo of Congress Poland", referring to the poet's warm childhood memories of his annual holiday stays in an idyllic environment made up of nature, family, and friends. Still, in Różewicz's writing it is impossible to reconstruct the metonymy of home and native land featured as the nobilitated centre of Polish or Central European identity. Neither are local native customs presented as sources of nationwide ideological and cultural identity.[810] The scholar, describing the writer's native land as the "splice of the country's major regions", the geographical join of the partitioning powers as well as the historic lands of Masovia, Lesser Poland, Greater Poland, and Silesia, located at the intersection of major trade routes, creates an image of an important borderline hub. This role of Congress Poland's western provinces ended, however, with the collapse of the three European empires – Austria-Hungary, Prussia, and Russia – rand their eplacement by modern nation-states striving to establish new

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[810] Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., p. 28.

borders based on ethnic (and spatial) exclusivity, thus entering potential conflicts with their neighbours and unwilling to embrace any ideological identity except that of their inhabitants. Situated on the southwestern outskirts of interwar Poland, the Wieluń region and Radomsko acquired the status of a periphery rather than the centre or a "bridge", and despite their substantial Jewish minority they never had the kind of multicultural character comparable to, say, Eastern Galicia or the Vilnius region. As a result, their literary image of the writer's homeplace could not be based either on the focal-point narrative or that of the borderlands as an ethnic-cultural mosaic.

Andrzej Mencwel, employing the concept of the Three Emperors' Triangle – that is the area "located in the middle of Polish lands, without any borderland overlays or contradictions" but divided by borderlines of foreign empires in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, perceives in the region's history and location an altogether different premise of its inhabitants' condition.

> Its symbolic and historiosophical significance should not be forgotten, however, because it clearly marks a certain concept of history and certain concept of human rights, and thus also rights of such communities as nations, nationalities, minorities. […] *Dreikaiserecke* is in this sense a symbolic point – here local communities are able to create only as much as they can get from empires. To get, in this context, may mean to win, but also to buy out, to wangle, to scrounge, to cadge.[811]

Różewicz's hometown, like several neighbouring counties from Łódź, Silesia, and Kielce Voivodeships did not belong, in his childhood years, to Poland's focal points; they had not been elevated to the rank

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[811] A. Mencwel, *Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy*, op. cit., p. 13.

of symbolic landscape and never enjoyed a literary legend comparable to that of Warsaw, Vilnius, or Lwów; neither were they ever dominant centres of national culture or seats of political power.[812] Viewed through the lens of modern history, however, they were settings of events and phenomena important for collective identity. It was there that in the first half of the 20th century some revolutionary social protests (e.g. the 1905 strikes followed by the local republic of councils in the Dąbrowa Coal Basin), national uprisings (in Upper Silesia), and significant changes of economic, industrial, and urban nature took place.[813] It was the bombing of the small town of Wieluń by the Luftwaffe that marked the start of the Second World War; in Radomsko a ghetto for Jews was set up in the spring of 1941 by the German administration. The Polish border, located nearby, was shifted so far away to the west and to the south by the victorious powers in 1945 that those previously borderland territories found themselves almost in the middle of the Polish state in its new, post-war shape. Having "gained" so much from empires in mid-20th century, the inhabitants of Różewicz's native province must have been particularly aware of the connection between their biographies and history, individual and collective experience, or between life in one's "private homeland"

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[812] Różewicz would often juxtapose Radomsko, as his place of birth, with various big cities and cultural centres, for example in an interview with Urszula Biełous: "Everyone has to be born somewhere. Not everybody could have been born in Vilnius or Lwów" (W 176).

[813] Congress Poland as the homeland of Polish folk masses (the "most Polish" people) and socially revolutionized "transit territory", frequented after the collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by foreign armies and ideas, was already in the 1830s contrasted with the more gentrified and traditionalist Eastern Borderlands by Maurycy Mochnacki in his *Powstanie narodu polskiego w roku 1830 i 1831* [*The Polish People's Uprising in the Year 1830 and 1831*]. The instability of political order, the changeability of Congress Poland's borders, and the country's unprecedented subordination to the influence of neighbouring countries were also emphasized by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Michał Grabowski, and Paweł Jasienica. See E. Dąbrowicz, *"Ziemia przechodów". Migracje i kultury lokalne w piśmiennictwie polskim XIX–XXI w. Ekskurs*, in: *Nowy regionalizm w badaniach literackich. Badawczy rekonesans i zarys perspektyw*, eds M. Mikołajczak, E. Rybicka, Kraków 2012.

and the lot of their country and the entire European continent. Presumably the topographic models that they referred to then proved insufficient under the circumstances. Still, they continued to function as the basis of their spatial imagination, remaining for many people then – affected as they were by a sense of homelessness and loss of political agency, often basing their relationship with the country or place of residence on inauthentic, ideological bonds, finding in their immediate environment material traces of another culture, migrating in search of a better life or escaping persecution – an important source of identification. As an attempt to verify and renew the meaning of those patterns, Różewicz's prose mediates between grand narratives functioning in the political and cultural sphere of Communist Poland and those experiences of the individual inhabiting the provincial peripheries, of the Polish state and Central Europe, that are missing or falsified in those narratives.

"Glass Houses" and Other Utopias

The idea of home or dwelling place is elementary for the individual's identity, representing his/her experience and construal of a place of one's own vs external space which remains in an emotional and social relationship with home and its dwellers. Such a place in Różewicz's prose is the family home, defined by personal memories and simultaneously inscribed in collective identity narratives, which traditionally link Polish family values with the history of native land, state, and the nation. The symbolic space of Różewicz's family home was presided over by a "portrait of Kościuszko in a peasant's overcoat" (I 90), featuring the "Chief-of-State in a *krakuska* cap and an overcoat against the beet-coloured background" (II 204). It is to that historic figure that Tadeusz Różewicz owes his first name. As the poet's mother Stefania recalls, "he was given the name Tadeusz at baptism, because his elder brother [Janusz – WB] was all for it. I asked him: Nusek, what name shall we give to your little

brother, and he answered: Tadeusz Kościuszko. That was because of that big portrait at our home" (M 38).

Nikodem Bończa Tomaszewski explains the unprecedented popularity of Kościuszko's literary and painterly portraits from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries on by the emergence of modern national consciousness, arguing that, unlike other knights of the Polish pantheon, "the leader in a peasant's overcoat enjoyed immense popularity among the common people".[814] Maria Janion quotes Jules Michelet, who wrote about Kościuszko that he was "the last knight and the first citizen in the east of Europe". The scholar argues that the commander-in-chief's democratic legend developed in the years of "struggles for independence" when "all the social classes felt the need for a personal embodiment of the patriotic myth with solidaristic undertones", what with Kościuszko being, to boot, an ambiguous figure, personifying diverse, sometimes even mutually exclusive, social and national visions.[815] As a result, his image was capable of representing political agendas of numerous estate and ethnic factions of Polish society. The head of the Second Polish Republic in the first post-1918 years was Józef Piłsudski, whose official title was that of *Naczelnik Państwa* [*Chief-of-State*], in emphatic reference to the republican and egalitarian character of the reborn state as well as the continuity of Polish democratic traditions.[816] Różewicz recalls the interwar cult of Józef Piłsudski in his conversation with Stanisław Bereś (W 328), and Majchrowski adds that "after the Marshal's death, the eldest of the Różewicz

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[814] T. Bończa Tomaszewski, op. cit., p. 165. The cult of Tadeusz Kościuszko among the common people is attested to by rural monuments of the commander-in-chief, e.g. the monument in Berezowica Mała set up at the sole initiative of, and funded entirely by, the local farmers. See *Kresy wschodnie II Rzeczypospolitej. Zbaraż*, ed. A. Żarnowski, Kraków 1994, p. 20.

[815] M. Janion, M. Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, op. cit., pp. 276–277.

[816] That title J. Piłsudski gave himself by a decree issued on the basis of a draft prepared by the Provisional People's Government of the Republic of Poland in November 1918. See Dziennik Ustaw 1918, no. 17, item 41, 29 November 1918.

brothers, 15-year-old Janusz, came home from school crying loudly".[817] Kościuszko's ethos was intensely exploited in socialist propaganda during World War Two (the commander-in-chief was the namesake of the 1st Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division of the Polish People's Army, whose soldiers were commonly called *kościuszkowcy* [Kościuszkans]),[818] and after the first post-war years, especially in the newspapers of the Polish Workers' Party, his biography was presented as a model biography of the Polish democrat and national hero (e.g. in "Trybuna Tygodnia" in 1948). Needless to say, Kościuszko was not the only "patron saint" of the emerging Communist Poland, as in the contemporary press Adam Mickiewicz was just as frequently proclaimed the hero of the Polish democratic legend.

Różewicz's interwar home is, in symbolic terms, the shared space of personal and national memory. In Polish tradition, the family home, Monika Brzóstowicz writes, is

> regarded as one of the most important social and cultural values, the individual's "fortress of identity" and the site of memory and history in its private, directly experienced dimension. In addition, [it is] a source of predestined emotional bond with one's nation.[819]

The place marked by the image and legend of Kościuszko can be viewed as a synecdoche of the ideological concept of homeland construed as one's own "home", fair towards, and fit for, all social groups.[820] At the

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[817]   Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., p. 18.

[818]   A former "Kościuszkan", now a settler in the Regained Territories by the Oder, was described by Różewicz in his reportage *Most płynie do Szczecina* (Mp 133).

[819]   M. Brzóstowicz, op. cit., p. 15

[820]   The significance of home as the *pars pro toto* of homeland in post-1939 Polish literature is analysed by Małgorzata Czermińska in her article *Dom w autobiografii i powieści o dzieciństwie*, op. cit., p. 232. Janina Abramowska emphasizes the Enlightenment roots of this identification in Polish literature (Krasicki, Konarski, Niemcewicz, among others). See J. Abramowska, *Peregry-*

same time, though, the writer's memoiristic texts, such as, for example, *Czerwone pieczęcie* [*Red Stamps*] and *Wspomnienie z roku 1929* [*A Memory of 1929*] (N), referring to his home as a private space which is, nevertheless, connected with the country's economic and social situation, tell us of material impoverishment typical of the first years of independence and during the international economic crisis of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Likewise, some of the stories from the collections *Opadły liście z drzew* and *Przerwany egzamin*, as well as memories collected in *Mother Departs* and those included in the autobiographical sketch *Drewniany karabin*, expose the poor living standards in the Polish countryside and provincial towns in the first half of the 20th century. The way space is described in those texts derives, among other sources, from naturalist fiction, wherein households are often presented as "basements" and "damp, stony dens" (I 91), apartments are "rooms full of darkness and stuffy, almost sticky air", with "large families cramming into dark and damp cellars" (II 218–219).[821] The ideological discourse of those narratives derives from the 19th-century progressive-patriotic vision of healing social ills characteristic of the democratic faction of the Polish intelligentsia. Though employing the discourse itself, Różewicz's protagonists rarely engage in agitation or debate, dreaming instead of "bright little houses, as if made of light" (I 101), or – in a spontaneous gesture of youthful rebellion – fantasizing about "glass houses" and leading the poor out of their "caverns into the sun" (II 219). Such a revolution is technological and ethical, not political, in nature. Insofar as the social utopia of *Drewniany karabin* refers to the socialism of Ziuk and Marshal Piłsudski, it does so

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nacja, in: *Przestrzeń i literatura*, op. cit., p. 126.

[821] Stylistic traces of naturalism can also be found in the writer's non-literary texts, e.g. in a letter Różewicz wrote to the editor of "Wieczór" (no. 330 of 30 November 1948) in which he referred to the house of a poor and lonely old woman from the village of Gorzkowiczki near Piotrków as a "horrible den".

through the veteran-democratic legend of the chief-of-state and the literary construal of the idea of civilizational progress in Żeromski's novels.

As Ludwik Rath demonstrates, Stefan Żeromski employed the idea as early as his *Uroda życia* [*The Beauty of Life*] (1912), writing about "the glass era of humankind and the glass era in Poland".[822] Rath located the source of "glass houses" in a novel by a Hungarian writer, Maurus Jokai (Jókai Mór), entitled *Black Diamonds,* published in 1870. The book inspired both *Ludzie bezdomni* and *Przedwiośnie*. The architecture of the "electromagnetic state" in Jokai's novel is the antithesis of prior building styles of "dark rooms" and "damp walls", because out of cheap and commonly available glass mass it is possible to create, within two hours, a bright, leakproof, flameproof, and durable house. Glass is also the material from which the colossal, lava-glazed buildings in the modern state's capital are made. The Hungarian writer's vision was born in the atmosphere of the positivist cult of natural and technical sciences. In Żeromski's fiction, in turn, "glass houses" turn into the civilizational allegory of renewal of homeland-home understood as an ethical-social formation, becoming a task for the mission-oriented and reformative intelligentsia. Contrary to the charges raised against him by the country's right, the author of *Przedwiośnie* did not conceive of this breakthrough in political terms. He wrote, after all, as follows: "A revolution which pushes the magnates down into the basement and moves the basement-dwellers to the palaces is simply ridiculous. It is, indeed, the work of a madman, fit for the madhouse."[823] Żeromski's "glass houses" constitute an ethical, rational, civic, and state-oriented proposal, referring to the idea of scientific-civilizational revolution.

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[822] L. Rath, *Geneza "szklanych domów" Żeromskiego*, "Ruch Literacki" 1930, no. 10, p. 310.

[823] Ibid., p. 313.

Whenever in Różewicz's prose the household and city, understood as spaces for a social utopia, appear it is usually – with the exception of reportage pieces – a signal of naive, youthful idealism combined with empathy for people affected by material poverty and squalor. "Glass houses" in his first longer reportage (cycle) *Most płynie do Szczecina* function, in turn, acts as the motif of ideological and ethical debate over values, typical for the discourse of socially involved literature.[824] The ruined cityscape makes the reportage's protagonists engage in a discussion:

> "These ruins need to be blasted away, the rubble needs to be cleared, the squares should be ploughed over, new grass should be sown, so that it is green in springtime – like hope, you know… and then houses, housing projects!"
>
> He smiled wryly: "Glass houses, huh? Cheap, lyrical optimism; a spiel that's good enough for a middle-class schoolgirl, but to my mind, it's, well… And, besides, you don't believe that yourself, do you?"
>
> I flinched and said: "But I do, I do believe it, dammit! Hell, if I didn't I would string myself up from the next lamp post!" (Mp 136).

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[824] The motif of "glass houses", popular in Polish literature and journalism of the 1940s, functioned as a politically mobilizing and agitating factor. It was associated, for example, with homeland democratized in the socialist sense. Adam Ważyk wrote in a poem: "Będzie wielka rzecz, / Pospolita Rzecz! / Potęga wyrośnie z nas / Na pochwałę wsi, na pochwałę miast – / Na spotkanie dniom / Szklany stanie dom!" [There'll be something great / A great Republic / We will grow big / In praise of villages, in praise of cities – / To meet the days / A glass house will rise!]. A. Ważyk, *Marsz*, in: J. Szczawiej, *Poezja Polski Walczącej*, vol. II, Warszawa 1974, p. 195. Władysław Broniewski, in a poem addressed to emigrants, urged them to return home and take part in the country's reconstruction as follows: "Bracia! Do domu! Stawiać czas / w Warszawie szklane domy..." [Brothers! Come home! It's time / to erect glass houses in Warsaw…]. W. Broniewski, *Poezje zebrane*, ed. F. Lichodziejewska, vol. III, Płock-Toruń 1997, p. 13. Franciszek Gil wrote in his 1946 reportage: "Today our peasants speak the language of glass houses". F. Gil, *Ziemia, ziemia…*, in: *Wejście w kraj*, op. cit., p. 76. Bolesław Drobner, a Polish Socialist Party politician, called Wrocław pioneers "a group of thoroughly honest people, struggling for a better, bright, sunny Poland, the 'Poland of glass houses'". B. Drobner, *Zdobyliśmy polskie Złote Runo!*, in: *Trudne dni. Wrocław 1945 r. we wspomnieniach pionierów*, vol. I, Wrocław 1960, p. 98.

The scene is so constructed that the narrator-agent does not come out as entirely credible, whereas the sceptical polemicist, charging him with employing propagandist rant, represents an authentic stand, grounded in fresh experience and individualized perspective. Though both of them are looking at ruins of a Gothic church, it is only the sceptic who acknowledges the fact that "our generation is bound to live with ruins", with the heap of rubble also denoting the destruction of "thought, toil, brilliant calculations", the erosion of the then-propagated ethos of man-the-builder. While the former represents the modern idea, originally Le Corbusier's, to construct a new world within a space "purged" of what is obsolete and reactionary, the latter voices doubts typical of the critique of such visions, undermining the above-quoted progressivist narrative, with progress construed as a collective effort aimed at mastering the hostile reality, making it possible for humans to settle into it in social and material terms.[825] The enthusiast's arguments are jarringly doctrinaire and overly optimistic, bordering on hysterical enthusiasm and the propagandist, idealistic attitude to working for the common good, one that was always denounced by Różewicz. The confrontation of the image of a destroyed temple and the vision of "glass houses" in the text does not lead to unequivocal conclusions. Still, it initiates an important debate on the consciousness of postwar, spiritually devastated man as an individual and part of society. If in the text's conclusion the narrator upholds the utopia of progress, the basis for it is technological development and education, not a political revolution (it is the "acetylenic star", not the red one, that shines over the children walking to their village school and the welder at work).

Kartki z Węgier, a series of reportage pieces written three years later, did not offer the writer such opportunities. Already in 1947, Edward Nazański, the editor of "Sygnały", the weekly literary supplement to

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[825] See E. Rewers, *Post*-polis. *Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta*, Kraków 2005, pp. 262–265.

"Trybuna Robotnicza", a daily newspaper that Różewicz cooperated with, urged for the "socialization of writers", that is a reorientation of their focus onto practical issues of industry and economy.[826] The doctrine of Socialist Realism, imposed on writers and artists, obligated them to give "testimony to the new times, new forms, new man". Reporters in particular were expected to "see the totality of changes, the magnitude of work completed, to comprehend the weight of social and civic problems".[827] From that moment on, the "glass houses" utopia was not supposed to inspire either philosophical debates or individual acts of empathy, because there was no room in an openly biased reportage for existential or moral doubts, what with its protagonist being either a collective or the stereotyped "new man" of communism. The new Dunapentele, the city of cleanliness, light, and modern industry, enthusiastically depicted by Różewicz in *Las w Sztalinvaros* [*The Sztalinvaros Forest*] (*Kartki z Węgier*) was supposed to be the ultimate implementation of the socialist agenda of the state's planned, ideologically steered modernization.

> In those houses, the houses of Hungary's first socialist city, there is no place for dirt, darkness, decay. The region's inhabitants are no longer going to be jammed in attics or damp, gloomy cellars that capitalism allocated to the urban proletariat. The new city is going to be the city of green, of light, of broad streets and open spaces overlooking the Danube (K 11).

The concept of home and the city in the reportage is grounded in naturalist-scientistic binary oppositions of progress vs backwardness, light vs darkness, open spaces vs cramped conditions, fresh air vs stuffi-

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[826] E. Nazański, *Gdzie są pisarze?*, "Sygnały" (supplement to "Trybuna Robotnicza", 16 February 1947) 1947, no. 47, p. 8.

[827] K. Koźniewski, *Wstęp*, in: *Most. Wybór reportaży*, ed. K. Koźniewski, Warszawa 1951, p. 8.

ness, cleanliness vs dirt, dignity vs humiliation, and enlightened human-
ity vs animalistic stupor. It also reproduces the vertical order of social
space from the bourgeois novel: the apartment vs the basement and the
attic. What links this vignette by Różewicz with Żeromski's fiction and
socialist thought is, primarily, the idea of harnessing modern civilization
and nature alike for humankind's benefit, for example by utilizing the el-
ementary power of great rivers (the Vistula and the Danube), the rational
perspective on reality, and the vision of prospective cultural transforma-
tion of the dwellers of "gloomy cellars" due to better housing conditions.
In Różewicz's text, however, the idea is embedded in the system of politi-
cal meanings that imposes both the antagonistic language of argumenta-
tion and the ultimate import of the entire argument, subordinated as it is
to the technocratic-ideological project of "new man", in theory inclusive
of everything that the new man might possibly need as regards housing,
work, leisure time, and cultural life. Despite the generally low social ac-
ceptance of the communist worldview in Communist Poland, the utopia
of the modern city construed as a promise of the country's modernization
and a better life for millions of people did fire the average Pole's imagina-
tion as late as the 1960s and 1970s.

Le Corbusier's technological-urban "machine" of social life, how-
ever, did not live up to such expectations. "Instead of a well-oiled mecha-
nism, the 'machine à vivre', and egalitarian society, there emerged the
crowded, claustrophobic city, filled with cars and unbearable noise".[828]
Similarly, in Różewicz's prose, the city and the residential building con-

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[828] E. Rewers, *Post*-polis. *Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta*, op. cit. p. 266. The critique of
modern metropolis emerges concurrently with the idea of modernist urban planning and archi-
tecture, but the symbolic demise of modernism is usually identified with the demolition of the
Pruitt-Igoe public housing project in Saint Louis, USA, in 1972. The housing project was car-
ried out in accordance with the theoretical premises of the International Congresses of Modern
Architecture, active since the interwar years. Ibid., p. 270.

note negative experiences, as – beginning with the first half of the 1950s and throughout the entire subsequent decade – urbanized or industrialized space, in his texts, acquired some unquestionable dystopian characteristics.[829] Already in *Uśmiechy*, the city is subversively compared to an anthill denoting cramped living conditions and the individual's insignificance. The association of the city and the railway station with an anthill accompanies the protagonist of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* (II 130), while the huge modern building in *Tarcza z pajeczyny* is a "termite nest" (I 237). This originally positive, Biblical comparison of humans to ants acquires a pejorative sense in modern thought, connoting naturalist concepts of social Darwinism and attempts at overcoming it in neo-idealist philosophy and humanist sociology.[830] In Różewicz's prose and poetry, however, the ant colony or termite nest is first of all a synecdoche of the inhuman city-organism, subordinated to the population's biological life. Anna Legeżyńska also points out that the urban anti-home in Różewicz's writing is referred to as a "cage", "trap", "waiting room", "human storage", and "home-office".[831] One could supplement this list by the equally frequent "chest" and "shop-window display" (Ma 43).

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[829]   Similarly, in Różewicz's poetry from the 1960s, the city is the technological anti-utopia, as, for instance, in the poem *Decybele* [*Decibels*]: "the iron strikes of streetcars / against the pavement / the blows of a hammer / on the staircase […] the prolonged hissing / the sucking of refuse / the emptying of containers / the gasping of engines" (IX 47). The modern metropolis in Różewicz's poem is one big urban trash heap, the "inhuman city, intentionally designed for large uniformed collectives by its architects, who dismissed the individual's perspective out of hand". B. Sienkiewicz, op. cit., p. 511.

[830]   The theme of an anthill society features in, among others, H. Bergson's *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932) and A. Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932, Polish edition 1933). The famous article by British sociobiologist Julian Huxley, explaining the principles of social organization as exemplified by the opposition of the zoological model of society (termites and ants) and the humanist (political) model, was published in H. Kozłowski's translation as *Ludzie i mrówki* [*People and Ants*] in "Nowiny Literackie" 1948, no. 35.

[831]   A. Legeżyńska, op. cit., p. 127. Jurij Lotman highlighted the standardization of modern man's existential space in M. Bulkhakov's *The Master and Margarita* symbolized by the "sounds of a radio show – the same in every apartment". J.M. Łotman, *Dom w "Mistrzu i Małgorzacie" Micha-*

Home in Różewicz's writing is transmuted into Anti-Home because it
loses its main attributes: the ability to symbolically embody the cos-
mic order (*imago mundi*), the ability to sustain values (integration and
family hierarchy). It even loses its elementary attribute of demarca-
tion, indispensable for marking off a safe place. As a result of these
changes, it ceases to be a symbolic space, or even an intimate one.[832]

Typical of the architecture of Communist Poland in the 1960s and
1970s, the "box" – made up of precast concrete slabs, erected in a busy
and noisy place, the effect of the city's socialist (re)construction and im-
plementation of the idea of standardized housing projects for the masses
– is identified in Różewicz's narratives with anti-home, a symbol of being
un-settled into the world. As Heidegger explains, "A building, especially
in the modern era – when the proper sense of building, i.e. habitation,
fades into oblivion – though providing man with a dwelling place, may
at the same time make habitation increasingly inaccessible, thus making
man homeless".[833] Majchrowski adds that in Różewicz's writing one can
"hear a certain anti-civilization tone, the writer's distrust of big-city life,
his terror of the metropolis with its cramped sprawl and consumptionist
excess".[834]

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iła Bułhakowa, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 1987, no. 4, p. 316. The opposition of home vs anti-home
(i.e. alien, hostile, almost infernal space evoking a sense of homelessness and danger) is traced
back by Lotman to Pushkin's, Gogol's, and Dostoyevsky's writings wherein the "Home theme
becomes the ideological centre absorbing reflections on cultural tradition, history, humankind",
whereas the anti-home expresses the illusory settling into the civilized world, the individual's
isolation and loneliness, the modern apartment's standardization – moreover, the anti-home is
part of the equally inhuman city space. Ibid., pp. 311–312, 315.

[832] A. Legeżyńska, op. cit., p. 133. The city as anti-home in Różewicz's poetry "is not conducive to
the sense of one's being settled into the world, does not create a solid basis for settling down, for
permanent residence". B. Sienkiewicz, op. cit., p. 519.

[833] E. Rewers, *Post*-polis. *Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta*, op. cit., p. 233.

[834] Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., pp. 226–228.

The modern metropolis theme in Różewicz's prose following *Kartki z Węgier* displays a distinctly anti-utopian bent, going against the grain of the modernist idea of a perfectable world, built on the ruins of an earlier era. That idea not only defined the form of the modern state, city and home, but also made it possible to perceive modern urban planning both in opposition to pre-existing building and habitation practices and as a long-awaited implementation of old visions of the future. Lesław M. Bartelski in his article *Kamień węgielny* [*The Cornerstone*], an imaginary conversation with Cezary Baryka in 1948 describing how "glass houses" were actually being erected in Warsaw (surrounded by cinemas, lecture halls, clubs, and cafes), he goes back in time to the 1930s, when there were 160,000 apartments in the capital consisting of one room only, most of them without any sanitary facilities, and Żeromski's idea seemed but a pipe dream.[835] Maria Dąbrowska, in her short story *Tu zaszła zmiana…* [*A Change Has Taken Place Here…*] (1951), referred to a similar historical framework creating a positive relationship between the writer-observer on the one hand, and an impromptu playground and the noisy school building at "my window level" on the other.[836] Her acceptance of the status quo in the story is ideologically motivated, in line with the thought patterns of Socialist Realism, wherein the intensity of city life; firstly, testifies to the success of the capital's ongoing reconstruction project, eliminating the ruins of the old world and facilitating the arrival of peaceful normalcy, and, secondly, constitutes tangible, though indirect, evidence of progress, heralding the dawn of a new, democratic era, more just than the previous one. The crisis of communist ideology in the Polish People's Republic in the mid-1950s anticipated the breakdown of the modern city utopia. The utopia's demise materialized in the 1960s

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[835]   L.M. Bartelski, *Kamień węgielny*, "Nowiny Literackie" 1948, no. 18, pp. 3–4.

[836]   M. Dąbrowska, *Gwiazda zaranna. Opowiadania*, Warszawa 1955, p. 78.

and 1970s, when it turned out that modernist architecture and urban planning had failed to solve social and housing problems. The polluted, industrialized cityscape, or the crowded street and playground, the recurrent motifs of Różewicz's prose in those days, no longer testify either to civilizational progress or the justifiability of the commonly pursued model of urban growth, or even to individuals settling into the newly arranged habitation space.

Anti-home is a device, part of Le Corbusier's "machine for living in", that is a mass-produced, run-of-the-mill, standardized place, designed in accordance with the premises of social engineering and, most importantly, is not fully separated from public space and is thus unable to fulfil the function of a place of one's own, reserved only for the individual and his/her closest kin. Legeżyńska rightly notes that Różewicz's anti-home is not an intimate space. Contrary to the scholar's opinion, however, it remains a symbolic space. After all, just like home, anti-home also expresses man's experience in culture-mediated forms. It seems, for example, that the home in *Sobowtór* symbolizes the "trashy" condition of the modern city dweller in general and that of high-rise housing projects in particular. The protagonist of Różewicz's essay is an intellectual weary of his role, the self-ironic writer-reader – someone who, impatient with children's chatter coming through the window, might have quoted Henryk Sienkiewicz's famous sentence: "Herod was a great king", rhetorically fencing off the writer's room from the street *profanum*. Such a gesture, however, could hardly be legitimized by the "trash poet". Between him and the tiresome city, there is no boundary that he could use as a protective screen. Ewa Rewers writes that the window – as a permeable boundary between one's private space and the public realm – is both a part and a model of the "palimpsest-like structure of the city experienced by the lonesome subject".[837] Just as the street runs

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[837]   E. Rewers, *Post-polis. Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta*, op. cit., p. 215.

through the middle, as it were, of the protagonist's home in *Sobowtór*, so is the world-as-a-garbage-dump at the very centre of his perception, affected as it is by the chaos of gratuitous, excessive, and incompatible impressions and observations that fail to make up a coherent whole.

Justyna Jaworska emphasizes the fact that in interwar Poland, viewed on the national scale, private space "remained a luxury or extravagance", whereas in the second half of the 20th century "poor housing conditions ceased to be a major problem, supplanted by monotony and kitsch".[838] As late as the 1970s, cheap housing projects designed for large families – dominant in Communist Poland and well-adapted to the ever-growing birthrate and mass migration to the cities – may have appeared to millions of Poles as the long-awaited implementation of the modern utopia of decent housing conditions for everyone, though in reality they only satisfied very basic housing needs, providing neither technical nor aesthetic comfort, and not always guaranteeing the separation of intimate and social spheres. Predictably enough, Jaworska adds, "It was not in the realm of privacy but, rather, in the cooperative and neighbourhood communities that socialism located the essence of future human happiness".[839] Communist representations of home were initially defined by the premises of Socialist Realism, which propagated the fetish of the apartment as a reward for one's enthusiasm, work, and sacrifice for Communist Poland, cultivating the myth of the country's collective reconstruction and modernization. Housing projects, in turn, were in the days of Gomułka and Gierek subordinated not to ideological criteria but, first and foremost, to the principles of socialist, bureaucratized economy, which resulted in extreme standardization and a lowering of quality. The housing dreams of Poles in those days, if one regards the literary and

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[838]   J. Jaworska, *Własny kąt*, in: *Obyczaje polskie*, op. cit., pp. 412, 417.
[839]   Ibid., p. 414.

cinematic works of the era as representative, corresponded to the vision of a building which, on one hand, approximated the traditional manor house and, on the other, whose interior design resembled that of a bourgeois apartment or an intellectual's study from the beginning of the 20th century. Meanwhile, they were being offered degraded functionalism and minimalism, the clumsily executed visions of modern interior designers and architects.

Marta Wyka, discussing Różewicz's attitude to objects and spaces in Communist Poland, writes that "the bourgeois room with its furnishings, for a long time, remained the synonym of harmony and order".[840] Such a well-designed place of one's own is Leopold Staff's room, is described in the sketch *"Zostanie po mnie pusty pokój"*.

> A bookcase with glazed doors. A little round table covered with a crochet doily. Four chairs. By the wall, between the windows, a desk. And a sofa. A leather armchair. A little coffee table with some magazines on it. On the desk, a small photograph of Chopin. On the walls: two little heads, Wyspiański's pastels, Fałat's watercolour and some accidental woodcuts featuring Warsaw. On the windowsills, a few flowerpots with flowers (III 18).

Staff's study is a "dead poet's" room, abandoned by a real person, but not symbolically "empty". It is a significantly arranged space, demonstrating the Old Poet's inclination for aesthetic equilibrium, his penchant for knowledge and modest, prosaic beauty, as well as his attachment to national culture. The signs of identity and cultural memory referred to in the description externalize the relation between the fullness and order of Staff's personality and his own place, and between the writer's spir-

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[840] M. Wyka, *Człowiek współczesny jest równoczesny"*, op. cit., p. 13.

itual culture and his material possessions. "Our apartment is, perhaps more than any work of our own, an image of ourselves", writes Andrzej Mencwel.[841] The motto from Conrad, placed at the beginning of the sketch, defines Różewicz's attempt to describe the "continuum of life" on the basis of "small, bodily sensations", starting with the symbolic beginning – Staff's chimney smoke. The narrative's counterpoint, however, is his own poem – quoted in various versions – about death, the ultimate severing of all bonds with life and the material world, "cutting oneself off" from people, superstitions, animals, plants, tastes, gestures, old landscapes, and the stars. Viewed from that perspective, the differences become less pronounced. Every, even perfectly ordered, modern human space is the individual's anti-home. The metric of authentic, common experience is not perfect at settling into one's existence and one's own place, but the awareness of the "broken threads" within, the inner realization that one's mental home is disintegrating. Staff's study is, in fact, a shouting "void" left after the passing away of a cultured person, the demise of an identity ultimately explainable in the light of ethical and humanist ideas, irrevocably gone with the image (meaning) of the world destroyed by modern history. The bourgeois room has become a utopian space.

The order of family home and bourgeois space, though unable to withstand the pressure of 20th-century changes, remained in Różewicz's prose a model of the individual's existential, or even somatic, rootedness in the world. Domesticated reality "will submerge itself in time, like Atlantis in water. Still, that Atlantis keeps resurfacing every now and then, as the childhood experiences leave a lasting imprint, contributing to the matter of memory and influencing one's understanding of the world".[842] It is the case in Różewicz's sketches and memoiristic texts collected in

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[841] A. Mencwel, *Widziane z dołu*, op. cit., p. 28.

[842] J. Petrowicz, op. cit., p. 711.

the volumes *Nasz starszy brat* and *Mother Departs*, in which the writer returns – both in narrative and symbolic terms – to his place of birth, as, for instance, in his small autobiographical piece *Twarze* [*Faces*] published in the first edition of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, wherein "that place" stands for the writer's native town, revisited by the protagonist "after a long journey that lasted for thirty years" (II 284). The town, street, and house are places of his own insofar as it is still possible to find and recover some "familiar faces" in that space, insofar as these sites constitute a space in which the narrator-agent can emotionally and organically partake thanks to his individual identification efforts.

> A wooden house used to stand here. You could enter the kitchen straight from the backyard. There was neither a hall nor a hallway. Just the threshold. Cut out from a wooden beam, well-trodden, bent almost like a bow, like a yoke, or a handbarrow. It was only the threshold and the warped door that separated the kitchen from the yard. […] The house was alive at night. There were rippling, squeaking, rustling, and shuffling sounds in there. We were part and parcel of the house. Its floors, walls, doors, windows (II 285–286).

This picture of an old building goes well beyond the confines of realistic description. The narrator of *Twarze* presents and recalls a material object in terms of the warm, friendly atmosphere between its dwellers, the corporeal-existential community of "we" circumscribed by the familial space that he remembers.[843] Ewa Rewers, discussing Heidegger's concept

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843   Just like in the story *Niedzielny spacer za miasto* [*A Sunday Walk Out of Town*], whose autobiographical motifs can be traced back to the Gliwice period and the "house with a little tower and green window panes": "We were climbing the stairs. We stopped by the door. I pushed the doorbell button. Grandma opened the door. In the hallway one could smell chicken broth and cooked vegetables. Like at my home before the war" (II 299). "The vision of family home in

of one's authentic ensconcement in the world, regards such a representation of home as a sign of a revision of the modern housing project that took place in the second half of the 20th century. The revision consisted of, among other things, a change in the language of the description of the very experience of habitation by replacing the ideological and abstract discourse of modernity with narratives of "returning to the roots, to the source, the matter".[844] Following Lefebvre, the scholar nevertheless argues that "habitation is historical in character", which makes the meanings behind the concepts of mental home or a place of one's own changeable and relative, depending on their historical context.[845] Rewers further explains that ensconcement, or settlement into the world in late modernity means "living on the outside of the technological obsession of progress, a return to a well-balanced relationship with nature […] and establishing a harmonious link with our past".[846] The topos of authentic habitation in Różewicz's sketch, however, has nothing to do with the post-modern nostalgia for Arcadian places or the utopian "private homeland" lost because of the relentless progress of history. This return is, rather, more about the acknowledgement – typical of his writings – of superiority or the primacy of somatic and material identification over concepts or images of culture which mediate between the subject and his experience and memory; it is more about partial and inconclusive biographical reconstruction than a pre-existing and coherent myth.

Różewicz's works is grounded in the theme of rootedness construed as an experience of one's attachment to a particular place. It is the space of happiness as it is not only the narrator-agent who resides there, but also the home itself that has 'settled down' within him". A. Kulik-Jęsiek, *Czasoprzestrzeń Różewicza: synteza i rozpad*, in: *Światy Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 48. This identification of home with the family circle is one of the fundamental *topoi* of Polish culture and a premise of traditional cultural identity. See D. Markowska, *Dom – twierdza tożsamości,* in: *Dom we współczesnej Polsce*, eds P. Łukasiewicz, A. Siciński, Wrocław 1992.

[844] E. Rewers, *Post-polis. Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta*, op. cit., p. 226.

[845] Ibid., p. 231.

[846] Ibid., p. 234.

Westward Ho! (Early Reportages)

As a writer-traveller, Tadeusz Różewicz began with writing reportage pieces about the so-called Regained Territories for "Trybuna Tygodnia" (the addendum to "Trybuna Robotnicza").[847] It was not an extraordinary or ideologically-neutral topic in the post-war years.[848] Tourist, historical,

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[847] Różewicz did not use the term "regained territories" in his reportages, but K. Wyka did – in the context of Różewicz's Oder trip. See K. Wyka, *Na linii Śląska*, op. cit., p. 1. The term "regained territories" was officially decreed by President I. Mościcki in 1938, in reference to the Trans-Olza region annexed by the Polish Army (see Dziennik Ustaw 1938, no. 78, par. 533, 11 October 1938). At the beginning of the 20th century the term was used by columnists of "Przegląd Wielkopolski" (J.L. Popławski and L. Warwas, among others), who wrote about the necessity of "regaining" Silesia and Masuria. In 1920, in turn, a special document issued on the occasion of the ceremony of Poland's Wedding to the Baltic Sea, performed by General J. Haller, announced the "regaining of the Polish Sea". See P. Kuciński, *O nacjonalistach i kartografach. Symbol granicy na tle idei (i mrzonek) politycznych w polskiej poezji nacjonalistycznej lat 30. XX wieku*, in: *Studia postkolonialne nad kulturą i cywilizacją polską*, eds K. Stępnik, D. Trześniowski, Lublin 2010, p. 228. Catherine II referred to Russia's western territories, taken away from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the partitions, as "regained territories". Thus the term's presence in the Polish geopolitical discourse may have resulted from the typically "subaltern" adaptation of the Russian imperial pan-Slavic discourse (the concept of territories returning to their "mother"/"matrix" is also of Russian provenance). See J. Sowa, op. cit., p. 467. After WW2 the term was used in reference to German territories located on the right bank of the Oder and the Lusatian Neisse, preliminarily assigned to Poland already at the Teheran Conference in 1943, the ultimate shape of the western border being established only at the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945. "During World War Two the territories of the Third Reich that were to be annexed by Poland were referred to as the 'postulated territories', the 'new territories', or the 'returning territories'. After 1945 the 'regained territories' became the official term, what with the then created Ministry of the Regained Territories. The term also entered colloquial Polish. After 1949 the phrase was deleted from the officialese of Communist Poland, though. The former German territories, after all, could no longer be viewed as a special region and were now supposed to be treated on a par with the rest of the country. The previous term was replaced by the neutral phrase 'western and northern territories'. Despite all that, the post-war term had become so well-established in Polish society that one can come across 'regained territories' in colloquial Polish even today". G. Thum, *Obce miasto. Wrocław 1945 i potem*, trans. M. Słabicka, Wrocław 2008, pp. 34–35, 252–253.

[848] Elżbieta Dzikowska notes that "the success of the West as subject matter in literature was to a large extent a result of the sustained support of the authorities that turned it into one of the important instruments of their policy. Reactivated in 1944 in Lublin, the Polish Western Union [Polski Związek Zachodni] was, admittedly, disbanded in the Stalinist era, but re-established by Gomułka as Society for the Development of Western Territories [Towarzystwo Rozwoju Ziem

production-oriented, or propagandist sketches and reportages, encouraging Polish settlers to go west and north and participate in the reconstruction or Polonization of the newly acquired territories, were in those days published by such authors as Kazimierz Koźniewski, Wanda Melcer, Edmund Osmańczyk, Ksawery Pruszyński, Władysław Ogrodziński, Franciszek Gil, Wojciech Żukrowski, Stefan Sulima, Henryk Worcell, Kazimierz Błahij, Roman Bratny, Zbyszko Bednorz, Lucjan Surkowski, Aleksander Jackiewicz, Stanisław Telega, and Mirosław Azembski. Silesia, Pomerania and Masuria were then at the centre of interest of the new regime, engaged as it was in creating the basis of the national, economic and cultural policy of the new state, within almost completely changed borders in the north, east and west. Seeking their policy's legitimization, the Communists reached for pre-existing, socially accepted narratives of the native land. The key ideological and propagandist tradition of western and northern territories – which, as Polish "native lands", were incorporated in 1945 into national territory – was the National-Democratic western idea, formulated in geopolitical terms at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.[849]

Augé points out that non-places are defined not by identity or ensconcement, but by "instruction manuals", as it is the text that facilitates and regulates entering into interactions with alien spaces.[850] If one assumes that the "regained territories", being nobody's lands that were symbolically ravished in the 1940s, became non-places, then their Polish "instruction manual" was the Piast narrative and the modernization nar-

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Zachodnich]. It remained active until 1971". E.K. Dzikowska, *Tożsamość wrocławia(n), czyli o możliwościach życia ponad podziałami*, in: *My wrocławianie. Społeczna przestrzeń miasta*, eds P. Żuk, J. Pluta, Wrocław 2006, p. 177.

[849] See G. Strauchold, *Ziemie Zachodnie – pojęcie z zakresu geografii historycznej (studium poglądów od połowy XIX w. do 1945 r.)*, in: *Ziemie Zachodnie – historia i perspektywy*, eds W. Kucharski, G. Strauchold, Wrocław 2011.

[850] M. Augé, op. cit., p. 65.

rative, which were mutually interconnected through so-called Western Thought, that was being implemented at the time.[851] As one can learn from articles in "Trybuna Robotnicza" from the 1940s, "propagating the western idea in society" was recommended by the Polish Workers' Party, which, among other things, supported popular lectures on the subject organized by the Polish Western Union.[852] Communist Poland's national and historical policy as regards western and northern territories is clearly traceable back to the theses of Zygmunt Wojciechowski, founder and director of Instytut Zachodni [Western Institute], who propagated the idea of Polish "native territories" and the thousand-year-old antagonism between Poles and Germans.[853] Różewicz also perceived the source of this

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[851] See *Odzyskane ziemie – odzyskani ludzie. Ze współczesnych zagadnień Ziem Odzyskanych*, Poznań 1946. The aim of the Regained Territories Bureau of the Ministry of Education [Biuro Ziem Odzyskanych Ministerstwa Oświaty], operating in "close contact" with the Polish Western Union [Polski Związek Zachodni], was "to effect the gradual merger of various social groups into one homogeneous society [...], to offer extended care to schools, given their crucial role in the process of creation of a new type of Pole", and to cultivate the relations between the locals' and the settlers' children. M. Pollak, *Działalność Biura Ziem Odzyskanych Ministerstwa Oświaty w roku 1945/46. Raport*, "Odra" 1947, no. 5, p. 3. Shortly after being appointed Mayor of Wrocław by the Provisional Government of the Republic of Poland (the successor of the Polish Committee of National Liberation), B. Drobner contacted the Polish Western Union in Kraków, preparing for taking over the city in line with the union's suggestions, among others. See B. Drobner, *Zdobyliśmy polskie Złote Runo!*, op. cit., p. 80. Both B. Drobner and Canon Priest Kazimierz Lagosz, the organizer of the Polish bishopric in Wrocław, used in public the term "macierz" [mother/matrix] and referred to the "tradition of Silesian Piasts". Ibid., p. 93.

[852] See e.g. *Propagowanie idei zachodniej w społeczeństwie*, "Trybuna Robotnicza" 1947, no. 40 of 9 February 1947, p. 3.

[853] See G. Thum, op. cit., pp. 236–238; G. Strauchold, op. cit., p. 32. Using, even before WW2, such terms as "macierz" [motherland/matrix] and "ziemie macierzyste" [native/matrix lands], Wojciechowski considered them an umbrella term for "all the territories that in the Middle Ages were part of the Polish state. After 1945 the words 'macierz' and 'ziemie macierzyste' proved helpful in eliminating a linguistic gap that the word 'homeland' was unable to fill. The term 'homeland', after all, denotes the country in which one was born, of which one is a citizen, or with which one has a national bond. None of these criteria applied, of course, to the German territories annexed by Poland in 1945. [...] That is why the noun 'motherland' and the adjective 'native' could become substitute terms [...]. The emotional content of those words was comparable to that of the term 'homeland', while in Polish society, with its cult of motherhood and the

geopolitical vision in nationalist ideology. It is Ułan in *Do piachu*, the character connected with Narodowe Siły Zbrojne [The National Armed Forces], who comes up with territorial claims, demading that the border should run along the Oder-Neisse line.

Poland's geographical location has changed many times in the country's history, affecting the evolution of representations of native space. The oldest representation, Janusz Maciejewski writes, "included the lands constituting the core of the first Piasts' state, i.e. those whose rulers' seals featured the Piast coat of arms, the white eagle, and which collectively came under the oldest umbrella term *Regnum Poloniae*, that is Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, Silesia, Masovia, and Kuyavia". The Cherven Cities, Pomerania, and Lusatia, in turn, that is lands whose seals featured other coats of arms, were only temporarily incorporated into the Piast monarchy.[854] As

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Catholic Mariolatry, they had extremely positive, religious connotations. 'Matrix/Motherland', then, was a perfect verbal construct, making it possible to refer to the western territories as 'ancestral lands' and to call the suggested pre-shape of the Polish state's territory 'motherland'. Motherland, after all, was the ancestors' homeland that had been dismembered in the past ages and, after World War Two, thanks to a twist of fate, reunited again." G. Thum, op. cit., p. 253. Without delving into the earlier history of the terms "motherland" and "ancestral" in connection with the activity of patriotic-educational institutions in the second half of the 19th century, one should add that at the beginning of the 20th century in National Democracy's journalistic texts, for example those published in "Przegląd Wszechpolski", the term "macierz polska" ["Polish motherland"] functioned in a cultural-territorial sense, comparable to such geopolitical terms as "Western Borderlands" and "ethnographic Poland". This meaning became commonplace in the interwar years, when Silesia, for example, was referred to in a proclamation by the president of the board of the Silesian District of Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnich [The Defence Union of the Western Borderlands] as a region that should be "inseparably bound to its Motherland" ("Strażnica Zachodnia" 1928, no. 2, p. 5) after 600 years of separation from its "Polish motherland" (J. Ludyga Laskowski, *W piętnastą rocznicę walk o wolność Górnego Śląska*, "Drogowskazy" 1936, no. 4, p. 1). "Motherland", in the context of mythical and metaphysical representations of "aboriginal" national culture, mother tongue and native soil, functioned also in the journalism of Stefan Żeromski (e.g. "gwara-macierz" ["mother dialect"] and "macierzysty kraj" ["motherland"] in the sketch *Snobizm i postęp*). See S.A. Wisłocki, *Matecznik Małej Ojczyzny – próba uściślenia pojęcia*, "Świętokrzyskie" (special edition) 2010, no. 2.

[854] J. Maciejewski, *Rasa czy* principium. *O dziejach przemian formuły polskości w XIX i XX wieku*, in: *Przemiany formuły polskości w drugiej połowie XIX wieku*, ed. J. Maciejewski, Warszawa 1999, p. 20.

a result of the country's feudal fragmentation, the Poles' popular under-
standing of Poland narrowed down to the crown lands "including only
Greater Poland and Lesser Poland, which collectively made up the Polish
Kingdom, reborn under the rule of Władysław Łokietek [Władysław the
Short]".[855] From the 15th century onwards, the term 'Poland' denoted all
the crown lands apart from the territorial core of Łokietek's kingdom, Mas-
ovia, Eastern Pomerania, Podlachia, Podolia, and Red Ruthenia, whereas
Silesia, Western Pomerania, and Lusatia were excluded from it. This rep-
resentation provided the basis for the topographical idea of Poland that
functioned until the 18th century, while the differences between the crown
lands and those connected with them as a result of the political union of
the state and the nobility –Lithuania, Ruthenia (Belarus and Ukraine) and,
partly, Prussia – would gradually disappear, leading to religious, linguistic,
and social integration of the ruling class. The Polish nation, in the political
sense, was, in those days, made up entirely of the nobility. At the end of
the century, "both as a result of the Enlightenment mental transformations
and, first and foremost, thanks to its own [the bourgeoisie's – WB] political
activity in the days of the Great Sejm and the Kościuszko Uprising", the
idea of the Polish nation was expanded to include also townspeople, whose
educated representatives became "carriers of conscious Polishness".[856] The
peasants, Janusz Maciejewski tells us, "despite their – elevated to the rank
of national myth – collective participation in the Battle of Racławice",
would still not identify with the national community, instead retaining
their attachment to local communities and loyalty to the state or the ruler.
Among the several 19th-century concepts of making peasants part of the
nation, the most inclusive one proved to be the political idea of the "peo-
ple", which was based on the premise that "both a native of Kraków or

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[855] Ibid., pp. 20–21.
[856] Ibid., p. 23.

Masovia or of Lithuania or Belarus" were inhabitants of all Polish territories and were "potential Poles".[857] Still, despite the abolition of serfdom and the granting of civic rights to peasants, ethnic loyalties proved stronger than political identities. As a result of the "growing awareness across Europe of ethnic differences now perceived as national ones", it was the exclusive, cultural-linguistic formula of a nation, the so-called *Sprachnation*, which from the second half of the 19th century also included Polish peasants and workers, that gained the upper hand in Poland as well.[858] As Maciejewski explains, "They were Polish-speaking peasants and workers inhabiting – or who came from –territories that overlapped with the first, early-Piast shape of Poland. In other words – ethnically Polish lands".[859]

At the turn of the century and during the first decades of the 20th century, "Bolesław Chrobry's [Bolesław the Brave's] Poland" (in Władysław Semkowicz's terms) denoted a geographic state based on the irregular quadrangle circumscribed by the Carpathian Mountains, the Baltic Sea, the Bug, the Oder, and the Sudeten Mountains – in other words, the old Polish (Lechitic) ethnic or "native" territories.[860] Claims to the lands situated in the north and the west of that area resulted in the essentially anti-German character of modern Polish nationalism, endorsed particularly by

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[857] Ibid., p. 25.

[858] Cultural nations, as communities of collective representations, require such media as language and literature, thanks to which those common representations – largely perceived as uniquely peculiar – emerge, are concretized, and become propagated and widespread. J. Joachimsthaler, *Naród, tekst i odroczenie. Ruchoma tekstura*, trans. P. Przybyła, in: *Opowiedziany naród. Literatura polska i niemiecka wobec nacjonalizmów XIX wieku*, eds I. Surynt, M. Zybura, Wrocław 2006, pp. 41–49. The concept of "print capitalism", conducive to the emergence of modern national communities, is discussed at length by Benedict Anderson in his much-quoted book *Wspólnoty wyobrażone. Rozważania o źródłach i rozprzestrzenianiu się nacjonalizmu*, trans. S. Amsterdamski, Kraków 1997.

[859] J. Maciejewski, op. cit., p. 27.

[860] G. Strauchold, op. cit., p. 29. According to Strauchold, the hypothetical course of the borders of "Chrobry's Poland" was proposed by Joachim Lelewel, while the notion of the border along the Oder-Neisse line was introduced by Wacław Nałkowski in 1912. Ibid., pp. 26–28.

writers and columnists connected with right-wing nationalists in the interwar years. Jerzy Pietrkiewicz's literary "geography of the nation", for example, encompassed Lusatia, Pomerania and Varmia, i.e. regions that back then remained within the boundaries of German culture and statehood. The concept of "Bolesław Chrobry's Poland", therefore, presupposed an antagonistic interpretation of the history of Polish-German relations, one that would justify claims to western territories. Such a narrative had already functioned in Polish Romanticism, but only thanks to the historiography, journalism and historical fiction of the first half of the 20th century did it become entrenched in the national consciousness. The Provisional Government of National Unity in 1945, taking an official stand on the issue of Poland's borders in line with the Soviet policy, accepted the country's geographical shape reminiscent of Bolesław Chrobry's state.[861] The Piast narrative, under the circumstances, served to justify Poland's post-war *status quo*, integrating the politically-divided society around the image of a shared collective past featuring the "thousand-year-old" conflict with Germany urging Poles to settle down in the western and northern territories, and incorporating the territories' local Slavic populations into the Polish nation. It was also an interpretation of the idea of native space corresponding to national identity organized in any nation-state around shared history, culture, and language.[862]

The western and northern territories surround – from the north, west and southwest – the truncated territory of interwar Poland, much-reduced in the east. This huge "semicircle" runs from Silesia, through parts of Brandenburg, to the mouth of the Oder, and all the way to

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[861] On 26 July 1944 Stalin made a secret deal with the Polish Provisional Government regulating Poland's annexation of the German territories west of the Oder and Lusatian Neisse (including Szczecin), despite the western Allies' numerous objections (raised as late as 1947). See T. Urban, *Utracone ojczyzny*, trans. A. Kowaluk, Warszawa 2007, pp. 120–125.

[862] See H. Tumolska, op. cit., pp. 31–32.

the Gdańsk Coast and East Prussia. Except for the last two provinces, located in the northeast, the territories belong to the macroregion of the Oder Basin,[863] stretching from Ostrava and Gliwice (connected with the Oder by the Gliwice Canal) to Szczecin and the Szczecin Lagoon.[864] The Oder-Neisse line in the late 1940s was regarded as a natural border, protecting the country if the expected conflict with Germany came to pass. After annexing the Oder Basin, however, Poland expected, first and foremost, resultant communication and economic benefits.[865] As Kazimierz Koźniewski enthusiastically wrote in June 1947 in his reportage featuring a boat trip from Koźle to Szczecin, "The entire Oder Basin has found itself in a single geopolitical and economic system".[866] The fact sparked the imagination of scientists, journalists and writers who, encouraged by cultural activists and literary critics,[867] showed a vivid interest in such topics

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[863] The concept of the Oder Basin was already in circulation in the 1940s. Andrzej Jochelson, for example, recalled: "I had long dreamt about working on those territories, even long before the war. In 1940 the dream, in a way, materialized, as I wrote back then a rough draft of an essay entitled 'The Oder Basin', with maps attached to it, in which I discussed the centuries-old links between those territories and Poland". Jochelson further explains that in the post-war Kraków press there would appear ads urging Poles "to take up work in the Oder Basin area". A. Jochelson, *Kronika Semipałatyńsk – Wrocław*, ed. S. Bereś, Wrocław 1997, p. 188. Silesia, Lubusz Land, and West Pomerania (the Szczecin Coast) are all commonly regarded as Polish "Oder Basin territories". See *Katalog wystawy "Odra i Nadodrze" w zbiorach Biblioteki Śląskiej*, eds L. Nitsche, M. Skóra, Katowice 1992, p. 4.

[864] Szczecin in the journalism of the day – for example, in Ksawery Pruszyński's essay *Szczecin, profil miasta* (1948) – was largely perceived, by analogy with Poland's Eastern Borderlands, as a city located "on the frontier", the "furthermost, westernmost, most threatened […] outpost" of the Polish state. K. Pruszyński, *Wybór pism publicystycznych*, op. cit., p. 595. See S. Sulima, *Na krańcach*, "Odra" 1946, no. 20.

[865] See G. Strauchold, *Odra magiczna, czyli polskie fascynacje rzeką w drugiej połowie lat czterdziestych XX w.*, "Pamięć i Przyszłość" 2012, no. 2. Strauchold writes even about many Polish historians', journalists', geographers' and economists' fascination with the Oder in those days.

[866] K. Koźniewski, *Żywioły. Rzecz o Ziemiach Zachodnich Rzeczypospolitej*, Poznań 1948.

[867] On 16 November 1947 the 11th nationwide convention of Związek Zawodowy Dziennikarzy RP [Polish Journalists' Trade Union] took place in Szczecin. A day later, in Wrocław, the 3rd nationwide convention of Związek Zawodowy Literatów Polskich [the Polish Writers' Trade Union] began, with the "problems of the culture of Regained Territories" featuring prominently

as the history and socio-economic situation of the Oder Basin viewed as a European macroregion, the problems of the cultural borderlands between Germany and Poland, the river transportation and the port of Szczecin, fishing and fishing industry on the Baltic Coast, and the relations between settlers from various parts of Europe and the local population. Programmatically bent on the extensive description and Polonization of the newly acquired territories, the Katowice-based "Odra" magazine persistently encouraged its readers to move west.

In the autumn of 1947, Różewicz took an extended boat trip, covering the long distance from Koźle in Upper Silesia to Szczecin, on board the ships "Lignica", "Lompa" and "Danusia" tugging a cargo consisting of the fragments of a steel bridge.[868] As the author of the reportage piece *Most płynie do Szczecina* [*A Bridge Sails to Szczecin*], Różewicz was, at that point, doing a journalistic job typical of the late 1940s,[869] connected with the then published premises of the Economic Reconstruction Plan, the so-called Three-Year Plan (one of the text's characters utters critical remarks on the "three-year plan", and the "Appendix to the implementa-

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on the agenda (*Diariusz kultury polskiej 1947*, ed. P. Grzegorczyk, "Twórczość" 1948, no. 12, p. 124). To the building of the State Theatre in Wrocław a huge banner was attached with the message: "Writers, write about the Regained Territories!" (see "Odra" 1947, no. 50, p. 2).

[868] The first post-WW2 Polish civilian cargo transport on the Oder from Silesia to Szczecin reached port at the end of May 1946. In the middle of that year the Polish authorities took over the management of the Oder waterway from the Soviet administration. See P. Szulc, *Odra w życiu Szczecina i regionu bezpośrednio po 1945 r.*, "Pamięć i Przyszłość" 2012, no. 2, p. 15.

[869] River transport in general, and the one on the Oder in particular, as well as the reconstruction and operation of the Szczecin port and sea fishing, were popular subjects for reporters and columnists in those days, e.g. E. Skowron, *Odra – rzeka przeznaczenia*, "Odra" 1946 no. 13 (the issue featured also a map of the Oder Basin and "the waterway from Koźle to Szczecin"); A. Sylwester, *Jechałem Odrą z Raciborza do Szczecina*, "Ogniwa" 1947, no. 31; R.A., *Odra – wielki szlak wodny*, "Trybuna Robotnicza" 1947, no. 16, 17 January 1947; "Specjalny numer Odry poświęcony Szczecinowi i Sprawom Morskim wydany na Dni Szczecina", "Odra" 1947, no. 25–26. One of the temporary reasons for this popularity were numerous articles and reportages in the USSR on river transport, maritime economy, and hydrotechny that were published in the Polish press after 1945.

tion of the 3-year plan" is analysed by Różewicz in another of his reportages on the Western Territories entitled *Wyprawa na złotą rybkę* [*Goldfish Fishing*]).[870] The reporter presents the bridge's transportation as an example of the success of modern engineering and "man in action". Citing technical terminology and data, he quotes extensively from the report on the reconstruction of the Opole shipyard, referring to Silesia's medieval history with an emphasis on the period of the region's separation from Poland as well as describing the local museum's folk costumes and giving their local names. He also discusses the "regained territories" in terms of a social melting pot in which migrants from different parts of Poland and the locals meet.

The mobility and motley-crew type diversity of the people featured in the reportage *Most płynie do Szczecina* do not yet mark anything positive in a cultural sense or any social value. The transformations taking place on the Poles' "new land" are all aimed at creating a socially and linguistically unified local community based on national patterns of collective identity.[871] The reportage's narrator, noting that "old habits, prejudices, social differences, or even small linguistic differences stand in the way of mutual understanding and co-existence", assumes that these problems will disap-

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[870] Piotr Grzegorczyk quotes some of those premises in the opening paragraphs of *Diariusz kultury polskiej 1947*, listing, among other things, "unifying the Regained Territories with the rest of the country", multi-purpose utilization of the sea coast, development of education and science. *Diariusz kultury polskiej 1947*, op. cit., p. 79.

[871] This is, for example, how Roman Lutman, in the first issue of the "Odra" weekly, defined Polish policy goals in the "regained territories". Lutman urged for "shifting the focus of state life to the West" accompanied by reorientation of "our national" imagination from "remote eastern territories together with Pan Wołodyjowski and the Kmicics" to the Odra Basin – the prospective birthplace of a "new Poland" and a "new type of Pole". R. Lutman, *Nowa rzeczywistość*, "Odra" 1945, no. 1, pp. 1–2. It is worth noting that T. Różewicz published his prose and poetry in the same weekly, next to such authors as W. Bąk, J. Dobraczyński, A. Gołubiew, Z. Hierowski, P. Jasienica, T. Karpowicz, E. Kozikowski, K. Koźniewski, S. Lem, K. Maleczyński, H. Malewska, M. Pankowski, E. Paukszta, S. Podhorska-Okołów, I. Sławińska, W. Szewczyk, J. Sztaudynger, J. Twardowski, W. Wirpsza, and H. Worcell.

pear in the next generation (Mp 132). "These territories witness the birth and crystallization of a new type of man", someone who, thanks to common school education in "the Polish language and history" (Mp 132) and widely-accessible classics of Polish literature – this "common treasure of the nation"[872] – will become, with time, a Pole in the ideological-cultural sense.[873] The blending of the "singsong voices of our little citizens from the Eastern Borderlands" with the "voices of the local children" and those from "the Warsaw area" was to result in their integration with Polishness in the supra-regional sense.[874] At this point, Różewicz seems to blur the boundary between national and local identity. The reporter evidently assumes that as a result of institutionalized popularization of national identity – primarily from the axiological perspective – the local one will emerge as its regional *pars pro toto*. This concept of collective identification clearly depends on National-Democratic geopolitics. Therefore, the expected cultural homogeneity of the Oder Basin inhabitants was not simply to result from their native Polishness, but from integration and unification processes taking place in the modern state.

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[872] T. Różewicz, *Światła na drodze*, op. cit., p. 9. The excerpt featuring Poland's literary classics has been shortened in the book version – for example, the quote from *Stara baśń*, the conversation with the reading schoolgirl, and the author's commentary on the Polish curriculum at a country school in Ścinawa, including his recollections of the authors of his own school reads: Sienkiewicz, Prus, Kraszewski, and Żeromski, have all been ommitted. Ibid., pp. 8–9.

[873] S. Ossowski writes: "the more the individual taps the treasure trove of national culture, the more numerous the links connecting him/her to various points of ideological homeland, the more vivid his/her picture of its totality, the bigger his/her sense of belonging". S. Ossowski, op. cit., p. 43. One of the major goals of school education on the so-called Regained Territories in the first post-1945 years – especially when it came to the local population, as G. Strauchold tells us – was "educating youngsters in such ways as to turn them into graduates well aware of their Polishness". G. Strauchold, *Autochtoni polscy, niemieccy czy… Od nacjonalizmu do komunizmu (1945-1949)*, Toruń 2001, p. 96. Hierowski's "cultural crusade" presupposed the link between re-Polonization of the "regained territories" and national culture which was to be popularized by such institutions as "school, church, community centres, cultural centres, and publishing houses". Z. Hierowski, *Krucjata kultury na ziemie odzyskane*, "Odra" 1946, no. 4, p. 2.

[874] T. Różewicz, *Spacer po Opolu*, op. cit., p. 8, and id., *Światła na drodze*, op. cit., p. 9.

Among the several regions of the Oder Basin, it was Silesia that was most frequently described by means of the "retort" metaphor, enjoying the greatest interest of Polish public opinion,[875] although in the then-prevalent geopolitical discourse, it was envisioned as a "melting pot" in the industrial and economic sense rather than in the national, cultural or religious one.[876] The idea of the western territories' valuableness in Różewicz's reportage derives, to some extent, from Poland's interwar thought, echoing some pre-existing representations of Silesia incorporated into the notion of the homeland as a historical region of Poland, the territory inhabited by ethnically Polish people, and a proletarian-industrial centre of the reborn state.[877] Silesia as a "colossal retort" in Stefan Żeromski's *Snobizm i postęp* stands for a fragment of national space, a "shred of the Piast domain", and, at the same time, the "stronghold of

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[875] Grzegorz Strauchold's comments on the Polish fascination with Silesia in the years 1945–1947 as follows: "Silesia was our land of enchantment, an almost fairy-tale province – as one could gather from some of its descriptions – or, to say the least, a great promise, a guarantee of Poland's future wealth and, by the same token, of its citizens' economic success". G. Strauchold, *Myśl zachodnia i jej realizacja w Polsce Ludowej w latach 1945-1957*, Toruń 2003, pp. 128-129. The editors of "Odra" were also focused on Silesia and declared in 1945: "By elevating the Oder to the rank of a symbol, we want to create and strengthen the idea of Great Silesia [functioning already in the propaganda of the National Radical Camp (ONR) after the annexation of Trans-Olza – WB] stretching along the Oder axis from Jabłonków and Cieszyn through Nisa, Świdnica, Wrocław, Lignica, all the way up to Głogów and Lubusz Land, and then – even as far north as Szczecin". *Perspektywa Odry*, "Odra" 1945, no. 1, p. 1.

[876] Silesia was described as a retort of European culture (intellectual and material) by Zbigniew Zielonka in the 1970s. He, however, equates it with the historical region, approximately overlapping with today's Lower Silesia. Glossing over the modern national identity of the region's inhabitants, Zielonka uses the term "Silesians" in the non-ethnic sense. See Z. Zielonka, *Śląsk: ogniwo tradycji. Rozważania o historii i kulturze*, Katowice 1981.

[877] Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, for example, having in 1945 accepted, at Jerzy Borejsza's request, the post of Chief of Delegatura Rządu do Spraw Wybrzeża [the Government Delegation for Coastal Affairs] would implement in the "regained territories" his interwar programme, striving to transform Poland from an agrarian into an industrial country and to make the Polish society west- rather than east-oriented. See *Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski a polskie ziemie zachodnie i północne*, ed. G. Strauchold, Wrocław 2003.

modernity", in which a "great life of mighty Poland" may flourish.[878] That image, of course, derivesfrom the ethos of organized collective labour, the development of industry and the country's urbanization, but also poses a challenge to the Polish intellectual elite, obliged to symbolically bind the new region to the land of the nation as an integral whole. As Witold Nawrocki argues, Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski –Minister of Industry and Deputy Prime Minister of the Second Republic – also regarded Silesia as a task for writers who were supposed to work a "miracle at the Oder, to bring the regained West closer to Poland, to show its social and political problems, and the entire toil of building the carved-out tunnel to Poland".[879] This image of a folk-industrial and, at the same time, Piast region calling, as it were, for personal involvement and attentive care on the part of the Polish intelligentsia, also functioned in the post-war literature and journalism, resurfacing, for example, in the then-popular appeals for "new authors for working-class Silesia" to emerge.[880] One would have expected that by setting out on a boat trip with the journalistic mission of presenting Silesia and other western territories, Różewicz lived up to those expectations. However, instead of an optimistic-paternalistic attitude to Silesia and its inhabitants, his reportage *Most płynie do Szczecina* endorses the cult of labour and modernity, combined with a distance towards pseudo-folk stylization in culture. What is more, Różewicz's later texts feature a rather negative myth of the "black city".

Despite evident traces of a German past, the narrator-agent of the reportage identifies the Oder Basin with Poland, his homeland in the modern (territorial-ideological) sense, that he regards it in community ("all of us") and positivist terms, emphasizing in this context the value of

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[878] W. Nawrocki, op. cit., p. 84.

[879] Ibid., p. 86.

[880] Lewy, *O ożywienie życia literackiego Śląska*, "Trybuna Robotnicza" 1947, no. 42, 11 February 1947, p. 7.

labour and common involvement in social causes. Although *Most płynie do Szczecina* is a travel-writing report, the reporter does not limit himself to presenting interesting places. The "scenic views" of the Oder Basin are not valuable in themselves, because "their organizer and creator" is, in this reportage, a "live, particular human being" whose labour changes the work and the life of the masses.[881] At several points, Różewicz shifts his attention from the "regained territories" to their inhabitants, the locals and the migrants, "people from all over the world" (Mp 131). The former are, in fact, almost absent from the scene, or present only indirectly in the picturesque heritage of folk culture (like natives in the colonial discourse), represented only by the history of the Germanized Piasts and by props in the folklore museum which fill the reporter with admiration due to their craftsmanship and original names in the Silesian dialect of Polish – ample evidence of their Polish origins. This other, newly-discovered type of Polishness, however, smacks of anachronism, serving merely as a regional and lexical ornament of civilizational discourse. Consequently, neither Silesian princes nor local peasants can act as protagonists of the prospective narrative of modernity – the core story of the reportage, whose central character is modern *homo faber*. Slovak folk artists, otherwise admired in Różewicz's sketch *Wspomnienia z podróży po Czechosłowacji* [*Recollections of a Trip Across Chechoslovakia*] cannot play that role either, as their museum-located works belong to the people's history rather than its present. The present and the future of the people are instead personified by "groups of girls and boys in workwear clothes" building a water

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[881] This is, approximately, how the Stalinist ideology and propaganda defined *homo faber*, the "new man", especially a young one, who was supposed to "accomplish great things for the country, finding new resources in our soil, constructing magnificent machines, transforming the native landscape, changing and regulating the course of our rivers". T. Wegner, *O wzmożenie pracy polityczno-wychowawczej i umocnienie więzi ZMP z masami młodzieży. XII Plenum Zarządu Głównego Związku Młodzieży Polskiej*, Warszawa, 6–7 June 1953, Warszawa 1953, p. 19 (qtd in: T. Mikulski, *Temat Wrocław. Szkice śląskie*, Wrocław 1975, p. 246).

power station, a symbol of industrialization and civilizational progress of the Slovak countryside.[882] It is they who, through their collective effort, transform the landscape of their agricultural state and change its history.

More visible than the locals in *Most płynie do Szczecina* are newly arrived settlers, people from the streets of Opole and villages near Wrocław. The presence of these new Silesians in Różewicz's text comes out as more real, but their links to their places of residence seem accidental, bereft of cultural memory, marked by a lack of any deepened sense of community and mutual trust, while their highly diverse customs and different ways of farming on the new land are all proof that a homogeneous Polish identity still needs to be created. Some of them (the locals) are a bit of an ethnographic relic, exploited by political propaganda and the folklore entertainment business; the others (the settlers) only potentially make up the society of western Poland.[883] The only value, apart from national culture, capable of genuinely uniting them is teamwork. Such postulated values are conspicuously absent from *Mały reportaż* [*A Small Reportage*], a short sketch published under the title *Mały reportaż z Miasteczka P.* [*A Short Reportage from the Small Town of P.*] in the second edition of

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[882] T. Różewicz, *Wspomnienia z podróży po Czechosłowacji*, "Echo Tygodnia" 1950, no. 23, p. 5.

[883] They "herald the new future type of Pole", Kazimierz Wyka wrote about the new inhabitants of Silesia, commenting, by the same token, on Różewicz's boat trip. K. Wyka, *Na linii Śląska*, op. cit., p. 1. Kazimierz Herz explained: "Such a Pole does not exist yet! One needs, first, to construct his/her ideal by means of one's brain and heart, one should provide both the outline and the details of his/her spiritual shape […]. That is why the struggle for the Pole of the Regained Territories must take place in the realm of education." K. Herz, *Duch kresowości zachodniej*, "Odra" 1947, no. 8., p. 1. The first Convention of Polish Writers of the Sudeten Land in Jelenia Góra (May 1947) witnessed the proclamation of "the Sudeten writers' ideological declaration", probably drafted by E. Kozikowski. The document obligated the writers to turn the newly arrived Polish population into a "new, homogeneous, monolith-like society", the "new homogeneous type of Pole", otherwise adapted to regional geographical and historical-cultural conditions. What seems particularly striking about the declaration is its thinking in terms of identity as a project, its belief in social engineering carried out by writers and artists, and in the connection between identity and local space. See J.B. Kos, *U podnóża Karkonoszy. Z dziejów dolnośląskiego środowiska literackiego*, "Pomosty" 1997/1998, no. 2–3, pp. 179–182.

Uśmiechy. In its earliest version, the text is simply "Miasteczko P…," (1954) ["The Town of P…,"] (1954), while in *Utwory zebrane* [*Collected Works*] it is rendered "Paczków, 1954". At this point, the narrator's focus shifts from the inhabitants of the Silesian town to the space of its small-town, neglected central plaza, from the shady local types idling the day away to the accompaniment of kitschy music blaring out of the street loudspeaker, to the "attic of the shabby tenement house torn down to its foundations by looters" (I 259). The utopia of the Polish "Regained Territories", steeped as it was in the ideals of reconstruction, hard work, upward mobility, civilizational progress and popularization of culture, changes in *Mały reportaż* into the surreal picture of small-town blues and stagnation, cultural degradation, and an omnipresent gaping void – a sad reminder of better times gone with the wind.[884] Różewicz's sketch is not, however, a discursive critique of the earlier project of the "new man", but rather a grotesque deformation of its abstract representation aimed to be implemented in the idealized future. It also ironically cancels out tendentious realism and the discourse of social engineering, excessively (ab)used in the post-war years, especially in reportage.

Labour ethos is the highest commonly shared value in *Most płynie do Szczecina*, an ethical yardstick applied equally to engineers, activists, skippers, peasants and intellectuals.[885] That is why an unknown Silesian on board the "Lignica", a native of the Koźle area, who has been working

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[884] The social and material regress of Paczków in the 1950s was presented in similar terms by Zygmunt Paprotny in his reportage *Paczkowskie refleksje*, "Odra" 1958, no. 31, p. 8.

[885] The ethos of collective work and the working man ideal was then being popularized by both propaganda and literature. See W. Nawrocki, op. cit., p. 164; T. Mikulski, op. cit., p. 317. B. Bakuła reconstructs the sense of labour in literature on the western territories as "an obligation to overcome historical hangups" and "the new life's highest value", one which "justifies our presence on the Western Frontier constitutes a national-political argument". B. Bakuła, *Między wygnaniem a kolonizacją. O kilku odmianach polskiej powieści migracyjnej w XX wieku (na skromnym tle porównawczym)*, op. cit., p. 173.

aboard ships "for twenty-seven years", is treated with respect and kindness, in individual rather than generic terms.[886] Although he has never been to Warsaw or Kraków, and, until recently, was probably a German citizen, the work ethos makes him a close person and an ideal protagonist of the Polish narrative of reconstruction and modernity[887] linked, in this case, with re-Polonization.[888] The obligation to work for the common good is binding for everyone, as it is only on the basis of such a moral-positivist imperative that an authentic community of people coming from different parts of the country can be created. Significantly, the focal points of native space in Różewicz's text are only two cities (Kraków and Warsaw), despite the fact that the new inhabitants of the Oder Basin – as the narrator earlier remarks –also come from "across the Bug", "from Galicia", "from the Eastern Borderlands". This shift of attention from the multicultural east

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[886] This Silesian is an idealized example of the "regained man" ("regained people" in post-war journalistic propaganda were, among others, re-Polonized autochthons from the annexed German territories, see e.g. E. Męclewski, *Ziemie odzyskane i odzyskani ludzie*, in: *Odzyskane ziemie – odzyskani ludzie. Ze współczesnych zagadnień Ziem Odzyskanych*, op. cit.), the local "Wasserpolak", the man of the borderlands who is capable of becoming 100% Polish. The reversed process was described by Różewicz in his short story *Wyrok* [*The Sentence*], whose protagonist, Józef Słupnik from Ruda Śląska, becomes a *Reichsdeutsch* under German occupation. Depicted as a cowardly renegade, that Silesian resembles a "worm" and a "beaten dog" punished by whipping (O 36–37). The 1946 story, when contextualized by post-war repressions against all kinds of "traitors of the nation", can be read as an example of the dehumanizing-of-the-Other device employed in order to punish the Other also in symbolic terms. See J. Waligóra, op. cit., pp. 34–35.

[887] Eryk Skowron recognized in 1946 the Silesian's right to a sense of separateness ("a separate type of Pole") on condition that this separateness results from his hard labour conditions, ones which "make him the leader of Polish labour and reconstruction". E. Skowron, *Nie chcemy być Ślązakami*, "Odra" 1946, no. 6–7, p. 9.

[888] Already at an early stage of the so-called verification of the authochthons of the "regained territories", after 1945 it turned out that both the objective criteria (e.g. language, ethnic group, religious denomination) and the subjective ones (one's will to identify with a particular nation) can be deceptive. Based on this diagnosis, Zygmunt Izdebski came out with practical criteria, taking primarily into account one's social behavings and attitudes (work, lifestyle, ways of raising children). See G. Strauchold, *Autochtoni polscy, niemieccy czy… Od nacjonalizmu do komunizmu (1945–1949)*, op. cit., pp. 54–57.

to the ethnic centre and to the "native" west is not accidental and does not result only from the writer's political cautiousness in this particular case. After all, *Most płynie do Szczecina* corresponds, generally speaking, to the main ideas of the socio-historical journalism of the day. The canon of geopolitical thought in those days – formulated, for example, in Edmund Osmańczyk's sketches, published in the years 1945-1946 in "Odra" and the popular Kraków-based "Przekrój" – was based on the work ethos and rejection of martyrological attitudes, focusing on the past and present links between the western territories with the rest of ethnic Poland, recognizing the state's post-war borders as final, bolstering folk traditions, and prioritizing the country's economic and civilizational growth.[889] This base narrative was one of the premises of the post-1945 nationwide transformation of the consciousness and identity of the inhabitants of the "regained territories".

The reportage's author, sailing through the Oder Basin on board "Noah's ark" (perceived as an element of the technological "miracle" of the Oder waterway and the entire macroregion), does not yet feel any personal, emotional bond with the unknown, new country, only emerging from the wartime chaos (or "flood").[890] Viewed from the perspective

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[889] In 1945, on the pages of "Odrodzenie", Osmańczyk called for a "reconstruction of the Polish State on the Oder and Neisse", writing: "Admittedly, it looks like a bombsite now. But it's ours. We can work miracles here. Anyone with bright thoughts and strong hands will be able to test their limits here. And do you know your limits, brother? I think not. Because human limits can be tested only where there is limitless work. The Polish land by the Oder and the Neisse is precisely such a country." E. Osmańczyk, *Na pobojowisku*, "Odrodzenie" 1945, no. 20, p. 1.

[890] Bolesław Drobner, organizing in 1945 in Kraków a pioneer group of specialists and officials whose aim was to establish a Polish administration in Wrocław, called it "Noah's ark on Wrocław's Ararat". B. Drobner, *Zdobyliśmy polskie Złote Runo!*, op. cit., p. 85. The figure of Noah's ark in this case implied reconstruction of the country and its social life after the disaster of war (after the "flood"), marking the "zero point" of history and its new beginning, the era of socialism. As regards the post-German territories annexed by Poland, the ark signified a new stage of their history as part of the national territory. For the motif of the "world's conflagration" and the myth of new beginning in the literature of the "regained territories" see H. Tumolska, op. cit., p. 34.

of the peaceful and sedentary life of a Kraków dweller, which is also the geopoetic point of reference for the representation of space in *Most płynie do Szczecina*, Oder Basin Poland seems remote both geographically and mentally. As the narrator puts it in the reportage's conclusion, the distance from "Krupnicza Street to the bargemen on the Oder, to the settlers […] is greater than the distance from the Earth to the Moon".[891] The reporter's aim is to shorten that distance, to bring together – emotionally and symbolically – people who can only be united by two commonly shared values: Polishness and work. Różewicz's literary-journalistic trip is thus a narrative about the new beginning of the Oder Basin's history, one that starts with war damage repairs, with the replacement of German names with Polish ones, with the organization of social life and economy.[892] It is primarily, however, a trip along Poland's western border, a description of the radically changed territory of one's own country, a rational attempt to get to know the new land and to "domesticate" it so to speak, or, in other words, to experience its incredible spaciousness personally and sensorially.[893] The borderline not only follows a different course than before, radically changing the map of Europe, but was also charted following some

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[891] T. Różewicz, *Światła na drodze*, op. cit., p. 9.

[892] The two goals – material and economic reconstruction of the "regained territories" combined with their re-Polonization – were in fact regarded as inseparable and equally important. Mieczysław Wionczek wrote in his reportage from Legnica about the necessity of war damage repairs in the western territories – as urgent a task as that of rebuilding the nation's capital, "because out there in Warsaw Poland is already present, whereas here in Silesia it is only looming on the horizon". Wionczek concludes that "the stakes are enormously high, perhaps the highest in our history". M. Wionczek, *Problemy śląskie (Lignica, w czerwcu)*, "Odrodzenie" 1945, no. 32, p. 5.

[893] Ossowski, discussing the problem of the individual's attachment to ideological homeland, described the following case in 1935: "In the Carpathian Mountains I met a young Czech, who had decided to walk along the entire Czechoslovakian border, evidently believing that this patriotic enterprise would enable him to establish personal contact with the entire territory of his ideological homeland – so fresh in its new, elongated shape. The direct familiarity with the capital and the entire borderline was to give him a sense of personal experience of all that stretched between Hradčany and the new state's borders". S. Ossowski, op. cit., p. 42.

highly peculiar, almost colonialist decisions. The victorious powers drew it up either arbitrarily, dividing with a geometric line previously German territories (East Prussia), or made its course overlap with natural borders, mountain ranges and rivers, but still cutting throughsome historical regions (Lusatia, Brandenburg, and the Oder Estuary), or arbitrarily establishing their political affiliation (the Kłodzko County). It would be hard to find more glaring topographic proof of the superpowers' imperialist politics towards subaltern or provincial territories inhabited by "nations-objects" bereft of historical or geopolitical agency.[894]

Różewicz does not touch upon that problem. *Most płynie do Szczecina* is a reportage that steers clear of political controversy, firmly adhering to the "Piast" historical and national vision as well as the ideological limitations of the western subject matter.[895] Still, one should readily admit, the text does not falsify experience at the level of casual observations of the daily life of common individuals. Różewicz's narrator talks about people who are only loosely connected to their own country, not rooted in their place of residence and alienated, not contributing to any community (political or cultural), sceptical towards the present and apprehensive about the future. His

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[894] Poland was dubbed a "nation-object" by Ksawery Pruszyński, who argued in the 1930s that even after regaining independence in 1918 the history of the Polish State and its political system were side-effects of military, political, intelligence and financial influences of the superpowers. K. Pruszyński, *Podróż po Polsce*, op. cit., pp. 97, 120.

[895] Bakuła, describing the ideological rationing of "the subject matter, the level of ideological discussions, the depth of historical reflection" in post-1945 migration literature, reconstructs the topic's censorship-imposed limits as follows: "1) […] the topic and the very term of 'deportation' is forbidden; 2) one should abstain from presenting the process of uprootedness, or cultural and social degradation, focusing instead on images of root-taking and settlement. Undesirable are all texts describing the drama of expulsion, while those presenting the processes of migrants' relocation and settlement are most welcome; 3) all ethnic-based conflicts, if they really have to appear, should always be concluded with a happy ending […]; 4) as far as it is possible, one should weaken the resonance of the term 'Eastern Borderlands', creating instead a positive representation of the western frontier". B. Bakuła, *Między wygnaniem a kolonizacją. O kilku odmianach polskiej powieści migracyjnej w XX wieku (na skromnym tle porównawczym)*, op. cit., p. 171.

perspective on the autochthons as a community displays the intellectual's attitude to the simple folk, grounded in the cult of authenticity and a sense of concern for their national identity, whereas his attitude to a particular individual (the Upper Silesian skipper) is individualized and friendly. What is more, the "miracles" of technology that the reporter finds so fascinating – the hydraulic constructions on the Oder and power-supplied country houses near Wrocław –still constitute an unobliterated trace of the alien German civilization. Modern, rational space management, though being otherwise one of the reportage's crucial observations and core values, is not conducive in this particular case to a sense of settling into the Polish West. The narrator-agent is aware of that. *Most płynie do Szczecina*, though speaking with the narrator's voice for reconstruction, industrialization, and commonly accessible education, should be regarded as an apt diagnosis for the fundamental experiences and doubts of the inhabitant of the "new land". This polysemic diagnosis is not overshadowed by either nationalist meta-history or the ideology of social and technological progress – or by the literary-intellectual vision of Silesia and the entire Oder Basin.

Migration and Safe Haven

While he was making his reporting trips to locations along the Odra River and the Baltic coast, and to neighbouring socialist countries, Różewicz was already thought of as a "young Kraków poet".[896] Kraków, a large city relatively unscarred by the war, a hub of national culture and stopover point for repatriates and settlers going west, was an important reference point in the geopoetics of the author of *Unease*. One of Różewicz's early poems, *Droga na Zachód* [*Road to the West*], published in "Odrodzenie" in November 1945, features an image of trains pulling out of a station in an unspecified city, but the figure of a boy delivering *obwarzanki* (Kraków

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[896] K. Wyka, *Na linii Śląska*, op. cit., p. 1.

bagels) implies that "car after car" is leaving Kraków.[897] With World War Two still raging, the Różewiczs moved to Częstochowa (M 136), where the poet passed his final high school exams, completed a course for working students, made his first literary contacts, and published a book of satirical poetry, *W łyżce wody* (W 287), with the local publisher Słowo. As he himself reminisces in a conversation with Jerzy Jarocki, he first visited Kraków in August 1938 at the time of the legionnaires' congress, encouraged by his schoolmate's father, Captain Gosławski. While there, he visited the museum in Kraków's Sukiennice to see paintings by Matejko, Fałat, Malczewski, and Podkowiński (W 214). A letter with poems sent after his final exams to Julian Przyboś, editor of the poetry section of "Odrodzenie", led to their publication in a magazine and to Przyboś inviting him to Kraków, where the young poet stayed for several days in the summer of 1945. Soon afterwards, he enrolled in the Faculty of Art History at the Jagiellonian University, and found temporary lodging with Przyboś on 16 Teresa Street, and then at the writers' house on 22 Krupnicza Street (W 215). Referring to Kraków as the capital city of [his] student youth, recalling in his sketches and interviews the local artistic community and his long-standing friendships with prominent painters, editors, and critics, and noting his first literary achievements (e.g. the volume *Unease* published by Przełom, a publishing house in Floriańska Street), the author depicted the city as an important stage of his "poetic path".[898]

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[897] T. Różewicz, *Droga na zachód*, "Odrodzenie" 1945, no. 50, p. 4.

[898] The topos of "poetic path" or "life path" is a motif of the autobiographical narrative in Różewicz's poetry, constructed in retrospect from the vantage point of a mature, settled man who analyzes his memories and experiences. Commenting on the Chinese edition of *Moja córeczka* in his sketch *W drodze*, Różewicz fulfilled the wish of the translator by writing "a few words about himself" (this sketch, as explained by Jan Stolarczyk, editor of the volume *Margines, ale...*, is an excerpt from an interview for the Chinese monthly *Shijie Wenxue*, where *Moja córeczka* was published in 1984). As indicated by the text's content and signature, the writer gave the interview in 1985, when his debut volume *Echa leśne* was reissued. The narrator of *W drodze* casts his mind back to that moment, the starting point of a "search for oneself, both in life and poetic

The city, which was then called home by the likes of Leopold Staff, Jerzy Szaniawski, Stefan Flukowski, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Stefan Kisielewski, Julian Przyboś, Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, Kazimierz Brandys, Leopold Buczkowski, and Tadeusz Kantor, seemed to be Mount Olympus to the young provincial poet (W 215-220). Indeed, Kraków offered the post-war debutant a myriad of options: its national arts institutions, editorial teams, its publishing houses, the ongoing scholarly and literary life, the milieu of the intelligentsia and a reading public, the surviving urban fabric and, last but not least, a sense of staying "in the capital city of the Polish spirit" (E 46). Neither the ruined Warsaw nor the cities in the so-called "Regained Territories" provided comparable conditions for artistic work, so Różewicz's move out of Kraków in late 1949 and his gradual settling in Gliwice (where he moved permanently in 1951, after his return from Hungary) can be seen as a watershed moment in his biography, and a decision that intrigued both literary scholars and his fellow writers, who referred to his isolation and "Gliwice emigration" (which is not much of an exaggeration) with concern, surprise, or disapproval.[899] Różewicz confirms that after his move he found himself "cut off" from the theatrical and cultural life of Kraków and Warsaw (W 227), but it was "emigration" in another sense, too. His reporting on expeditions to the

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work", the beginning of the "quest... [to find] oneself" [*droga do siebie*] (Ma 23). The landscape of memory, the place of birth, the beginning and the way, the old and the present "self" – these concepts make up the topos of "life path", a spatial figure of the individual's identity that defines him/her hermeneutically by revisiting a meaningful past, piecing together an autobiographical narrative from an array of different "sites of memory". This topos also organizes the composition of the address "Kiedy myślę o poezji w ogóle, myślę o Mickiewiczu" ["When I think of poetry in general, I think of Mickiewicz"], delivered by the writer in 1991 on receipt of his honorary doctorate from the University of Wrocław. The signatures included in the text – which pertain to the dedications by J. Przyboś and L. Staff – point to Kraków and the second half of the 1940s as one of the landmark "sites" of this narrative (Ma 260-261).

[899] T. Drewnowski, J. Tuwim, P. Mayewski, J. Nowosielski, J. Przyboś, among others. In 1962, Przyboś wrote to Różewicz: "You fell into Gliwice like a stone into the water" (Ma 149).

Western Territories in the 1940s may have been a substitute and preparation for his travels abroad, as their destinations were rather unknown and alien in a material and symbolic sense. Despite an extended nationalist propaganda offensive, particularly after 1945, Silesia and Western Pomerania had not yet been established as unambiguously Polish territories in the Polish geopolitical consciousness, and their civilizational organization and other German material traces further highlighted their difference from the rest of the Polish territory. Gliwice was perceived in the same way. However, the poet's move there was motivated by pragmatic reasons – especially the location of the apartment and job of the writer's wife, who moved to an apartment on 28 Zygmunt Stary Street in Gliwice after the war, and bore the financial burden of keeping the house until the end of the 1950s (W 293). Due to Gliwice's remoteness, the writer's contacts with the literary milieu became more difficult and less frequent. "I received good and bad news from Warsaw and the other capital (of my student youth), Kraków, several times a year", he wrote in the sketch *Norwid powiedział* (III 121). Różewicz kept in contact with his friends, publishers and critics mostly through correspondence. Living nearest to him in Katowice was Zdzisław Hierowski – a literary critic and historian, expert on Silesia, translator of Czech and Slovak literature, and thereafter, the writer's friend and advisor (e.g. on issues related to Kafka). The author of *Moja córeczka*, however, still remained a member of the Kraków branch of the Polish Writers' Union, and not the Katowice one, meaning his contacts with the Upper Silesian literary community were rather intermittent (Ma 294). Years later, the poet explained:

> This was a kind of hygienic ploy, as it enabled me not to attend the Union's meetings in the Stalinist years. The meetings were very unpleasant, consisted of various self-critiques by artistic sections, etc. The safe haven in Gliwice enabled me to avoid these sorts of "joys" (Ma 294).

Różewicz mentions the same "covert" reason in his conversation with Robert Jarocki and in a number of other reminiscences (W 293). Key to this interpretation of his own biography is the search for privacy and an authentic life in a provincial space, distant and secondary to the major centres of national culture, but providing a refuge of sorts from the realities of the totalitarian system and the state's cultural policy of Socialist Realism. This role of provinces and peripheries was most clearly evident in the works and discussions of the watershed year 1956.[900]

Różewicz settled in an industrial city located outside the borders of interwar Poland, inhabited by a mix of immigrants (displaced persons and repatriates) and autochthons who often did not come from Gliwice − a city which had seen most of its German population expelled − but from the nearby Polish Silesian villages, towns and cities of the pre-war Silesian Voivodeship.[901] "An extremely mixed community lived here: Silesians, native Silesians, Germans, Poles, and a plethora of immigrants from Poland's eastern borderlands as well as from central Poland. It was a melting pot. A melting pot of nations", he said in his speech *Na dobre i złe zawsze z wami* (*Always with you for better or worse*), given in 1995 during the ceremony in which he was made an Honorary Citizen of Gliwice (Ma 292-293).[902] In this retrospective statement, the

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[900] Implying that Różewicz was aware of this as early as 1949 would be an anachronism, but this interpretation of the Gliwice stage of his "life path" finds frequent vindication in his later autobiographical narratives.

[901] In 1948, the population of the "Regained Territories" comprised displaced persons from central Poland (2.5 million), repatriates from the USSR (1.3 million), repatriates from western and southern Europe (235,000), Ukrainians displaced in 1947 (150,000) and autochthons who had been "vetted" (1 million). In addition, another group of repatriates from the USSR (250,000) settled in the area between 1955 and 1959. See C. Osękowski, *Ziemie odzyskane w granicach Polski. Nowa jakość terytorialna, społeczna i ekonomiczna*, in: *Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski a polskie ziemie zachodnie i północne*, op. cit, p. 45.

[902] The city is already portrayed in this manner in the poem *Dzień w Gliwicach* (1945), published in the poetry book *Uśmiechy*. However, this social melting pot is at odds with the officially promoted idealized vision of Polish cultural identity in the "Regained Territories", as the

Gliwice of the late 1940s is a space not yet identified with "Poland", situated somewhere beyond the old border, still mentally separated and marked with material signs of the not-so-remote German past (including public inscriptions, books, and graves).[903] The incipient emotional bond emerging at the time between the city's new residents and their immediately surrounding space did not stem from the space being arbitrarily subsumed under the notion of ideological homeland, but from the fact that its residents had settled in and felt at home in their small communities of family, neighbours, and friends. A social and cultural "melting pot", the Gliwice described in Różewicz's memoirs is at odds with the imagery of Western Thought, which combined modernizing and nationalistic goals. This project of Polonizing the city and region rested on the assumption that their inclusion in the Polish native territory was first of all an ideological issue. The industrialized part of Upper Silesia was to become the industrial heartland of Poland, the new centre of a state which was being transformed in the Silesian "retort" into a country of modern people who, in addition, represented Polish national identity in its narrow ethnic sense. However, this combination proved problematic. The material heritage of the Western territories as a borderland revealed their German history, and their Polonization after World Wars One and Two primarily involved political and symbolic-linguistic efforts. The populations of the major towns and cities, even in the eastern part of Silesia, identified themselves with Germany even as late as 1921, the year of the plebiscite, while their later Polish residents arrived from other parts of Poland and from Upper Silesian (Polish) vil-

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"miracle" of the Polishness of Gliwice revealed here is just a phenomenon of quotidian, common life (VII 132).

[903] In his *Dziennik gliwicki*, under the date of 3 July 1957, Różewicz wrote down the words of his dying mother: "I don't want to be buried here among the Germans; I want to… in… or in Częstochowa… in Częstochowa" (M 102).

lages. This provoked tension between their ethno-cultural identity and their sense of not-feeling-at-home in their local space. One of their first impulses, then, as supported by the Polish administration, was to de-Germanize it. The same process of "programmatic de-Germanization" that sought to overcome the historical, cultural, aesthetic, and symbolic otherness of Silesia, Lusatia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, and East Prussia, was carried out on a much larger scale in the Western and Northern Territories after 1945.[904]

The second component of the imagery of the Silesian "melting pot", Civilizational revolution, became inscribed at that time within the project of building a communist authoritarian state and a centralized and etatist economy, and of pursuing industrialization seen as a historical necessity. The literary expression of this project was a stereotyped vision of Silesia as an industrial space, complete with folk ornamentation. The same vision was prevalent in the poetry of the time, with poets expressing a fascination with the workers' culture of the region (the Polishness of the workers) and the region's industrial landscape. Adam Włodek, for example, opens his poem *Ze Śląska* with the following words: "Chimneys, big spindles, enveloped in smoke as if in yarn", but at the same time points to Polish Silesia's new geopolitical status: "Now the Odra flows like time to remain a border". Różewicz's reportage *Most płynie do Szczecina*, which appeared in the same period, begins with the same words. The piece deploys a contrast between "Kraków's green roofs" and the "smoke of Katowice, Zabrze, Gli-

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[904] The eradication of German traces in the "Regained Territories" is discussed by M. Zybura in his book *Pomniki niemieckiej przeszłości. Dziedzictwo kultury niemieckiej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, Warsaw 1999, pp. 8–15. "The Poles from the Borderlands and central Poland who arrived after the war in the former German territories of Silesia, Pomerania, and East Prussia, did not take over a propaganda-advertised mythical fatherland, but a concrete 'foreign-land'. Everything was foreign there: the landscape, the aesthetic and symbolic aspects of the built environment, the form and extent of industrialization and agricultural development, the cultural fabric, even regional history". Ibid., p. 8.

wice" (Mp 119). The topos of the industrial city or city of smoke resurfaces in Różewicz's diary notes, sketches, letters, and short stories in the 1950s and 1960s, overlapping with the metaphor of "Black Silesia", i.e. the historical eastern sub-region of Upper Silesia, or the middle section of the pre-war Silesian Voivodeship – its most urbanized and industrialized part with an economy driven by coal. Majchrowski suggests that the myth of Gliwice as Różewicz's "black city" is attributable to Hierowski's sketch. The metaphor, however, originated in interwar journalism, school education (economic geography), and local folk topography perpetuated in the discourse of socialist industrialization after 1945 (e.g. in the "Odra" weekly). As late as the first half of the 20th century, "Black Silesia" connoted positive meanings, in keeping with the prevailing modern vision of civilizational and economic reconstruction of the Polish state (sustained by the propaganda of the People's Republic of Poland until the 1970s), but the term took on an anti-utopian meaning with the advent of the crisis of the ideology of socio-technological progress. A space that had been physically exploited and culturally exhausted in the aftermath of nationalist-Sanationist, Nazi and Communist social engineering, and then, after World War Two, had lost its status of the ersatz West to the Oder territories, "Black Silesia" evoked quasi-colonial associations with a hinterland supplying the country with raw materials, a provincial region of lesser import. The author of *Różewicz*, however, is right in claiming that the myth of the factory city did not reflect the writer's Gliwice experience. True, Gliwice was not situated "on the route" of artistic journeys, as the poet admitted in a letter to Paweł Mayewski, a Polish prose writer, editor of "Tematy" and translator based in New York, but neither was it a middle-of-nowhere provincial town, cut off from the world and cultural life. When, after several invitations, Mayewski finally visited Różewicz, the author of *Moja córeczka* proudly showed him large new buildings (Ma 295). Other friends and acquaintances, including Kornel Filipowicz, Julian Przyboś, Henryk Bereska, Karol Dedecius, and

Petar Vujičić, came to Gliwice at that time, too. Różewicz himself also travelled constantly during this period, including to Mongolia in 1956 (*Niemowa w Mongolii*; *O tej porze* [Ma], a small "trace" of which can be found in *Duszyczka*, a prose poem also connected with his stay in Paris in 1968); to Paris in March the following year (*W najpiękniejszym mieście świata*; *Tożsamość* [*A Posthumous Tribute to Karol Kuryluk*]); to China in 1958 (*Sen kwiatu, serce smoka*; *Dwa skoki i już Pekin*, *Przelot*, *W drodze* [Ma]); to Italy in 1960 (his first visit there); and then to Belgium, the Netherlands, and France (1961); again to Italy (1964 and again in 1967); and finally to Germany, France, and Sweden (several times).[905] If one adds to this his numerous contributions to many nationwide literary and socio-

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[905] Różewicz's travel notes, interviews, and correspondence can be used to compile a list of his foreign trips. The writer visited, among others: the USSR (1965, 1978), Austria (1966, 1972, 1973, 1980, 1986, 1996), Macedonia (1967, 1971), West Germany (1962, 1963, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1976, 1979, 1987, 1989), East Germany (1956, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977), France (1957, 1961, 1968, 2008), Finland (1963, 1969), Denmark (1963), Lithuania (1969), Hungary (1950, 1953, 1958, 1970), Belgium (1961), Spain (1970), the UK (1961, 1971, 1975, 1977, 1988, 1993, 1996), the Netherlands (1971, 1990), Romania (1974), Sweden (1969, 1974, 1994), Bulgaria (1961, 1975, 1978), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1975), the US (1975, 1987, 1991), Italy (1960, 1979, 1984, 1991), Greece (1980), Mexico (1981), Czechoslovakia (1949, 1957, 1958, 1985), the Czech Republic (1993, 1995), Jordan (1986), Yugoslavia (1958, 1987), Ireland (1988), Portugal (1995), and Germany (1996, 1997). In the period of the Polish People's Republic, in particular from 1956 onward, foreign travel was possible thanks to the relative liberalization of the state's cross-border traffic policy after the Stalin's era had come to an end. It is estimated that 9,000 Poles travelled abroad in 1951, 177,000 in 1956, 900,000 in 1970, and 8.1 million in 1975. See M. Okólski, *Mobilność przestrzenna z perspektywy migracji niepełnej*, in: *Ludzie na huśtawce. Migracje między peryferiami Polski i Zachodu*, op. cit., p. 14. Foreign travel of Poland's citizens intensified in the 1970s, when the authorities opened the borders with other socialist countries, signed agreements to lift visa requirements for travel to and from Austria, Turkey, Finland, and Sweden, as well as facilitating travel to Canada and the US. In 1972, for example, ca. 9.5 million Poles crossed the GDR border (with a Polish identity card), and more than 4.2 million Polish citizens travelled to Western countries during the decade. See A.L. Sowa, op. cit., p. 401. In 1970, less than half of 250,000 applications for permission to travel to the so-called capitalist countries were successful, while 10 years later the authorities approved nearly 90% of 800,000 applications. See D. Stola, *Międzynarodowa mobilność zarobkowa w PRL*, in: *Ludzie na huśtawce. Migracje między peryferiami Polski i Zachodu*, op. cit., p. 85.

cultural periodicals, including "Życie Literackie", "Kultura", "Odra", and "Przegląd Kulturalny", the argument holding that the artist suffered from creative impotence and was isolated in an "industrial city" appears to be false.[906] Majchrowski also noted that the student theatre community in Gliwice had a marked influence on the development of Różewicz's playwriting, providing the stage for his first theatre experiments.[907] Różewicz established contacts with Piotr Lachmann, Wojciech Pszoniak, and Andrzej Barański, who visited him and joined his local circle of friends (Ma 293). The Gliwice years were a period of extremely intense writing and marked the beginning of Różewicz's international literary career, attested by numerous theatre productions and editions of his writings, as well as by travels, awards, critical attention, translations of his works into foreign languages, and their inclusion in school reading lists. Counting his reporting trips to the western and northern territories and the earliest international travels to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the writer, in the first post-war years, saw a large portion of Central Europe, which served as an important geopolitical and economic reference for the Polish state within its new borders drawn in Potsdam. His gradual relocation from Kraków, a focus of Polishness, to (formerly) German Gliwice, which took place between 1949 and 1951, was therefore preceded by several years of travellingdiscovering the new Polish territory, its geographical surroundings and processes of "urban advancement" (M. Czerwiński), namely industrialization, reconstruction, resettlement, settlement, and social change.[908] Gliwice belonged

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[906] The argument is supported by the writer himself, e.g. in *Dziennik gliwicki*: "Nobody sees how my 'reserves' are frittering away and diminishing in this poky little town, in this complete separation and silence of many years. [...] I am stuck here, in this factory city". (M 90).

[907] Z. Majchrowski, op. cit. p. 177.

[908] "Polish urbanization", wrote Marcin Czerwiński, "included, among other things, filling up the western and northern towns and cities, which had become largely deserted during the war as their German inhabitants fled fearing reprisals, and then emptied out as the remaining Germans were repatriated. There, too, Polish urbanization had to heal the cities by raising them

to a space that had already been "domesticated" to some extent by Różewicz the reporter, topographically discovered, but still foreign in many ways. The city, located at the historical intersection of political and cultural influences of Germany, Poland, and Bohemia, inhabited by a mixed immigrant population, Polonized after World War Two, industrialized and academic, with a predominance of technical intelligentsia, yet still peripheral, can be considered as an alternative to the places he inhabited before and as a new problem in his geopoetics. This otherness and the problematic nature of Gliwice as the writer's place of his own did not result from its peculiar regional character. The continuity of its German cultural traditions was interrupted – the native Silesian character in the People's Republic of Poland was reduced to folk culture and to workers' and insurgency-related mythology.[909] The literary legend of Polish Upper Silesia reinforced the mythical image of the region as a mental home, but did not compensate for the disappearance of the intellectual, religious, and cultural heritage of Gliwice, which had been lost through warfare, post-war looting of artworks, the

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from the ruins [...]. These cities (including, to a large extent, Warsaw) were virtually re-created by people who, in their majority, were unlikely to have had any practical experience of urban life, particularly of metropolitan traditions, and by those who, although coming from an urban background, did not form a tightly knit core in the new places of settlement, having arrived from regions that often differed in customs and the level of civilization". M. Czerwiński, *Życie po miejsku*, Warsaw 1975, pp. 12–13.

[909] A literary portrayal of such Silesianness is offered in the writings of Gustaw Morcinek, whose works were officially promoted in the People's Republic of Poland and included in school reading lists. Wilhelm Szewczyk, who worked as a national-Catholic journalist before becoming a Communist activist, wrote that Morcinek "restored the importance of all the small paraphernalia of Silesian life, which thus entered literature as fully legitimate items able to elicit the same emotional response as Romantic paraphernalia from Nowogródek or Ukrainian steppes are", which contributed, says Krzysztof Kłosiński, "to the epic elevation of Silesia to the status of a mythical home, the mythical centre of the world". Quoted in K. Kłosiński, *W stronę inności. Rozbiory i debaty*, op. cit., p. 93. However, this vision of Upper Silesia's cultural identity was the narrative of a mythical house only for those of its inhabitants who identified as Polish or with the "peasant-and-worker culture of Silesia" (J. Jedlicki). Vis-à-vis the German cultural traditions of Gliwice (particularly the bourgeois ones), it was marginal, foreign, and imposed.

expulsion of the former population, the PPR's nationalist policy towards the autochthons and the entire German legacy of previous eras. These losses went hand in hand with a reorientation of the Polish geographical imagination, but one that ran contrary to what experts on the region expected. The interwar stereotypes and subsequent tampering with such historical concepts as Silesia and Upper Silesia "led to a preposterous geographical displacement of this area in geographical space relative to its historical meaning and location within that space".[910] Hierowski urged: "Let's stop thinking in pre-1939 terms, and let's stop imagining that Silesia ends 20 kilometres beyond Katowice. In fact, this is where it truly starts".[911] The "expansion" of Silesia to the southeast and the administrative erasure of its historical borders after 1945 contributed to the fact that both Lower Silesia and the Opole part of Upper Silesia were excluded from the common perception of Silesia, while western Lesser Poland, especially the Dąbrowa Coal Basin, was included in it.[912] The concept of Silesia, thus defined, was

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[910] A. Tworek, *O sytuacji językowej Wrocławia dawniej i dziś*, in: *My wrocławianie. Społeczna przestrzeń miasta*, op. cit., p. 184. Grzegorz Pisarski argues that "the entrenched stereotypes that originated in the interwar period, when there was a Silesian Voivodeship in the Second Polish Republic, contributed, after the plebiscites, to perpetuating the opinion that that which was Silesian in Silesia was located in the Polish part of Upper Silesia". G. Pisarski, *Łużyce a tożsamość Dolnoślązaków*, in: *Dolnoślązacy? Kształtowanie tożsamości mieszkańców Dolnego Śląska po II wojnie światowej*, eds J. Nowosielska-Sobel and G. Strauchold, Wrocław 2007, p. 74. See also: G. Kosmala, W. Spallek, *Gdzie leży Śląsk?*, "Geografia w Szkole" 2007, no. 4.

[911] Z. Hierowski, *Odbudowa Zachodu*, "Odra" 1945, no. 1, p. 4.

[912] In his sketch *Gdzie leży Śląsk?*, Zbigniew Zielonka explains that, historically, the Polonocentric "concept of 'Silesia' involved an expansion towards the south and south-east. This direction is in evidence to this day – to the detriment (so to speak) of historic [Silesia – WB], that is Lower Silesia". This concept has "shrunk down", because "the Polish Voivodeship of Silesia" was created after World War One on the eastern edge of Upper Silesia, with the administrative centre in Katowice, and probably this terminology contributed to the "shrinking down" of the concept of Silesia in common consciousness already in the interwar period" to approximately the area of the voivodeship. Z. Zielonka, op. cit., p. 143. This symbolic deformation affected all the "Regained Territories". Silesia, integrated with an eastern swathe of Upper Lusatia, became the current Lower Silesia; several Silesian counties were added to western Upper Silesia to form the Opole region; parts of Silesia, Greater Poland, Lower Lusatia, and Brandenburg (New March,

used in the 1970s by Tadeusz Różewicz (M 114).[913] Gliwice, which before World War Two had lain outside the boundaries of the Silesian Voivode-ship and was predominantly inhabited by Germans, was incorporated into Polish Upper Silesia, which contributed to loosening its natural ties with cities in the western part of the region.

As a unitary state, People's Poland, in principle, strived to achieve an ideo-cultural spatial exclusivity that provided the basis for its political legitimacy in the Western and Northern Territories, so the concept of Silesianness was narrowed down to a local variety of ideological Polish-ness. Other than none-too-subtle 'wall-rug' folk art and the regional his-tory of the workers' movement, this local character present in the public discourse involved, among other things, modernizing concepts of social-ism and historical, ethnographic, and moral axioms of the nationalist Piast Concept.[914]

However, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, interest in issues related to the Western Territories markedly declined, which was partly attrib-utable to the social conflicts of the day and to a shift in the country's international relations after Edward Gierek's team of technocrats rose to power. Open to contacts with the West, the new leadership re-established relations with West Germany and curbed anti-German propaganda.[915]

Lubusz Region) were fused together to become the present Lubusz Region; and the parts of East Prussia and Pomerania that had been incorporated into Poland became Masuria, Warmia, and Western Pomerania.

[913] The shift in the meaning of the term "Silesia" to designate the eastern part of Upper Silesia, i.e. the environs of Katowice, is discussed by Jürgen Joachimsthaler, who believes that this was due to the fact that the Polish authorities shaped the national identity of the population of the sub-region post-1921 by invoking its Polish-Silesian character, whereas in the western parts of the region the national identity was created after 1945 from scratch. J. Joachimsthaler, *Wielokrotnie wyobrażona prowincja. Śląsk między wizją a rzeczywistością*, op. cit., p. 481.

[914] On narrowed-down regionalism in literature, see Z. Kubikowski, *Bezpieczne małe mity*, Wrocław 1965.

[915] Tumolska adds that the process of changing Polish-German relations began at a social level, too, at the time, and was "conditioned, among other things, by shifts in the consciousness of

The traditional sources of national identification, which referred to patriotic-civic and religious patterns of Polishness, were also evidently growing in importance. However, they too were not conducive to the creation of a regional identity of the inhabitants of the 'Regained Territories', reinforcing in social discourse and culture, at least until the second half of the 1980s, the axiological superiority of an ideological homeland over a private one. This was particularly important for migrants and displaced people, i.e. the uprooted. Even if the migrant population that settled in the former German territories post-1945 integrated socially, the process was based on a national identity superstructured on a strong cultural and social diversity, as it were. Its most potent patterns, however, had already become anachronistic, and the images of the nation's land and its focal points, shaped in the Polish culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries, could have seemed abstract to Poles born or raised in the Western Territories, particularly those images that related to far-flung and personally unexplored areas which, in addition, were separated by a state border, e.g. the Eastern Borderlands. Between these traditions and the modern cultural industry of the People's Republic of Poland, which in the years of "low stabilization" reproduced social patterns that were potent but disconnected from local experience, an identity void opened. Even though the official language, school education, and national literature brought the residents of the Western Territories a sense of belonging to an ideological homeland, they did not have much impact on the local social ties which continued to be very feeble.

Moja córeczka was one of Różewicz's first and more significant works in which the concept of "small homeland" cropped up in the context of both the topographical models of Polish identity and the modern problems

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European societies, the conclusion of the 'cold war' and 'hot war', and the coming of age of a generation that does not remember the war and is free from the insecurities and traumas of the past". H. Tumolska, op. cit., p. 69.

of not feeling at home. Although its protagonist lives in an industrial city, he imagines his own place to be Arcadian, with gardens, trees in blossom, dirt roads, and birdsong, which, however, is jeopardized by civilizational change. Różewicz had used the same image in his letter to Mayewski: "Larks, lapwings perched nearby – I was walking straight ahead and I was happy. I had a moment of joy; I even talked to myself and to a hare hopping across the plain. I got my smoky city behind my back". (W 181). The city of the protagonist of *Moja córeczka* is industrially contaminated, but remains a "small homeland", while the capital, for which his daughter leaves, is more of a "Babylon", the metropolis of the cynical and the wicked.

As Ewa Rewers reminds us, the city in the modern culture has been inscribed in the opposition between refuge and megalopolis,[916] which means shelter in Różewicz's writing, a natural, family space, but also the awareness the loss of a mental home, of being expelled from one's own domesticated place. In the writer's geopoetics this opposition has both a spatial and historical dimension, as the idyllic landscape of the provinces in *Moja córeczka* and many other works, like in Adam Mickiewicz's poem, is a world that is fading into the past (the sentence "everything has changed", which recurs in the last scene, is the leitmotif of Różewicz's novel).

Jan Sowa points out that one of the key elements of the Sarmatian gentry tradition in Polish culture was a reluctance to modernize and to live an urban life, which was labelled as degenerate and seen in opposition to an exemplary, unchanging existence in an idyllic space.[917] Often evoked in 19th-century literature, this tradition had a considerable impact on the formation of the post-partition image of Polish identity.[918] Con-

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[916] E. Rewers, *Post-polis. Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta*, op. cit., pp. 230–231.

[917] J. Sowa, op. cit., pp. 266, 395.

[918] See M. Lasowy, *Praca nad nowym mitem. Przestrzeń miasta w polskiej i niemieckiej powieści XIX w. na przykładzie* Soll und Haben *Gustava Freytaga i* Lalki *Bolesława Prusa*, in: *Opowiedziany naród. Literatura polska i niemiecka wobec nacjonalizmów XIX wieku*, op. cit., p. 234.

trasted with this canonical image of the native domestic space, Różewicz presents the modern experience of the individual.

The Arcadian and rustic – Mickiewicz-type – framework of the native landscape in *Moja córeczka* encompasses images of urban space. The space is seen as dominant, signalling the passage of time and suggesting a certain vision of the future. As late as 1965, in an interview with Krystyna Nastulanka, the writer said that Silesia is "a structure that expands farthest into the future. The most industrialized Poland. The Poland of tomorrow. During those fifteen years, the landscape of Silesia, the rhythm of life, time and work, have entered into my work". (W 23). A few years after *Moja córeczka* was published, Różewicz said to Andrzej Szymura: "I'm interested in cities in development, dynamic cities, cities that change before my eyes and I change with them. Perhaps that's why I lived in Gliwice for twenty years and that's probably the reason why I have ended up in Wrocław". (W 59). This dynamic of the modern world in the novel is, however, ethically ambiguous. When these two narratives of identity, civilizational and anti-urban, linked to the idyllic image of the private homeland, intersect in *Moja córeczka*, they turn out to be equally flat. Tradition gives one a sense of purpose, but it also overwhelms, sends one to sleep with the illusion that the world is unchangeable, while rapid change fascinates while simultaneously jeopardizing the sense of feeling-at-home and stabilization. Despite the fact that the tenement house from Różewicz's novel, inhabited by people who do not know one another and harbour mutual aversion is pulled down and replaced by a modern concrete-and-glass house, the city that straddles an industrial canal is heavy-industry polluted and commonplace, bland, and the landscape of "glass houses" is no longer the exponent of a narrative of progress, but of the protagonist's depressive state of mind. When his family and home fall apart, there is no longer any community he can return to.

This landscape, although it generally corresponds with Gliwice, provides a rather stereotyped context for post-war social change, mostly the

disintegration and anomie caused by such phenomena as rapid industrialization, mass migration from rural areas to cities[919] and from the central and eastern regions to the Western Territories, the growing distance between the experience of the generations of parents and children, the expansion of transnational popular culture, and the break-up of traditional regional small communities. The juxtaposition of home and province vs the world remains, however, the primary geopoetical opposition. This opposition appears in the form of cultural ideas, images of the native space, which describe the protagonist's identity as an aesthetic, moral and emotional attachment to an idyllic landscape. Even if the protagonist in *Moja córeczka* has his own private homeland, it is located in a symbolic space, not a real one. The crisis of this symbolic rootedness ruins his ambiguous identity of a "new man", which is at once rustic and bourgeois, modern and old-fashioned, associated with the traditional intelligentsia and familiar from television and newspapers. Both formulas of one's own place in this novel – the one linked to modern civilization and the provincial (anti-modern) one – fail, as the former does not ensure that one can make himself/herself feel truly at home, inhabit a space in the community with other people, while the latter, as a mythical image of life outside of history, is anachronistic. It preserves native values, but does not explain the changing world here and now, nor does it protect a real, individual man and his home.

Place as a "Ravaged" Form

Mieczysław Orski writes that Wrocław experienced an intellectual and artistic revival in the second half of the 1960s, becoming one of

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[919] The following ironic remark made by the narrator of *Sobowtór* concerning an old peasant woman on a tram can be seen as a comment on this phenomenon: "Where are they all going now, they'd been sitting on their arses for a hundred years and now they've made their move all at once" (III 414). The same can be said about the words about masses that "started moving", which the writer himself says in the film *Tadeusz Różewicz: twarze*, op. cit.

the country's cultural capitals.[920] Most importantly, the resurgence included international theatre festivals and the activity of the Polish Theatre, the Contemporary Theatre, Jerzy Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre, "Odra" monthly, the Ossolineum publishing house, literary critics such as Józef Kelera, Jacek Łukasiewicz, and Zbigniew Kubikowski, and of modern art theorists, particularly Jerzy Ludwiński.[921] It was Kubikowski who persuaded Tadeusz Różewicz to settle in the capital of Silesia.[922] The critic also took care of the practical side of the writer's move, applying for the allocation of an apartment on his behalf.[923] The energetic editor of "Odra" and president of the Wrocław branch of the Polish Writers' Union also contributed to the relocation of Jerzy Grotowski's and Lud-

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[920] M. Orski, *Pisarze wrocławscy w "Odrze"*, in: *Wrocław literacki*, eds M. Kopij, W. Kunicki, T. Schulz, Wrocław 2007, p. 457. J. Kelera, writing about theatre, notes that "in 1965 or so there comes an evident turning point, quite abrupt and almost 'explosive', though, as a matter of fact, it was preceded by several years of a deepening reorientation of actions and achievements in the field that concerns us, and in the whole cultural infrastructure of the centre upon the Odra River". The critic also points to the context of this turning point: 1) the "carnivalization" of the cultural atmosphere of the city, associated with the student theatre festivals, 2) the "osmosis" between the activities of outstanding artists; 3) public speeches, workshops, and discussions, aimed at disseminating artistic ideas, 4) the development of the humanities at universities, 5) the activity of the Wrocław branch of the Polish Writers' Union; 6) patronage of the National Council of the City of Wrocław. J. Kelera, *Wrocław teatralny 1945-1980*, Wrocław 1983, pp. 184–186.

[921] See *Panorama kultury współczesnego Wrocławia*, ed. B. Zakrzewski, Wrocław 1970.

[922] As asserted by T. Kijonka in his article *Dom z narożną wieżyczką*, "Dykcja. Pismo Literacko-Artystyczne" 1996, no. 3–4, p. 4. His view is shared by M. Orski. "The credit for, among other things, bringing Tadeusz Różewicz to Wrocław in the second half of the 1960s, goes to them [the editors and collaborators of "Odra" − WB], especially Zbigniew Kubikowski and Czesław Hernas". M. Orski, op. cit., p. 457.

[923] "Ladies and gentlemen, I am a new arrival in Wrocław. No so long ago, together with editor Kubikowski, who is present here, I was looking for a place to live where I could work and live", said Różewicz in December 1970 on receipt of the Odra Award (Ma 277). The writer moved into an apartment block at 53 Gliniana Street, then, after a few years, into an apartment in an old house at 13 Januszowicka Street, and then into a single-family house at 16 Promień Street.

wik Flaszen's theatre company (1965)[924] from Opole to Wrocław, and, in addition to Różewicz, invited Urszula Kozioł, Melchior Wańkowicz, and Stanisław Barańczak, among others, to contribute to "Odra". The magazine's poetry section at the time was run by Tymoteusz Karpowicz, while the theatre section was helmed by Kelera. It was thanks to them that "Odra", which had previously followed an agenda centred around German issues and the Western Territories, became an important socio-cultural monthly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with a circulation of up to ca. 12,000 copies and a genuinely nationwide reach. The economic, organizational and political ground for the cultural development of the city was prepared by the National Council of the City of Wrocław and the Municipal Council for Culture, which – in pursuance of the policy of the People's Republic of Poland that sought to replace German traditions with Polish ones – helped expand the cultural infrastructure, mobilize the local artistic milieu and provide good working conditions for artists from other centres, such as Grotowski and Ludwiński.[925] "The Communist

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[924] At the instigation of and thanks to the support of Professor Bolesław Iwaszkiewicz, Chairman of the National Council of Wrocław between 1958 and 1969. See J. Kelera, *Wrocław teatralny 1945–1980*, op. cit., p. 185. Kelera called for this relocation in "Odra".

[925] Zbigniew Makarewicz recalls that "the heads of the arts departments, though members of the Communist Party, were definitely open to new cultural developments: Marian Kuszewski, member of the Presidium of the National Voivodeship Council, and Jerzy Nowak, member of the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Wrocław." Z. Makarewicz, *Polska sztuka na Zachodzie. O Jerzym Ludwińskim we Wrocławiu*, in: *Jerzy Ludwiński. Wypełniając puste pola*, eds P. Lisowski, K. Radomska, Toruń, 2011, p. 55. In an interview with Piotr Lisowski, Maria Berny said that "it was a particularly good period for Wrocław. It so happened that the city's party and administrative authorities at that time were exceptionally wise. Jurek Nowak was the Director of the Cultural Department, and Michał Kłeczek was his deputy, both extremely imaginative and creative. It was during their tenure that Jerzy Ludwiński and Jerzy Grotowski's Theatre of the 13 Rows were brought to Wrocław. Mime theatre started to develop at the time too. Wrocław was lucky to have people who knew that Polishness could and should be strengthened, not through Agit-prop, but through developing cultural, academic and scientific infrastructure". *Między odbiorcą a twórcą*. Piotr Lisowski in conversation with Maria Berny, "Jednodniówka Muzeum Współczesnego we Wrocławiu", Wrocław 2 September 2011, p. 4.

state," writes Dorota Monkiewicz, "permitted modern avant-garde art that found scant acceptance in other circumstances, as since a new Polish history as being written in these 'lands without history' (given that their German past was to be forever erased)".[926]

> As Janusz Bogucki explained years later [qtd in Lech Stangret in his description of the political context of the Wrocław '70 Art Symposium – WB] the idea was to fashion in these lands, abandoned by the Germans, a new tradition, to revive among the settlers who had arrived from various regions of pre-war Poland and a handful of indigenous inhabitants a local patriotism that identified itself with the city – a new Polish centre.[927]

The cultural development of the city was a part (the next phase) of the process of its systematic Polonization, which began in 1945, and was due to the peripheral location of the region and all the newly acquired areas along the Odra River, which in the politicized culture of the People's Republic of Poland served as an experimental space.[928] The

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[926] D. Monkiewicz, *Es Beginnt in Breslau*, "Jednodniówka Muzeum Współczesnego we Wrocławiu", Wrocław 2 September 2011, p. 1.

[927] L. Stangret, *Zaczyna się we Wrocławiu – w kontekście współczesności*, "Jednodniówka Muzeum Współczesnego we Wrocławiu". Wrocław 2 September 2011, p. 1. The political context of the Wrocław 1970s avant-garde is also indicated by Zbigniew Makarewicz: "You had to wait for the Anniversary of the Return of the Western and Northern Territories to the Motherland to be able to publish new artistic ideas in Wrocław, while the Solidarity 'festival' which begun in 1980 shortened the period of the neo-avant-garde which had not yet run its course". Z. Makarewicz, *Szał swobody. Ruch artystyczny w Polsce lat siedemdziesiątych*, "Artpunkt. Opolski kwartał sztuki" 2010, no. 6, p. 3. Makarewicz also quotes a critical report by the Security Service on the activities of Galeria Pod Mona Lizą. Ibid., p. 5.

[928] Lower Silesia was a region "seen by the then authorities as a precarious territory of 'post-German' influence, so it was heavily underinvested, but, at the same time – as a region far removed from the metropolis, situated in the Western Borderlands – it was assigned the role of a so-called political "safety valve", with the personnel of the party's central office turning a blind eye to, for example, international festivals of student theatre and of strongly rebellious and anti-totalitarian

author of *Unease* became a part of the artistic revival in Wrocław, creating and publishing poetry, prose, essays, and theatre plays, including the novel *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*, the collection of sketches *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, the dramas *Na czworakach*, *Marriage Blanc*, *Do piachu* and *Odejście Głodomora*. From 1969 to 1976, he authored an ongoing column in "Odra", entitled *Margines, ale....*[929] Różewicz's books were published by Ossolineum and – from the late 1980s onward – by Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie. Many of his plays and works not originally intended for theatre were produced at the Polish Theatre and the Contemporary Theatre. The local context of Różewicz's writing at the turn of the 1970s was provided by the works (including theoretical ones) of the likes of Tymoteusz Karpowicz, Andrzej Falkiewicz, Stanisław Dróżdż, Jerzy Grotowski, Henryk Tomaszewski, Helmut Kajzar, Jerzy Ludwiński, and several other artists working in visual disciplines (fine arts, photography, film, performance).[930] Despite generational and worldview differences, they shared an experimental or critical attitude to the convention of high culture and were interested in bodily experience and sexual identification as a construct-commodity, redrawing the boundaries of art and its social role, the material and topical dimension of the work vis-à-vis the historical and museum narrative, problems of the work's reception

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"open" theatre, held in Kalambur, and to the publication in "Odra" of texts that were banned, even from printing in Warsaw's "Polityka", such as Kazimierz Moczarski's *Rozmowy z katem* or Hanna Krall's *Zdążyć przed Panem Bogiem*. M. Orski, op. cit., p. 457. Based in Świnoujście, a town in the "Regained Territories" located relatively far from the metropolis, FAMA played a similar role at the turn of the 1970s.

[929] M. Orski mentions that Różewicz's collaboration with "Odra" was so close at that time that the writer was once called "secret arch-editor" in a byline. Ibid., p. 461.

[930] Maria Gołaszewska draws a parallel between the anti-aestheticism of the neo-avant-garde (conceptualism) and the writer's stance: "Battles are waged not for individual aesthetic values, but for the meaning of art. Tadeusz Różewicz does not want to be aesthetic, because life for him is more important than art". M. Gołaszewska, *M. Gołaszewska, Prawda artysty. Szkic bez dystansu*, w: *Permafo*, ed. A. Markowska, Wrocław 2012 (exhibition catalogue for *Gdzie jest Permafo?*), Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław 2012, p. 311.

in the context of new media and audiences who adopted a consumerist attitude to artistic "products", and engaging in dialogue with western artists rather than imitating them. This Wrocław-based late avant-garde ("trans-avant-garde"), mostly involved theatre practice, conceptualism, and poetry, both concrete and linguistic.[931] Although focused on theoretical (meta-artistic) reflection and on text as material, conceptual art was not, however, abstract in the ideological sense.[932] It can be presumed that

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[931] Makarewicz refers to the trends and avant-garde groups of this period as "trans-avant-garde" to distinguish them from the avant-garde of the first half of the 20th century. See Z. Makarewicz, *Szał swobody. Ruch artystyczny w Polsce lat siedemdziesiątych*, op. cit., p. 3.

[932] Jerzy Ludwiński's exhibition of Zbigniew Dłubak's work at the Pod Moną Lizą Gellery in Wrocław, held in December 1970, "Sztuka pojęciowa". I use this term in its broad sense to include conceptual work in various fields and theoretical reflection. Magdalena Ziółkowska recalls that the unrealized plans for a Museum of Modern Art, designed by Ludwiński in 1966, was in breach of an unofficial agreement between the society of the People's Republic of Poland and its government dictating that the contemporary art of the Western territories should be subordinated to such national culture institutions as the Silesian Museum in Wrocław (National Museum since 1970), whose mission was to forge the historical identity of the city and region (M. Ziółkowska, *Muzeum ma rację bytu jedynie jako prekursor*, w: Jerzy Ludwiński. *Wypełniając puste pola. Filling the blanks*, op. cit., pp. 30–32). Challenging the social basis of the traditional museum narrative and its role in public spaces, Ludwiński raised a question mark over the historical policy in the "Regained Territories" and demanded decentralization of Polish culture (J. Ludwiński, *Muzeum Sztuki Aktualnej we Wrocławiu (koncepcja ogólna)*, "Jednodniówka Muzeum Współczesnego we Wrocławiu", Wrocław 2 September 2011, p. 10). His concept of "art in a post-artistic era", as introduced in an article of the same title published in "Odra" in 1971, was influential in the changes in the modern artistic consciousness at that time. Ludwiński noted the devaluation of the originality criterion, the "impurity" and borderline character of modern works of art, the blurring of the boundary between art and art theory, the replacement of creativity with reflection on the notion and situation of culture, the disintegration of the artistic system with its distinctive hierarchies and categories of describing, judging, and using artworks (see Jerzy Ludwiński, *Wypełniając puste pola. Filling the blanks*, op. cit.). Zbigniew Makarewicz's artistic work at the time can also be seen as challenging the current social landscape and historical memory. Makarewicz co-created an installation called "Perpetual Falling" (1968), taking its cue from T. Różewicz's poem *Spadanie*, which referred to the degraded reality of the People's Republic of Poland, and the project "Muzeum Archeologiczne – Festung Breslau" (Wrocław '70 Symposium), which envisaged excavation work in one of Wrocław's huge post-war rubble dumps. See A. Kostołowski, *Filozoficzny realista (uwagi o twórczości Zbigniewa Makarewicza)*, "Artpunkt. Opolski kwartał sztuki" 2011, no. 8, p. 4.

it was an attempt to break out of the conformism of the "little stability" not towards a conservative utopia and an ethical covenant of the artist with his/her native community, but rather through intellectual exploration (theorizing), neo-Dadaistic and feminist, conceived as a discussion of the artist with a post-modern – new-media-shaped – audience, as well as a revision of the modernist myths of national culture and an analysis of the "new situation in art".

If this "call of the new was effective" in leading to art being brought closer to collective life, explains Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka, it was not only thanks to the favourable steps taken by the authorities who did not recognize all the "potency and freedom in the newly emerging artistic thought", but "because in Wrocław, a young city, a young generation started their life, a generation of displaced people who wanted to create a space for their own identification".[933] The end of the 1960s saw the beginning of the transition from "localization" to "actualization" (or rather to their co-existence) in Wrocław's culture, i.e. from occupying a space, based solely on the ideological and institutional assignment of inhabitants to a territory, to the social "awareness of place as a text of reality".[934] This awareness was conducive to the development of their existential bond with the city and a sense of feeling-at-home.

Paraphrasing Heidegger's *Letter on "Humanism"*, Ewa Rewers wrote: "Culture is the home of being. The abode of culture is inhabited by man. The guardians of this home are thinkers and artists. Their guarding helps achieve a transparency of being; through their stories, transparency becomes a culture in culture", giving man a symbolic shelter in the predicament of modern not-feeling-at-home.[935] If one assumes that a former German city

[933] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Geografia gramatyki i gramatyka geografii, czyli dlaczego Wrocław?*, "Jednodniówka Muzeum Współczesnego we Wrocławiu", Wrocław 16 December 2011, p. 2.

[934] Ibid, p. 2 (the distinction between "localization" and "presence" posited by Tadeusz Sławek).

[935] E. Rewers, *Post-*polis. *Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta*, op. cit., p. 227.

was a form devoid of content or one filled incompletely, fluidly, still open to cultural development, Różewicz and his writing imparted new meanings to this "empty" space, as did Tomaszewski, Kajzar, and Grotowski, whom the writer met, worked with or intended to work with. More than thirty years after moving to Wrocław, the poet invoked "their spirits" at the opening of the Eurodrama 2002 Festival, addressing young playwrights as the hosts of the city, and witness to its past, as it were (Ma 303). On one hand, the artists listed in *Zamykanie i otwieranie* are characters in Różewicz's autobiographical tale, on the other hand, their presence in the "spiritual" space of the city fills up a social void in its culture and history, which could not be overcome by politically decreed narratives of memory and collective identity. Theatre, particularly Grotowski's theatre, gave Wrocław audiences a sense of participation in a community of myths, archetypes and of a place that saturates the "poor", prop-less and indivisible performance space, bringing the actor and the audience closer together.

Różewicz playfully disagreed with an "anti-theatrical" spatial solution in theatre in *Kurtyna z dzieciństwa* (1973), a brief tribute sketch on the play *Błażek opętany*, which the future poet saw in 1928.

> The fact that the actors and the audience were separated by a space created greater "metaphysical" tension (a mystical sensation?) than direct physical "contact" of the audience with the actors would. [...] there is no return to that theatre, but because of its disarming naiveté it was closer to Shakespeare's theatre than the most daredevil intellectual (and visual) contemporary productions. It was close to Shakespeare's comedies [...]. From *Zimowa powieść* to *Ubu Roi* runs a ripple of the carefree laughter of Melpomena's children (Ma 61).[936]

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[936] Różewicz could have seen Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford in July 1971. He watched the "funny performance of *Ubu Roi*" in April 1973 at the PWST Theatre in Kraków (Ko 131, 189).

When Różewicz moved to Wrocław, the Laboratory Theatre was already known in Poland, but it held special importance for the residents of Wrocław. Karol Maliszewski noted that the production *Apocalypsis cum figuris* became a symbol of Wrocław's culture and of its place on the map of Polish contemporary arts, even its signature work.[937] Różewicz and Grotowski discussed a potential collaboration, but the writer decided against it and moved on to develop his own project involving a theatre mostly based on words. One of the writer's major objections to *Apocalypsis cum figuris* was his recognition that powerful, avant-garde theatre devices had become conventionalized, which could – and had to be – overcome by returning to the dramaturgy of a literary text. "Words have been nullified in this piece", he wrote in the sketch *Apocalypsis cum Figuris (W Laboratorium Jerzego Grotowskiego)*. "To give Grotowski a text is to send a living thing to be eaten. It is neither collaboration nor communion, it is a kind of sacrifice" (V 154). Likewise, in *Zamykanie i otwieranie* Różewicz made it very clear that his theatre was post-avant-garde and realist, built on speech rather than formal and technical innovation which, according to the writer, only produced new clichés (Ma 302).

After moving to Wrocław, Różewicz published works which, like *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* and *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego*, presented the *summa* of his reflections on the place of art in the experience of the "common man" and in the modern world, as well as an extensive commentary on the role of the artist and cultural tradition in the era of mass communication. This period soon yielded such works as *Marriage Blanc* and *Do piachu*, important voices in the historical and ideological discussions of the penultimate decade of the People's Republic of Poland. The author of *Sobowtór*, however, did not become embroiled

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[937] K. Maliszewski, *Liryka we Wrocławiu, Wrocław w liryce (1980-2000)*, in: *Wrocław literacki*, op. cit., p. 412. This Grotowski production inspired such Wrocław writers as Rafał Wojaczek, Bogusław Kierc, and Gabriel Leonard Kamiński.

in political conflicts as his writing was not intended to contribute to the social disputes of the day.

Nevertheless, the end of the 1960s was a particularly difficult time for Różewicz. Majchrowski recalled that the writer settled in Wrocław after his return from a trip to France, where he had been "disturbed by the so-called March accidents".[938] Letters to Mayewski, collected in *Margines, ale...*, confirm that Różewicz was greatly affected by the anti-intelligentsia and anti-Semitic witch hunt launched by the nationalist faction of the Polish communist party, but also joined by people from intellectual and literary circles.[939]

On 28 May 1968, while still in Gliwice, he wrote:

> My loneliness deepened. I wasn't a part of any "community" (*środowisko*), either in Poland or in exile, either a "community" or a circle (*towarzystwo*). Not out of "pride", but because I'm not cut out for this. I thought I could "fight" on my own. But this was a delusion, too. [...] I'm living closed off − by that shame, fear, contempt. I am writing this letter only to you − please don't hold it against me − I must know you won't read it [to anyone,] even to your wife. I will not make a trip to America now. Perhaps next year. I will send you my new Wrocław address. What's going to happen to me now? I don't know. I think I will live and work. Once again I've found out I can't live long without my Family and Homeland. I'm too weak, apparently (Ma 193).

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[938] Z. Majchrowski, op. cit., p. 180.

[939] The writer spoke about his "fears" in an interview with K. Braun: "It's not that I am excluded from Polish reality and have absolute inner and outer freedom. No. This is not true. I am affected by the constraints of family, society, censorship, customs, by street noise, political noise. Even fears...". K. Braun, T. Różewicz, *Języki teatru*, op. cit, p. 185.

Followed, two years later, by the subsequent passage:

It is spring 1968/1969/1970. I was a healthy, cheerful boy in junior high school, then, in the underground and in the guerrilla unit I was brave, calm, my commandant had a good "opinion" of me… and now I'm scared to enter the house where my family lives, the family who I love but can't explain anything. I am not (mentally) ill, I'm healthy, I'm reputed to be one of the most "normal" people in literature; I don't get hysterical and overreact, I don't run around seeing psychiatrists, I wasn't in hospital for nervous diseases. I see things in a scarily clear way; I now see and feel myself (clearly) as I'm scared to enter the house, I turn back, go away and, finally, I come back, ashamed of myself. And it takes as much toll on my health as some [guerrilla] operation during the occupation (which was punishable by death and, worse… torture, etc.). You see, I've told you only a tiny little story about entering my own house. If only you were sitting here with me! Trips abroad don't bring me any joy; I feel out of place, I often feel disgust, I am furious… I cannot stay in Poland too long, because the "demons" become persistent (Ma 201-202).

The letters attest to the moral dilemmas and horror that beset the author of *Unease*, the sense of loneliness and danger he lived with during those years. The feeling of being trapped, described by Różewicz, might have been linked to the Jewish roots of his mother, Stefania Maria Różewicz *née* Gelbard. "Buried in me, like a body in the ground, are my 'secrets'", the writer confessed to Mayewski. "Maybe I will tell you the 'story' of my Mother's life some day. […] But I won't tell you this 'secret' now" (Ma 202). Różewicz outlined the sources of his anxiety in *Drewniany karabin*, a prose memoir piece exploring occupation-related themes.

The protagonist of the piece, the sylleptic Tadejus/Tadeusz R., is warned by Łukaszczyk, a Silesian from Nowa Ruda employed in the same office, to: "beat it and never show your face again. Tomorrow will be too late [...] there's something not quite right with you, your grandmother or your mother". The narrator-protagonist describes his reaction thus: "My heart stopped beating, and then the fear made it come to my throat where it remained stuck... The fear for mum, for brothers, for dad.... for our whole house thumped me over the head, and I had no idea what was happening to me..." (II 222). The situation described in the letters to Mayewski resembles the dramatic episode in *Drewniany karabin* in terms of the experience of fear, confusion, distrust, isolation, loneliness and alienation, and the atmosphere of accusations and suspicions.[940]

Yet, the author of *Unease* did not want to stay abroad indefinitely or emigrate with his family, even though his numerous journeys and growing literary stature across the world offered him opportunities to do so at

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[940] Despite research into the resources of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, it has not been possible to confirm the conjecture that in 1968–1970 the Special Services of the People's Republic of Poland conducted operational activities against the writer. According to the materials provided by the Institute, on 5 February 1964, the Katowice Security Service opened a file codenamed "Writer" in order to "clarify the nature" of his [T. Różewicz's – WB] correspondence and personal contacts with translators of Polish literature in the West and publishers in capitalist countries", including Karl Dedecius, Piotr Lachmann, Florian Smile, Adam Czerniawski, Zbigniew Grabowski, Ilka Boll, Martin Gregor, and Göran Sonnevi. The action plan envisaged covert monitoring of Różewicz's correspondence and his foreign contacts, (conducting) a thorough personal search before crossing the Polish border, analyzing the writer's work, in particular works passed or sent abroad, signing up secret operatives who would be able to reach the target directly. The file contains summaries of Różewicz's correspondence with translators, critics, and publishers mentioned in the documents. A note of 23 May 1964, drafted in Warsaw, says that the Head of Division IV of Department III of the Polish Ministry of the Interior, having consulted the Ministry of Art and Culture, the Union of Polish Writers, and ZAIKS, proposes to discontinue operational activities linked to Różewicz, lift objections to his foreign trips, not to conduct searches at the Polish border, and transfer the file to the archives (the note includes a favourable opinion on the writer and his work). Following a suggestion from Warsaw, a request was drawn up on 4 August 1964 in Katowice to close the file. IPN file Ka 0162/490/J (Operational check, codename "Writer", reg. 8898, ref. II – 9168).

the time.[941] "I thought", he wrote to Mayewski, "about whether I could decide to leave Poland. Never" (Ma 199). As he noted many times in this correspondence, he would not be able to leave Częstochowa, Radomsko, and Wieluń behind. Was the choice of the capital of Silesia for a new home a substitute for the distance of exile? If so, it was not so much a distancing away from the political institutions and power centres of the People's Republic of Poland, but from the various cliques that hijacked the Polish cultural life at the time. "I'm going through a very difficult time with my work now," explained Różewicz, "(I am still furious that the 'milieu' [*środowisko*] 'did not understand a thing')", and later on he added: "In both speech and writing, I try to fight the idiocy and the monstrosities (often) penned by my (?) 'fellow writers'". (Ma 192, 199). Looking back thirty years, the writer commented on this situation with the following words: "1968, 1969…these were difficult years for of the nation, for its writers…we failed this test. That's my opinion to this day. There were people out there who were righteous and sane…but merely a handful of them" (Ma 243). "We", the nation and its writers, failed another test of tolerance, we did not understand the lesson of the consequences of the racism and nationalism of the mid-20th century, let ourselves be drawn, too easily, into the communist campaign of anti-Semitic hatred, or indifferently watched this witch hunt against "aliens" and their public stigmatization.

The campaign unfolded in Wrocław, too. But neither the Wrocław community nor its elite were as integrated as the cultural circles of other urban centres where the writer seriously considered moving his perma-

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[941] In 1967 he wrote: "I often go abroad (sometimes so close you might find it is hardly abroad at all…), after a few weeks I am all in agony and very much drawn to the land where I live. I have finally realized I would find it impossible to stay permanently outside Poland, it would be a disaster" (Ma 192).

nent residence during that period.[942] Różewicz explained that "Wrocław, a community established after the war, is open to all sides, well-aired. Climatically unhealthy, because the Odra means humidity, and humidity is rheumatism. But the spiritual atmosphere is good there" (W 315). This opinion is in line with the commonly shared contemporary self-stereotype of Wrocław residents, who in response to the sociologists' question about the most important feature they shared, predominantly answered "openness" (in 65% of responses).[943] The collective identity, built on the idea of openness, encourages trust and readiness to include others in one's social group.[944] This way of perceiving interpersonal relations in the city stemmed not only from the fact that its population was almost totally exchanged post-1945, but also from the cultural mosaic of people who settled in the city after the war.[945] Its new residents repre-

[942] Carmen Laforet, who described her tour of Poland in 1967, noted that in contrast to Warsaw, where intellectuals and the elite made up an exclusive group, the social life in Wrocław brought together members of different social and professional groups, with people who originated from upper classes forming no separate "milieu" (*środowisko*). See C. Laforet, *Za żelazną kurtyną. Podróż do Polski w 1967 roku*, trans. F. Łobodziński, Warszawa 2012, pp. 120–121.

[943] M. Łaska, *Wrocław jako marka. Socjologiczne refleksje nad potencjałem wizerunkowym Wrocławia*, in: *My wrocławianie. Społeczna przestrzeń miasta*, op. cit., pp. 32–33.

[944] As many as 53% of Wrocław residents believe that "most strangers can be trusted". The figure for all Poles is below 20%. W. Skiba, *Kapitał społeczny mieszkańców Wrocławia*, w: *My wrocławianie. Społeczna przestrzeń miasta*, op. cit., p. 90. Sociological research indicates that the majority of Wrocław residents still believe that to be a Wrocław citizen it is enough to identify yourself as one/a Wrocław citizen. See J. Pluta, *Studium wrocławskiego autostereotypu*, in: *My wrocławianie. Społeczna przestrzeń miasta*, op. cit., p. 242.

[945] Jan Miodek wrote: "In the early 1960s it was said that Wrocław was a city where people came from everywhere. This made it an open city, a city of young people, a tolerant city", while Bogusław Litwiniec, who organized Open Theatre Festivals, said: "Wrocław was an example of a city [that showed] how to live unconservatively; a place where you went for freedom, a dash of anarchy and a pluralism which I describe in the simplest way possible: here nobody looked inside other people's pants, to check whether you were circumcised or not, or under the shirt to see if they wore a cross on the chest. [...] nobody cared if someone was different. On the contrary. Being different was an asset, because it was an adventure. I only ratcheted up the intensity by inviting theatres from New Zealand to Greenland. We broke down stereotypes. Especially during the culmination from the mid-1960s to the 1970s. When people would come to Wrocław, they

sented heterogeneous Polishness with no real connection to any dominating regional group,[946] while some of them belonged to non-Polish ethnic groups that made up the post-war community of Lower Silesia and Wrocław, e.g. Germans, Jews, Czechs, Lemkos, Ukrainians, Macedonians, and Greeks[947] (Henryk Tomaszewski, a German, and Lambros Ziotas, a Greek, were the writer's close friends). This is why they came in contact with other customs and languages in their immediate surroundings more frequently than the inhabitants of ethnic Poland. Some of them ended up in the Western Territories for reasons beyond their control, or were even brought here by force, but others arrived seeking shelter in an attempt to escape political repression, erase the memory of the traumatic past, or begin a new, better life. The legend of Wrocław as an "ex-centric" city, created in the 1940s, implied not only its geographically peripheral location vis-à-vis the country's central region, but also social acceptance for non-normative behaviours and phenomena.[948]

Różewicz's correspondence suggests that the decision to move to Wrocław was made in the final weeks of 1967, or a little earlier, but was kept secret even from his friends and acquaintances. Zdzisław

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could hardly believe the atmosphere we had here! Qtd in P. Żuk, *Wrocławskie pomosty do Europy – o europejskiej tożsamości w lokalnych warunkach*, in: *My wrocławianie. Społeczna przestrzeń miasta*, op. cit., p. 40–41, 54.

[946] Even the two largest regional groups of displaced persons, from Greater Poland and from Mazovia, in total, represented less than 30% of the population of Wrocław. I. Turnau, *O pochodzeniu dzisiejszej ludności miasta Wrocławia*, "Przegląd Zachodni" 1995, no. 2, p. 21 (first edition: "Przegląd Zachodni" 1949, no. 9–10).

[947] See K. Pudło, *Wpływ stosunków interetnicznych na przenikanie się kultur ludności Dolnego Śląska po II wojnie światowej*, in: *Śląsk – etniczno-kulturowa wspólnota i różnorodność*, ed. B. Bazielich, Wrocław 1995, pp. 170–171.

[948] This image of Wrocław and the Western Territories also stemmed from their identification with the Eastern Borderlands and Lwów. See S. Bednarek, op. cit., p. 90. Quoting the proverb "He went to London, somewhere beyond Wrocław", W. Szewczyk holds that the capital of Silesia was traditionally associated with remoteness and peripheral, not fully defined location. W. Szewczyk, *Wrocław, co przywieziesz, to ostaw*, "Kalendarz Wrocławski" 1985, p. 152.

Hierowski did not learn about it until he was presented with the "Odra" prize on 7 December (III 101).[949] As correspondence with Jan Brzękowski implies, the author of *Unease* planned to return to Kraków as early as 1961 (Ma 212). Also, Tadeusz Kijonka believes that "one could expect [his] return to Kraków, the city of his studies and of the high-powered start to his literary career".[950] Kijonka adds that "the decision on Tadeusz Różewicz's leave from Gliwice to Wrocław was unexpected and surprising", as "at that time a writer's status was also determined by his/her address, so whoever found some success, was gravitating towards Warsaw, since even Kraków did not appear to have enough clout to bolster a career".[951] This mindset may have been shared by Kraków-based Jerzy Nowosielski who, in a 1966 letter, immediately after Różewicz was presented with a First Degree State Prize, advised the poet to move to the capital in order not to "suffer" anymore in Gliwice (Ko 42).[952] Różewicz did not follow these plans through, explaining in interviews many years later that his "work is intertwined with the country and the language rather than with one city or another" and, even though he had a fondness for Polish capital cities, Warsaw seemed "tiresome and provincial" (W 149), and Kraków was beset by "dulszczyzna" (W 315). From this point of view, the choice of Wrocław as a place to live and write did not result from its "position-bolstering" status on the cultural map but Poland, but

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[949] As indicated in a letter from Z. Hierowski, qtd in Hierowski's sketch *Hierowski. Zamknięcie*, and the editor's note below the sketch. The conclusion of the sketch in the first edition is different from the one in *Utwory zebrane*, where the last sentence referring to the title, "The twenty-year chapter of my life in Upper Silesia came to an end" was removed. See T. Różewicz, *Hierowski. Zamknięcie*, op. cit., p. 55.

[950] T. Kijonka, op. cit., p. 4.

[951] Ibid, pp. 4–5.

[952] Perhaps J. Nowosielski's comment about the writer's discomfort in Gliwice also referred to his health and well-being, as Różewicz complained in many letters and interviews that Gliwice's dusty air had polluted his lungs (W 63).

rather from a communal "vacuum", as it were, that prevailed there at the time and the poor social integration of its residents, which produced a sense of having severed one's links with the past, and even a relative independence and detachment from the intellectual milieu, who oriented themselves towards Kraków or Warsaw. This was probably what the writer meant when he said: "I broke off contact with almost all my acquaintances. In Wrocław, I've been meeting with [only] two people for almost two years, that's all" (Ma 199). His note in *Kartki wydarte z dziennika*, which includes a scene of a visit of a friend from his guerrilla unit whom Różewicz has not seen since 1944, can be read as a comment on the beginning of the Wrocław part of Różewicz's biography. The city, as presented in this scene, is still a good place for those who "do not want to revisit the old days" (III 372).[953]

Yet, leaving Gliwice was not an easy experience for the writer, as attested in his sketches *Przeprowadzka* and *Przeprowadzka (ciąg dalszy)*, published in 1969 in "Odra" magazine. Różewicz writes in the first of them:

> Inside me there are now two apartments (maybe I'm still in two apartments, I'm still living in the apartment I moved out of, even though this flat is deteriorating, fading, falling apart, but it still exists). Inside me there are two views from the window. [...] Two post offices. Two postmen. Two tailors. Bookstores are replacing other bookstores, cinemas are replacing those other cinemas, parks are growing into each other (Ma 43),

In *Przeprowadzka (ciąg dalszy)* he adds: "I was leaving a city and was left by a city. A painful process of detaching oneself from the past, de-

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[953] Even B. Drobner recalled that people "with a ragged mortgage" tended to leave for Wrocław after the war. B. Drobner, *Zdobyliśmy polskie Złote Runo!*, op. cit., p. 85.

taching oneself from life 'raw', and without anaesthesia" (Ma 44). Behind the slightly sentimental tone of these sketches, one can discern the motif of a dual city, typical of post-war migration and resettlement literature, whose authors explored the theme of people's extreme spatial mobility at the time, and their sense of uprootedness, of not-feeling-at-home and homesickness.

Most commonly, this topos expressed the chronic homelessness of the emigrants, displaced people, and expellees, fated to live with the schizophrenic concept of a place of one's own referring to both a remembered space that has been lost and a space that is real, experienced, but still alien. This is the case in Anna Kowalska's prose and in Zbigniew Herbert's or Adam Zagajewski's essays and poetry. A nostalgic and political (sometimes even martyrological) take on post-war "displacement" in their works lead to an axiological imbalance between the two spaces, and even to a symbolic conflict between the new homeland and the old one, a conflict that reflected the ideological, collective antagonisms of the era. However, in Różewicz's prose "displacement" mostly has an existential dimension, associated with the replacement of images of one's own place in the consciousness of the self. Zagajewski's Gliwice in *Dwa miasta* is an unappealing, industrial city, but is also anti-Lwów hence why these cities, which cancel out each other, are the source of the permanent sense of man's not-being-at-home after the disaster of war and expulsions (every city is Jerusalem, every man a wanderer, says the writer). In Różewicz's text, the "completely natural leaving" of Gliwice results in the "replacement of one image with another", a temporal duality of the place of residence as the problem of the well-being of a particular individual. This sense would have been shared by the majority of Wrocław's residents.

The findings of sociological research on the new residents of Wrocław in the post-war years indicate that only some of them were repatriates who had been collectively and forcibly displaced. The large majority settled here

voluntarily, leaving the towns and villages of Lesser Poland, Greater Poland, and Mazovia, alone or in small groups, for personal and pragmatic reasons. What is more, they had the alternative to move to the growing cities of ethnic Poland. The fact of abandoning their former city, town or village, for them, took on not so much of an ideological significance, but a nostalgic and existential one. Not every inhabitant of the Western Territories identified as an expellee or political exile, but almost every one of them lived in a multilayered space, as his/her image of a real home and city contained residues of the memory of the historical or biographical discontinuity of residence, of a great migration, journey, relocation, and of the new place's otherness which was being the slowly overcome.[954] This narrative of "passage" was inherited by the following generations, too.[955]

While the collective myth of group resettlements emerged fairly early (e.g. the myth of Borderland origin), the biographies and family stories of the new residents of Wrocław, except for their common circumstances, set them apart from one another for a long time, as they revealed a diversity of birthplaces, life motivations, customs, language (varieties of Polish), family relationships, and acquaintances. More than in sedentary communities, the communal sense of the residents of Wrocław was based on myths, and their sense of separateness and individuality on biography.[956]

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[954] E.K. Dzikowska writes that "the stigma of transit, of being in between, has become a permanent part of the Wrocław identity. The palimpsest has become the fundamental figure that allows to express it". E.K. Dzikowska, op. cit., p. 178.

[955] "Out of the seventeen million Poles currently living in cities, more than ten million are likely to be newcomers and their children born in a new domicile, who are only the first urban generation. The "townies" with a short genealogy, therefore, are markedly predominant in our cities. The vast majority of the urban proletariat and intelligentsia are people whose familial or personal biographies contain a recent turn, a transplantation to a different environment, a change of the type of domicile, surroundings, job, customs". M. Czerwiński, *Życie po miejsku*, op. cit., pp. 10–11.

[956] "Cities created 'anew,'" explains Czerwiński, "constitute themselves into conscious communities that support their imagination with symbols, which the collective generally needs. These symbols had to be recovered from under the ruins filling the city centres, or new ones had to

The author of *Unease* made a brief visit to Wrocław on 8 September 1947 together with a Czech cultural delegation who had been invited to Poland by the Western Institute. He was accompanied by Jan Pilař, a writer, critic, and translator of Polish poetry, who recalled years later that their arrival was celebrated with a welcome dinner attended by Maria Dąbrowska and Wojciech Żukrowski, and that they had seen an operational rail car factory and a rebuilt university amid an "enormous sea of ruins".[957]

Heinz Winfried Sabais, a German poet born in then-Breslau, wrote to Różewicz in a poetic letter that the city was "horribly ravaged".[958] This phrase was also an apt description of many other cityscapes in Central Europe after 1945: Gdańsk, Warsaw, Dresden, and Berlin, torn down and burned, and, what is more, in the case of such cities as Breslau and Stettin, abandoned by their former residents and set-

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be created, suitable for the situation and history. [...] This effort of historical imagination, this persistent search for the past and the creation of new symbols is perhaps the only, or at least the most evident, sign of committing more than just work and human intelligence to the process of "recovering cities" [such as Wrocław – UK], but also the more hidden mental layers – the need for rootedness, the need for the emotional and moral 'organization' [*zagospodarowanie*] of one's domicile'. Ibid., pp. 13–14. While creating the Polish symbols of post-war urban identity, the citizens of Wrocław were discovering old, local, "post-German" ones, inscribed within the space and history of the city. Their daily participation in this space hindered a full "natural" identification with it, did not allow them to "to melt" into their immediate surroundings, but considering the relativity of the new myths and traditions, it gave them the opportunity to settle in them in their own way, also by personally helping to shape the space of their surroundings and discover their history, create a new proxemic code. This is because Wrocław, as a meaningful space and a social construct of a place, was, up to the 1960s and 1970s, an open set of signs/symbols, prone to varying, even contradictory, arrangements.

[957] J. Pilař, *Początki zainteresowań poezją polską i przyjaźń z Tadeuszem Różewiczem*, in: J. Pilař, *Eseje o poezji polskiej*, trans. A. Czcibor-Piotrowski, Warszawa 1987, p. 36. Less than ten years later, "Poglądy" published for the first time in Wrocław an interview with Różewicz as well as his poems, including *Kamienie na szaniec* with the note "From the underground collection *Echa leśne*, published in a guerrilla unit in 1944", "Poglądy" (special edition, Wrocław, 14 March 1957), p. 3.

[958] H.W. Sabais, *Wrocławski list*, trans. B. Danowicz, in: *Wrocław liryczny. Lirysches Breslau*, eds M. Graszewicz, M. Zybura, Wrocław 1997, p. 105.

tled by aliens. Yet, the author of *Unease* did not invoke the founding myth of Polish Wrocław, created after the war, which posited apocalyptic destruction and reconstruction of the Piast heritage from ruins, and was so readily embraced by other writers, Tadeusz Zelenay and Jan Sztaudynger, among others. When in mid-1968 Różewicz settled in the capital of Silesia, the city had grown to a population comparable to that of the interwar period, was "purged" of Prussian monuments and inscriptions, cleared of rubble and partly reconstructed, although ruins and vast empty spaces between buildings were still evident, in short – it was first transformed into a "symbolic no-man's land" (B. Waldenfels), and then developed and Polonized. At the same time, there was mass construction of Real Socialist buildings combined with a great deal of veneration for the traces of Wrocław's medieval past. The mythology of the great reconstruction of the "city of ruins", which began to wane as early as the second decade after 1945, was clandestinely accompanied by the uncensored myth of expelled Borderlanders. Besides, the nationalist discourse of "motherland lands" was losing its social punch, slowly giving way in literature to reflection on Polo-German post-war relations, the legacy of German culture in Silesia, and the cultural memory of the city and region (H. Worcell, J. Pluta, J. Żylińska).

Building on Gaston Bachelard's metaphor of speaking space, one can say that while immediately after the war the geopoetics of Wrocław evoked a sense of alienation, unrootedness, and nostalgia in the new residents for their lost own place, and, politically, motivated them to collectively rebuild and Polonize the city, after two decades its credibility and emotional value began to dry up.[959] The myth centred on the image

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[959] "The rhetoric of the recovered city encouraged a situation in which the process of building a local identity was based on strictly non-local factors, involving, first and foremost, the sense of ethnic community. So if – for example – the authorities tried to make sure that the immigrants who settled in the reconstructed Warsaw should be able to relatively quickly come to feel Varsa-

of ruins and "Piast" meta-history blocked the process of Wrocław residents developing a deeper sense of being-at-home. It was too selective and detached from the specific, local topography which, as they were growing closer to the city, revealed its historical variability and multilayered nature, and even a contradiction between its signs and the meanings ascribed to them, between the "phantasmal presence of the German element in the city's architecture and urban layout", confronted with their experience on a daily basis, and its ideological interpretation.[960] This contradiction could no longer be resolved by the dogma of the "Regained Territories". The evolution of their geopoetics was accompanied by literature which diagnosed the shifts in the perception of space in public discourse after 1970.

When the female protagonist of *Klamra*, a short story from Jerzy Pluta's collection entitled *Konie przejadają Polskę* (1974), takes in the landscape including the Odra River and Grunwaldzki Bridge, the narrator, uncovering a deeper layer of the topographical palimpsest, adds:

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vians, in Wrocław the settlers were supposed to feel Polish in a recovered Polish city". M. Łaska, op. cit., p. 20. Up to the 1970s, the social engineering of the "Regained Territories", claims E. K. Dzikowska, was compelling and effective. "It gave rise to one of the few consensus points between those in power and the people. It was transcending the division into the right and left side of the political spectrum". (E.K. Dzikowska, op. cit., pp. 166–167).

[960] D. Monkiewicz, op. cit., p. 2. The ideology of ethnic exclusivity of Wrocław and the "pan-Polish" identity of its post-war residents "excluded the possibility of taming vast areas of artefacts of urban space, in which houses, contrary to the spell-like slogans, did not only speak Polish. The techniques of exclusion gave rise to otherness, but did not furnish effective strategies for overcoming it; the topos of taking control through work was not enough, all the more so because its symbolic potential derived from the asymmetry of the Polish-German modernization discourse, which codified thinking in terms of superior/inferior civilization. The absent Germans were still represented by the things they left behind, things making up everyday life, shrouded in mystery, clamouring for their story to be told". E.K. Dzikowska, op. cit., p. 177. Kopytoff points out that what matters from an anthropological point of view is not the mere taking over of foreign objects or ideas, but "the way in which they are culturally redefined and put into use". I. Kopytoff, op. cit., p. 252. A new definition was given not only to German places and things in the "Regained Territories", but also to such complex cultural and geographical concepts as "Silesia" and "Silesian" (resident of Silesia).

"there is no Oder anymore, there is no Kaiserbrücke anymore, there is no… ".[961] As late as the 1970s, the German past of Wrocław and Lower Silesia appears in prose works in the context of the narrative of the so-called "regained territories", where "there is no" local memory, because a part of local history has been erased, negated, and the rest arbitrarily incorporated into the discourse of the Polish Piast legacy and Silesianness (e.g. the cult of Slavdom and Silesian uprisings). This narrative, however, is no longer authentic. Aside from that, it has ceased to be the Western and Northern Territories' paradigmatic story to which their other identity stories are supposed to refer to. It is only a slogan, like in Różewicz's column published in "Przekrój", *Syn King-Konga gra w ping-ponga* (*King Kong Playing Ping Pong*), where "Piast Wrocław", the 1978 FIFA World Cup, and the sentimental gorilla lifted from the American film belong to the same flattened, infantile, and all-engulfing cinematic mass culture. The terms "Piast lands" and "Regained Territories" lose their political significance at the time, though they retain a special relationship with the Polish memory and imagination, e.g. referencing Polishness as a cultural code. This is how one can interpret the writer's comment in a letter to Nowosielski that the snow falling in Wrocław "at last resembles Polish winter in the 'Regained Territories'" (Ko 176). A proper "Polish winter" in Silesia − a relatively warm region − it seen as a model landscape, expected and observed with satisfaction.

Whatever we say in an alien place, writes Waldenfels, we respond to otherness, because otherness is the principal cause that calls us to "speak", and speaking vis-à-vis otherness means using the code of one's own culture as a form of speech that is already impure, permeated with the call of the alien.[962] Such a story "opposes" ethnic, religious, and political

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[961] J. Pluta, *Konie przejadają Polskę. Opowiadania i opowiastki*, Wrocław 1974, p. 83.

[962] B. Waldenfels, op. cit., pp. 50, 80. Tadeusz Sławek explains the relation between the cultural code (language) that a thinking and acting individual uses to express himself/herself and signs of

"purity".[963] This process of expanding cultural narratives of space to in-clude an alien past, which applies not only to Wrocław, started as early as the 1970s, but it was not until ca. 1989 that it led to the emergence of the popular geopoetics of the palimpsest, which can be seen as an attempt to fill the material, social and symbolic emptiness of the Western Territories, to link together their interrupted traditions, to negate the myth of 1945 as the beginning of history and, finally, to replace the attitude of cultural confrontation with all things German with one of discovering the past and recognizing it as one's own.[964] *Gawęda o spóźnionej miłości* is one of Różewicz's most famous works thematically linked to Lower Silesia. The chief motifs of the poem, "trace" and "journey", come together to form a story that is both autobiographical and fairytale-like, the description of a life path leading "through forests along the Warta and Pilica rivers / through Kraków, Gliwice, and Wrocław / through the seven mountains and seven rivers" (X 15). From under the stratum of the real emerge the Silesian Rzepiór, the Polish Mountain Spirit, and the German Rübezahl − the same figure in three different cultures and languages. The legendary demon of the Giant Mountains, or the Karkonosze, "visits" Karpacz, or Krummhübel, in *Gawęda*. This stratification of cultural traces is set against the foil of the vertical organization of space in a poem that is a declaration

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space: "A place is not only a silence waiting for words (space is not a container for our gestures); space is also these words, the language left at man's disposal. Space is not only silent, but can speak. Not only is there a geography of grammar, but also a grammar of geography. To live and act in a place means to think in the language of the place (a geography of grammar), but also with the language of the place (a grammar of geography)". T. Sławek, *Między literami. Szkice o poezji konkretnej*, Wrocław 1989, p. 89.

[963] B. Waldenfels, op. cit., p. 70.

[964] This palimpsest as a metaphor for discovering erased Germanness was a reversal of the meaning of palimpsest as the overcoming of Germanness present in earlier literature, e.g. in *Wrocławskie Przedwiośnie* (1946), a sketch by Anna Kowalska in which the author notes with satisfaction that "the residents of Wrocław are slowly placing on the German city a new card of Polishness, which is legible to them". A. Kowalska, *Opowieści wrocławskie*, Warszawa 1995. See M. Zybura, op. cit., p. 225.

of love for the Karkonosze and expresses fascination with the mountineer Wanda Rutkiewicz by someone who "scaled only the 'Dog Hill' / near Radomsko (25 metres tall) in his childhood", and a growing biographical myth in which the flooding of Wrocław is taking on the characteristics of the biblical flood. This mythologization of the great flood is not unique in the region's literature, because the defence of the city against flooding in 1997 "became one of the monuments [sites of memory − WB] of the local identity".[965] Narratively and symbolically, Różewicz's work ends in the Museum of Toys in Karpacz, which originated from the collection of Henryk Tomaszewski, with the last image altering the perspective of the poem by reducing human "climbing" to the scale of a doll's house. *Gawęda o spóźnionej miłości*, adds Artur Nowaczewski, "is a poem about human ambition, its limits, and the journey one has to take to regain inner peace and harmony".[966] This text also transposes the question of the cultural identity of a resident of the "Regained Territories" from the perspective of Big History, which takes its main protagonists "through / fire air war" to that of a small biographical narrative.

Gawęda o spóźnionej miłości is not Różewicz's first text addressing the theme of the Karkonosze. The landscape along the "road to Szklarska" in *Opowiadania dydaktyczne* (1971) features snow-covered mountains, spruce trees, and a rocky stream. This postcard view clashes with the image of a devastated mountainous area and its overpopulation, and sparks the narrator's argument juxtaposing the purity of nature with the "dirt-

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[965] M. Łaska, op. cit., pp. 22–23. Likewise, Jacek Pluta notes: "The experience of the Great Flood is currently the central element of the self-stereotype of the residents, both on symbolic and bond-forming levels". J. Pluta, op. cit, p. 257.

[966] A. Nowaczewski, *Wokół Gawędy o spóźnionej miłości*, in: *Ewangelia odrzuconego. Szkice w 90. rocznicę urodzin Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 410. Nowaczewski's argument that "in Polish poetry, it was not until Różewicz and his work that the region of the Karkonosze Mountains was utilized" is debatable (see e.g. J. Kolbuszewski, *Krajobraz i kultura. Sudety w literaturze i kulturze polskiej*, Katowice 1985).

ish" man, betraying a regressive and morally suspect desire for a nature "pure like a tear", ideal, therefore inhuman, and, at the same time, displaying ironic detachment from this desire. The contrast between the leisure-inspired, utilitarian approach to the mountains and their romantic image as a sanctuary of untainted nature was typical of the Polish literature of the 1950s and 1960s – a time when mass tourism, skiing, and package holidays were emerging, encouraging the perception of the mountains as a "funfair", promenade or ski run.[967] The poem *Wodospad* (*Waterfall*), published in 1950 in "Wieś" weekly with the title *Wodospad Szklarski* (*Szklarski Falls*)[968] contains no sign of this perception of space yet. The pure nature of the mountains has not yet been desecrated by human presence. On the contrary, the image conjures the impression of human absence implied by the simile "stones are lying / in the patches of sunlight / like abandoned / black tables" (VII 286). This sanctuary of nature is not so much pure as deserted, because no one can feel and name its purity (Różewicz describes a deserted town which did not even have a new name in the account of his 1948 expedition in Wolin included in a reportage I mentioned earlier). If one ignores the philosophical and ethical meaning of this poem, linked with Różewicz's idea of challenging anthropocentric illusions such as the myth of nature's innocence, one can assume it is a record of a sensation characteristic of the former German territories, especially the Sudetenland, which still, years after the war, felt as if they had been abandoned by humans. In fact, this imagined landscape is a recurring motif in the literature of the Western Territories, including in Henryk Worcell's short stories collected in *Najtrudniejszy język*

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[967] See J. Kolbuszewski, op. cit., pp. 181–182.

[968] T. Różewicz, *Wodospad Szklarski*, "Wieś" 1950, no. 26, 2 July 1950. Jacek Kolbuszewski contrasts this poem with the trend towards ideological interpretation and mythologization of the space of "Regained Territories", characteristic of the post-war poetry dealing with Karkonosze. See J. Kolbuszewski, op. cit., p. 196.

świata (1965), which report that the former residents, Germans expelled from the Kłodzko County, left a silence and a "swollen void".[969] The topos of the Sudety Mountains as "no-man's land" and "empty space", "which were the cause for wars that changed languages, muddled the borders, welcomed newcomers, and then bid farewell to expellees" was used in the 1990s by Olga Tokarczuk.[970]

While adding further locations to the description of Różewicz's "life path", Tadeusz Drewnowski wrote that the poet, "after years of valuable studies and friendships in Kraków, after a tough, hardworking and protracted spell in Gliwice, Silesia, moved to Wrocław in 1968. Welcomed by the city, he was slowly making himself at home there."[971] However, the feeling of being-at-home in Wrocław in those years was not yet obvious or automatic. It was still a problem, not so much social, given the remarkable openness of Wrocław's residents in the 1960s and 1970s allowed new residents to integrate relatively quickly, but cultural and biographical, related to the individual's sense of unrootedness in a city marked by strangeness, and in the whole region, inhabited by people who differed from one another in so many ways. Making oneself at home in a place like this required the individual to adopt an active attitude as well as working out a relationship between his/her life, imagination, the material environment, and history. To participate in the symbolic-cultural space of post-war Wrocław, wrote Tadeusz Sławek, "does not mean dissolving into the world, but organizing [*zagospodarowanie*] it, [...] it does not involve faithfulness to a chronological temporal continuity, but a reconstruction of history, a starting afresh,

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[969]   H. Worcell, *Najtrudniejszy język świata*, Katowice 1965, pp. 130, 132.

[970]   O. Tokarczuk, *Dwanaście obrazków z Wałbrzycha, Nowej Rudy i okolic.1996*, in: O. Tokarczuk, *Moment niedźwiedzia*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 148–149.

[971]   T. Drewnowski, *Walka o oddech – bio-poetyka. O pisarstwie Tadeusza Różewicza*, op. cit., p. 309.

a reconnecting of elements of time";[972] it is the designing, as Dróżdż has it, of a being-"at-home" that, while placing the individual amid real signs, does not subordinate his/her experience to the social codes of time and place.[973] Just like Wrocław's neo-avant-gardists and conceptualists, Różewicz did not succumb to the mythical or ideological narratives of the "Regained Territories", seeking in their special space, culture, and history a *modus vivendi* in accordance with his own biographical and artistic sensibility.[974]

Shortly after the move, in his correspondence to Mayewski, the poet wrote: "learning to walk once again, from scratch" (Ma 194). Although in this letter – his first sent from Wrocław – Różewicz admitted specifical-

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[972] Ibid., p. 91: "The city that demands such an organizational [*zagospodarowanie*] effort from me is not the magnetic centre of my 'blind' attachment, I do not revisit the past to recreate it as it used to be (the city as the myth of youth, as nostalgia, as a return to the past; *vide* the fate of post-war Warsaw, rebuilt with in a meticulous fashion to reflect its pre-war form; an overpowering, engaging and elitist city in the sense that it creates characteristics which enable us to immediately identify a stranger), nor does such a city offer an experience of the past exactly as it was (*vide* Kraków with its cult of history and reluctance for innovation, as change is a threat to history). The place in question is a newly organized [*zagospodarowany*] space, an area that is new, but possessed of its own characteristics that I have to recognize; such a city distances me from itself, because I am a stranger in it, even while I feel enthusiastic about this place I keep my distance from it, which enables me to observe, to comment on my exaltation. I am too 'new' to be one with this place, and its history concerns me only indirectly; I can therefore create this place unhampered either by excessive attachment or historical reverence. I know not the (historical) 'content', as it were, of this place, but the current configuration of its form. I co-feel with this place, because I am not identical with it. I live in it, but the familiarity of a local resident is alien to me." Ibid., pp. 91–92.

[973] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Odprysk poezji. Stanisław Dróżdż mówi*, Kraków-Warszawa 2012, p. 89.

[974] The manifest emptiness in the space of ruined Wrocław was also being filled in an organized manner in the socialist period, e.g. through competitions for Wrocław poets, whose poems were to be displayed on the empty gable walls of buildings (*Wierzę, że wartości zostaną.* Zbigniew Gostomski in conversation with Lech Stangret, "Jednodniówka Muzeum Współczesnego we Wrocławiu", Wrocław 2 September 2011), and by painting murals on these walls, "creation of which was determined by a 'lack' rather than development or progress". M. Palka, *Pamięć na ścianach. Wrocławskie murale w obiektywie Bogdana Konopki*, "Pamięć i Przyszłość" 2012, no. 2, p. 77.

ly to problems with writing,[975] "learning to walk" could also, figuratively, mean a life change, a turning point forcing him to reinvent himself as a writer and person, but also a return to childhood – the time of domestic order and familial fullness. This return did not mean negating the existential and historical experiences that formed the starting point for his first "learning to walk" after the war. Rather, just the opposite, it heralded another attempt at transforming them into a literary whole, thematic and biographical.[976] If we assume that this project is outlined further on in the same letter (and in the letters that followed), it means it is an (auto) biographical idea, focused on the memory of the place of origin and the people closest [to the writer], and also, indirectly, an interrogation of his own identity touching on the foundations of his worldview and way of writing.

Różewicz used the metaphor of re-learning to walk and speak in the self-referential sketch *W drodze*, where he used characteristic signatures ("now... in 1985 [...], when I write these words") to mark the relationship between written text and the text of his biography, "re-written" elsewhere and at another time ("Wrocław – 1985"), but always referring to his bio-

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[975] One of the poems in the volume *Regio*, dated January 1968, sheds light on the relationship between the political events in Poland at that time and the writer's prostration mentioned in his letters to Mayewski and Nowosielski: "Will anything bad happen to me? nothing will happen to me // I will survive everything // how many times a modern man can lose his dignity // so / when the whole history / history with a lower-case h / ends / I'll get down to work / won't I? / I'll get down to work again" (IX 64).

[976] The metaphor of learning to walk as an adult can also be construed as yet another attempt to solve the fundamental, invariable problems of Różewicz's creative work, relevant in any new place. "My problems – I will recall the conversation between the writer and K. Braun here – do not take new forms, shapes, in a different place,... I don't suddenly explode with new content, I don't suddenly spread my wings... No. (I don't.) And this baggage, this weight... I carry it along. It isn't big. But it's rather heavy. I carry it, I haul it. And it's the same when I travel, change residence, stay in a foreign country. I myself find it a mystery. And I find it hard to talk about it. Maybe my work will solve this [problem] one day". K. Braun, T. Różewicz, *Języki teatru*, Op. cit., p. 187.

graphical beginning and literary debut (Ma 22-27). The same metaphor of re-learning to be oneself is present in *nauka chodzenia* (signed "Wrocław 2002-2004"): "start from the beginning / start again he would tell me / learn to walk / learn to write read / to think" (X 251). This wisdom-filled voice belongs to an Evangelical pastor born in Breslau, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pacifist and anti-fascist murdered weeks before the end of World War Two. His "theology of the death of God" rested on the conviction that, faced with the Shoah, Christian and humanist values were implemented outside the institutional Church and its traditional teaching, discredited by its members collaborating with the political system (*Deutsche Christen*) and its indifference to the death of followers of other religions and Christians of Jewish descent (Bonhoeffer's ethics of responsibility towards the "fellow man" inspired E. Lévinas, among others). Przemysław Dakowicz holds that:

> The most important question posed in the famous *Laty z więzienia*? [Bonhoeffer – WB], published after the war by Bethge, was the one about the place of Christ in the contemporary world. Directly linked with it was a reflection on the condition of man, who must live as if God did not exist.[977]

Bonhoeffer's religious imagination and poetics had one of its sources in the writings of Silesian mystics, e.g. their signature use of contradiction, paradox, and aporia.[978] In the poem *nauka chodzenia*,

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[977] P. Dakowicz, *Różewicz i Bonhoeffer. Na marginesie wiersza* Nauka chodzenia, "Topos" 2005, no. 5–6, p. 29: "An extremely important argument that leads Bonhoeffer to criticize religion as a human right was the attitude of Christians towards Hitlerism. The war exposed all the weaknesses of the church, which not was only incapable of resisting evil, but repeatedly supported the actions of the German state apparatus which were completely at odds with the spirit of the Gospel". Ibid., p. 41.

[978] Ibid., p. 43.

Bonhoeffer's ideas take the form of an obligation to live a mature, deliberate and dignified life, the precept of solidarity with fellow human beings, and the imperative to demonstrate a Christian attitude outside the Church and religion, outside religious discourse (the concept of non-religious Christianity).[979] Bonhoeffer appears as both a disciple of the departing Christ, and the teacher of Różewicz's "saved" one, the master who gives advice on how to conclude a poem: "delete the word 'beauty'". Therefore, the German clergyman becomes the patron saint of the passage from the "death of God" to the "death of poetry", and the ethical and artistic challenge undertaken by the Polish poet.[980] A more personal trace in *nauka chodzenia* is a reminiscence of his brother, who was executed by the Nazis shortly before the end of the occupation, and had been Tadeusz Różewicz's first teacher and master when he was a young man. The quote from Bonhoeffer's *Nächtliche Stimmen in Tegel*, however, gives the word "brother" a more general, communal meaning, referencing the German pastor's idea of human brotherhood. This is where the biographical meets the collective and historical. Just like the post-war loss of faith in humanity was the impulse for Różewicz's first "learning to walk", the need for a new "learning to walk" results, among

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[979] See D. Szczukowski, op. cit., p. 195.

[980] This "passage" is explained in detail by Andrzej Skrendo, who does not, however, hint at any links to Bonhoeffer's thought. See A. Skrendo, *Poezja po "śmierci Boga". Różewicz i Nietzsche*, in: *Nasz nauczyciel Tadeusz. Tadeusz Różewicz i Niemcy*, op. cit. Taking the example of the poem *Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland*, A. Ubertowska analyzes this motif in Różewicz's lyrical poetry in the context of Paul Celan's poetry and Martin Heidegger's philosophy. See A. Ubertowska, *Tadeusz Różewicz a literatura niemiecka*, op. cit., pp. 49–66. According to Ubertowska, "the conviction of the fundamental incongruity between the world of aesthetics and the domain of extreme existential experiences led" both poets to attempt to create a utopia of language as Heidegger's "house of being" in which "it would be possible again to communicate 'that which is the most human'". Ibid., pp. 52–53. The protagonist of this journey from speechlessness and uprooting ("we were lost for words // we travel and live / on the move / here and there") to the final bio-graphic whole ("I know I will die all") is Celan, "Antschel the Wandering / Jew" (IX 270–272).

other things, from another experience of fear, oppression, confusion and losing trust in those who had failed the moral test in 1968, and who did not show interpersonal solidarity to the victims of the ongoing hate campaign.

"Brotherhood" is also the final word in *Zamykanie i otwieranie*, an address in which Różewicz quotes the inscription carved into the plinth of the Wrocław monument to Frederick Schille: "Alle Menschen werden Brüder" (Ma 303). Unveiled in 1905 in Szczytnicki Park, the monument, destroyed after World War Two, was reconstructed in the 1990s through the efforts of the "Theatre on the Odra" Association for Polish-German Cultural Cooperation.[981] As signs in the urban space of Wrocław, the monuments to Bonhoeffer and Schiller preside over the image of a multi-cultural and multi-religious city open to a number of different traditions which, after 1989, came to dominate other visions and narratives of local identity.[982] It seems that *Zamykanie i otwieranie*, the address given to guests from Poland, Germany, and Hungary, who have no reason to feel like strangers in the capital of Silesia, refers to this new meta-narrative of the history and culture of Wrocław. This is because openness is the most prized value in Wrocław, whose most eminent cultural figures hail from elsewhere. It is, however, primarily a personal, autobiographical story merging the recent history of Polish culture and the "alien" city from the perspective of an individual, not a nod to the local stereotype. In *nauka chodzenia*, too, a specific Wrocław space is linked to historical and religious reflection through their inclusion in a poetic biography that makes the city the narrator's place of his own.

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[981] *Encyklopedia Wrocławia*, ed. J. Harasimowicz, Wrocław 2001, p. 658.

[982] See P. Kubicki, *Nowi mieszczanie w nowej Polsce*, Instytut Obywatelski, Warszawa 2011 (the report is available here: www.instytutobywatelski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Nowi-mieszczanie1.pdf, last accessed on 15 December 2012).

I chanced into Bonhoeffer in Wrocław

[...]

we sat in the shade of trees

in a tiny brewery next to St. Elizabeth's

Church

Bonhoeffer read to me

his poems written in Tegel (X 251-253)

The siting of the Bonhoeffer monument in the square adjacent to the Town Square, next to St. Elizabeth's Church, Breslau's main burghers' parish church, the former "Evangelical Cathedral of Silesia" (P. Dakowicz) taken over by the Catholic Church after the war, points to its conciliatory and intercultural significance, associated with the image of Wrocław as a "bridge", "passage" or "meeting place", a place of transit, open to others, incompatible with the dogma of spatial exclusivity and nativity".[983] Różewicz published *nauka chodzenia* in both the Catholic "Tygodnik Powszechny" and the Lutheran "Rocznik Diecezjalny", distributed by the Wrocław Diocese of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession. His intention was to "present the work to readers of the Augsburg confession".[984] Therefore, the figure of Bonhoeffer and the context of the poem's publication trigger the narrative of a city-palimpsest, with the earlier denomination emerging from under the prevalent, obvious Catholicism, and with the German tradition of theological exploration, great reforms, and religious turning points, which is closer to

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[983] The concept of Wrocław as a geographical and ideological "bridge" ties together Tadeusz Mikulski's 1940s historical-biographical sketches on literary contacts between Poland and Wrocław (T. Mikulski, *Spotkania wrocławskie*, Wrocław 1950), while the expanded metaphor of the city and region as a "road and gate" joining Poland and Europe appears in Zbigniew Zielonka's Silesian sketches published in the 1970s (Z. Zielonka, op. cit.).

[984] P. Dakowicz, op. cit., p. 30.

the writer's sensibility, making its presence felt alongside contemporary Polish ritual religiousness. One of the pillars of the Polonization of the Western Territories was institutional Catholicism and Polish church administration which, acting under provisional law, rather decisively took over the real estate and rights of the German Catholic Church.[985] It may be added that Catholic religious discourse and tradition were particularly associated with identity discourse in these territories and, as such, were a tool for their ideological Polonization and the creation of social ties in the diversified community of their inhabitants.[986]

The third monument important to Różewicz, tied to the ideological image of Wrocław at the time of his move there, was the statue of Pope John XXIII on Ostrów Tumski, unveiled in 1968.[987] In the poem *taki pomnik (Szara strefa)*, however, the "statue of the Good Pope" did

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[985] Cardinal August Hlond and apostolic administrators Bolesław Kominek and Karol Milik became especially involved in this process, personally and supported by the Communist authorities (including the army) forcing the German Catholic priests to resign from office and leave the territories occupied by Polish state administration. See T. Urban, op. cit., pp. 146–150.

[986] See G. Thum, op. cit., pp. 82–92, 243–246. "The Polish myth of the Piasts", explains Wojciech Kunicki, "did two things at once: it gave historical legitimacy to the "recovery" of these territories and provided a propagandistic bridge of consensus with the Catholic church, which, after all, unreservedly supported the state authorities in the unimaginably brutal process of expelling the German population and the Polonization" of Silesia. W. Kunicki, *Śląsk. Rzeczywistości wyobrażone*, in: *Śląsk. Rzeczywistości wyobrażone*, op. cit., p. 72. Władysław J. Grabski, scholarly advisor to the Polish Ministry of Recovered Territories, stated: "The Polishness of the Regained Territories is inextricably linked to Catholicism". Qtd in: G. Strauchold, *Autochtoni polscy, niemieccy czy... Od nacjonalizmu do komunizmu (1945–1949)*, op. cit., pp. 78–79. M. Zybura identifies Z. Hierowski and Z. Bednorz, among others, as the creators of the "cultural programme of taking control" of the Western Territories, which also involved their "spiritual Polonization", making them Polish by "inculcating Catholicism" (on territories that had been predominantly inhabited by Lutherans). M. Zybura, op. cit., p. 16. The link between "religious and identity discourse" in post-war Wrocław is also discussed by E.K. Dzikowska (op. cit.). This can be also said about all "Regained Territories", where Catholicism was treated as a social glue in communities at a point when other social ties were only emerging and were too weak to integrate people from various parts of the country. See J. Lipiński, *Kościół w awangardzie polskości na Ziemiach Odzyskanych*, "Odra" 1946, no. 13.

[987] *Encyklopedia Wrocławia*, op. cit., p. 661.

not belong to the contemporaneous code of meaningful city space, as it had been "put up by a suspect Pax or / some other Caritas affiliated with the Party" (X 146-148).[988] This "abandoned", politically "off-message" monument, which was ignored by municipal and ecclesiastical authorities, is described by Różewicz as "a figure excluded from the commonly accepted religious paradigm, but this is precisely why the speaker of the poem, locating himself on the periphery of official religiosity, recognizes the Pope as his patron saint.[989] In *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach*, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, as Pope John XXIII, has already been presented as the patron saint of a church with a social conscience, engaging in ecumenical dialogue with followers of other religions, tolerating non-believers and doubters. However, making John XXIII the contemporary spiritual patron saint of the citizens of Wrocław is controversial − not only because John Paul II remains the only Pope universally worshipped in Poland, but also because John XXIII's comment, taken out of context, on "Wrocław in western lands recovered after centuries" legitimized the historical policy of the government of the People's Republic of Poland with regard to former German territories.[990] However, Różewicz's poem is not a political reckoning with the past, but a reflection on the rift between collective and personal memory, the disparity between the individual sense of merit and what is currently treated as monumental, worthy to be immortalized in granite and used during publicly celebrated anniversaries. This monument is a place of remembrance "abandoned" by people, although located at a site of paramount importance for the history of the city, a place turned into a non-place (Marc Augé), as the exchange of meanings of urban spaces is under way everywhere all the time, and, as it goes

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[988] An explication of this poem was proposed by Wojciech Kudyba in his sketch *Różewicz pisze odę dla papieża*, "Topos" 2005, no. 5–6.

[989] D. Szczukowski, op. cit., p. 194.

[990] Qtd in G. Thum, op. cit., p. 346.

on, the identity based on location is challenged, proves discontinuous, literally unfounded.[991] In the sketch *Poczytajcie Prusa, zanim mu pomnik postawicie...*, published in "Odra" in 1973, Różewicz wrote that it was much easier to erect a statue than to deal with its inconvenient existence thereafter (Ma 105). Other questionable statues, in his view, were those of Kafka and Staff. The writer's critique of commemorative rituals not only reflects his unorthodox perspective on history and is a symptom of his detachment from the relevant social expedients, but also stems from his sense of being short-changed by the absolutized faiths and ideologies that left a mark on his biography.

John XXIII appears in *Notatka z 31 maja 1963 roku (Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego)* and then in *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* as the "first Great Man I saw with my own eyes" (II 181), and, episodically, in a speech given at the University of Warwick in 1990 (Ma 283). These texts overlap with the writer's (auto-)biography as the first features the Pope seen "with [the writer's] own eyes" in 1960, the third addresses Różewicz's generational experience, while the account of creating the second is woven into personal correspondence with the Nowosielski couple. From a number of letters that followed, it appears that *Śmierć* was Różewicz's first major work written in Wrocław following his temporary writing block: "What is more, I'm starting to move on with my work, but it's bloody tough going... I've got it off the ground, though" (Ko 79).

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[991] "The identity-forming belief in the effectiveness of localization", writes Kunce about the experience of (not-)feeling-at-home in Gliwice, "usually collapses suddenly". In fact, there are dislocating tendencies in the location itself. It turns out that the reference points one used to trust are displaced and not so reliable. This is when empty spaces, shifting fields, vibrating elements, and cracks are revealed [...] the very absence of certain determinants of the self is revealed. Absence reveals itself in the remnants of presence through conjectures, revocations, destructions, erasures. This prompts the conclusion that all permanent locations are common knowledge that has distinctly frayed and has no clear reference, where nothing is legitimate, and the chaotic movement of events merely heralds the coming of an indefinite future order." A. Kunce, Z. Kadłubek, op. cit., pp. 166–167.

A few years later, the poet wrote a letter to the Nowosielski couple signing it "Thaddaeus + Jude (of lost causes)". (Ko 186), referring to himself in a similar way as in the poem *jest taki pomnik*: "Bless me / Thaddaeus Jude of Radomsko / of whom they say / he is an 'atheist'". (X 148). The letter of 14 April 1973 was sent very close to the tenth anniversary of the encyclical *Pacem in terris*, the title of which is inscribed on the plinth of the Wrocław statue (April, the month of the anniversary and of national memory in the People's Republic of Poland, is the only reference to time in Różewicz's poem). Perhaps the alias of Thaddaeus Jude does not only mean "a deep spiritual union with the Holy Father", as proposed by Wojciech Kudyba, but is also an allusion to the ancestry of the apostle of Christ, the disciple with a Hebrew name, a clue pointing to the writer's Polish-Jewish origin and his history-steeped biography.

Commenting on the Wrocław period of Różewicz's life and work, Tadeusz Drewnowski suggests that the writer "did not retain a particular attachment to his hometown", and recognized the capital of Silesia as his place. This contention is certainly debatable. During a conversation in 2009 with the then-mayor of Wrocław, Rafał Dutkiewicz, the topic of magical places cropped up, and the writer said that Radomsko rather than Wrocław was his magical town. "What is in fact magical is the city, town, village or, for that matter, any place where one was born. It is where his or her life started [...]. This place is truly magical".[992] The author of *Unease* even compared Radomsko to the navel that "connects the foetus to life", defining its attitude towards his hometown in terms of biography, not mythography. Notable from this perspective on Różewicz's geopoetics are two poetry books published in the 1990s, harking back to the tradition of the old Polish genre of silva rerum, *Nasz starszy brat* and

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[992] *Wiersz szuka domu*, Rafał Dutkiewicz in conversation with Tadeusz Różewicz, "Tygodnik Powszechny" 2009, no. 39, p. 56.

Mother Departs – the most extensive and intimate narratives of autobiographical places in his oeuvre.[993]

Nasz starszy brat includes a copy of Janusz Różewicz's dedication in the volume of Leopold Staff's poems he presented to his brother in which Słowacki, Schiller, and Rimbaud are referred to as "immortal", but not Tadeusz (N 248). This note of 1941, suggesting literary patrons for the younger poet, does not seem to belong to its time, but rather to the 1990s – the decade of European reconciliation and the healing of post-war rifts on the continent, and the changes symbolized by *Ode to Joy*. Janusz Różewicz's poem *List z Wrocławia do Sally*, signed "Radomsko 1940" (N 14), is also recontextualized. In its personal image of a son missing his mother and a fascination for a Romantic poet, the titular city takes on a new meaning. His Wrocław is not only a foreign stopover city ("sunny loneliness in a Wrocław hotel"), or the part of German territory where Janusz found himself as an intelligence officer of the Home Army (N 220), but a Polish city whose Polishness is not obvious, and, as such, requires constant upholding, completing, and proving.

An episode in Słowacki's biography, the Wrocław meeting with his mother, Salomea Bécu, which had previously been nothing but a literary curiosity and lyrical topos, became, in the years immediately following 1945, a part of the narrative of the local identity of Wrocław residents,and was created and disseminated by writers, school teachers of Polish as well as historians of Polish literature. Early on, a tendency

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[993] "An autobiographical site", writes Małgorzata Czermińska, "can only arise when the writer creates an image of an important portion of physical space, a description of it, a set of references and allusions, if he builds a literary construct that becomes a cultural equivalent, a verbal symbolization of that portion of space." Czermińska adds that to decode the image of an autobiographical site one needs a hypothesis embracing the author's whole body of work and the presence of traces of the narrator-agent. M. Czermińska, *Kategoria miejsca autobiograficznego w literaturze doby migracji*, in: *Narracje migracyjne w literaturze polskiej XX i XXI wieku*, op. cit., pp. 43–44.

appeared, already present in Tadeusz Mikulski's sketches, to strengthen
Wrocław residents' feeling of being-at-home through biographical mi-
cro-narratives alongside great meta-history. This form of taming the city
is evident in a memorial plaque, mounted on the 150th anniversary of
Słowacki's birthday in 1959, on the wall of one of the buildings in the
Kościuszko Socialist Realist Residential District, which was erected at the
site of the former hotel where Słowacki stayed. Engraved on the plaque
are Słowacki's words: "I am in Wrocław – and I want Sally (if possible)
to come here... Juliusz Słowacki", and the signature "Wrocław, 2 June
1848". This inscription not only points to the role of the national liter-
ary legend in the Polonization process but, by appealing to emotions
and invoking fundamental values, highlights the relationship between
the bard's personal life and this specific place. At the end of the 1960s,
a public discussion began in Wrocław regarding the proposed erection
of a statue to Juliusz Słowacki in the park named after the poet and, at
the start of the following decade, the Wrocław Lovers Association began
raising funds for the monument. Before the statue (made in Gliwice and
shipped down the Odra River) was unveiled, the committee for its erec-
tion issued a statement underlining the Romantic poet's links with the
city, their significance for cultural tradition, and the fact that Słowacki's
manuscripts and first editions of his writings were kept in the Ossoline-
um which, because of these holdings, was "treated by Słowacki experts as
a Słowacki House" (Bernard Januszewski).[994] This context is appropriated
by Janusz Różewicz in his texts which appeared for the first time or were
re-published in the collection *Nasz starszy brat*. When read in the 1990s
in Wrocław, not only were they part of the city's cultural achievements,

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[994] See Z. Antkowiak, *Juliusz Słowacki we wrocławskim krajobrazie,* "KalendarzWrocławski", 1985,
p. 168. The statue was unveiled by Jan Dobraczyński on 6 May, "on the 39th anniversary of the
fall of the Nazi-controlled 'Festung Breslau' and the return of Wrocław to the motherland".
Ibid., p. 175.

but they contributed another micro-narrative to one of its founding narratives. Similarly recontextualized – from the vantage point of a different time and place – are texts in *Mother Departs*.

Nasz starszy brat, edited by Tadeusz Różewicz, brings together texts by several different authors, but also contains the writer's poems and memoir sketch *Tylko tyle*. *Tylko tyle* includes a biographical signature which spells out the location of the narrator-agent in time and space, and the transmitter's perspective for the whole book: "I currently live in Wrocław and I'm 71 years old" (N 144). The very first sentences of the poetry book *Mother Departs* set up the textual and biographical situation in the same manner: "Now that I am writing these words [...] it is 1999..." (M 7-8). *Nasz starszy brat* and *Mother Departs* are retrospective self-narratives which attempt to build a whole that had been "disturbed" after the deaths of his brother and mother (N 144). These two books overlap both biographically and textually, as Różewicz included a number of the same texts in both which stand in an intertextual relationship with earlier editions, as some of the texts had already been published in his other books. The sentence "Now that I am writing these words..." recurs in *Mother Departs* four more times – the last time in the sketch *Do poprawki*. It is almost as if Różewicz wanted to say that this was not only the "examination of conscience" of an old man and writer, his *summa vitae* (summary of life), but also a narration of individual identity as an artefact, a literary construct, a constantly present and revised text in the poet's writing. These revisions are made by a writer who does not trust literature, does not hide the discontinuities and ambiguities of description (including historical description), referencing as much the world as the writing itself, the past and "now". If the narrator begins his story in the first person and present tense, as is the case with the sketches referred to above, the sentence "Now as I am writing..." is its only plausible beginning.

In *Nasz starszy brat* and *Mother Departs*, an exchange takes place between the intimate and the individual on the one hand, and, on the other, the public.[995] This is also the compositional idea of *Tylko tyle*, because the narrator of the sketch simultaneously writes a reminiscence of the outbreak of World War Two and a letter of sorts to his deceased brother, presenting him as both a person closest to the writer and a war-generation poet, a peer of Krzysztof Baczyński. The narrator of *Teraz*, the opening sketch in the second book, describes his life and comes to terms with history, feeling his mother's gaze on himself. On the one hand, the accounts of their deaths are both referential and extremely somatic, and are therefore, argues German Ritz, detached from the cultural and historical determinations. On the other, both highlight the corporal fragility of their protagonists, who are particularly vulnerable to the physical and ideological oppression of Nazism and anti-Semitism. Yet Różewicz eschews mythologizing. He accentuates the austere form of Janusz's writing exercises, the non-literary nature of the memories of his comrades-in-arms, and the open-ended composition of the book that grew in length with successive editions.

He creates the image of his brother first and foremost as a family void, a personal feeling of loss and loneliness, a specific interrupted biography not only as the next incarnation of a tortured and murdered underground fighter. He also separates the figure of mother from the "cultural determination of alleged Jewish ancestry", because "Jewish identity in the 20th century can never be seen as a purely private fate, it is always a part of the Holocaust, and would prevent any secondary determination on the part of the son".[996]

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[995] G. Ritz, *Początek lektury psychopoetyckiej*, in: *"Matka odchodzi" Tadeusza Różewicza*, eds I. Iwasiów, J. Madejski, Szczecin 2002, p. 132.

[996] Ibid., p. 135.

The purpose of this re-description of the fate of his loved ones is Różewicz's hallmark reconstruction of oneself, of his own world, which has been built for decades, but is constantly turning to nothing, "collapsing under the rubble of houses hospitals and temples," and together with it "man and God dies" (M 10). Only as the text's editor or "reviser", can the self of these books free itself from these determinations in order to, once again, at "death's door", negotiate the relationship between the private and the public. One could say that in this autobiographical revision, such principal narratives converge as the narrative of a poet after the death of poetry, the narrative of the individual's identity after the collapse of the notion of subject, the narrative of a survivor overwhelmed by the memory of the Holocaust, and, finally, the narrative of not-feeling-at-home in a "ravaged" world. "Autobiographical speech" (G. Ritz) is the only language able to reconcile: private life and historical experience; the role of the story-telling self and the role of the told; temporariness and fragmentation, on the one hand, and the desire for a whole, on the other. Hence, *Nasz starszy brat* and *Mother Departs* argue that it is impossible to feel at home in a "ravaged" world through myth, ideological utopia, or historical narrative. It can only be achieved through biographical story in which only the symbols and collective identity can be exchanged for a sense of agency and individuality. These books can be read as a fulfilment of the "learning to walk" outlined in 1968 in a letter to Mayewski.

Topobiography

Even though Radomsko occupies an important place in Różewicz's personal memory and prose, the writer was sceptical about the mythology of hometown and native region. If landscapes of childhood find their way into his texts, they are more often linked to biography than myth, with the memory of a family home associated with a specific existential or somatic experience rather than an unreal, Arcadian image of the past.

The scenes of homecoming to one's small town, which abound in his prose, are embedded in narratives which speak of of the irreversibility of contemporary uprooting. The individual's memory of his/her family home does not turn into a regressive utopia which could balance out the sense of feeling out of place in the world. One source of this sense is the biography of the Różewicz man, who carries in his memory the occupation-era "lesson in closed space" (M. Głowiński) and the post-war loss of one's own place, migration, experience of alienation and social disintegration, and, finally, the symbolic emptiness of the Western Territories. This radical abandonment of a tamed landscape and opening it up to an alien space which was only just becoming a part of the state and the nation's land did not result in an immediate shift of the writer's topographical imagination. The barge cabin in the reportage *Most płynie do Szczecina* still evoked associations with a partisan *zemlyanka*, while a post-1968 Wrocław street reminded the poet of the occupation-era danger of torture and death. Nevertheless, Różewicz's 1940s reportages already prove that in his geopoetics at the time, space was perceived as a challenge, both cognitive and civilizational, casting his protagonists in the role of pioneers and participants of momentous historical changes. This narrative was largely subordinated to the paradigmatic story of the "Regained Territories", not only concerning the German territories in the north and west that had been incorporated into Poland but, equally importantly, pushing the problem of the territories lost in the east out of public discourse. This also included organizing the collective metahistorical imagination, including the "Piast" past of the areas along the Odra River, the new beginning of their history in 1945, and the future as an ideological and cultural project of the community of the Western Territories'. While the past and future are practically off the table in Różewicz's reportages in that their vision governed by the doctrine dictating the way of writing about the "Regained Territories", the present is most open

to individual doubts and observations, because it involves the quotidian, the visual, the concrete, and the individual. Between the nationalistic idea of the Piast past and communist social engineering, Różewicz found room for an ambiguous quotidian vision of the past of the Odra lands, far from idealized, with its inhabitants condemned to a sense of temporariness, brainwashed by propagandist promises, living in ruins, social disintegration, and a peripheral position vis-à-vis the metropolis. These observations from the 1940s, although they do not undermine the mythology of the Western Territories, they herald its exhaustion and, in a more general perspective, point to the failed attempt to develop a sense of feeling-at-home, the crisis of inhabitation seen as a genuine connection of the individual with his/her place and other people, exposing its modern "openness", existential uncertainty, and the alienation from the vision of the world embedded in culture and ethics.

In Różewicz's early reportages, this diagnosis is framed in the context of collective identity narratives invoking the idea of progress and grand social projects linked to urbanization, industrialization, and planned economy. The key metaphors of these narratives, the images of a crucible and retort, not only expressed a fascination with technological development, but also heralded the arrival of a historical turning point during which industrial transformation was taking place alongside a social and cultural revolution.

The ideas of social and civilizational progress were fused in the topos of glass houses, particularly popular in Polish journalism and socially engaged literature after 1944. This vision of rebuilding human relations and improving material well-being was based on the utopia of modern architecture and urban planning which promised to satisfy mass housing needs with the aid of new technological solutions and planned economy. Its ideological thrust was directed, among other things, at pre-war social relations which, vis-à-vis the vision of glass houses, ap-

peared inhumane and anachronistic. Even though Różewicz approvingly invoked Żeromski's vision, he had already exposed its utopian nature in his reportage *Most płynie do Szczecina*. Without calling into question collective work and civilizational progress as overriding values, the writer recognized the post-war "ruins" not only as an economic, technical and organizational problem, but also as a spiritual one, related to the moral and mental ravaging suffered by the individual. From this standpoint, "reconstruction" had to be defined – as Różewicz notes in his sketch *Do źródeł* – as intellectual and educational work, too, which aims to reconstruct the consciousness of cultured man. At the same time, the cultural policy of the state gave this notion a peculiar meaning, instrumentally subordinating culture and education to the creation of a collective ideological identity. One of its principal components was the authoritarian project of building a homogeneous society and nation emerging as a result of post-war political, nationalist and territorial changes. The whole country was to be subject to these changes, but the ruined or deserted cities and towns were especially suited to playing the role of the melting pot of a new society, as their social and symbolic emptiness could quickly be filled with ideological content and doctored national tradition. While generally sympathetic to these changes, Różewicz noted their unsettling effects. The serial mass construction in the People's Republic of Poland barely met basic housing needs, failing to make individuals feel more at home in their own place or strengthen their sense of belonging to the local or regional community. The development of this sense was hampered by the national identity being built after 1945, underpinned by the nationalist concept of a centralized ethno-cultural state striving to erase any regional differences and Polonize ethnic minorities. In effect, the meanings of local geopoetics that were at odds with the national identification and meta-history were excluded from the public discourse of the People's Republic of Poland. This conflict was most apparent in

the former German territories which retained so many material traces of another civilization that the Polonization myths could not compensate for the sense of alienation of their new residents from their surrounding space. Różewicz's 1950s and 1960s texts, whose protagonists have the opportunity to return to their birthplace, or to come to feel at home in a [new] reality through memory and national culture, or to escape into privacy, correspond to this situation. However, their choice comes down to choosing a more tolerable illusion, as all of these solutions prove to be unrealistic or ineffective. One can "inhabit" neither an ideology nor the past, while family life and nature could perhaps provide shelter if the Różewicz man was not internally ravaged. The civilizational metaphors of the melting pot and glass houses, promising a modern and comfortable living space to a multitude of new inhabitants turn out, in Różewicz's writing, to be part of the ambiguous image of the world whose irreducible poles are, on one hand, urban anonymity and individualism, which offer the chance to liberate the individual from his/her naturalized social identities, and, on the other, the discomfort of the "anthill", against which house walls and windows afford no protection.

As a migrating individual, or one already settled but poorly bonded with his place of residence and community, Różewicz's protagonist, who quests for a lost "mental home", has no choice but to indulge in myths or uphold his biographical identity. If the myths were grand trans-regional political or historical ones, to embrace them meant coming to live in an illusory world divorced from everyday material reality which, particularly in the Western Territories, was out of step with the ideological formulas of Polishness, familiarity, and "promised land". If, on the other hand, these were local narratives of the collective identity of the residents of Gliwice or Wrocław, built, for example, upon the myth of (Polish) Silesianness or Lwów character transferred from the east, they offered their post-war residents a sense of feeling-at-home that was temporary and

dubious, based on ignoring the actual history and cultural heritage of these cities. Over time, however, the chances of their becoming domesticated on an individual basis increased. As a matter of fact, the personal memory of the migrants and expellees mostly stored negative and typical experiences, related to repression, loss of homes and native land, interrupted traditions, alienation and loneliness in new environments but, at the same time, guaranteed the distinctiveness of all the individual stories of growing roots into places of one's own. This opportunity to become rooted no longer involved subsuming a number of different biographical stories under an overarching national or civilizational vision, but establishing a link between on-the-spot existence, signs in the local space, and the past that had left material traces on it. Only the story of oneself and one's loved ones could be a narrative genuinely uniting personal and family experience, historical awareness, cultural tradition, and the signs in the individual's material living environment.

As Waldenfels notes, the alien and the own "can only be defined occasionally, starting from the place pertaining to the speaker and the actor".[997] In order for the story of a migrant or resident of an alien place still marked with the stigma of someone else's history to become the glue binding together his non-contingent identity based on the relationship with both the lost space and its geopoetics and with the settled place and its symbolic universe, it must be reworked, and framed from the perspective of the new location. This act of retelling one's own story is the context of many of Różewicz's late works, with the writer, through numerous edits of his "autobiography", seeking to link together the collective history, the myth of birthplace, and the description of his individual life journey. Even though this topobiographical whole never proved to be unattainable, speaking from Gliwice and Wrocław, from the perspec-

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[997] B. Waldenfels, op. cit., p. 79.

tive of their difference, changed its geopoetics. In his first texts about the Western Territories, Różewicz clearly distinguished between alien place and own place, seeking familiar parallels or opposition to the former, but, with time, the boundary between the two became blurred so that his idea of feeling-at-home acquired a new meaning. A place is the mental home of an individual if his cultural identity corresponds with his spatial identity, whereas otherness is located outside of both the place and the unified identification. Różewicz's protagonists find traces of non-identity and otherness not only in (the signs of) their living space, which is constantly being symbolically deserted and re-written, but also in their existence, with their cultural consciousness marked by discontinuity and palimpsest-like impurity. Only by responding to the challenge of this ambiguity and otherness is it possible to speak plausibly about oneself and one's own place in the world. What is more, the ambiguity and otherness call on the Różewicz modern man to keep on revising his autobiographical identity-story, complementing the already domesticated with that which comes up as alien.

6. Biographical Identity
And Signature

S everal hypotheses have been posited as to the identity of the self in Tadeusz Różewicz's texts.[998] Andrzej Skrendo divides them into two categories. "The common denominator of the first set of opinions", argues Skrendo, "is a recognition of the agent's disintegration, [while] the second group is united by the conviction that Różewicz himself features in his poems as it were, thus giving them coherence and uniformity".[999] Simply put, Różewicz's self is defined either textually or empirically and personally. If Skrendo's distinction is only a proposal of how to organize literary descriptions, the case can be considered closed. However, if one assumes that the textual character of the self does not rule out an (auto-)biographical identity, the agency in Różewicz's works remains problematic.

Signature and identity

In order to discuss the identity of the textual self, Skrendo puts forth a deconstructive theory of signature, which legitimizes the narrator-agent

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[998]   The concepts of the identity of the self in Tadeusz Różewicz's texts are discussed by A. Skrendo in his book *Tadeusz Różewicz i granice literatury. Poetyka i etyka transgresji*, op. cit.

[999]   Ibid., p. 290. One of the most interesting studies in the first category is T. Kunz's book *Strategie negatywne w poezji Tadeusza Różewicza. Od poetyki tekstu do poetyki lektury*, op. cit.

in the text by means of the author's signature, a textualized trace of his/her existence.[1000]

> In a signature and through a signature, the person reveals his/her peculiar borderline textual-empirical nature. S/he appears as a textualized body rather than a *cogito*. However, body narratives cannot be united, because a body is a multiplicity and mutability, the subject of continuous appropriation and the object of expropriation.[1001]

Skrendo does not deny the presence of self-descriptions in Różewicz's work, but rejects their simple extratextual reference. He does not accept that the agent has an *a priori* personal identity. Instead, he identifies "a variable distance between the text and the author as its effect, which is not fully textual, as it is constantly transcending the text towards the

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[1000] See. A. Skrendo, *Sygnatura Tadeusza Różewicza. Dwie interpretacje ze wstępem i postcriptum*, in: *Osoba w literaturze i komunikacji literackiej*, op. cit. The role of signature in the lyrical autobiography of 20th-century poets, including Tadeusz Różewicz, is also discussed by Małgorzata Łukaszuk-Piekara in her book *Wizje splątane z historiami. Autobiografia liryczna poety*, Lublin 2000. Łukaszuk-Piekara believes that the presence of a textual signature represents a literary strategy, the result of "the author's telling decision to thematize life vicissitudes", while emphasizing that the self signalled in the text with the poet's name is ambiguous. "It would be a construction of the self in which the self exists in two different ways at the same time, as true and as invented, as empirical and as textual, as authentic and as fictional-poetic or fictional-novelistic. It follows from her argument that the autobiographical self is "the thematic object of an account that on the one hand aims for spontaneous sincerity and on the other for a professional metapoetic provocation and manipulation of the biography. Signature as a literary identity sign is investigated by Andrzej Stoff in his article *Ja, autor. O funkcjach sygnatur w literaturze współczesnej*, in: *Ja, autor. Sytuacja podmiotu w polskiej literaturze współczesnej*, ed. D. Śnieżko, Warszawa 1996. Stoff sees the signature, in particular "the author's name in autobiographical practices", as a gesture of "speaking out on behalf of the literally, personally concretely understood subjectivity of literature. A gesture like this stems from a disagreement to the absolutization of literary character which in extreme cases has been considered as all-encompassing intertextuality". Ibid., p. 72.

[1001] A. Skrendo, *Tadeusz Różewicz i granice literatury. Poetyka i etyka transgresji*, op. cit., pp. 302–303. Skrendo reminds us that in Derrida's understanding, signature also accommodates the writer's idiom and date, but further on he uses it as reference to a proper text. Ibid., p. 282.

empirical".[1002] Skrendo's analysis suggests that Różewicz's signature is an in-text boundary between two descriptions of the narrator-agent – the self-created and the self-discovered (existential and corporeal).

Skrenda's proposal, which is merely outlined here, would not be of interest if it did not raise questions and doubts. Are the two descriptions distinguished in the text by only a signature, and is the textual-biographical dimension of (the identity of) the agent limited to their relationship? Can the theory of the signature be falsified when applied to Różewicz's works, i.e. does it allow for (assume) the existence in them of such a self-description that cannot be related to the author's signature? Can the relationship between the agent and his legitimization and signature transcend the limits of a single work? Can Skrenda's concept be used in a work to represent the agent's identity only as an ahistorical arrangement of descriptions, or also as a process, marked in time by successive descriptions, self-images and, possibly, their later interpretations? Is it possible to construe Różewicz's textual self as an extratextual problem, e.g. an anthropological or sociological one? Does Skrenda's theory make it possible to establish the writer's uniqueness, to distinguish – by solving the problem of the narrator-agent's identity – his writing from the work of other contemporary authors who, by signing their work, leave a trace of the empirical self? My answer to these questions is no.

As Skrendo stresses, the signature is not an expression of the person behind the agent, but a textualized trace of his/her empiricality, not referring beyond the text. Therefore, traces of the self in various texts cannot be unified into the individual's identity, unless it is tautological, assuming that the writer's signature corresponds to each of his signatures in his/her other works. Consequently, by applying the signature theory, one limits the important problems of Różewicz's writing linked to mod-

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[1002] Ibid., p. 283.

ern biographical identity, and reduces the historical, social, cultural, and moral significance of his literary agent. I do not fault this concept for not being a theory of the person because it is not one by definition. I agree that it would be difficult to find corroboration in Różewicz's works of the personalistic or Cartesian model of the self's identity, the model of an integral person/self, completely autonomous in relation to the text or language. It is for another reason that signature as a descriptive tool and textual exponent of the self arouses my reservations. Noting only the tensions between Różewicz's text and signature, one cannot speak of the identity of the textual individual who is thus stripped of his biography and therefore, logically, one cannot ask questions about the existential and ethical meaning of the speaking or acting self. A consistent application of the theory of signature does not allow for such readings.

As it applies to each of Różewicz's texts, the concept of signature does not define the scope of its own truthfulness, it is does not lend itself to falsification in this respect. Despite staking total claims, it does not seem sufficiently inclusive in epistemic terms, because, firstly, it reduces the different identities of Różewicz's agent, the descriptions of the self in the writer's text (texts) to the common denominator of a single-type signature, i.e. the author's name and surname – this signature-identifier justifies speaking about "Tadeusz Różewicz" only as an agent that is temporary or, in fact, extratemporal (ahistorical), as well as local, detached, and separate in each text. In an analytical situation, one can of course juxtapose different works by Różewicz, but the signature is an intratextual relation. Creating a self-identity − e.g. a continuity in time − from signatures included in these works would run counter to Skrenda's assumption that the artist's textualized presences cannot be united. However, many of Różewicz's works engage in dialogue with his earlier works (and with the images of "Tadeusz Różewicz" contained in them), with some of them dating back decades. The focus of that dialogue is, among other

things, the writer's autobiographical identity as an attempt to capture an existential whole, repeated from the perspective of historical distance from the old description of the self, and with a different literary mindset.[1003] The writer's "biographies" are multiplied, parallel (alternative) and revised after many years. There are intermediate stages, multilateral relations, blurred boundaries between the descriptions of the "constructed" and the "reconstructed". By consistently applying the notion of signature to construe them, the problem can be simplified and bypassed, but little is gained in return. It would be more appropriate in this case to transcend the narrow definition of signature, e.g. as proposed by Inga Iwasiów, who considers self-paraphrase as a form of signature, too.[1004] It is a signature without a date or name, but fulfils some of the functions of autobiographical expression. This is because self-paraphrase as repetition and change reveals the temporal dimension of an identity stretched between the old self and the present self, between the past told *ex post* and the self-project, texturally co-present in the domain of the agent's activity of self-creation (and articulation). Incidentally, it is worth noting that a signature in Różewicz's works can also take the form of a photograph or a few photos from a family album, which add temporal tension to the biographical construct (the present retrospective gaze and the image of the past), lay down the boundary between the private and official, and document the physical integrity of the protagonist. Comparing the role of photographs in the prose works of the last decade of the 20th century,

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[1003] Zygmunt Ziątek places Różewicz among the writers, such as Adolf Rudnicki, Maria Kuncewiczowa, Kazimierz Brandys, Tadeusz Konwicki, and Józef Hen, who, years after the events, turned to the format of testimony, "but now as authors of fiction who know that their witnessing of history must stand up to scrutiny as works of literature and can make use of methods developed in the field of art". Z. Ziątek, *Wiek dokumentu. Inspiracje dokumentarne w polskiej prozie współczesnej*, Warszawa 1999, p. 50.

[1004] I. Iwasiów, *Autoparafraza jako sygnatura*, in: *Ja, autor. Sytuacja podmiotu w polskiej literaturze współczesnej*, op. cit.

Cezary Zalewski claims that "a photograph not only adds new biographical information, but − through its form − makes it plausible".[1005] This is how the identities of the characters in the poetry volumes *Nasz starszy brat* and *Mother Departs* are legitimized. The theory of signature is not able to accommodate the self-paraphrases and photos that are part of Różewicz's "biography writing".

Without rejecting Skrenda's anti-metaphysical assumptions, on one hand, I consider his theory as ineffective, one avoiding confrontation with those aspects of Różewicz's writing that cannot be swept aside when discussing the identity of the self. I do not argue with Skrendo's critical diagnosis of the subject. It is hard to deny that the self in Różewicz's texts written after 1956 is often dispersed, lacking any substantial and personalistic basis of identity, sometimes internally illogical. However, the other hand, when reading these works, the reader has the impression of dealing with a distinctive self, recognizable in a meaningful, if at times disrupted or ambiguous, autobiographical construct. I agree with Skrenda's diagnosis that Różewicz's narrator-agent inhabits an intertextual borderland, but I believe that the most interesting meanings suggested by this intriguing area cannot be captured by the theory of signature which, by excluding biographical identity, excludes large stretches of modern artistic, historical, social, and bodily experience from discussion.

I do not intend to revert to traditional biographism. The purpose of this chapter ("Biographical Identity and Signature") is to describe the experience in question as a problem of Różewicz's texts and their interrela-

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[1005] C. Zalewski, *Czytanie obrazu. Motyw fotografii w prozie ostatniej dekady*, in: *Literatura polska 1990-2000*, eds T. Cieślak, K. Pietrych, v. II, Kraków 2002, p. 400. The function of photography (including family photography) in identity narratives is examined by Marianna Michałowska in her article *Podróże innych – fotograficzne opowieści*, in: *Narracja i tożsamość*, eds W. Bolecki, R. Nycz, v. I: *Narracje w kulturze*. Janusz Drzewucki describes the photographs on the covers of Różewicz's books in the context of bodily experience in *Smaki słowa. Szkice o poezji*, op. cit., pp. 70–71.

tionships. I therefore reject idiomatic and metaphysical models of agency, *a priori* assumptions about the integrity and autonomy of the person, extratextual evidence of the existence of the self. Moreover, I consider those theories of the agent that leave no scope for uniting textual manifestations of the self into a biographical identity as inadequate. I conceive of the autobiographical self as a narrative composed of self-descriptions and their interpretations, textually mediated in history (temporal perspective) and culture. Narrativistically speaking:

> The identity [of the individual − WB] is never finished, it remains in the process of production, irrespective of whether it is new or inherited, i.e. pre-defined, as it might seem. Regardless of whether the identity is located in the past and treated as already present before, or whether it is a completely new self-concept situated in the future, it is yet to be built of elements, signs, and symbols of culture. [Identity as biography − WB] expresses a system of values, defines human actions, and the agent's orientation towards the world. Likewise, it is possible to analyse the course of life as a sequence of past events present in the consciousness of the agent, ordered and interpreted, i.e. ones that have been given a meaning.[1006]

Identity, thus conceived, is not only a textualized borderland of a number of different self-descriptions, but also an articulation of their aggregated meaning, an attempt to reconcile memory with the self-project, individual experience with ready-made identification models, the textual subject/agent role with the object role. Within the framework of this concept, the agent can comprehend himself/herself − and become comprehensible − through narrative hence the identity results from the

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[1006] S. Grotowska, op. cit., p. 84.

interpretation of self-representations in a temporal order determined by the notion (hypothesis) of an existential whole. I assume that narrativism not only explains the borderline identity of the agent in the works of the author of *Unease*, but also allows the textual situation of the self to be translated into the individual's social or ethical problems, which cannot be raised using the theory of signature. Tadeusz Różewicz's textual agent says much more about himself than can be read from the signature "Tadeusz Różewicz", which does not mean that his textuality, fragmentation, and discontinuity can be ignored.

The biographical self, which I analyze in this chapter, can be found in many of Różewicz's works, but not all of them. If one rejects the empirical and personal circumstances, the self-descriptions in the writer's texts do not always add up to a biographical identity. The autobiographical subject-narrator must interpret himself/herself in a temporal perspective, invoke social or cultural patterns of existence, and refer to the biographical conditions of referentiality and plausibility. Not every text compatible with the writer's biography meets the criteria of autobiographicality as, for example, despite adhering to certain facts, I may fail to actualize the temporal dimension of existence. These criteria are, of course, debatable. Edward Kasperski maintains that some scholars deem "any document that contains an autobiographical account" legitimized by the author as autobiographical.[1007] To be able to speak of such an account, the text must be (partly or wholly) an utterance by an entity identical to the individual whose life the account concerns. This identity is guaranteed by a signature: the author's name. In line with the second position, autobiographicality is a normative formula, unique among all other types of utterances whose signature refers to the textual self. This concept assumes, among other things, a holistic perspective on the protagonist's life, "the

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[1007] E. Kasperski, op. cit., p. 16.

functional separation of the roles of the author and the protagonist and, at the same time, their semantic identity" as well as "the author's retrospective attitude to the author-protagonist".[1008] Needless to say, Tadeusz Różewicz did not write an autobiography as such in the generic sense of the term, but published a number of texts that satisfy the criterion of autobiography in a broad sense (streamic) and some of its conditions in a narrow sense (generic), e.g. the narrator's retrospective stance, autobiographical tension between the teller and the told, and making the narrative into a whole by invoking an existential order, even if only residually. Importantly, the writer did not write any autobiographically inflected work in which the illusion of a personal presentation of a "life text" and the role of authorial sincerity − which underpin the autobiographical agreement − were not problematized, textualized, and included in the agent's self-knowledge, ostentatiously revising the still incomplete, imperfect the truth about himself. Biographical texts "offer, so to speak, only textual ersatzes of the agent's dissipating and fuzzy identity [...]. The text is what is given and relatively legible. The rest remains an unknown, the domain of endless speculation and infinite revisions".[1009] All that remains after the modern deconstruction of the agent and autobiography, it seems, is text, and within the text, the signature.

Not all, Kasperski adds, there is still the question why, despite the unmasking of "illusion-generating figures", autobiographical accounts are so prevalent in literature, manifest themselves in ever-different forms of writing, types of circulation systems, and conventions.

[1008] Ibid., p. 16. Based on these positions, Kasperski defines two types of autobiographism: generic (narrow sense) and streamic (broad sense). The latter means "an element of the writing programme and practice", appearing in "utterances and non-autobiographical writing as their loaded component and a peculiar distinguishing feature of literariness". Many of Różewicz's stories and sketches, even long poems, can be classified as core-stream autobiographism.

[1009] Ibid., p. 13.

This remark also concerns the work of Różewicz, for whom biographical identity, although consciously practised as an artefact, remains a constant reference for the textual agent and, what is more, thanks to it, the great themes of his writing are embedded in individual experience – both anonymous and concrete, personal and universal, always fragmentary, but at least temporarily and provisionally rendered whole in the narrative.[1010] Therefore, reducing the social or historical significance of the writer's "autobiography" to the problem of the structure of the text (and its signature) and discussing the autobiographical utterance in isolation from the textual dimension of the self's identity seem, in this case, to be an attempt to sidestep the problem. To solve it, both points of view − the textual and the biographical − must be considered.

The Limits of the Autobiographical Agreement

Autobiographicality, in this sense, is a type of the narrative identity of the self in the text.[1011] It is not autobiography in the strict generic sense, but a textual project of the agent who interprets self-descriptions in the light of (a model of) a biographical identity, and vice versa − the focus of his/her reflection is also autobiographicality which changes its meaning in the consciousness of the self. Each autobiographical self remains, to some extent, bound by an autobiographical agreement arising, among other things, from the textual framework of the work and from

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[1010] Marcin Telicki calls this type of identity of the self in Różewicz's poetic texts "the voice of an undersigned anonymous'. He argues: "The author's signature does not ensure the lyrical persona's comprehensibility thanks to the poet's acquaintance. A number of (to some degree) anonymous agents do not ensure knowledge of the author. [...] The recorded experience, which will explain some of our experiences, is more important."

[1011] In defining the autobiographical self (an individual identity "created through story-telling"), Philippe Lejeune references Ricoeur's notion of narrative identity. P. Lejeune, op. cit., p. 5 et seq.

reading rules.[1012] The most recognizable textual trace of this agreement is the signature: the author's name or date. When

> we want to establish what the self in personal stories refers to, we do not have to look for an unattainable extratextual reality: the text itself, on its fringes, offers us the ultimate point of reference – the author's name, a part of the text which undoubtedly has a real reference.[1013]

Philippe Lejeune's conclusions indicate that the autobiographical agreement determines the empirical reference of the text and identifies the text's protagonist with the author. This reasoning is not validated in Różewicz's writing. Autobiographical signs are indeed constantly present in his works, but their actual reference remains uncertain and partial. And even though the textual self often fits the writer's biography, it just as often does not fit – and does not adhere to – itself. Internally contradictory and fragmented, it finds no personal confirmation. The identity of the agent is not just a consequence of the acceptance or rejection of the autobiographical agreement as a general and external rule, because its meaning becomes fixed only in the story of the self, and in the dialogue among its descriptions.

[1012] "An autobiographical pact is an obligation undertaken by the author to tell his life story (or a part or aspect of it) directly, in the spirit of truth. [...] The autobiographer promises that what s/he is telling you is true, or, at least, it is what s/he considers to be true. S/he acts like a historian or journalist, the only difference being that the subject of the promise is s/he herself/himself. [...] How does this commitment to tell the truth about oneself manifest itself? How does the reader recognize it? Sometimes it is the title: Diary, Memories, The Story of My Life... or the subtitle ("autobiography", "story", "memories", "journal"), and sometimes simply because of the absence of a reference to a "novel". Sometimes it is the author's introduction or some other declaration on the back cover. Finally, the autobiographical pact is very frequently based on the author's name printed on the cover and the name of the character whose story is told in the text." Ibid., pp. 297–298.

[1013] Ibid., pp. 45–46.

If we were to explain the biographical nature of Różewicz's texts by reference to the author's biography, the problems of their subjectivity would be ostensibly solved at the expense of disregarding the internal contradictions of the textual self. The composition of at least some of these works, viewed as an identity narrative, does not allow for a similar reduction. The speaking self relates events and experiences, but also fulfils functions that cannot be reduced to a representation of the writer's past. The narrative unifying the agent's personal characteristics arises as he undertakes activities in the text, comments on quotations, confronts notes with memories, organizes them in the story-telling process, and tries to find the right way to express experience. Różewicz's self simultaneously processes its past by articulating it lyrically, discursively, or fictionally and the self-descriptions referencing the past. The meaning of these references in the identity narrative is not predetermined by the autobiographical pact, nor is it completely independent of it. Różewicz's narrator or lyrical persona (agent) takes stock of the tenets of this agreement, thinks about the historical order of facts, the reliability of his information, the social context of individual memory, and the literary form of textual records – both his own and otherwise.

Set against the autobiographical style of reception of these works and prompted by the signals of the pact, the actual identity of its agent is all the more ambiguous, incomplete, and ultimately unjustified in extratextual reality. Różewicz's speaking protagonist does not take the form of a seemingly coherent self typical of the illusion of generic autobiography. It does not mask "the difference that exists between the subject of uttering and the subject of an utterance", and does not seek to convince the reader that the speaking agent is identical to the person described, who, in addition, corresponds to the author of the signature.[1014] The autobiographical agreement in Różewicz's work is located in the midst of the identity narrative – since

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[1014] Ibid., pp. 124–127.

each reading pact is, at least in part, textualized – and, like other projects of the textual self, is interpreted by the self-unifying agent, discovered in the self-description and, repeatedly, violated by comments on the text, tested and discussed either seriously or ironically. Let me reiterate that not all of Różewicz's works that reference the writer's biography meet the conditions of such textualized autobiographicality. The texts that can be deemed autobiographical in the sense that we employ here are the ones whose agent acquires an autobiographical identity as the pact's interpreter processing self-descriptions. The criteria for legitimizing this concept of autobiography are not the "tenets" of the agreement, but the textual role of the agent that takes others into account. How does the identity of Różewicz's self work the context of the premises of the pact and their reinterpretation?

1) The pact results in the temporality of the self so, in the agent's reflection, autobiographicality is also a proposal of how to understand his own historicity.[1015] Różewicz's speaking self cannot forget about its identity in time, since it reads historically marked self-descriptions, and often checks their chronology. This is because in the process of biographical creation it has to recreate itself too. The persons and events necessary to this (re)construction are placed in time dated or related to facts and phenomena whose place in history is defined.[1016] In its attempt to interpret

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[1015] Ibid., p. 58. This identity practice was characteristic of the Polish prose of the second half of the 20th century. According to Błoński, in order to define the formula of Polishness and Polish history at the time, writers delved into family and private memories, establishing a relationship between collective history and a certain metahistorical vision of it, on the one hand, and the individual's fate, on the other. J. Błoński, *Odmarsz*, op. cit., p. 286. This relationship is also clear in Różewicz's texts, but the position of history as a paradigmatic narrative is dubious in them, as the historical experience of the Różewicz man, contrasted with his role as the narrator-agent of a biographical narrative – constantly revised – turns out to be textual, too, meaningful only in a specific culture and language, changing over time together with them.

[1016] "(Auto)-biographical discourse", notes Mieczysław Dąbrowski, "is essentially a discourse based on the interplay of personal language and the language of history, of the private dimension and the universal (public) dimension". M. Dąbrowski, op. cit., p. 51.

them wholly, the speaking self becomes both the subject of the description and its object. If the autobiographical agreement were to be treated as a rule of understanding the text independent of the textual self, the problem would solve itself. This is because, as a consequence of Lejeune's pact, the agent of the identity narrative is identical to the represented and designated character. But given Różewicz's textual self reveals its incoherence and dissimilarity to that person, the biographical identification is exposed as an interpretation. The speaker is not simply the person represented and designated, but aims for autobiographical identification with him/her, and to imbue it with a present meaning. An identity tells a story about a different, old self that can be understood only hypothetically as a reconstruction. *Próba rekonstrukcji*, *Przerwany egzamin*, *Tarcza z pajęczyny*, *Tylko tyle*, *Teraz*, and *Do poprawki* are the most prominent sketches where an "autobiography" is created as a "revised" identity narrative. The act of self-interpretation in Różewicz's texts raises the question of the historicity of the self in the context of a literary work's structure, it is a self-paraphrase, reveals the distance between description, and its meaning after a time determined by the agent's new situation. Historicity and autobiographical identity are textualized here. They reference actual experiences, not directly, but textually, through a self that interprets itself at the time (of creating) the narrative, and assembles the "building blocks" of writing ideas and memories, or old and new diary notes, into a problematic whole (I 218).

2) In keeping with the pact's implications, the identity of the autobiographical agent can be compared to a composition of two (or more) self-descriptions which make the story subjective – individual and unique, personal – and, at the same time, comprehensible to others. The autobiographical, story-telling self therefore uses roles and patterns which give it a social dimension. After all, the fundamental tenet of the pact is to depict a particular, specific human being. Różewicz does not erase this contradic-

tion, but makes it part of the identity of the autobiographical self, which constantly switches between self for oneself and self for the other. Using the examples of *Próba rekonstrukcji*, *The Card Index*, *The Witnesses* and *Grupa Laokoona*, Stanisław Gębala describes identifying the meaning of the social role assigned to the agent/protagonist of these texts by other characters. Gębala emphasizes the negative dimension of social identity: hypocrisy, anaesthetized emotional and moral sensitivity, the curbing of individual spontaneity. On the other hand, notes the scholar, in order to reconstruct Różewicz's self, it is necessary to have the other: "we only exist as a reflection in the eyes of another person so, in order to recreate our own image from the past, we must first of all reconstruct the other person".[1017] Różewicz's identity narration is a description of a doubled self – intimate and public – having a conversation with the other, who is discursively present in quotations or paraphrases. The biographical sketches on his mother, brother, Staff, Kuryluk, Mickiewicz, Norwid, Tuwim, Hierowski, Wyka, and Czechowicz are interesting examples of Różewicz's autobiographical narratives. This is where it is most evident that, in order to produce an autobiographical reconstruction of the self, it is necessary to have a relation with "her" or "his" identity, the biographical whole of the other person, and an external perspective on oneself and, in special cases, a perspective on one's past self, which makes the difference between the self and "him" ambiguous, when the old "selfness" proves to be incomprehensible or illusory.

Lejeune holds that "one cannot really step outside of oneself, that is, represent a different point of view on a par with his/her own. Two genu-

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[1017] S. Gębala, *Sprawdzanie tożsamości – rzecz o Tadeuszu Różewiczu*, op. cit., pp. 420–422. Therefore, in Różewicz's writing one should distinguish between a single and specific Other, who remains in a differentiating relation to the self, and the other as a serial person, who represents a role, a type. The former individualizes the autobiographical narrative, the latter determines its social meaning.

inely different perspectives on the same individual can only be articulated outside of the autobiographical project".[1018] Różewicz's autobiographism falls outside the stipulations of the pact, given that the agent in his works, representing "someone else's" point of view, remains in the midst of the identity narrative. Quoting the other, he speaks from the standpoint of an open textual self created through reading and interpreting a variety of self-descriptions or descriptions of other people, relevant for the re-construction of his own experiences. The autobiographical agreement offers a ready-made model of the self, and ends any disputes over its identity when a work is recognized as an autobiography. Ultimately, the agreement has only one agent, the rest is the social and literary context. Różewicz, on the other hand, creates his agent in an intertextual space, without arriving at a static and closed self. His agent is not isolated from other *cogitos*. Różewicz's self cannot exist outside the reflexive space of the encounter of the various self-descriptions, textualized traces of other agents. However, while the autobiographical pact adds someone else's contributions to an already designed identity, thus limiting their sub-jectivity, Różewicz's agent lets them speak in an unfinished, incomplete narrative, where each of the agents adds corrections to the identity of the self. Without simply multiplying social descriptions of the self, the writer constructs the situation of polylogue in the text.

Traces of other agents are not objectified to a greater extent than traces of the social identity of the self, which breaks down into roles, symbols and cultural patterns, recollection and self-creation, and diverse textual techniques of the self. When Różewicz's agent unifies himself in an identity narrative, the boundaries between its component descriptions cannot be erased. Between its lines, as in the sketch *Teraz*, the author of the text and biography speaks, recognizing the situation of writing rather

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[1018] P. Lejeune, op. cit., p. 143.

than the fact of his existence outside them. There is no self that would not prove to be a dramatic or grotesque site of diverse other "selves" (self-descriptions). While each of these components confirms the agent's auto-biographical identity, they simultaneously reveal his incompatibility with the ideal self, constructed according to the rules of normative autobiography, ostensibly whole and coherent.

3) The pact also stipulates the obligation to be truthful, i.e. to preserve the referential way of speaking about the world.[1019] The author of *Sobowtór*, even in the most autobiographical accounts, adheres to this condition perversely, offering numerous testimonies of the existential identity of his textual self, but next to the most important events he recalls minor personal episodes, juxtaposing "absolute values" and events of historical importance with trivial ones[1020] – e.g. the outbreak of war with his mother's burning of jam.[1021] Many of Różewicz's extensive and detail-rich texts, as new information is added, become ever more documentary, however, this does not make them truer. The excessive amount of specific details about individual life destroys the truthfulness of autobiography – its epistemic value and authenticity – as a text. If it were revisited *in crudo*, the past world would turn into nonsense. As autobiographical practice shows, the referentiality obligation is a deceptive directive.[1022] Lejeune's pact is, in fact, a plea for construing facts in accordance with autobiography as a particular type of historical account, not for representing something that was. "Every judgement about the past," ar-

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[1019] Ibid., p. 47.

[1020] What renders the generic biography authentic, i.e. the details and minutiae of life, at the same time poses a threat to the biographical identity in the text, as it breaks up the identity narrative and undermines the illusion of the self as a whole. See S. Grotowska, op. cit., pp. 81–82.

[1021] A similar detail ("She was frying jam in Lviv in the forty-first in June when their house was hit"), attesting to the average individual's mental unreadiness for a historical turn and the "historicization" of his/her experiences, was used by Anna Kowalska in her novel *Uliczka klasztorna* (1949).

[1022] E . Kasperski, op. cit., p. 13.

gues Łukasz Pawłowski, "has to invoke probability, is and is not a lie".[1023] Sometimes directly, sometimes parodistically, Różewicz unveils the true nature of reference, revealing the responsibility of the subject/agent of creation that underlies this obligation. Despite the inevitable formulaic nature of this construct, the biographical self cannot be created mechanically and unintentionally, because an identity is a subjective attempt to make meaning, a narrative whole composed of different descriptions of the self. Therefore, the autobiographical telling of "the truth about oneself" in Różewicz's texts is not an external criterion of an identity narrative, but a part of it, indicated in the text by the agent's work. Różewicz's responsibility for his words, for the entire post-war literature, which is symptomatic of his oeuvre, also involves the very way of speaking about oneself, i.e. the right language. This language is authentic insofar as it allows the expression of the individual's experience. Różewicz's agent is not a person as defined by personalistic philosophy. He is not moral before or outside the text, but only when he says "I" in the text, when, as the agent, he chooses and compares some descriptions of reality and leaves out others when he has to face the problem of the truth about himself as both its creator and recipient.

The Textual Narrator-agent in the "Church of the Individual"

The notion of the human individual, which refers to an existence that is single and singular, but represented by way of recognizable descriptions, mediated by cultural practices and patterns of speaking about oneself, is fundamental to autobiographical thinking. The autobiographer either

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[1023] Ł. Pawłowski, *Władysław Terlecki:* Zwierzęta zostały opłacone. *Ruch od powieści historycznej do ponowoczesnej narracji o historii*, in: *Podmiot i tekst w literaturze XX wieku. Warsztaty interpretacyjne*, eds H. Gosk and A. Zieniewajk in collaboration with K. Krowiranda and Ż. Nalewajk, Warszawa 2006, p. 61.

questions the possibility of overcoming this paradox or, more frequently, dismisses it, naively or consciously transforming the perspectives of the self that are available to him into a textual construct of identity, and sometimes adding a parodistic or self-reflective commentary. Lejeune explains that

> there is a clear contradiction between autobiographical ideology and the reality of intertextuality; a contradiction between the desire for this intertextuality to be forgotten (it is easiest to forget it yourself and practice it with utter naiveté) and the necessity to activate it. It painful to think that an individual is a serial fact and originality is a code. [...] All the utterances, all the fictions, aphorisms, poems, images, and musical works that we have chosen and absorbed mix in the melting pot of our identity.[1024]

The author of an autobiography is an interpreter of his or someone else's testimonies of memory and of model identity narratives. He works with formulaic and repeatable descriptions. The autobiographical agreement implies that they can be contained in a single narrative unifying their representations of the self into an integral and unique identity. The aim of the autobiographer is to formulate an identity narrative that ignores the intertextuality of his/her text, and subjects the dispersed textual self to a personal and empirical interpretation in keeping with the pact. The autobiographical convention − a ritual in the "church of the individual" (Lejeune) − obscures the actual condition of the textual agent. The most acute problem of autobiographism is a rather marginal theme in autobiography, often irrelevant for the identity of its agent.[1025]

[1024] P . Lejeune, op. cit., pp. 219–221.

[1025] The question of the "ersatz quality" of autobiographical texts has featured in the reflection of its authors for a long time, but it is rarely the main subject of the narrator's discourse or the reader's interest. See E. Kasperski, op. cit., pp. 12–15.

Since at least the existentialist period of his work in the mid-1950s, the author of *Śmierć w starych dekoracjach* constructs ambiguous and impermanent characters, grotesquely patched together from intimate selves and official identities, emotionally denuded or deformed by participation in culture and collective life. They are constantly exposed to the risk of unification and inauthenticity – this is the only unchangeable thing about them.[1026]

When trying to express himself in an autobiographical story, Różewicz's Everyman breaks up into the typical roles of the average man, the common man of the 20th century, when he recognizes the components of his social identity, e.g. the role of son, soldier, man, citizen, member of the intelligentsia, reader, writer, tourist, or old man – he discovers nothing special or extraordinary. Despite his ironic detachment from these identification dilemmas, he sees no way out of the aporia of modern identity. Łukaszuk-Piekara points out that Różewicz obeys the "rules of literary communication", creating an "autobiography" with the aid of ironically reversed literary formulas.[1027] One can say, oxymoronically, that Różewicz's agent is a self-critical Everyman who, with a sneering attitude, observes the seriality and formulaicness of his self articulated in the text. If the narrative of his identity were to remain in keeping with the autobiographical agreement, it would have to involve erasing intertextuality, which is his fundamental and conscious experience. This mystification would lead not to saving, but to squandering the chance for an individual and unique self. Therefore, Różewicz's agent impinges on the autobiographical convention of uniting texts, reveals and comments on the boundaries between self-descriptions, and pulls apart seemingly

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[1026] Although he focuses the poetological aspects of the agent, Tomasz Kunz sees the identity of man in Różewicz's poetry in a similar way, concluding that it is non-essential, devoid of "essential, inalienable properties". T. Kunz, op. cit., p. 369.

[1027] M. Łukaszuk-Piekara, op. cit., pp. 162–163.

ordered episodes of the protagonist's biography. He cannot simply re-count his biography, because "each unravels in Everyman's files",[1028] he can, at most, take part in its translation or deconstruction as the subject of a textualized identity narrative. Even though the repertoire of his so-cial roles remains typical, the break-up of the impermanent identity they make up takes place along a differentiating trajectory, which confirms its active presence in the text. The Różewicz self is himself, the persona of its intertextual "selfness", as it tries to put together a file of old and new self-descriptions while simultaneously scattering them about.

One example of a construct made up of many textual utterances of the self is Tadeusz Różewicz's sketch included at the beginning of "Mem-ories of Janusz" in the collection *Nasz starszy brat. Tylko tyle* includes a contemporary section, written by the overarching narrator "today", on "the 53rd anniversary of the outbreak of World War Two". However, it concerns the occupation and post-war period, accompanied by daily en-tries from 1944, 1955, and 1957, quotations from Leśmian's and Miłosz's poems, and the words of his brother and other historical figures enclosed in inverted commas. The boundaries between the texts comprising *Tylko tyle* have not been erased, the quotations are accurate, and some of them are dated. The superior agent does not leave out the names of their au-thors, except for one excerpt from a poem by Leśmian. Despite the fact that the boundaries of the constituent texts are preserved, the sketch can be read as a whole thematically linked and subordinated to the narrative self, which at once tells a story, makes comments, and creates a narrative from other people's and its own words. The autobiographical self unifies itself semantically as an agent and its corresponding character, assembling its biography into a first-person story, but also constructing a dialogue

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[1028] A. Zieniewicz, *Obecność autora (Role podmiotu autorskiego w literaturze współczesnej)*, in: *Auto-biografizm – przemiany, formy, znaczenia*, op. cit., p. 132.

over time with the murdered brother and other characters in the sketch. The roles of the "I" (self) and "you" engaged in this dialogue are reversible. Typically, "Tadeusz" speaks to "Janusz", but the older brother also becomes a sender through quotation. The distance between the speaking self and the speaking self as an autobiographical character also changes. The formal impersonal narrative at the beginning, thematically justified by the anniversary of the war, transforms into a "church of the individual", a private memory, a reckoning with memory, an intimate confession. The narrator defines his identity retrospectively and intertextually, noting the emotional and temporal distance from his former self – a character remembered or "quoted" using diary excerpts. The self so articulated is the agent of an entire *silva rerum*, the narrator of the central story, and the narrator of notes from the past while, for the textual selves from the quoted stories and commentaries, it is also an object, a historical figure, and a complex person that needs to be reconstructed. The textual ramifications of this ambiguity are not hidden. The speaking agent who constructs the utterance breaks up into so many partial voices that its personal integrity is called into question, and, at the same time, he is reflected in the texts of others which give him a personal and social, almost object-like identity. The shared space of these intertextual identifications is a self that is semantically specified, yet variable in time, which recognizes itself in several characters and roles, at once internal and defined from a distance, subjective and objectivized in an outside perspective or relation. The narrator is in a position (relative to the model autobiographical identity) which is unresolvable in the context of the oppositions of the subjective vs the objective, the written vs the lived, and the present vs the past. Thus, the Różewicz self has no permanent and straightforward autobiographical identity, one that would be continuous in time, subjective, separate and unique, and communicative, too. The "illusion-creating figures", which could justify it socially or historically, appear in the

sketch as a collage of texts and their commentary, a whole that is comprehensible, but temporary, prone to break-ups and new arrangements.[1029] The hypothesis of the self as a person outside of the identity narrative, a person "describable" in terms of the pact, fails. The autobiographical role of the textual agent, however, does not become nonsense. As he tries to recount what has happened in his life from his youth and since his brother's death, the narrator of *Tylko tyle* realizes more and more clearly with each new "fact" or "episode", and relates that it is impossible. While with recourse to multiple literary genres and classes, his own and someone else's texts, stories from the past and descriptions of the present, the narrator-agent sketches a plausible biography of a poet of the Generation of the Columbuses, a non-identity narrative emerges in the margins. The autobiographical self decomposes under the weight of doubt, falls out of line with the narrator's intentions and quoted descriptions. It proves to be only a way of story-telling, creating and organizing serial texts that cannot represent the life of the individual except through the illusion of a pact. If the rules of reading these descriptions are defined by an autobiographical agreement, the continuity of the self is textually confirmed by the protagonist's relation to the author, by the generic signals, it is legitimized by the notions of the person and agent and inscribed within history. If a pact is not in force, the agent of the text loses the obviousness of this identity.

The speaking agent in Różewicz's work constantly emphasizes its inconsistency, non-identity with the self summoned from the past. Tempo-

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[1029] The question of collage in Różewicz's writing has been discussed in more detail by, among others, M. Piwińska, *Różewicz albo technika collage'u*, "Dialog" 1963, no. 9; A. Falkiewicz, *Fragmenty o polskiej literaturze*, Warszawa 1982; T. Dąbrowski, *Cytat i kolaż (O Różewiczowskiej poetyce fragmentu)*, "Kresy" 2004, no. 1–2; J. Kelera, *Teatr bez majtek*, Warszawa 2006; M. Ciura, *Kolaże pamięci – czyli* Matka odchodzi, "Annales universitas Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio FF (Philologiae)". 2007, vol. 25.

rarily and conditionally, its non-identity in time is toned down by adopting model identities, e.g. of a poet or son, which overshadow and simplify it, but – in the agent's mind – also complicate it. This is because they violate the second and third conditions of autobiographical identity, i.e. individuality and specificity. In order to meet them, the non-originality of the self must be mystified in the "church of the individual", shrouded in mystery, or interpreted in favour of the character described: the narrators-characters of the autobiographies examined by Lejeune conquer them by identifying themselves with various patterns of the self from the position of the only agent. Autobiography becomes a description of the deliberate "path that led to this gesture of appropriation", of mastering the existing identity patterns.[1030] Instead, Różewicz's speaking agent openly recognizes his seriality and inauthenticity, discovers in himself someone else's or stereotypical identities, and weaves alternative autobiographies. However, this is not a triumphant gesture of appropriation which could provide the foundation for a "church of the individual" – a story about a hegemonic agent in the textual world of other or former selves. This is not because Różewicz's agent has no personal autonomy, is not beyond articulation, and his narrative procedures – even if deliberate ("I wanted to tell you" in *Tylko tyle*) – do not guarantee arriving at a final and overriding identity (of the described and the writer). Rather, the autobiographical nature of this agent is a description of decline, a narrative not only of an arrival, but also of a departure from the certainty of "who I am", the rejection of existing, automatic, and already employed answers. The autobiographical narrative thus construed is therefore an account of experiencing incompatibility and of losing confidence in successive self-descriptions, a report on the growing distance between the self speaking about itself and the identification patterns provided by education, ideology, philosophy, literature, memory,

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[1030]   Lejeune, op. cit., p. 226.

and common thinking.[1031] *Tylko tyle* cannot be called a simple autobiography, nor even a part of it, and the narrator-protagonist constructed in the sketch, thanks to the autobiographical tests to which the characters and he are subjected, proves to be the "centre" of the narrative, who, through intertextual links, is the focal point of such borderline problems of the autobiographical account as the fragmentary nature of (the text of) identity, the ambiguity of the concurrent role of narrator-agent and character, the incongruity between historical story and remembered biography, and the disintegration of autobiographical illusions in the process of reconstructing and illuminating the truth about oneself.

The autobiographicality of Różewicz's texts is also sustained by discursive comments: philosophical or existential digressions on the margins of stories about life. Yet, the writer does not solve the problem of the individual's identity intellectually. Any overly unambiguous answer to the question of "Who and I?" would be implausible, potentially trivializing the experience of the incoherence and discontinuity of the modern self, which cannot be conveyed in discourse. Even the "double" [*dwojnik*] in *Sobowtór*, a sketch featured in the second edition of *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* and, earlier, a character in Różewicz's poetry, is not a trustworthy personification of the ambiguous and unclear condition of the narrator-agent, as none of its personal renderings are fully confirmed in the autobiographical text-erzatz. That which is real (in the autobiographical text) can be called – to phrase it none too gracefully – interpretive work of the textual self in an incessantly intertextual set-up. And if one were to translate

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[1031] Roland Barthes practises this form of autobiographical writing in Roland Barthes (1975), creating an image of himself from excerpts of his own and other authors' texts, their commentaries, family photos, replicas of manuscripts, copies of printed matter, etc. Barthes points out in the introduction that this formula is absolutely impossible, because biography pertains exclusively to life, which does not describe itself, and once an author begins to write, the text, which is detached from the autobiographical figure, "expropriates" the author from his/her biography. R. Barthes, op. cit, p. 10.

this textual understanding of this agent-character into the terms of narrativism, the Różewicz man would be the protagonist of a double biography, one ordinary and one reversed. As he collects his existential roles and unfolds a life story, this narrator-character discovers his non-identity with his former self, with his own and other people's images of himself, feels that self-creation is artificial and derivative, and returns to the starting point. It is, however, not a futile action. This attempt at a provisional, internally contradictory autobiography makes it possible to include the following elements in the biographical self: descriptions of the author's real experience and signatures, social and literary identity patterns, and philosophical reflection on the condition of the modern agent in such a way that they are not overshadowed by the "illusion-producing figures" of the pact.

The autobiographical figure in Różewicz's writing is the reader and protagonist of an account of life, the textual incarnation of the collective identity and, like any other individual, an exception to it, the subject of moral reflection and an ethically fragmented self, the creator of identity illusions and their debunker, and the destroyer of petrified holisticisms. Let me reiterate that the reading of Różewicz's work does not corroborate the empirical or personalistic assumptions of individual identity. Autobiographicality here is a derivative of textual relations which, however, do not meet the conditions of the autobiographical agreement, and the more the personal, historical, social, and ethical identity of the narrator-agent is legitimized, for example, by documents and signatures, the more it seems to be artificial, unoriginal, ambiguous, and provisional. At the same time, this composition of autobiographical narrative explains why it always remains only an attempt.

Conclusion

I wrote this study prompted by a conviction that the individual and collective identity of the individual, although currently seen as one of the key problems of cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology, and philosophy, does not necessarily coincide with the principal questions that literary studies pose to a researcher of the work of Tadeusz Różewicz. I do not address some of these problems, and treat others only incidentally. One of the questions absent from this book is the artistic merit of Różewicz's writing, which I leave out so as not to complicate the core argument, which deals with identity, the social and private experiences of modern man, and his self-creation in culture.[1032] The question of the place and role of Różewicz's writing in the historical-literary process has also only been marginally addressed. Where necessary, I reconstructed the historical context of the writer's works and indicated the intellectual and literary traditions that are most relevant to them but, with a few exceptions, I did not interrogate their innovation and originality, or their links to the dominant movements and currents of the era. These ques-

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[1032] See footnotes 44 and 45 in the chapter "Tadeusz Różewicz's Narratives and the Modern Identity (An Introduction)".

tions have already been raised by other authors, and wherever I draw on their findings, I note this in the footnotes and bibliography.

Nevertheless, *Tadeusz Różewicz and Modern Identity*, too, has arisen from questions derived from literary studies. One of the most vital relates to how the narrator-agent and characters are created in Różewicz's narratives, in other words, it is a question about the literary and cultural identity patterns the writer used, transformed, or critiqued in his narratives. This is the starting point of this book, but its aim is not only to point them out in Różewicz's prose, but also to describe them from the vantage point of the author's narrativistic concept of identity and the narrative techniques used by him to construct an image of himself and the world. First of all, I read Różewicz's texts as a writer's take on the identity narratives of modern man, which is why I consider the identification patterns used in them as components of a specific literary work, but also a trace of the existence of these narratives in culture, collective memory, ideologies, and biographical stories. Making use of the theoretical idiom proposed in the introductory chapter, I read his prose as a textual image of identity or of the identification work in the text. This reading would not be possible without a theoretical (nominal) model, which comprises the questions and premises of the present book. The aim of each chapter, however, is to create a viable model including the myths, topoi, symbols, representations of man as an individual and as part of a community, as well as the relations between them.

The second model can only approximately be seen as a permanent collection of patterns and narratives, as all the 20th-century representations of man proved to be historical, revealing their relativity and mutability. As such, they allow themselves to be described in terms of change rather than statically, which is why this book posits the problem of Różewicz's work as both modern and post-modern. If only because of the concept of the "zero point" of history and the portrayal of the destruction of the

old world combined with the vision of a new beginning, the prose of the author of *Unease* is close to the historiosophy of modernity. Already in the 1940s, the writer questioned the way of thinking about man in terms of a project of society and history, complementing the grand narratives of the era or even replacing them with stories of real, daily existence, of the experience of the material and corporeal world, of the common imagination of the individual and its colloquial verbal renderings. A historical discussion of change in culture involves capturing both its variability and continuity, observing, among others, its development as an intentional and selective dialogue with the past, taking into account the identity of its different (also new) participants. While probing the role of cultural memory and varying literary, philosophical, and political traditions in Różewicz's prose, I highlight the social and individual experience that has been preserved in it so this historicity acquires an anthropological dimension. Therefore, when I describe small narratives of Everyman (common man), I do not downplay the fact that their meaning also stems from the rejection or interpretation of grand stories, whose protagonist is first and foremost a man of ideas, the subject of political history, and a creator of culture who consciously draws on national or humanist tradition. Because of the time when Różewicz's works were written, I examine the identity patterns and problems associated with both types of characters in his prose (and their intermediate forms) in the context of World War Two and the revolutionary changes in its aftermath, Stalinism in Polish culture, the "small stabilization", and the end of the century. On the other hand, the composition of this book results not so much from the chronology of Różewicz's writing, but from the ideological, philosophical, socio-cultural, and existential premises of the identification and auto-creation of his literary agent/protagonist as a modern man or one taking stock of the experience of modernity. As a result of the overlapping of the order of argument and the historical context, this study is multi-pronged.

It is at once a description of Różewicz's narrative utterances; the model of the individual and collective identity in the 20th century, as had been tested in his narratives; and a quasi-biographical sketch on the writer himself and his textual image.

If we bear in mind the initial questions of the study, this composition is functional, because the study's initial problem is the dependence of the individual's self-knowledge (self-determination) on the social and cultural meaning of his/her experiences or, in narrativist terms, the link between biographical story and the narrative of identity and collective memory. The book's theme and main focus of description are paradigmatic stories of modern man, which give meaning to his narratives about himself, the contemporary world, and the past. Of the underlying stories, I mostly addressed those that were of particular importance for Różewicz as a Polish writer or for the Polish reception of his work, e.g. national meta-history; collective memory and heroic biography; the discourse of a cultured state; the ideology of the "new man", civilizational progress, and political and cultural emancipation of the lower sections of society; the tradition of the nobility and the Mediterranean myth; the nationalist narrative of the "Regained Territories"; the consumer society project; a modern formula of (auto)biographism; and reflections on the common and corporeal experience of the individual. I described these premises of identity in Różewicz's prose not only as grand identity narratives in specific literary, reportage, journalist, memoirist, and current-affairs narratives, but also as a combination of fiction, biographical story, and social discourse and, indirectly, as textual self-creation, a partial and continuously revised autobiography. From this perspective, I treated Różewicz's prose as a textualized "dialogue" between the familiar, common, symbolic, and historical in the consciousness of modern man on one hand, and the personal, existential-corporeal, common, immediate, and undomesticated in his experience on the other.

Reading this "dialogue" leads one to the conclusion that Tadeusz Różewicz did not, save for exceptional circumstances, reject any identity narratives to affirm others, but – increasingly more clearly – used them to assemble prosaized, biographically-oriented stories, non-final and polyphonic, testable in the context of daily existence and the body, open to revision. Identity in the writer's prose was becoming more individual and authentic not through ideological choice or because of its arbitrary reduction to a private dimension, but, most importantly, because he created a narrative of modern man as a (re)construction, a story in the process of "revision", a textual attempt at unifying man's agency and social identification, undertaken, however, with the awareness that when "zero hour" strikes, every symbolic whole is intellectually and morally suspect.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The chapter "Biographical Identity and Signature" is an amended and expanded version of the article *Sygnatura i autobiograficzne "ja" (Tadeusz Różewicz w "kościele jednostki")*, in: *Podmiot w literaturze polskiej po 1989 roku. Antropologiczne aspekty konstrukcji*, ed. Ż. Nalewajk, Warszawa 2011; part of the chapter "I, the Reader" was published as an article, entitled *Homo lector* Tadeusza Różewicza, in: *Po(granicza) teorii*, eds E. Rychter, M. Bielecki, Wałbrzych 2010; three texts, whose edited fragments were incorporated into the chapter "Space in Narrative", were published as conference proceedings after the conferences "Nowy regionalizm? Badawczy rekonesans i zarys perspektyw" (Zielona Góra, 11–12 October 2012), "Czytanie Różewicza" (Radomsko, 12–13 October 2012) and "Pamięć – Obcość – Zaangażowanie. Tendencje w rozwoju literatury polskiej i niemieckiej po 1989/1990 roku" (Wrocław, 7–9 November 2012).

SUMMARY

As Andrzej Mencwel observed, "as a result of fundamental histori-cal changes" the need arises for "restructuring of the whole pre-sent memory and tradition system" (Rodzinna Europa po raz pierwszy). Changes of such significance took place in Poland during the Second World War and several following decades. Collective experience of that time was made up of – apart from political antagonisms – social and cultural phenomena such as change of elites, reinterpretation of their grand narratives (or symbolic world), the ultimate inclusion of the masses into the national project based on the post-gentry tradition and national history, the intensive development of urban lifestyle and the expansion of popular culture, industrialization and the process of forming a single-nationality state that diverted from the politics of domination over east-ern neighbors and, instead, focused on developing the so-called Polish Western and Northern Lands. Tadeusz Różewicz's work referred to these experiences on both the intellectual and biographical level.

Comparing Juliusz Mieroszewski's political journalism with Tadeusz Różewicz's works, Andrzej Mencwel stressed its unique relationship of the author of Niepokój. According to him, both writers were writing as though "they had truly experienced the end of the world" (Przedwiośnie czy potop. Studium postaw polskich w XX wieku). In the afterword to

the German anthology of Różewicz's works, Karl Dedecius mentioned "Stunde Null" ("hour zero") as the founding experience of his writing. It was this experience that induced him to undertake the challenge of attempting a new collective and national as well as individual self-identification, searching for a radically new way of thinking and writing about man, and verifying the essential components of his identity. Andrzej Walicki called this urge "the catastrophism after a catastrophe", explaining that "once the catastrophe took place, a ca- tastrophist acknowledging its inevitability must think about 'a new beginning', about determining his own place in a new world" (Zniewolony umysł po latach). Hanna Gosk specifies that "it gave rise to situations when the necessity of discovering one's place in new geographical, social, axiological and world-view-related environment urged self-identification" (Bohater swoich czasów. Postać literacka w powojennej prozie polskiej o tematyce współczesnej). It must be stressed that the need for re-establishing the sense of identity, resulting from a major crisis, was by no means limited to the postwar artistic and political elites. On the contrary, due to social changes and democratization of the access to national culture, it concerned more than ever in the past the "everyman" who did not belong to one class solely: the intelligentsia, bourgeoisie, peasantry, or proletariat but, most often, represented multiple social rooting. Tadeusz Różewicz, alongside with writers such as Tadeusz Borowski, Marek Hłasko or Miron Białoszewski, made the "Polish everyman" (Tadeusz Drewnowski) the central figure of his work.

This study discusses the modern identity of an individual in Poland in two variants: a cultured man with traditions and an ordinary, transitional, temporal, or "new", man. By adopting the narrativist approach, identity can be described through its articulations in culture, for example in literary texts. Analyzing methods of modern identification and self-awareness throughout this book, I try to prove that prose works of the

author of Śmierć w starych dekoracjach present an extensive, interesting and diverse material in the matter. When necessary, I refer also to his dramatic works and poetry, especially to some longer poems published after 1989. The author's most important prose works have so far been written in the first 30-year period starting from his debut volume of partisan novellas, notes and humorous sketches Echa leśne mimeographed in 1944. While focusing on this period, I also analyze later works published in collections Nasz starszy brat and Matka odchodzi published in the last decade of the 20th century, although written at an earlier date. Różewicz's prose works analyzed here were published predominantly in the threevolume edition of Utwory zebrane in 2003/2004, in the reportage collection entitled Kartki z Węgier (1953) as well as in the collection of newspapers features, letters and notes – written in the 60s. and 70s. in most cases – entitled Margines, ale… (2010). I also make use of the earlier editions of his works, containing prose works not included in Utwory zebrane, for example, from the volume Opadły liście z drzew, as well as of some narratives published in journals and anthologies. Conversations with the writer published in Wbrew sobie. Rozmowy z Tadeuszem Różewiczem (2011) and his letters to Jerzy and Zofia Nowosielscy included in Korespondencja comprise an auxiliary material.

What specifically draws my attention in Tadeusz Różewicz's prose? I read his works in the context of identity narratives manifest in culture and historical-biographical stories. The questions then arise about their formative influence on an individual: what within them presents a reference for the "self" seeking identification? When and how does individual experience take on an intersubjective meaning? Under what circumstances is it expressed in the public sphere? Have new identification patterns emerged in the Polish modernity, and if so, then what fields and phenomena of the 20th century culture or history have taken on such model significance? How and where were boundaries drawn be-

tween what is individual in an identity of a person speaking and thinking in Polish on the one hand, and, on the other, what is collective? What has been considered native in this identity, and what alien – for example Western, bourgeois, communist, German, Jewish, non-normative in terms of religion or sexuality – and in what way has cultural "otherness" been constructed at that time? Trying to answer these questions, I refer to categories of cultural anthropology such as symbolic universe, collective memory, autobiographical identity, body and space in culture, as well as to notions from the social sciences – interpersonal relationship, public discourse and communicative community. To put it simply, using these categories I try to describe the most important narrative forms and topics of Różewicz's prose that allow the writer to address and express in a literary form identity problems faced by an individual and the community. I also attempt to analyze the very proces through which Różewicz develops his own unique identity narratives as well as the evolution of narrative conventions of his literary work. Reading Różewicz's works in this manner and organizing chapters of this book from the ones presenting public identity (displayed publicly and codified in ideology or aesthetic) to the ones presenting private identity, I put an especial emphasis on some issues related to cultural studies and social communication. According to the reconstruction model, I assume that even private experiences shape one's identity through culture and language. In Różewicz's narratives I describe and compare both more collective and more individual premises for constructing identity. The criterion for differentiating between these premises is determined by the narrativist approach adopted in this book. An individual's identity (even autobiographical one) is created and expressed within the existing culture and public sphere, and for this reason I am interested in history of ideas, in social relationships, symbols and role models, changes of customs and everyday life which left a distinct impression on literary, political or historical narratives. Reading

these narratives, I make use of the following authors: Jan Assmann, Jean Baudrillard, Zygmunt Bauman, Ernst Cassirer, Michel Foucault, Marc Fumaroli, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jerzy Jedlicki, Anthony Giddens, Izabela Kowalczyk, Philippe Lejeune, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Stanisław Ossowski, Ewa Rewers, Paul Ricoeur, Richard Rorty, Elżbieta Rybicka, Richard Shusterman, Georg Simmel, Jerzy Szacki, Magdalena Środa, Charles Taylor, Nikodem Bończa Tomaszewski, Christian Vandendorpe, Anna Wieczorkiewicz. I rely on their reconstruction of social-historical background of modern identity presented by these authors as well as on language used by them.

The book structure results from the overlapping, or even conflict, of two research objectives. My task is to analyze the most important premises and forms of identity in Różewicz's prose, and I describe them in separate chapters as problems of culture, literature and history of ideas as well as models and social projects. It is my wish that all these perspectives make up a coherent identity narrative of man of the second half of the 20th century – a "biographical" case study. The study covers the process of political empowerment of an individual; his/her participation in democratized mass culture; his/her attitude towards collective memory, towards Polish and European cultural community; experiencing of body, sexuality and everyday existence; emotional and social relationship with space; and, finally, an autobiographical identity which I reconstruct as a transitional and provisional "whole". One of the most significant issues covered in the book is the western orientation of Polish collective identity in the 20th century, related to the modernization of Central Europe and the postwar division of the continent by the Iron Curtain, which created in Poland a phantom idea of the West, as well as to the shifted borders of the Polish state to the territories by the Odra river and the Baltic Sea, to polonization of former German lands, and, finally, to historical and political discourse legitimizing this transfer of territories. Tadeusz Różewicz as

a travelling writer and journalist has relentlessly problematized the relationship between Europe and its Polish idea; as a resident in Gliwice and Wrocław, not only has he described – since the trip down the Odra river on a fishing boat from Koźle to Szczecin in 1947 – symbolic colonization of the post- German Nadodrze, but also artistically diagnosed the birth of the new individual and social identity of the inhabitants of this border area, with its clashing narratives of history, biography and national literature alongside the overlapping traces of different cultures and traditions.

Writing about Różewicz's man in this book, I clearly do not mean the writer himself. It is obvious that among many convictions and attitudes that the author of Sobowtór manifests, there are some of which he is fond, and there are others of which he is not. I do not disregard his views voiced in non-fiction narratives and public speeches, yet I am mostly interested in experience, world view and self-comprehension of his literary persona and literary hero presented or partially derived from an idea of man and of community in his texts. Analyzing Różewicz's works, I therefore distinguish between his self-evident journalistic approach and his humanistic reflection which is a result of a philosophical or literary presentation of identity problems an individual faces. I read his prose as an element of a public discourse and at the same time as an indirect – formulated in fictional, intimate or notebook narratives – criticism of social reality and European culture in the 20th century. In most cases, I leave open questions such as whether or not Różewicz was or is committed to a specific political project; whether or not he is a modern man in different meanings of this notion; whether or not his personal identity coincides with identity narratives in his books. Finding an answer to these questions is not a purpose of this book. It is, distinctively, the problem of Tadeusz Różewicz's intellectual commitment to modern culture, literature and history and a problem of the writer's role in creative and critical understanding of them that I find more interesting and important.