



Writing **Literature**, Reading **Society**.

Power, Politics and Economy
in Contemporary Literary Production

28–29 October 2013
Kraków, Poland

The Krakow Voivodeship Public Library
1 Rajska street (room **315**)

- 2** Program
- 4** Keynote speakers
- 8** Conference participants
- 23** Chairpersons
- 24** Map

9.00–10.00 Registration & coffee

10.00–10.15 Opening and welcome

10.15–13.00 Session 1:
Literature – Politics – Society (chaired by JAN SOWA)

Keynote lecture:
WALTER BENN MICHAELS, *The Beauty of a Social Problem: Beyond Poststructuralism, Postmodernism and Even Postcommunism*

Discussion

HÜLYA BULUT,
ÖZGE SOYLU BOZDAÇ,
The Transformation of Sufism and Conservatism in the Turkish Literature: Love and Dervish Gate

ALEXANDER KURE,
The Use of Revolutionary Aesthetics in Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo's The Trial of Dedan Kimathi and Bate Besong's Requiem for the Last Kaiser

Discussion

VIKTORIA GRIVINA,
"A Nice Virus": Predicting Counterculture Fiction via Modern World Taboos

GARIMA KALITA AND UDDIPANA KALITA,
Reading and The Process of Subversion

Discussion

13.00–14.00 Lunch break

14.00–17.00 Session 2:
Against Sociologists (chaired by MARIA KOBIELSKA)

Keynote lecture:
MICHAŁ PAWEŁ MARKOWSKI, *Who Needs Sociology of Literature? Politics and Literature reexamined*

Discussion

15.00–15.15 Coffee break

PAWEŁ SZYPOWSKI,
Why Literature Cannot Believe in Society Too Much

PAWEŁ WOLSKI,
Who Needs Holocaust Studies? Writing Structurally, Reading Corporeally

Discussion

TOMASZ KITLIŃSKI,
Society's Hospitality to the Other? Sociologies of Literature in Poland and Beyond

ELŻBIETA OKROY,
EWA OKROY,
Toward a New Society – Beyond Language

17.00–17.15 Coffee break

17.15–20.00 Session 3:
Writers – Institutions – Market (chaired by ALICJA PAŁĘCKA)

Keynote lecture:
GRZEGORZ JANKOWICZ, *Dubravka Ugrešić's Socio-political View upon Literature*

Discussion

MAGDALENA NOWICKA,
Writers, Public Intellectuals and Entrepreneurs of the Self: Economy of the Literary Public Sphere

MONIKA POPOW,
The Emancipation of Creatives. Literature in Time of Cognitive Capitalism

Discussion

MACIEJ JAKUBOWIAK,
New Polish Literature Under the Law

GÖKHAN MÜLAYIM,
Processes of Marketization of Kurdish Books in Turkey

9.30–10.00 Coffee

10.00–12.45 Session 1:
Writing and/against Identity (chaired by MICHAŁ SOWIŃSKI)

Keynote lecture:
JENNIFER ASHTON, *Labor and the Lyric: The Politics of Self-Expression in Contemporary American Poetry*

Discussion

KAROLINA KRASUSKA,
Always Localize! Maria Komornicka/Piotr Odmieniec Włast and Polish Feminist/Queer Criticism

JĘDRZEJ BURSZA,
Against the Galactic Suburbia. American Radical Feminism and Science Fiction

Discussion

MARTA KORONKIEWICZ,
Does This Poem Work for You?

PIOTR SOBOLCZYK,
The Anxiety of (Social) Influence

12.45–13.45 Lunch break

13.45–16.45 Session 2:
Literature and the Constitution of Society (chaired by KRZYSZTOF WOLAŃSKI)

Keynote lecture:

PRZEMYSŁAW CZAPLIŃSKI, *Games in literature. The rules and rates of contemporary literary life in Poland*

Discussion

14.45–15.00 Coffee break

KAMIL RUSIŁOWICZ,
Writing Poland as the Other of Marxist Geographical Materialism

PAWEŁ KACZMARSKI,
The Common Reader Goes Shopping

Discussion

OKSANA LYKHOZHON,
The Concept of Europe in Literature. Writing Europe – Making the Union?

STANLEY BILL,
Uses of Theory: "Postcolonialism" and the Polish Right

16.45–17.00 Coffee break

17.00–19.45 Session 3:
New Media – New Society? (chaired by ANNA NACHER)

Keynote lecture:

NICK MONTFORT, *Electronic Literature and Other Forms of Popular Creative Computing*

MACIEJ MARYL,
Sociology of Literature Goes Online: Concepts, Problems, Methods

LIDIA GAŚOWSKA,
Beyond fan fiction. Writing as a desire

Discussion

EMILIA BRANNY-JANKOWSKA,
American and Polish Cybertext Writers on the Society and its Media

JAGODA CIERNIAK,
Piotr Siwecki: Avant-garde Activity as a Form of Resistance against the Publishing Market

19.45–20.00 The Moment of Conclusion

■ Jennifer Ashton

Labor and the Lyric: The Politics of Self- -Expression in Contem- porary American Poetry

Although it would be something of an exaggeration to claim that lyric is liberalism's poetic form, it's no exaggeration at all to say that attacking and defending lyric has been poetry's neoliberal form, particularly in the U.S. In our period, lyric as a privileged form of self-expression has become virtually synonymous with poetry itself. And reinventing poetry has been, since the 1970s, the project of either repudiating or resurrecting the lyric, such that its repudiation has meant the refusal of self-expression, and its resurrection, when it hasn't been simply a matter of embracing self-expression, has often meant its refusal as well. Another way to say this would be to say that the poetic practice that has coincided with the fortunes (and misfortunes) of liberalism has largely revolved around the fortunes (and misfortunes) of the self. Or to put this only slightly differently: the history of the lyric since the 1970s is the history of the advent and adventures of human capital in poetry.

"Labor and the Lyric" takes as its subject two very recent installations in this history of what we might call "post-human capital": the post-"post-racial" imaginary that has anchored identity-driven poetry in the U.S. since Barack Obama's first presidential election in 2008, and the "post-human" imaginary that has anchored poetic responses to climatological and financial crisis in the U.S. during the same period. These two apparently unrelated strands in recent poetic discourse represent two versions of an identical logic. In the first poetry maintains the fantasy of the self in the absence of

its expression, while the second offers the fantasy of self-expression in the absence of a self. In short, we find ourselves with a poetics that mirrors the fantasy of unregulated markets – in which what it means to express something is to mean nothing at all. Meaning nothing at all, meanwhile, is now what passes for a politics.

JENNIFER ASHTON is a professor of American literature at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her main fields of interest are 20th- and 21st-century American poetry and literary theory. She has published articles on modern and contemporary American poetry, with a particular interest in the history of the lyric and the theoretical, aesthetic, and political commitments that have sometimes attached to it. These concerns were in part the subject matter of her first book, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: American Poetry and Theory in the Twentieth Century* (2006).

■ Przemysław Czapliński

Games in literature. The rules and rates of contemporary literary life in Poland

I recognize – not the first, nor only in the wake of Bourdieu – that literature is a game. It differs from other games, because it can absorb the social phenomena of communication, transforming them into its own game rules. Over the last quarter-century Polish literature played most of all – which is not to say: only – in three games: a game of identity, game of the media, game of society.

First of these games was to add to social communication heroes who have questioned the

normative collective identity that Polish culture has developed in the 80s. This game went on till half of the first decade of the twenty-first century, that is, until it challenged the legitimacy of normative identity, moving from now on in a continuous discursive struggle to determine the validity of all identity.

Under the conditions of anomie, when no one can gain a monopoly on defining the collective identity, and means of communication become the game tool. This movement was launched in 1976, at the time of the creation of the so-called independent circuit, strengthened and transformed into a dynamic pattern in the mid-80s – with the formation of a third circuit. In this circuit (represented mainly by fanzines and small publications) for the first time on a large scale has been used domestic production means to produce the means of communication – one-time newspapers, magazines, paperback books, pirate radio stations. At the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first century, this process is carried out both in the mass variant (newspapers, publishing houses), environmental variant (fandoms, fan fiction movement) and individual one (so called self-publishing), enriched further with the creation of autonomous agents of consecration (awards). These facts confirm that means of communication become the condition of communicative autonomy – it is not a user who has the autonomy, but a person who determines the terms of use.

The combination of the two games leads up to launch the third game – play of society. Participants in the game have the tools of (relative and propagated) autonomy through independence to determine its own identity and with the ability to manufacture the media. The new game, which is revealed to them, is that the collective identity proposed by a literary work and the game of media proposed by a literary work situate the reader beyond the existing social games – within new ones. It is a game of post-society rather than of society; a game of survival rather than game of planning the future; a game of sub-media rather than of

mass-media. Thus the very reception of a literary text becomes a participation in a society that communicates differently, and that plays a different game of existing.

PRZEMYSŁAW CZAPLIŃSKI is a literary critic and professor of contemporary literature at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He is a jury member of many important literary awards, and one of the most important Polish researchers in the field of literary sociology. He is the author of *Ślady przełomu. O prozie polskiej 1976–1996* (1997), *Efekt bierności. Literatura w czasie normalnym* (2004), *Polska do wymiany. Późna nowoczesność i nasze wielkie narracje* (2009), and *Resztki nowoczesności* (2011).

■ Grzegorz Jankowicz

Dubravka Ugrešić's Socio-political View upon Literature

In her essay "Karaoke Culture" Dubravka Ugrešić examines various modes of cultural participation that resemble the karaoke performance. In Japanese 'karaoke' means "hollow orchestra" and this meaning works as a foundation for Ugrešić's critical insights. The new technologies and media allow any individual to remain anonymous and to transcend some of the cultural and social barriers while performing a song or some other forms of art. These modes of participation are liberating only to a certain extent since the 'karaoke' performer functions within given framework and codes (genres, media, technical tools). According to Ugrešić there is a substantial difference between democratic idea that everyone can act freely if they want to and democratic practice according to which everyone wants to act because there is something on offer. In my presentation I will focus on the social and political consequences of karaoke mechanisms for the contemporary cultural (especially literary) systems.

GRZEGORZ JANKOWICZ is a critic, philologist, essayist, editor and translator. He works with the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the Jagiellonian University (Poland). Jankowicz has translated into Polish the work of such authors as R. Firbank, G. Perec, R. Rorty and S. Žižek. A co-host of TV shows broadcast by TV Kultura, including Czytelnia oraz Poezjem. He has taught, among other things, Polish literature at Indiana University in Bloomington (USA). Jankowicz collaborates with the Korporacja Ha! Art Foundation as Deputy President and Editor of two publishing series: Linia krytyczna and Proza obca. Editor of Tygodnik Powszechny's cultural section.

■ **Michał Paweł Markowski**
Who needs sociology of literature? Politics and Literature reexamined

In this presentation the relation between politics and literature is reexamined and acquires new meanings. Beginning with a critique of the term "sociology of literature" as a misleading, the author – drawing examples from Flaubert, Kafka, Orwell, and Gombrowicz – embarks on redefining "the political" as applied to literature. The main thesis is that politics, since Aristotle, has been performed as the gesture of separating of truth from fiction, art from life, and the public from the private. This attempt at keeping those two realms at bay is political through and through. From this point of view what was assigned as withdrawing from politics unexpectedly seems to confirm it and what tried to remain untouched by politics turns into its essential enactment.

MICHAŁ PAWEŁ MARKOWSKI is a professor of Polish literature at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. He explores the fields of 20th-century literature, philosophy and literary theory, specializing in French poststructuralist thought.

He is the author of *Efekt inskrypcji. Jacques Derrida i literatura* (1997), *Nietzsche. Filozofia interpretacji* (1997), *Identity and Interpretation* (2003), *Polska literatura nowoczesna. Leśmian, Schulz, Witkacy* (2008).

■ **Walter Benn Michaels**
The Beauty of a Social Problem: Beyond Poststructuralism, Postmodernism and Even Postcommunism

This paper is about the political economy of the work of art – and especially of the idea of form – in neoliberal societies. Its goal is to show the degree to which supposedly egalitarian theoretical and social movements have in fact contributed to the creation of an increasingly unequal society, and the ways in which the work of art has become (but need not remain) a technology for justifying those inequalities.

WALTER BENN MICHAELS is a professor of American literature at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is a literary theorist and the author of *Against Theory* (1982, with Steven Knapp), *Our America: Nativism, Modernism and Pluralism* (1995) and *The Shape of the Signifier: 1967 to the End of History* (2004). Michaels's work has generated a set of arguments and questions around issues central to literary studies: culture and race, national and personal identities, the difference between memory and history, disagreement and difference, and meaning and intention in interpretation.

■ **Nick Montfort**
Electronic Literature and Other Forms of Popular Creative Computing

The practice now known as electronic literature includes the creation of digital poetry, hypertext fiction, interactive fiction, story and

poetry generators, and other projects that bring together computational techniques with literary engagement – concern for poetics, fiction, narrative, voice, concept, and the like. By considering specific examples of electronic literature, I show how this practice has been a bottom-up phenomenon driven by the effort and ingenuity of individuals, including many writer/programmers, and small, informal groups of collaborators. In its impulse, electronic literature is in direct contrast to the mass-market concept of e-books as promulgated by conglomerate publishers, Internet retailers, and consumer electronics companies, a concept which has arisen out of industrial and commercial concerns rather than literary ones. In the realm of literature and in digital media, electronic literature is not unique in emerging from small-scale, distributed efforts. To situate it among related popular practices, I describe several other types of "creative computing," including game development by individual designer/programmers and the productions of the demoscene. I conclude by arguing that the

project of electronic literature will be carried on in future decades not by means of the division of labor that typifies corporate society, and by those who fit into existing job descriptions and categories, but by individuals by who can both write and program, people who can bring these capabilities together to develop radically new insights and approaches.

NICK MONTFORT is a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the creator, critic, and theorist of digital media particularly focused on the intersection of computing and writing practice; author and programmer of interactive fiction, poetry generators, and other digital literary systems. Author of *Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction* (2009), *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System 2005*, co-editor of *New Media Reader* (2005). He blogs about digital media and other topics, writes poems in unusual forms, and frequently collaborates with writer/programmers and others on online literary projects.

Conference participants

Stanley Bill *Uses of Theory: Postcolonialism and the Polish Right*

The theme of this conference assumes a complete lack of interest in social and economic issues among mainstream literary theorists in Eastern Europe, while hoping to confront the most insightful inquiries into literary production in the East with the most inspiring social and literary theory from the West. In this paper, I propose to discuss an unexpected area within Polish literary, cultural and political life where a similar confrontation has already taken place specifically, in the appropriation of postcolonial theory by various scholars, journalists and literary writers associated with the Polish conservative Right.

In recent years, writers hostile to the present Polish government or, more generally, to the political order of the post-1989 Third Polish Republic have used the rhetoric of postcolonialism as a critical weapon. This means taking the very term postcolonialism together with its associated concepts and applying it directly to the Polish context. In short, Polish political and cultural elites are allegedly still subject to a subordinate mentality inherited from years of subjugation under Soviet and imperial rule. This line of argument certainly makes some sense, and yet the postcolonial move on the Polish Right remains highly surprising. After all, postcolonial theory in the West owes a great deal to Marxist, post-modern and feminist theories none of which are especially dear to Polish conservatives. So why and how do conservative writers and theorists utilize postcolonial theory in Poland?

In my analysis, I would propose to examine literary writers (including the poets Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz and Wojciech Wencel),

journalistic writers (including Rafał Ziemkiewicz and Paweł Lisicki), and literary scholars (including Ewa Thompson). In all these cases, I shall treat the use of postcolonial theory – drawn wholesale from foreign sources – as a conscious strategy employed in direct and polemical response to social and political realities in contemporary Poland.

STANLEY BILL – PhD at Northwestern University (USA), Comparative Literary Studies. He has published papers on the writings of Czesław Miłosz and Bruno Schulz. He also translates Polish fiction and non-fiction.

Emilia Branny-Jankowska *American and Polish Cybertext Writers on the Society and its Media*

The classics of American hypertext focus very much on the new media and warn against the changes they bring to the modern society. Joyce's *afternoon* is built upon an opposition between nature and technology, where technology is the essence of evil. The protagonist is a poet who had become a salesman in an IT company, which led to the destruction of his marriage and, indirectly, to the death of his wife and son in an accident he caused. However, Joyce's hypertext is at the same time an apology of new technology whenever it is used as a tool to create poetry which contests the rational, the male and the technocratic ways of mastering the world.

Stuart Moulthrop, the author of *Hegirascope*, is also critical about hypertext and its political and sociological implications. In one of his talks he warns that [a]t its worst, the Web is a complex amusement holding the attention of

smart people while mega-capital creates a more perfect Imperium. The key motif returning in *Hegirascope* is a bodiless hegira, being a sort of schizofrenia experienced by the protagonists unable to distinguish between the real and the strange sort of dream they are immersed in.

This state of mind is a metaphor of the Internet experience. At the same time, Moulthrop's work is strongly ironic in presenting the user with a kaleidoscope of loosely tied lexias which makes the user trace the similarities, the differences and the tensions. Thus Moulthrop criticizes the quality of hypertext that was so much praised by Joyce the shift towards the fragmented, the networked, the unstable and the unfinished. However, the hypertext such as *Hegirascope* may again become an agent of change, if it "overheats" the medium (in the sense given to this term by Marshall McLuhan), thus provoking it to change into its reversal, yet unknown.

Similar strategies are used by some contemporary Polish new media writers who strongly contest the order of the contemporary society. The new media are explored and used by the Polish authors alongside with the traditional ones. The sociological and cultural change that is in the center of their art is the change in communication, brought about by modern capitalism of the media age. The communication in question privileges repetition over reasoning, enhances the detail and exposes the sensual. Logic becomes a mere technique remaining on the surface of the communication, but in fact being subject to the play of instincts and desires captured in suggestive images. New media are perceived as a vehicle but not the centre of this change. Sławomir Shuty contests the modern society in a similar way as Moulthrop – by the ironic overuse of its communication patterns in his novels and short stories. His works focus on the behavior patterns of the individuals who are ridiculous as much as they are immersed in the new culture.

Perfokarta poetry seems very different from Shuty's work but it has one thing in common with all the above-mentioned works. They try to contest and escape the regime of meaning as it

is imposed by society and its media. They also do it from the inside, using the same vehicles and mechanisms as society does. Their play with the materiality of the sign is also a way of bringing the interactive, the repetitive and the sensual to its extreme.

My talk would compare selected American and Polish new media writers' view on the problems of the technology and communication in the modern society and the role of art in this context. The theoretical background would be mainly new media theory (especially the McLuhanite idea of overheating the medium).

EMILIA BRANNY-JANKOWSKA is a freelance researcher in the field of electronic literature and cybertext. She is an author of a number of publications in the field of cybertext theory and new media literature, as well as natural language processing. She gained her PhD in literary studies in 2010 at the Jagiellonian University, where she presented a thesis under the title: *Cybertext. Methodology and interpretation*. Much of it was prepared in Norway, where she worked for a year as a Marie Curie EST researcher. Since 2005 she is also an IT Engineer, having finished the M.Sc. studies at the University of Technology on Kraków. She prepared a curriculum and taught a course on Internet art at cultural studies at Jagiellonian University in 2010/2011. Currently she works as an IT consultant, hoping to find a university affiliation as a researcher one day.

Hulya Bulut, Özge Soylu Bozdağ *The Transformation of Sufism and Conservatism in Turkish Literature: Love and Dervish gate*

The "Mevlevilik" (Mawlawi) order was founded in 1273 by Mevlana Celaleddini Rûmî's (1207–1273) followers after his death. The Mevlevi became a well-established Sufi order in the Ottoman Empire by Sultan Veleđ. The Mawlawi believe in performing their dhikr in the form of a dance

and musical ceremony known as the Sama, which involves the whirling from which the order acquired its nickname. The Sema represents a mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through mind and love to the Perfect.

Rûmi's poetry has influenced Persian literature as well as Urdu, Punjabi, Turkish and other Iranian, Turkic and Indic languages written in Perso-Arabic script, such as Pashto, Ottoman Turkish, Chagatai and Sindhi.

Rûmi believed passionately in the use of music, poetry and dance as a path for reaching God. For Rumi, music helped devotees to focus their whole being on the divine and to do this so intensely that the soul was both destroyed and resurrected.

Today, Mevlevilik can be found in many Turkish communities throughout the world, but the most active and famous places for their activity are still Konya and Istanbul. In Turkish literature you can see traces of Mevlevilik in books by conservative writers (Peyami Safa, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Safiye Erol, etc.). Through the ideas expressed in these writers' books (novels, collections of short stories), conservatism is transferred to readers. After the general election in 2002, AKP made up the government in Turkey, and after a while conservatism came to the center. In other words, conservatism is no longer a marginal force. We can also see a shift towards a conservative point of view in literature. Mevlevilik is a popular theme in many novels that have become bestsellers.

At this point it is interesting to examine the writers who are focused on Mevlevilik in their novels. In our paper we wish to study the novels of Elif Safak and Ahmet Ümit, who are the most popular writers in Turkey (both Elif Safak's *Love* and Ahmet Ümit's *Dervish Gate* were published in 2009). We will examine how Mevlevilik is presented in their books and discuss the themes of Mevlevilik and conservatism with the help of Pierre Bourdieu's notions. In this way, we will give meaning to the transformation of conservatism in Turkish literature by examining the phenomenon of writers placing conservative themes in their

books in order to attract more attention in the literary sphere.

HULYA BULUT – BA in the Department of Art History at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and MA in the Department of Turkish Literature at Bilkent University (Turkey). She is currently lecturing Turkish for Native Speakers at Boğaziçi University (Turkey) and is also a PhD student in the Sociology Department at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University.

ÖZGE SOYLU BOZDAĞ – postgraduate student of the Media Department at Marmara University and MA in the Department of Turkish Literature at Bilkent University (Turkey). She is currently working as an instructor in the Department of Turkish Language at Sabancı University.

■ **Jędrzej Burszta**
**Against the Galactic Suburbia:
American Radical Feminism
and Science Fiction**

In 1975, feminist writer Joanna Russ published *The Female Man*, a postmodern science fiction novel celebrated within feminist circles as one of the most influential literary works exploring women's oppression. *The Female Man* is embedded in the radical feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and uses the science fiction genre to portray the lives of several female characters from the past and future, who can be viewed as exemplifications of issues discussed and criticized by radical feminist activists. In addition to her science fiction work, Joanna Russ was also active in academic feminism, publishing volumes of essays on women's role in literature (e.g. *How to Suppress Women's Writing, To Write Like a Woman: Essays in Feminism and Science Fiction*). This paper will explore the significant relation of the science fiction genre as a framework for revolutionary thought, a subversive literary practice famously defined by Darko Suvin as cognitive estrangement, which

encourages readers to imagine alternative realities and therefore question present-day culture and society. Russ's *The Female Man*, as well as other sci-fi novels written in the period between the late 1960s and 1970s equipped with a strong leftist sentiment, critically links the cultural with the political, giving voice to those marginalized by mainstream society, while providing a futuristic framework within which it can assess the ideological basis of the American radical feminism of the seventies.

JĘDRZEJ BURSZTA – MA in cultural studies at University of Warsaw (Poland), Institute of Polish Culture and MA in American studies at University of Warsaw, American Studies Center. Areas of interest: anthropology of literature, cultural studies, ethnography, science fiction studies, American studies.

■ **Jagoda Cierniak**
**Piotr Siwecki: Avant-garde
Activity as a Form of Resistance
against the Publishing Market**

This paper is an attempt at classifying Piotr Siwecki's artistic projects as a kind of resistance strategy against the world of late capitalism. His works, in this context, aim at rejection of the inside/outside systematic opposition. In my paper I will describe the author's activity as an independent researcher and self-publisher, and will analyze the critical and subversive potential of his literary works and publishing activity. Taking into consideration the manifesto of Mark Amerika, an attempt will be made to prove that Siwecki's literature can be regarded as a form of intervention conducted within the framework of *the society of spectacle*. The meaning of contestation in Piotr Siwecki's works will be defined through analyzing the acts of postproduction and hypertext narration of his works.

JAGODA CIERNIAK – postgraduate student at Jagiellonian University (Poland), Contemporary

Culture Studies. She is an editor-in-chief of PROwincja magazine. Her interests include different aspects of contestation in art, new media and counter-culture.

■ **Lidia Gąsowska**
**Beyond fan fiction.
Writing as a desire**

Fan fiction feeds on what is popular. Fan-stories live as long as the book or film attractiveness of the plot of *Harry Potter* or the vampires from *The Twilight*. Nevertheless, fan fiction posted on the Internet never dies entirely, sometimes taking economic place in the long tail. Once in a while the authors of fan fiction bring back the memory of the heroes of popular films, TV series and books. Writing and reading become an illusive ritual of writing and reading oneself through amateur fictional stories. Desires, dreams, aspirations and the view of the world (mostly of a young girl) become a canvas of fan fiction stories and tell a lot about their authors.

The fansite movement on the Internet triggers specific solidarity between writers and readers which is contradictory to its dehumanizing image. The fansite practice of writing and reading emphasizes everything that unites rather than what divides, of course, in a distributed and temporary way. This is not a story divided in consultation with other rational individuals, but a myth, in which we participate (reproducing the stereotype of Mary Sue with desirable personality traits and physical appearance, a farewell to great narratives). It turns out that in reality the characters (heroes), the saints as well as the symbolic figures, are not created by original authors, but by their fans. Without practicing the fan movement, these are, indeed, ideal types, but also empty forms, arrays, which come to life when they are recognized, if we recognize ourselves in them and allow them / ourselves to join the community. Analyzing the fansite movement and the fan fiction practiced on the Internet from a sociologist's and anthropologist's point of view one may notice

Janus face of the fans (in accordance with the formula Today I love you, tomorrow I hate you), a trick, the will to live expressed by the multiplicity of rituals, situation, gestures and experiences. Everyday life is based on relative and intersecting freedoms. The social life flourishes as a black market, giving itself to a more or less complicated exchange of gifts, as it is stated by Maffesoli and Jenkins, and the fansite movement is in the gray zone without paying royalties to the authors of the original work.

LIDIA GAŚOWSKA – MA in Administrative law and Polish Philology at Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski (Poland) and PhD in Popular Literature and Literary Theory at UWM, works as a teacher. Her publications include: *Rozpoznawalne i popularne. Rozpoznać schemat i odtworzyć historię – na przykładzie wybranych (o)powieści fantasy i Moda na fan fiction, czyli jak fan tworzy fikcję i jak jej używa*. Areas of interest: media arts, media in cultural context, literature in the digital age, narrative theory.

■ **Viktoria Grivina**
**A Nice Virus: Predicting
Counterculture Fiction
via Modern Word Taboos**

When asked if books still have any impact on contemporary society, as a literary scholar, I say 'yes'. I explain my answer simply: if books had no impact, nobody would think to ban them, and as a consequence, there would be no banned or forbidden books in the world. However, even as recently as 2012 Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* was excluded from all public libraries in the seemingly liberal state of South Korea. It is also true that in different times and cultural spaces taboos on the written word have varied dramatically. What was considered obscene, for example, in Victorian Britain (words such as 'trousers', 'leg' or 'belly') is neutral nowadays.

Omissions and taboos have been successfully employed by literature and art which,

whether in full awareness or not, have overstepped conventionalities of the norm, or, as we might say, have transgressed boundaries and in this way allowed a common vocabulary to expand with it.

I have recently participated in a 'Youth in Action' program where I carried out an experiment aimed to determine which topics are most painful to speak about among contemporary young people from different cultural backgrounds. I attempted to make a prognosis of what kind of literature might be considered transgressive or might be banned by the time these youths became a definitive force in their due environments. A test was taken by participants from 4 countries comprising both old and young democracies: Spain, Georgia, Hungary and Ukraine. Interestingly, it brought varying and at times perplexing results. In my report I will present these results and also compare selected forbidden topics with works of well-known counterculture icons William S. Burroughs and Chuck Palahniuk.

VIKTORIA GRIVINA – postgraduate student of the Department of Foreign Literature at Kharkiv University (Ukraine). Topic of dissertation: *William S. Burroughs in context of contemporary transgressive fiction*.

■ **Maciej Jakubowiak**
**New Polish Literature
Under the Law**

In his *Rules of Art*, Pierre Bourdieu writes about the law (*nomos*) that rules the literary field. This law is at the same time immanent and transcendent, as it structures the literary field (creating hierarchies, divisions and distinctions), but also regulates accession into the field. Moreover, the law – understood as a rule and as an authority – is situated as a central motive of Bourdieu's analysis of the literary field, even though his perspective may seem mainly economically oriented.

I would like to supplement Bourdieu's concept of *nomos* by referring to a different, more particular understanding of the law, namely to the part of the modern legislature which is directly concerned with cultural production, functioning in continental Europe as *author's rights*, and in the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition as *copyright*. It is widely accepted by Law and Literature scholars that the ideological base for the modern author's rights is the Romantic concept of an author as an individual, original genius. This idea, adapted to modern modes of (not only cultural) production, also structures contemporary legislature in this field. In consequence, an author's rights silently privilege literary (and generally artistic or aesthetic) practices which follow, even unconsciously, the Romantic concept of an author and of a work as an original (that is: not having any antecedents) entirety which belongs to its author. On the other hand, it suppresses – using mainly a legal concept of plagiarism – other literary practices differentiating from the Romantic paradigm.

In my paper I would like to explore how this suppression functions in contemporary Polish literature. Among the questions I would like to pose are: which particular literary practices are privileged by the author's rights, and which are discarded as non-legitimate or even illegal; how the modern legislature structures the literary field in Poland; what are the relations between the literary field on the one hand, and the legal and economic fields on the other.

These kinds of questions are mainly raised within today's discussions of digital media and changing modes of cultural production stimulated by the Internet. I would, however, like to apply this kind of critical perspective to the literary field which, at first sight, may seem distant from these problems, but – as I will argue – is deeply connected with today's controversies regarding author's rights.

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■ **Paweł Kaczmarski**
**The Common Reader
Goes Shopping**

In my paper I would like to analyze how the re-emergence of the figure of "common reader" in today's sociological and anthropological discourse serves as a means to suppress and erase any possibility of a political, subversive reading of contemporary literature. The common reader, first developed as a separate quasi-theoretical construct in the 19th century (by writers and essayists, including, of course, Virginia Woolf), in today's literary criticism as well as in the mainstream journalism has become something of a key concept, steering the discussion about literature towards the categories of *lifestyle* and away from the questions of social change. While being praised by many as an egalitarian agent inside the elitist Academy, its main function is to invalidate most of the fundamental political questions one could ask with regard to the contemporary novel and poetry: questions of class, structural inequalities, social justice. As more and more critics and journalists claim to know what the common reader might or might not be interested in, the focus on their market-driven *taste* replaces the question of their *needs*; the latter from now on belongs to the private space of an individual. We the literary critics, theorists, the University in general no longer desire to know who our fellow-readers *are*; we just want to know what they *like*. One of the results of this is the redefinition of the term *realism* in different works of fiction.

I would like to reflect on how our mere sympathy towards the common readers is, in fact, an act of power; and, as a limited solution to the current situation, I will recall some of the ideas developed by members of the Situationist International and their spiritual followers.

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■ Garima Kalita,
Uddipana Kalita
**Reading and the Process
of Subversion**

The process of reading involves a conscious strategy of attention, exploration and analysis, however mundane and simple. The reader is, in fact, an architect of modules that are personal, social, cultural and political. But this does not in any way presuppose a conscious orchestration on the part of the reader, as the narrative power hides underneath metaphors and the hyperbolic passion of the author. The simple joy of aesthetics is often turned into meaningful endeavors if authors such as Brecht or Dickens either proffer sharp social analysis and pointed commentary or weave stories of social realism. Accepting these authors as points of departure, writing neo-narratives of contemporary history would deflect the egocentricity of individuals in the frogpondium. It is beyond doubt that to transform or ‘write’ is by no means easy. To say the least, it requires dogged determination and unflinching commitment. Still, a fundamental question remains, which in the wake of the advent and passing off of postmodernism is gaining ground, namely, whether the radical structural difference as defined by Frederic Jameson between the historicities of the consumer society of today and the earlier moments of capitalism is a recurring phenomenon. If this break or shift is a reasonable historical growth, does it anticipate an anti-postmodernist or even post-postmodernist stance? How is the cultural logic of capitalism validated?

The reading of literature and society, together or separately, is in fact a complicated and complex process involving power dynamics in politics, culture and economics. The author-reader nexus in a subterranean manner dissolves, yet at times overlaps the dialectic between the individual and the collective. How society confronts the challenges posed would largely be determined by collating literary matrices with meaningful dialogic relationships of societal concerns. Within these parameters, the hyperactive role played by the media and market in literary output needs to be analyzed objectively.

■ Tomasz Kitliński
**Society's Hospitality
to the Other: Sociologies
of Literature in Poland
and Beyond**

Referring to the title of Michał Paweł Markowski’s lecture ‘Who Needs Sociology of Literature?’, my objective is to explore contemporary sociologies of literature *d’après* Pierre Bourdieu, faced with the East European experience of otherness and writing-reading. Are literary studies, and generally the (post)humanities, hospitable to the problems of society? Is literary criticism socially engaged? Are sociologies of literature hospitable to the Other? I examine the *oeuvre* of Maria Janion (b. 1926) who began her career within Stefan Żółkiewski’s project of the sociology of literature. Professor Janion is a forerunner of Jewish, feminist and queer literary criticism in Eastern Europe. A pioneer, she has opened up new vistas in literary theory and history, and, generally, has pushed Poland’s humanities into more inclusive and subversive territories. Janion has discovered, reclaimed and celebrated alterity in society; she has also served as a public intellectual for the cause of women and minorities. In my interpretation, Janion has authored an OTHER (psycho) sociology or philosophy of literature, exploring *Niesamowita Słowańszczyzna*, the uncanny Eastern Europe. My methodology derives from Julia

Kristeva’s *sémanalyse* and in particular her East European meditation ‘Bulgaria, ma souffrance’.

TOMASZ KITLIŃSKI – MPhil at Université Paris 7, supervised by Julia Kristeva, and PhD at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. He was a Fulbright scholar at the New School for Social Research in New York. Books: *The Stranger Is in Ourselves. To Love according to Julia Kristeva*, (with P. Leszkowicz) *Love and Democracy. Reflections on the Queer Question in Poland*, (with A. Reid) *Parallel Lines* and (with C. Hurford) *Love. Hate. Contributions to collected volumes*. Activist for minority, labour and refugee rights.

■ Marta Koronkiewicz
**Does This Poem
Work for You?**

The starting point of my paper is the social function of poetry, as understood by Adrienne Rich in her late essays. According to Rich, the single most important function or capacity delivered by poetry today is that of a constant reminder, continuously reminding us of the things that we *might want* (as individuals as well as a society), our forgotten or buried desires, our paradoxical as it may seem forgotten future. In her manifesto *Poetry and Commitment*, Rich – referring to her favorite literary works repeats one question: does this poem *work*? What is its *work* or *labour*? In other words, Rich asks about the ways in which poetry intervenes in one’s life how, with all its formal aspects and aesthetic mechanisms, it enables us to imagine an *everyday life* different from the one we already have. In my paper I would like to compare Rich’s point of view to that of Franco Bifo Berardi in his last book *Uprising. Poetry and Finance*; there, the Italian philosopher sees poetry as something potentially able to defeat the there-is-no-alternative ideology of today’s economics. Using Polish poetry of the last ten years or so as an example, I would like to reflect on what is the actual *work* of a poem the work that enables the possible to be seen as such.

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■ Karolina Krasuska
**Always Localize!
Maria Komornicka/
Piotr Odmieniec Włast
and Polish Feminist/
Queer Criticism**

In post-1990 Polish feminist and queer criticism the modernist writer Maria Komornicka/Piotr Odmieniec Włast has functioned as a paradigm for gender or sexual “transgression” (Ritz). His transition has been interpreted as reflecting anything from “spiritual transsexualism” designed to fight patriarchy (Janion) through “phantasmatic lesbian[ism]” (Filipiak) to “addiction to her desire,” leading to this “transgender act” (Cuprjak). Komornicka/Włast has definitely helped the development of feminist/queer criticism in Poland, but has this criticism – which has quite often simply been an application of Western theory to the Polish context – really helped in understanding Komornicka/Włast’s texts in their specific temporal and spatial location? Using recent approaches from transnational studies and intersectional analysis, this paper looks at what is at stake when gender studies concepts “travel.” It shows how such “locational readings” can help understand Komornicka/Włast’s texts and, as a result, be productive for Polish (gender) theory.

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— Alexander Kure
The Use of Revolutionary Aesthetics in Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Gathae Mugo's The Trial of Dedan Kimathi and Bate Besong's Requiem for the Last Kaiser

Modern African (postcolonial) playwrights have continuously displayed an overt political social commitment that is best described at most as revolutionary and at least as radical in their clear and growing tendency away from the conventional notions enshrined in the bulk of African writings as viewed by Eurocentric literary critics. Such revolutionary tendencies, exposed in both matter and manner, are noticeable not only in their opposition to imperialism and concern for the lower class in society but also their emphasis on the fact that socialism (which is very similar to pre-colonial Africa's traditional practice of communal existence) is the very best option for raising such postcolonial societies out of the situation they have found themselves in. In terms of manner, in a bid to deconstruct established dramatic paradigms, playwrights completely violate the Aristotelian tenets of playwriting in their plots, characterisation, structure and use of language, to embark on a series of stylistic experiments that disorder our expectation of coherence (Ruthven 7). In addition, their aesthetic vision creates an alternative tradition which presents drama as a social force and an ideological weapon for man's struggle for emancipation. Therefore, this paper shows, from a critical Marxist perspective, how the selected playwrights, Ngugi wa Thiong'o / Micere Gathae Mugo, from Kenya, and Bate Besong, from Cameroun, in their plays *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976) and *Requiem for the Last Kaiser* (1991) respectively, manipulate dramatic techniques in order to explore and expose the

terrible reality that characterises their societies, and to show how drama can be used as an instrument of revolution/radical change in Africa.

ALEXANDER KURE – Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, Head, Department of English and Drama and Director, General Studies Program in Kaduna State University, Kaduna-Nigeria. Member of the Linguistics Association of Nigeria (LAN), Nigerian English Studies Association (NESA), and English Language Teachers Association of Nigeria (ELTAN). His major research interest is: Comparative Literature as it interrogates gender, peace/conflict resolution and environmental issues.

— Maciej Maryl
Sociology of Literature Goes Online: Concepts, Problems, Methods

This paper focuses on the influence electronic technologies of communication have on both the institution of literature (understood as a cultural practice of writing, distributing, reading and evaluating literary texts) and the ways we study it.

I begin with analyzing how technologies of production and distribution have reshaped the institution of literature over centuries. The stress is put on the digital turn viewed in the perspective of previous transformations (invention of writing, print and the advent of mass printing industry). Then I trace the influence of those transformations on the way the institution literature was conceptualized by scholars. The main discussion will cover the conceptions from the era of mass printing. I focus on such authors as Raymond Williams, Robert Escarpit, Stefan Żółkiewski and Janusz Lalewicz, pointing out to some links between the Polish and Western sociology of literature as well as claiming the importance of their writings for contemporary scholarship.

The main and final part of the paper is dedicated to the literary life online. In the light of previous discussions I define the subject of analysis.

The Internet will be treated as both research subject and research material, which means that on the one hand I discuss how new communication technologies have reshaped the literary life and, on the other, I present a methodology of online research which takes the advantage of the electronic form of the data. The areas of interest of the online sociology of literature will be discussed on the example of my own research into writers' websites, literary institutions and reading communities on the web.

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— Gökhan Mülayim
Processes of Marketization of Kurdish Books in Turkey

The aim of this paper is to examine the processes of marketization of Kurdish books in Turkey, with a focus on the production and distribution/circulation of these cultural commodities. Kurdish, as a "minor language", has been situated at the intersection of the subjection/assimilation and resistance/politicization dimensions of the Kurdish Question in Turkey. From the inception of the republic to the present, Kurds in Turkey have been continuously subjected to the state's policies of assimilation of Kurdish identity in general and Kurdish language in particular. As the symbol of Kurdish identity, the language was banned and excluded from the public sphere in 1924. That is why, for decades, procuring works of literature in and through Kurdish was difficult and limited to underground political and intellectual circles in Turkey. Only after the ban on the public use of Kurdish was partially lifted in 1991, literary production in this language has proliferated within the public sphere. Nonetheless, works

of literature in Kurdish have gained negligible publicity largely due to the consequences of the long history of attempts at linguistic assimilation (such as: the devalued image of Kurdish, lack of an educational system in Kurdish and lack of an established standard for the dialects) and also due to the governmentality (beyond the legal freedoms) of the market. Although this particular case of literary production provides us with a peculiar example of the question of autonomy of the field (the Kurdish literary field has been equivocally autonomous, rather than autonomous), how these cultural goods are produced, distributed and consumed calls for particular scrutiny. Therefore, what I would like to examine in this paper is the processes of marketization, especially production and circulation, of Kurdish books under the shadow of these instituted obstacles. The main argument of this paper is that the marketization of Kurdish books has been made possible through political/ethical and symbolic modulations of actors and networks rather than the classic economics of a cultural field of production.

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— Magdalena Nowicka
Writers, Public Intellectuals and Entrepreneurs of the Self: Economy of the Literary Public Sphere

This paper discusses the changing public roles of writers in times of neoliberalism, mediocracy and proliferation of moral dilemmas in modern societies. Despite the constantly diagnosed crisis of the writer's ethos as a public intellectual and

an ethical authority, literature can still stimulate public debate on social matters, focusing the conflict on the figure of a controversial author. Being considered members of a symbolic elite (Bourdieu, van Dijk), writers are expected to remain external actors in the media-economy system of fame and celebrity production. Simultaneously, writers are becoming the subjects of self-promotion practices, which reduce their status to an object of consumption.

This ambiguity can be reflected in the categories of Michel Foucault's late works. From a Foucauldian and postfoucauldian perspective, writers should be regarded as hybrid subjects produced by anonymous relations of power as the elements of media and culture *dispositive*. In consequence, a writer can be seen as an *entrepreneur of the self* an individual directed by the rationality of microeconomics and the responsibility of self-adjustment to the mainstream of culture. Moreover, the famous notion of the Habermasian literary public sphere is being reduced to or rather displaced by an interplay between the *subjectification* of a writer as a political and economic figure and his resistance as a medium of practical reason.

MAGDALENA NOWICKA – Assistant Professor in the Institute of Sociology of the University of Lodz (Poland). Her recent publications are: *Ist Dispositiv nur ein Modebegriff? Zur Poetik des dispositif turns?* and *Żyd, czarownica i stara szafa. O konstruowaniu żydowskości autorów piszących o trudnej przeszłości*. Academic interests: social communication, post-Foucauldian discourse analysis, collective memory, post-colonial studies, the legacy of Edward W. Said and its redefinitions in Eastern Europe.

■ **Elżbieta Okroy, Ewa Okroy**
Toward a New Society – Beyond Language

In this presentation, the notion of minor literature described by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari is

confronted with J. Rancière's concept of distribution of the sensible. Relations will be explored between politics and aesthetics in the social order and its transgression.

Minor literature is defined through: the deterritorialization of language, the political element and the collective value. Deterritorialization is described as the impossibility of not writing. It is related to issues of finding a voice within a language that is both unfamiliar and common. On the one hand, the concept of becoming-minor converges with processes of subjectivisation referring to becoming-other. On the other hand, minor literature becomes a way of mediating a group within a major language and a major society.

According to J. Rancière, literature is founded on the distribution of the sensible. His work describes the emancipation process of labour in the 19th century. It points out literature as historically determined, connected with politics of aesthetics. Thus, literature becomes politics the field of producing and effecting by everyday experience a distinct organization of the sensible depends on a distinct aesthetics.

The paper ends with an examination of Deleuze's and Rancière's approaches in the context of research of Polish literature after the political transformation of 1989. It focuses on a few examples of the relation between the literary act and the social order.

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■ **Lykhozhon Oksana**
The Concept of Europe in Literature. Writing Europe Making the Union?

We always keep saying that literature reflects all the social and political changes even before they take place. So we can easily say that there were a lot of writers, philosophers and other people of art who began to speak about Europe before the Union: Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, Alexandre Kojève and others.

But what had happened in writers' minds when we've got the union?

So the subject matter of this research is the creative activity of George Stainer, Malcolm Bradbury, Lars Ayer, William T. Vollmann, Milan Kundera, Czesław Miłosz, Manuela Gretkowska, Andrzej Stasiuk, Marek Krajewski and Yuriy Andrukhovych. The object matter of this research is the concept of Europe in their literary activity.

The first thing to be mentioned is that the realization of the concept of Europe really depends on the country the writer comes from. There are at least 5 groups of different realizations of the concept of Europe. For example, in Central and Eastern European literatures' this concept often realizes in opposition of the images My country which is not perfect, but it has the great history (nostalgia), Western Europe, which doesn't want to accept my country and

Aggressive East, which wants to tear my country away from the civilized Europe (very often this East is Russia or the Soviet Union).

But what about those parts of Europe which have never been doubted to be Europe, which have always been considered as the civilized West? What about American writers who wrote about Europe in the 19th century as it was their lost motherland? What about the opposition between America and Europe, as Jean Baudrillard called the first one «The ideal Europe»?

So the objective of this research is to find out how writers write Europe and how it correlates with the political changes.

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■ **Monika Popow**
The Emancipation of Creativity: Literature in a Time of Cognitive Capitalism

In my paper I will focus on one of the leading concepts of critical theory – the concept of emancipation. The question I am going to ask is whether today's literature and literary market provide a possibility for individual (both reader and writer) and collective (society, social classes) emancipation. There is no doubt that nowadays literature is strongly impacted by economy, which shapes our views of intellectual work and our notion of labour in general. It is believed that immaterial work is a contemporary form of production. Creativity is a central concept of cognitive capitalism. Therefore, writers and artists, as members of the creative class, are becoming contemporary manufacturers, producing, above all, knowledge. The role of art and literature is increasing with the growing volumes of sales and rising prices, while

writers are often subjected to precarious working conditions. Due to this fact, the potential of literature as social criticism may be weakened.

However, literature is also changing under the influence of alternative forms of self-expression. The canon is being questioned and the concept of high literature is being displaced by more democratic forms. Its social significance is also subjected to the influence of mass culture.

Taking into consideration the context presented above, I am going to analyse the role of literature in the processes of social and individual emancipation. I will be asking what it means to be a writer in cognitive capitalism. Does literature have emancipatory potential, and under what conditions is this emancipation possible? Who is emancipated by whom? What kind of social class do writers make up? Is it possible to create alliances with other social actors (e.g. activists)? I will attempt to answer these and other questions considering the role of contemporary literature in the emancipatory processes.

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■ **Kamil Rusiłowicz**
Writing Poland as the Other
of Marxist Geographical
Materialism

When thinkers such as David Harvey, Fredric Jameson, or Edward Soja conduct their research on the contemporary social construction of space, they seem to follow the flow of capital, inevitably heading toward the metropolis. Similarly, Hardt and Negri replace the industrial town with the metropolis, the major feature of which becomes

the ability to create encounters. As a consequence, a new postmodern subject has been situated within the chronotope of a post-Fordist city, in a post-national world of flexible accumulation. What is more, the social geography of the world has been remapped, and the new map leaves out spaces that do not fit the new economic order. Within these uncharted territories live those who, for various reasons, were unable to adapt. Therefore, while it seems possible to rethink national literatures of countries that at least partially completed the transition from Fordist economy to flexible accumulation (a good example may be Paul Giles's *The Global Remapping of American Literature*), such remapping turns out to be at least problematic when it comes to countries that have no metropolises, yet the literatures of which struggle with the similar contemporary problems of identity, space, or history as those faced by Western societies.

The purpose of my paper is to address the issue of a post-communist space as represented in the literature of Polish writers born in the 1970s. By juxtaposing major contemporary theories of the social construction of space with the model of a post-communist chronotope distilled from the contemporary Polish literature, my paper will aim at showing that writing (and, consequently, theorizing) a postmodern subject is an activity dependent on postmodern theories of space best applicable to advanced Western societies. However, in the contemporary world of the mass media, it is almost impossible to think a pre-postmodern subject, a subject that does not take responsibility for his or her narrative biography. Which means that in Polish literature it often happens that the postmodern subject is being inserted into a pre-postmodern space. Therefore, my paper will aim at showing that contemporary Polish literature is in fact a laboratory where issues mostly neglected by Marxist geographical materialism are being actively discussed.

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depictions of houses in contemporary American literature. The author of *U progu eksplozji: kryzys tożsamości w prozie pokolenia lat siedemdziesiątych* and co-editor of *Americascapes: Americans in/and their Diverse Sceneries*.

■ **Piotr Sobolczyk**
The anxiety of
(social) influence

This paper ostensibly refers to Harold Bloom's categories of the anxiety of influence. I treat Bloom's theory as an immanentist one, i.e. text/aesthetics/personality-oriented, which is specific to the time in which the theory was developed. However, at least since the 1980s there has occurred a visible change towards a socialization of the whole field of human sciences (as observed by Alain Finkielkraut). Bloom's proposition might well serve the purpose of describing high modernism, but nowadays the fears and anxieties among writers and their readers are different. I want to appropriate and resignify Bloom's categories and intermingle them with the concepts of social psychology. My main point is that in the current field of literary production the writer who desires success the conditions of that desire I describe according to Bourdieu oscillates between the old myth of a writer as an independent and autonomous genius, and the new conditions that require of him social commitments, writing on burning social issues, participation etc. I am mostly interested in the rhetorical aspect of reading literary work as contributing partly to the autonomy myth and the strategies of introducing social issues, especially queer sexualities, which is my area of expertise. For example, *Senność* by Wojciech Kuczok could be read as a defense of the writer's status and at the same time an engaged pro-gay novel, in which the writer, in a slalom of rhetorical figures and political correctness, creates a positive image of a gay person, gathering himself cultural capital as an important writer of our changing times.

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■ **Paweł Szypowski**
Why Literature Can Not
Believe in Society Too Much

In my paper I would like to position myself somewhat counter to the idea of the conference, namely in the region of Derridean thought. I aim to introduce a polemic with the conference's hopes and beliefs, which I find, on the one hand, justified, while on the other too far-reaching. As I do not see a *radical* difference between such thinkers as Spivak, Butler and Derrida, I hope not to become too heretical.

I contend that in binding together literature and the social-political sphere we may misunderstand, firstly, the character of literature itself, and secondly, the significance of the above-mentioned sphere. Then there is a risk of giving the social perspective the discursive primacy. Every human subject is (or ought to be) organized (by itself, according to his/her freedom but also by literature) by socially vital concepts, trends and events according to one of the meta-physical implications of the primacy. Since being this subject equals active participation in social changes and being well informed in current social issues, giving such primacy means to constitute domination over a subject's engagement, knowledge, presence and future. Defining social cases as being of prime interest, it consequently constrains and closes the domain of the social, for on the same level there is nothing other and outside of which or with relation to which a new sense could be born. The need for privileging social questions over others resembles the situation

in which some realists prefer questions on hard scientific topics such as the status of neutrino, for a certain answer should prove for them the existence of fact and reality.

On the other hand, taking into account the Derridean concept of writing and literature as the very possibility of freedom of speech it's impossible to make any sphere prime. Literature exceeds and dismantles any kind of tantalization. It makes every social intervention (*sic!*) by definition a failure in the sense that we do not have a full orientation of what we are doing, what causes our deeds or to whom we address our intentions, or even who we are. Moreover, since the act of writing always testifies for a singularity, writing demands a kind of *gelassenheit*, stepping back from the known social-political sphere of senses. Where to? Into a private and special sensibility. I would like to demonstrate this in greater detail with examples from the prose of Polish writers Marcin Świetlicki and Dorota Masłowska.

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■ Paweł Wolski
**Who Needs Holocaust Studies?
 Writing Structurally,
 Reading Corporeally**

Holocaust studies area branch of knowledge very often believed to be a conservative one; however, at the same time, they seems to follow and include the newest, sometimes revolutionary trends in philosophy and literary studies. Examples include animal studies (D. LaCapra), women studies (J. Ringelheim, B. Karwowska), postcolonial studies (M. Hirsh) etc., but on

a closer inspection it is hard to perceive this process merely as an interdisciplinary fluctuation of ideas. The process consists of something else. That something else is an inner contradiction inscribed in the genre of the (Holocaust) testimony, namely: being in and out of it, conveying the objective truth and confirming it by virtue of a witness who was there.

As such, Holocaust studies may serve as a litmus test for the global changes in human studies as a whole, which tend to turn away from the notions of sign, structure etc. towards categories such as gender, economics of everyday life, non- normative narratives etc., but at the same time seem to have trouble finding a way around the old literary and human studies language. This is also observable in Polish literary studies, where phenomena such as the work of Michał Głowiński prove that Holocaust studies area discipline allowing for a surprising shift: as an author of a classic theoretical text "Cztery typy fikcji literackiej" this prominent researcher represents quite a different stance than the one observable in his Holocaust studies' volume "Stosowności forma".

In the paper, I will prove that Holocaust studies, even in their most conservative form, represent the striving of contemporary human studies to include issues such as the body of the author, the corporeal narrative context, the autobiographical, personal, political, social context etc. in their theory.

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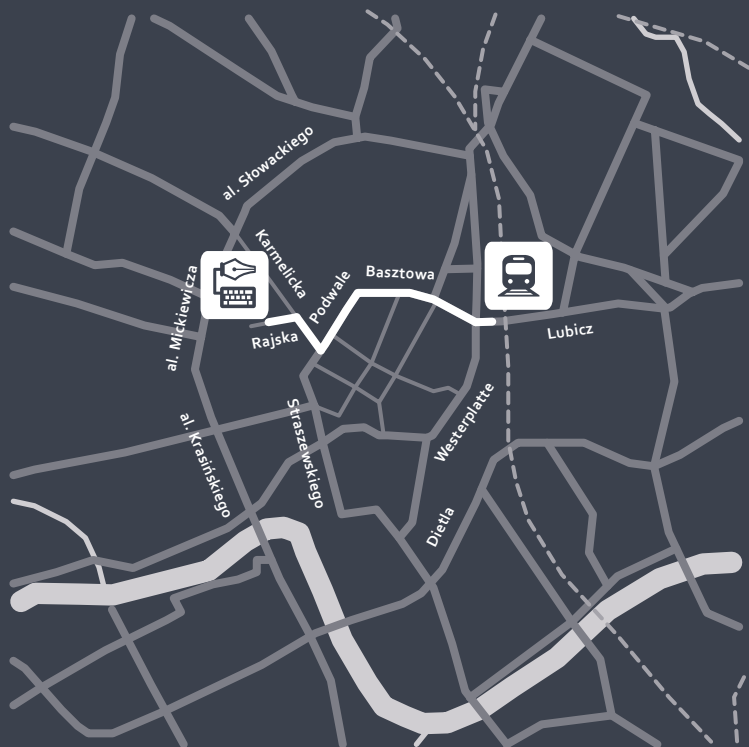
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International Conference
**Writing Literature, Reading Society.
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in Contemporary Literary Production**
Organized by Fundacja Korporacja ha!art
as a part of the "Post-1989 Polish literature
in light of Pierre Bourdieu's theory"

The conference founded by
the National Science Center research grant
number 2011/01/D/HS2/05129
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