



Mateusz Antoniuk

The Pleasure of the Pre-Text
The Text-Making Process as a Question
for Polish “Literary Studies of/in the Future”

This article concerns the theory and practice of a variety of approaches to the literary creative process. The main thesis is that scholarship of this kind – quite popular outside of Poland – may be seen as interesting proposition and simultaneously as a challenge for contemporary (and future) Polish literary criticism. The author argues that Polish genetic criticism stays in touch with both the “cultural turn” and the idea of the “return to the philology.” In conclusion, the category of the “trace” and its applicability for the purposes of genetic criticism is discussed.

Keywords: genetic criticism, creative process, literary draft, cultural turn, philology, trace

Tomasz Cieślak-Sokołowski

The Return of Close Reading
in Contemporary Interpretations of 20th Century Literatures

The present article offers an insight into contemporary discussions concerning the category of close reading. It is in such a context that the author is able to shed light upon the special status of such forms of contemporary literary criticism that do not attempt to change paradigms, but rather are organized by gestures of corrections and reconfiguration. Postulating the “return of close reading,” the author departs from the basic tenets of New Criticism to illustrate some of the more recent concepts of what close reading is today and how they affect the interpretation of contemporary works of literature and, by extension, texts of culture.

Keywords: close reading, New Criticism, interpretation, 20th century literature

Michał Krzykowski

What after French Theory? A Troublesome Legacy

The goal of the present article is a critical reading of the legacy of the French theory, which exerted a powerful impact upon the shape of the discourse of contemporary literary studies in Poland. Insofar as “practising theory,” which has, by and large, replaced “practising literature,” indeed revived the Polish humanities in the 1990s, today the real epistemological potential of the poststructural theoretical instruments seems to be fading. The subsequent “turns,” proclaimed in the milieu of the “new” humanities seem to endorse the intellectual status quo, because they take place within the limits of the same paradigm, to which their purely declarative character testifies. The literary scholarship of/in the future will therefore be the scholarship of retreat.

Keywords: French theory, literary scholarship, poststructuralism, theoretical paradigms

Michał Larek

McLuhan. Another Literary History

The author of the present article revisits McLuhan's important, albeit rarely discussed, 1962 monograph *The Gutenberg Galaxy. The Making of Typographic Man*, in which the father of contemporary media studies manifests himself as a literary scholar, a historian of culture and a critic of the philosophical tradition of the West. Larek re-traces the scholar's reflection upon the impact of the civilizational transformation triggered by the invention of print not only in terms of the "literary" consequences of the birth of the idea of mechanical reproduction, but – more importantly – in terms of the change in the self-awareness of the western man. *The Gutenberg Galaxy* is thus an "antibook" by means of which McLuhan plays with – and challenges – patterns of thinking formed as a result of the birth of the new medium, indicating that Gutenberg's invention has degraded awareness subjugating it to the discipline of the social machinery, whose directives it automatically carries out. Gutenberg's man is a creator whose most important text-generating tool is montage; yet, the above notwithstanding, the reader's interaction with a printed page, which gave birth to new formulas of philosophical doubting, underlies the evolution of contemporary criticism. Thus oriented, McLuhan's alternative literary history avoids interpretation: pragmatic and technologically inclined, such a history understands a text as a material entity, which impacts humankind in more ways than the hermeneutic tradition of literary scholarship would be ready to admit.

Keywords: McLuhan, Gutenberg, criticism, awareness, non-hermeneutic literary history

Adrian Gleń

A Report on the Condition of the Critical Discourse in Poland

The article is an attempt to describe the condition of the discourse of literary criticism as practiced in Poland. The author investigates the process of gradual impoverishment and despecification of the language of literary criticism, which reveals itself via diverse socio-literary phenomena, such as the demand for shortenings and evaluative character of literary criticism, the places where literary criticism appears, the disappearance of the quality of the dialogue, and the way literary criticism functions in the Polish contemporary publishing market. A separate part of these considerations is devoted to the overview of the critics' approaches to the condition of the discourse of literary criticism and the discussion of the postulate of the "privatization" of literary criticism.

Keywords: literary criticism, Poland, critical discourse, scholarly publishing, academic dialog

Tomasz Cieślak-Sokołowski

"Opening the Great Parable"

On Zbigniew Herbert's Writing of One of His Poems

The main objective of the present article is to offer a reading of Zbigniew Herbert's manuscripts, drawing upon French and British theories of genetic criticism. The author

analyzes the physical shape of the page and the stages of the making of the poem with reference to specific examples based on materials collected in the Zbigniew Herbert archive at the National Library of Poland.

Keywords: genetic criticism, Zbigniew Herbert, manuscript studies, writing process

Maciej Jakubowiak

Cultural Studies on Copyright Law

The goal of the article is to present and analyze the key problems of cultural studies on copyright law – a relatively new area of literary and cultural research, developed mostly in the United States since 1980s. The main objective of thus oriented research is to introduce an alternative perspective to studies traditionally carried out by copyright lawyers – a perspective allowing one to recognize the complexity of ways in which legal solutions may impact cultural practice. The article chronologically discusses the most important publications representing this subdiscipline, including text by such authors as Martha Woodmansee, Mark Rose, Paul K. Saint-Amour and Caren Irr. The critical presentation of the material focuses on ways of defining relations between copyright law and literature, on the impact of analyses carried out within this model upon our understanding of the cultural phenomena under discussion, and – last but not least – on research methods within the area. Additionally, the argument presented in the article serves the purpose of deriving a more general formula of thinking about literature from the existing research and of confronting it with other modes of reflection about the relations obtaining between various disciplines of academic research.

Keywords: cultural studies on copyright law, copyright, authorship, impact of legal solutions upon cultural practice

