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„Point of View” as an Anthropological and Narrative Category in Nonfiction Prose.

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My subject belongs to the area of narratology studies that concerns typical literary structures present in narratives not being works of art. The most widely known studies of such kind are related with the concept of metahistory formulated by Hayden White. The first Polish researcher who shared a similar literary “zeitgeist” was probably Michał Głowiński with his study *Document as a Novel*.² This frame includes a specific issue that is of my interest, namely the notion of “a point of view” as a narrative and anthropological category. This category might be applied, firstly, in analyses of forms stuck in the traditionally understood center of literariness, secondly, in reference to bordering literary forms (after Ryszard Nycz: eccentric or silvic), and thirdly, in relation to texts beyond traditional scope of literature, therefore documentary or scientific texts. What is also crucial in examining the

¹ This is a slightly modified version of the paper delivered at the international scientific conference *Storytelling in Light of Comparative Studies* organized by the Institute of Literature and Poetics Theory and Team of Anthropology of Storytelling at the Polish Studies Faculty of the Warsaw University, May 2003.

² M. Głowiński *Document as a novel*, [in]: *Studies of Narration*, ed. J. Błoński and others, Wrocław 1982; ct. also: *Literary Statement v. Philosophical Statement*, ed. M. Głowiński, J. Stawiński, Wrocław 1982; M. Głowiński *Literary Studies among Other Disciplines*, [in]: *The Humanities at the Turn of the Centuries*, ed. J. Koziół, Warsaw 1990; M. Głowiński *Poetics In view of non-literary texts*, in: id., *Poetics and Surroundings*, Warsaw 1993; A. Zawadzki *Philosophical Text as Subject of Historical Poetics' Competence*, [in]: id., *Contemporary Philosophical Essay Writing in the Polish Literature of the First Half of the 20th century*, Cracow 2001; A. Ochocki *Philosophical history*, [in]: *Practices of Storytelling*, ed. B. Owczarek, Z. Mitosek, W. Grajewski, Cracow 2001; K. Rosner *Narration, Identity, and Time*, Cracow 2003.

"point of view" category is the genre convention employed in a given narrative text regardless of the fact whether they are purely literary genres, the bordering ones such as essay, autobiography and diary, or finally, scientific elaborations such as a thesis, a treatise or a monograph.

A sharp outline of an anthropological point of view is most easily noticed when an encounter of different cultural circles results in a narrative statement and such examples exclusively will be analyzed in this paper.³ It is necessary to take into account the cultural identity of an author of such statement, the specificity of the cultural circle subjected to observation and the cultural identity of recipients to whom the statement is addressed. There are a few possible variants:

- 1 The author and the described environment have common identity, while the addressee is different. In such case the author speaks of the world of his or her own culture in order to present it to others;
- 2 The author speaks about a different world in order to present it to readers from his or her own community who have not yet had an opportunity to learn about a new cultural circle;
- 3 The author speaks about the world which is not his or hers and wishes to introduce readers from this other world to his or her opinions about it.

Each time a different configuration comes out and, in a simplified manner, it can be described as:

- 1 Me about my own to others (identity of the sender and the subject, otherness of the reader);
- 2 Me about the other to my own (identity of the sender and the addressee, otherness of the subject);
- 3 Me about the other to others (otherness of the sender towards both the subject and the reader).

In order to present the problem more clearly, I will now put aside instances of complex cultural identity, when the anthropological point of view of the author is shaped by two cultures at the same time or a purposefully chosen multi-culture phenomenon becomes the subject of the story. I do not assume, however, that the homogeneous identity is closed because such identity would be a serious obstacle in the very intercultural contact and consequently, in creating narration about the world that is different from one's own or narration addressed to the reader from outside one's own community. In fact, closeness is only possible in the second variant i.e. me to my own about the others, who are considered strangers. Then this variant takes on the extreme form: me to my own about the enemy (the hostile).

It is quite different with the recipient's cultural identity than in the case of the sender and the subject of narration because, in practice, the address inscribed in the text is often two-fold: changes take place only within the hierarchy of two types of readers. Speaking of our own world to others, we should not rule out a possibility that readers of their own community will find out how they have been presented

³ I deal with a different aspect of this phenomenon than Janusz Krzywicki in his study *Storytelling on the Border of Cultures: African Literatures*, in: *Practices of Storytelling...*

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to others by their compatriot. And the other way round: speaking to our own community about the other world we cannot be sure that the readers who belong to the described cultural circle will never get to know the narration that treats about them, although it was not intended for their eyes. A spectacular example of such – not designed by the author but evidently realized by him or her – real duplicity of the recipient is Astolph de Custine's *Russia in 1839*. It is visible in his *Foreword* edited three years after writing the book, consisting of letters from the journey around the country of tsars.

I never forget that, first of all, I write for France and I think that I should present it with facts which are useful and important to it. I believe that if my conscience tells me so, I may even be the most severe judge of the country where my friends are.⁴

The fact that the author already in the course of writing the book was aware of the second – next to his compatriots – group of his future readers having completely different attitudes, is demonstrated in an earlier *passus* from the *Foreword*:

Unusual interest in my work expressed by the Russians, visibly anxious about my reserve displayed in conversations, made me think that I'm equipped with more power than I have ever attributed to myself; I sharpened my attention and caution because I quickly realized danger to which my frankness could expose me to. Not daring to send my letters via mail, I kept them all hidden with extraordinary prudence as if they were aggravating documents. (22)

The pertinence of de Custine's identification of possible duality of responses to his writing was proven in later turbulent history of the book reception, maybe not less interesting than the work itself. Subsequent editions were bought up with such enthusiasm that pirate copies were even published. On the other hand, de Custine was fiercely opposed in brochures (published in France and Germany) inspired by the tsarist government as well as in articles of the part of French press following the doctrine of not annoying Russia.⁵ Therefore, even if we only enlist examples of unequivocal cultural identity of both the sender and the subject of narration, we need to consent to the fact that, in practice, on the recipient's side we may inevitably encounter the more or less vivid duality of the address the text reaches.

Let us mention a few – diverse in terms of the genre – examples of narrative non-fiction emerging on the border of distinct cultural circles. My selection includes texts that are quite well-known, translated into several languages and known outside Poland. These are: *Native Realm* by Czesław Miłosz, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word* by Bronisław Malinowski, and chosen reportages by Ryszard Kapuściński. It is immediately clear that the cultural distance is variously shaped on the scale of the conventional distance. For an inhabitant of Europe, for instance, feeling the difference between national and regional cultures within the old continent differs

⁴ A. de Custine, *Russia in 1839*, footnotes and the afterword translated by P. Hertz, Warsaw 1995, vol. I. 22.

⁵ A. de Custine, *Russia in 1839*, Warsaw 1995 (ct. translator's footnotes, 1. 1. 525-526).

from the contact with exotic Asia, Africa, or Australia. Miłosz's book is presentation of such – not as distant – otherness within Europe. The writer speaks about his life experiences treating his own, individual fate as an example of more general phenomena characteristic to his homeland. Although it belongs to the Mediterranean Christian area, it is also an unknown province on the periphery of the Western world and, additionally, separated from it by the Iron Curtain in the moment of writing the book. Miłosz confesses that the idea behind this title crystallized in the attic of an old Swiss house whose smell

was familiar, identical to the smell of my childhood places, but the country of my origin was far away... Undoubtedly, this was my home as well but the one that recants – as if by force of the warrant imposed on itself – the knowledge about myself as a whole... My roots are there, on the East. If it is difficult or unpleasant to explain who I am, it is necessary to try to do it anyway.⁶

Miłosz's book embodies the first distinguished variant, "me about my own to others." He used to write in order to show his Western readers something they didn't know but he wrote and published in Polish, so he addressed the book dually; he also dedicated his novel to the Polish reader – at first, the Polish emigrant. The cultural identity of the narrator and the narrative's subject perfectly fits into the genre formula typical of autobiography, especially the one strongly taking into account the aspect of genealogy. By presenting the family history, the narrator can depict how deep his or her personal story is rooted in the history of the entire cultural community. Subsequently, the story of his or her own maturation may be conjoined with the presentation of the changes to which the community was subjected in the narrator's times. In the most general view, this is the genre formula applied in the story told by Miłosz. Within this frame, the author continues with further diversifications. The plot related with maturation does not only serve as a means of showing transformations in the life of the community. The autobiography supported by genealogy and treated as *exemplum* of social phenomena is discretely completed by individuation – a characteristic element of the formation novel. This perspective gives space to the individual point of view marked by a trace of separateness evoking a limited feeling of identification with the group. Similarly to the camera lens, the focus changes and only one face is singled out in a group photograph. A straightforward example of such personal distance towards a part of his own community are chapters covering high school and university years – *Catholic Education* and *Nationalities* – where Miłosz writes about the birth of his critical attitude towards superficiality of ritualistic Catholicism and vehement reluctance to extremely popular ideology of the National Democracy. "Moving slowly in the crowd or standing on the square, I was bursting with hatred" (84). The narrative point of view also undergoes certain changes. The first-person form appears not only in singular (the basic form for autobiography) but it is sometimes plural, such as in the case of identification with the peer group in student and literary circles. However, despite the grammatical "I," narration often

⁶ Cz. Miłosz, *Native Realm*, Warsaw 1990. 6.

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seems impersonal. Owing to the “zoom,” it gradually takes from view an individual story in favour of presenting the history of Europe’s “Eastern province” seen from the distance of the epic, omniscient narrator whose point of view exceeds the limited character’s perspective.

Another genre model proves useful to the second variant of the intercultural narration where the narrator speaks about not his or her own, but a different and frequently rather remote world. Cultural otherness of the subject and the object of the novel are visible, for instance, in a situation of the journey. In this context, the literary tradition has contributed to development of a whole range of possibilities in terms of genre forms: the journey’s description, letters from the journey, the journey’s diary, reportage. Let us look closely at examples that are very telling due to the large cultural distance between the subject and the object. These are the above mentioned narratives about the world of exotic cultures created from the anthropological point of view of a European. My choice of Malinowski and Kapuściński was motivated by the selection of two genres: personal diary and reportage.

Fascinating material for analysis can be found in the full Polish edition of Bronisław Malinowski’s diary – before 1967 known in the English version containing only half of the manuscript, even if it was the most important part of the book concerning the field research in New Guinea and The Trobriand Islands. The reception of *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word* as a discreditable and scandalous text showing human weaknesses of the great scholar (what has been the impression of the public after publication of the English translation) is a misunderstanding.⁷ It cannot be interpreted as an opposition of hypocrisy of ethnographic works and sincerity of the author’s confessions in the diary. This ambivalence was immanently inscribed in Malinowski’s anthropological point of view. In his scientific works, he presents the culture of the Pacific islanders and seeks to comprehend and describe it using categories relevant to its specificity. He is overtly fascinated with the beauty of the local landscape.⁸ In *A Diary*, the passion of the scholar concentrated with full devotion on the subject of his research is strongly present, while the feeling of getting closer to local inhabitants (whom the diarist mentions by name, not impersonally) is more and more intense in the course of time he spends among them. At the same time, there appear difficulties accompanying the unprecedented field research such as strenuousness of the tropical climate (for a European), health problems and bad effects of the long-term separation from people belonging to the author’s cultural environment. Malinowski’s expression of his negative emotions towards those con-

⁷ See: G. Kubicka, *Introduction*, [in]: B. Malinowski, *A Diary in a Strict Sense of the Word*, Cracow 2002; also J. Clifford, *About Ethnographic Auto-Creation: Conrad and Malinowski*, transl. by M. Krupa, [in]: *Postmodernism: Anthology of Translations*, ed. R. Nycz, Cracow 1998.

⁸ A. Zawadzki in his book about contemporary philosophical essay writing pertinently notices the impressionistic manner of nature descriptions in *A Diary*. However, I do not agree with his opinion that Malinowski did not see the separateness of the exotic landscape and that he did not discover a new language for it. (A. Zawadzki *Contemporary Philosophical Essay Writing...* 232-233).

ditions evoked immensely critical opinions about the book. In the meantime, the ambivalence of his approach to the natives that, on the one hand, exhibited in interest and fondness, on the other hand, in impatience, reluctance, at times even disdain and fury, is in fact neutralized in the superior perspective of the observer and scientist. Malinowski, as an anthropologist, watches with equal attention the inhabitants of the Pacific islands and himself living among them. He conducts a bold and ruthless self-analysis which, in the context of other Polish autobiographical literature, can only be compared to the one performed by Karol Irzykowski in his diaries. Auto-criticism and continuous reprimanding himself also bring to mind *The Diary* by Stanisław Brzozowski.

Still being a personal journal written day by day and mainly for his own use, Malinowski's notes also contain methods of content organization typical of a novel – in four different types: 1) the psychological novel; 2) the novel about searching one's own path and developing oneself, i.e. *Bildungsroman*; 3) the love story presenting both ideal, spiritual love and physical passion; and 4) the travel novel. Elements of the psychological novel, which due to its character is the closest genre to personal diary, the reader of Malinowski's notes may detect in all those places (and they are numerous) where the diarist performs self-analysis. Such instances can be found in the passages describing his relations with "Staś" (Witkiewicz) and in the part devoted to his stay in Ceylon – on the way to Australia – during which, with a streak of auto-irony, he catches himself on an internal conviction about his own superiority over the locals because he feels like a *sahib*. Finally, when he realizes his suddenly changing moods: from mad yearning after Europe to worshipping the tropics ("the Southern hemisphere" as he often defines them). In his self-analysis, he does not withdraw from picturing humiliating details; his cognitive passion seems to win over the fear of being ridiculed. Psychological introspection is most frequently subordinated to conclusions which should steer towards developing and reshaping of oneself in search of the life path leading to great results; this way, the Freud-inspired psychological novel assimilates traits of the formation novel. Although we follow the main character of *A Diary* between the age of 24 and 34, so in the period when he has his adolescence far behind him, in fact the main plot of Malinowski's notes consists in identifying his fate and entering the path of its realization. In reality, these are the author's years of learning and traveling.

Affection-related plots typical of a love story are present in *A Diary* on two levels: sublime feelings and physiology of sex – division corresponding to the stylistic duality of lyrical poetization and blunt literality. An idiom characteristic to Lesser Poland is quite distinct but brevity protects the diarist from falling into the melodramatic kitsch.

The three above discussed genre models can be referred to the whole Malinowski's book, while the travel-related pattern gives context only to the second part beginning in 1914 at the point of the author's preparations before leaving for the tropics. The genre which played an important role in the 18th-century novel, later moved towards popular literature or books dedicated to young readers if there were also elements of

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education, thriller, and adventure. Such features cannot be found in Malinowski's *Diaries* but considering that the topic is related with the journey to the Southern seas, what comes to mind are Joseph Conrad's novels. Images of the exotic world – both descriptions of the territories and the stories about their inhabitants and contacts with them – gradually take more and more space comparing to three other threads in the *Diaries* written during four years on the Trobriand Islands. Nonetheless, this scenery is characteristic to Conrad's imagery but not Conrad's narration. The manner of storytelling employed by the narrator of *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word* does not remind Marlow's. The analogy between the two authors should be searched for in another area as James Clifford did comparing the rules according to which both of them built their biographies. He also noticed that *A Diary* "sometimes repeats and re-works the themes from *The Heart of Darkness*."⁹ Surely the themes, but not the narrative structures.

In *A Diary*, there are no signs that would allow an assumption that the four genre models are consciously chosen patterns. Malinowski was passionate about novels of all kinds and artistic classes: from Dostoyevsky and Conrad up to various light readings. He devoured novels like drugs especially during his research on archipelagos of the Pacific Ocean. *A Diary* is full of mentions about his compulsive reading, so if the diarist wanted to perform novelistic stylizations, he would not suffer from the lack of models from both high and popular literature. We should admit, however, that his genre qualification of the notes taken by him for a decade is a proof of the most adequate identification. It is indeed "a diary in the strict sense of the word." It is not an obstacle, however, for a reader of this enormous, rich entity to be able to filter it by well-known novelistic genres which help distinguish plots and stylistic tones composing the work.

The possible contexts of the four distinct genre models and diversification of stylistic registers are not followed by the variegation of narrative points of view. From the beginning to the end, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word* is guided by the same first-person narrator. "I" – the main character – develops and changes in the course of numerous experiences, while the storytelling "I" clings to the same perspective of the narrator who is unequivocally and visibly present in the text.

Obviously, the situation of the intercultural conflict does not emerge until the second part of *A Diary* – during Malinowski's stay in the tropics. It is written from the perspective of a European who collects knowledge about local inhabitants in order to make them the subject of anthropological theses addressed to people of the West (me to my own about others). Internal diversification of the old continent being a basic distinguishing mark of the anthropological point of view in *Native Realm*, is meaningless in Malinowski's diaristic narrative. In the first few chapters of *A Diary*, the author writes about himself and everywhere he feels at home: on the Canary Islands, in Cracow, Leipzig, Zakopane and London.

Ryszard Kapuściński's journeys, not less exotic than the Trobriand Islands researcher's travels, for years resulted in reportages. The writer combined the reli-

⁹ J. Clifford, *About ethnographic...* 246

able classic formula of the genre with some of the compositional tricks and stylistic techniques representative of contemporary, formally sophisticated novelistic prose and poetry. First, let us focus on the consequences of the fact that Kapuściński is a Polish reporter travelling across the Third World. Apparently, it is not the question of being Polish in the ethnic sense but of the cultural and historically defined experience of a person who was born and brought up in Central-Eastern Europe. Kapuściński, one generation younger than Czesław Miłosz, comes from the latter's neighborhood: his hometown Pińsk lies on the territory of today's Belarus. Moreover, similarly to Miłosz, Kapuściński remembers that the history of the local population was considerably influenced by the presence of the powerful neighbor: first tsarist, then Soviet Russia. The role of this experience was fully unveiled in one of his later books: *Imperium*. In the first chapter, he wrote about his personal and direct encounter with Stalin's regime after the Red Army occupied Eastern territories of the Republic of Poland in September of 1939.¹⁰ More or less explicit signs of this experience are present in Kapuściński's writings all the time, starting with his first book. The reader finds the first echo of his childhood memories in the author's debut entitled *The Polish Bush* published in 1962. It is a collection of short reportages from the life of the Polish countryside in the People's Republic of Poland of the 1960's, written – interestingly enough – already after his first long travels to Africa and Far East and after the press success of his series of reportages from Ghana and Congo. Kapuściński was at the time already known as an author writing about very distant and exotic countries. He already experience dramatic situations in the real African bush. He had numerous exciting and exotic themes at hand, therefore it may seem surprising that his first book starts with the text entitled *Exercises of Memory* and composed of memories from his own wartime childhood.

It was not necessary to wait thirty years until the publication of *Imperium* to see that the echoes of this early childhood experience came up again in Kapuściński's output. Surviving the war – which meant experiencing lethal danger, hunger and poverty – is a trace appearing in the background of narration speaking of events presented in his every subsequent book. From the perspective of all Kapuściński's later works, it is obvious that this opening was not coincidental but it is surely a meaningful beginning – on many different levels.

In writing, it is a beginning of the first book, in biography – a beginning of experiences shaping conscious visions of the world and one's own place in it, eventually, on the intellectual and ethical level, it is the foundation of the writer's outlook on life, his understanding of mechanisms that propel history and social life. The Second World War broke out exactly on a day when 7-year-old Rysio should have started

¹⁰ In interviews given after 1989, Kapuściński not once talked about the meaning of his experiences from his homeland. He presented this problem most emphatically in his lecture after being conferred a *honoris causa* degree by the University of Wrocław (he talked about the influential role of childhood's landscape, about regional Europe and its role in the post-colonial world). The shortened version of this lecture has been published ("Odra" 2002, no. 1) under the title: *Where Are We From? Who Are We?*

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school. Books written by the adult Ryszard are filled with traces of experiences gained and memorized during six years of the wartime misery, traces so tiny that the reader might not even notice them in the dramatic and variegated present. However, frequent appearances of these tiny traces show that mature thoughts regarding the boy's experiences became the first school of understanding colonialism in the Third World and the Soviet totalitarianism as the internal colonialism of the Second World. Experiences forming the writer in the place of his childhood and youth, offered him a chance that reporters and travelers from the Western world did not have. In works such as *Another Day of Life*, *The Soccer War*, and *The Shadow of the Sun*, Kapuściński presents migrations of terrified civilians impoverished by yet another revolution or domestic war in Africa or Latin America. He concludes his descriptions with a memory: such train stations besieged by masses of tormented, miserable people roaming chaotically and helplessly he had already seen in Poland at the end of the war. He says, "I was a refugee myself." A long-time experience of living in the Soviet totalitarian system turned out to be not less educational than the war itself. Living in the so called "worse Europe" governed by the Soviet empire, knowing personally the conditions of life in the remote provinces and the poor countryside struggling daily with cruelty of nature, helped the reporter move around the African interior, far from capital cities and outside national parks.

At the same time, Kapuściński does not make a secret of the fact that his great chance to penetrate the Third World also meets restraints. It often happens that the reporter writes about his helplessness in the presence of a specific phenomenon and neither the local friends' helping hand nor the knowledge derived from estimated researchers' books or relying on his own experience seems to work out. At times, he comes across such areas of experience where he starts to blunder. For Kapuściński, the local dimension of his own experience is not a subject of his description but a tool for analysis. It allows him to build a comparative scale including indispensable points of reference. The local experience is not limiting to him. On the contrary, it opens cognitive perspectives enabling him to formulate generalizations that do not lead to empty abstraction but to understanding another specific issue. Several direct analogies between colonialism in the Third World countries and totalitarianism in Europe can be found in *The Shadow of the Sun*. Methodical famine, a weapon in the hands of the Sudanese government against the rebellious South of the country, is depicted as the same mechanism used by Stalin to cause death from starvation of millions of Ukrainian people in the 1930's. The regime maintained in prisons in Addis-Abeb reminds the reporter of the rules of the Gulag Archipelago, whereas the official language of many African dictators has the familiar sound of the Soviet "newspeak."

Anthropologically and sociologically defined point of seeing the reality transposes into three various methods of obtaining materials and the corresponding narrative structures. The world presented in Kapuściński's books is observed from the perspective of a witness who tries to get as close as possible to the point of view of an events' participant. To achieve that, the reporter frequently takes grave risk

which sometimes results in facing direct life threat (especially during wars in Africa – examples could be found in *Another Day of Life*, *The Soccer War*, and *The Shadow of the Sun*). He highly appreciates only his own eye testimony. If it is impossible in the case of past events, he obtains testimonies of eyewitnesses and events' participants. Their points of view are then embedded into the reporter's own narration. Letting in voices of his numerous informers, Kapuściński tends to organize the entire choir. He creates a polyphonic construction in which distinct points of view complete each other or compete with each other in such a way that they might even overshadow the reporter's voice. In such cases, he is left with the role of the conductor or – using another metaphor – the director who introduces many soloists on stage but reserves the right to take the floor. This structure is characteristic to the entire narration of *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*. The author also partially employs this method in his other works.

In situations of no access to eyewitnesses, Kapuściński reaches for written sources or other documents (such as photographs) in order to reconstruct past events, similarly to a historian. However, the way he tells the story is typical of the novel with the omniscient narrator who speaks about the fictional world. He offers the reader a possibility to enter into a pact of suspending disbelief and accepting the suggested version of events according to the rules applied in a classic historical novel by building an illusion of "eyewitnessing" the past. This takes place, for example, in the initial parts of *Shah of Shahs*, in the chapter entitled "Daguerreotypes," where photographs showing particular scenes are the starting point of developing stories about the characters' traits and destinies.

Three different sources of knowledge about the world (one's own observation, other witness' testimony, earlier created documents) correspond to three distinct storytelling techniques: 1) the author's report being first-person narration, 2) voices of the events' participants functioning as the character's statements and finally, 3) reconstructed sources supported by the third-person narrator. It is of course indispensable to use indirect sources, documents and scientific studies but the core of Kapuściński's output is not his extensive reading. The real bloody flesh of his writing – impossible to be forged and replaced by any book knowledge – is his own experience completed by testimonies of eyewitnesses. The text going into the readers' hands consists of this material submitted to the masterly literary processing.

The key issue here is that the reporter-author and his informers-characters observe events from anthropologically different points of view. He comes from another cultural environment and this distance cannot totally vanish, even in the situation of direct observation and participation. On the other hand, they belong to the world they speak about, so their testimony already has a filter of their mentality built in which – for the reporter – becomes a problem itself, a matter to reflect upon. For them, it is a tool of interpretation, for him – not only a tool but also an object to be interpreted as a part of the African, Asian, Latin American world. The most important strategy of the reporter – trying to describe the world that is very different from his own as reliably as it is possible in order to get maximally close to

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the internal categories of this world – is a narrative technique, in the novel theory defined as free indirect speech.¹¹ It most accurately corresponds to the essence of the anthropological perspective chosen by Kapuściński. The writer is firmly settled in his own cultural identity (formally, the story is told by the narrator), but the identity is not closed. Conversely, it is based on a dialogue, open to comprehend another culture (the character's point of view becomes embedded into the author's narration, stylistic features of the character's utterances are taken into account in the style of narration). Kapuściński frequently applies this mechanism to make it work in the opposite direction: he builds the character's statement but he most often filters it through the ironic stylization that gives the reader hints on interpretative intentions of the narrator. This method was – to a great extent and in a masterly fashion – was used in *The Emperor* to which I shall return.

Apart from the free indirect speech, Kapuściński finds some other methods of mediating between his own point of view and perspectives of his interlocutors from the Third World. He operates with a whole range of personal forms in narration. He uses a neutral form of third-person narration, introduces the direct “I” of the reporter-witness, the “I” of the character, and eventually, various kinds of “we.” Depending on a situation revealed by the context of applied personal forms, “we” either defines the European culture's point of view (it is sometimes specified that the experience of Central Europe is in discussion), or expresses a form of identification of the reporter's point of view with a group of the Third World inhabitants. In the latter case, “we” does not embrace certain aspects of the European identity: the ones that remain completely impenetrable and closed to the African, Asian, or Latin American reality. Neither this “we” can point to attitudes encountered in the Third World.

The entire range of diverse possibilities is most vividly outlined in *The Shadow of the Sun* recapitulating the writer's forty years of experiences collected in Africa. We can see it with microscopic precision in the ending of the story about Uganda's dictator Idi Amin. The narrator comes across a scene where fishers bring to the market an exceptionally huge and fat fish that attracts hungry inhabitants of the town but the crowd is silent. Everyone knows that Amin's soldiers tend to throw bodies of their victims into the lake where they are devoured by crocodiles and carnivorous fish. In the same moment, an army track arrives; soldiers notice the fish and take it to the car, instead leaving a body they have brought with them. The narrator begins as a witness: “Once I wandered around the market in Kampala.” Then he impersonally speaks about the ruined capital of Uganda but when he shifts to the scene with soldiers, he becomes a participant speaking not only on his behalf but also on behalf of the silent city inhabitants:

We, who were standing closer, saw...them throwing a dead, barefoot man. And we saw them leave immediately. We only heard their coarse, mad laughter.

<http://rcin.org.pl>

¹¹ W. Tomasiak, *From Bally to Banfield and Further: Six Theses about Free Indirect Speech*, Bydgoszcz 1992.

In all Kapuściński's books, the author's "I" reverberates first: readers find out whom they listen to and who takes responsibility for everything that will be said. In the first sentence of the reportage from Angola *Another Day of Life*, Kapuściński writes, "I spent three months in Luanda, in the Tivoli hotel." The story about the sovereign of Ethiopia begins with the sentence, "In the evenings, I listened to those who knew the Emperor's court." In *Shah of Shahs*, first he describes disorder in his hotel room filled with press-clippings and notes. Through this journalist mess, he introduces the reader into the world of the Iranian revolution, but right after such a personal prologue, the writer develops a whole spectrum of viewpoints.

Kapuściński begins a ballet of all types of personal forms building in readers' imagination an image that is rich, diversified and full of nuances and shade gradations. However, this image is always inscribed in the superior frame of the organizing perspective that does not have to be accepted by the reader who learns other points of view present in the narration, but it is always there to be referred to. The writer does not impose his own interpretation, although he never avoids defining his outlook. This effect is achieved not only thanks to the technique of changeable points of view in narration, but also due to the ability to give an existing book a new compositional context, and the appliance of several stylistic procedures.

An example of a very interesting composition, which goes completely beyond the reportage genre canon, is *The Soccer War*. Some of the older texts taken out from earlier books and a few new ones composed an utterly new literary piece owing to introduction of an autobiographic and auto-thematic plot. The author introduces his later comment to reportages from various places in the world written in the period of almost twenty years. He sometimes unveils unknown facts about events that had not fit into a given reportage or he had not been aware of earlier. He strings particular texts like necklace beads onto the time-line of his life, but – what is more important – he also mentions unfulfilled writing projects. He incorporates fragments of two book projects, which he planned but has never finished, into ready reportages. This way he creates an open composition resembling auto-thematic novels written according to the formula inspired by Karol Irzykowski's *The Hag* and *The Caves of Vatican* by André Gide and continued in French *nouveau roman* and in the postmodernist novel. Drafts of the two unwritten books, noticeable in *The Soccer War*, not only are a fascinating piece of writing but they also give a completely new dimension to the earlier reportages by including them into the chronology of the writer's autobiography.

Eventually, it is time to move from genealogy issues to a few observations referring to the style of Kapuściński's prose. Stylization – within the double point of view in free indirect speech – was applied in *The Emperor* in the most sophisticated manner. Some critics considered it as following a grotesque style employed by Witold Gombrowicz in *Trans-Atlantic*. It turned out, however, that when Kapuściński was writing *The Emperor*, he was not acquainted with *Trans-Atlantic* yet; the resemblance stemmed from reaching to the same source: i.e., the style of old Polish diaries of the

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gentry, mainly from the Baroque era.¹² In his search of the proper way of exposing the anachronistic mentality of people from the Emperor's court, the reporter found an ideal pattern borrowed from the 17th century diarists living in the rigidly hierarchized, ceremonial world where everyone obeys complicated social and linguistic rituals¹³. By means of exaggerating those features, the writer furnished the language of his interlocutors, once the Emperor's people, with a grotesque character. From their point of view, their statements are serious while the reader – owing to the narrator's stylistic techniques – detects auto-irony of which the speakers are unaware. The writer frequently uses another two distinctive stylistic figures. One of them is openly intertextual and these are groups of quotations used as mottos. The other one is seemingly a simple trick already well-known to the ancient rhetoric and keenly employed in descriptive poems of the Enlightenment. What I mean here is enumeration.

The first book written by Kapuściński, *The Polish Bush*, already starts with a motto situated right after the title of the first text (devoted to his own wartime childhood). It is a fragment of a poem by Janusz A. Ichniowski, the poet of the same generation as the author. Later, beginning books with mottos almost becomes a rule with no exceptions. Mottos usually consist of a few quotations; they are micro-anthologies composed by the author from all kinds of fragments. Among them, we can find words of poets, novel writers and philosophers, sayings in Latin and a prayer of a chief in an African tribe noted down in the 19th century, but also funny, clever and sad sentences quoted from letters written by American children to God. Mottos derived from so many different sources create an ample multi-voice – they not only enter into a dialogue with Kapuściński's own text but also "talk" with each other. They express metaphorical generalization of the author's thoughts that is a regular function of a motto, but they also code his texts into the wider stylistic register. They prepare readers for the fact that by reaching out for the book composed of the material collected for reportage, they will find themselves in the middle of literature.

Enumeration as a stylistic means of expression seems not to have any artistic potential, although Kapuściński uses this feature in a way that attracts attention. One of the most original examples is a fragment from *The Soccer War* which treated about his search for accommodation at the start of the five-year stay in Latin America (the chapter "It is high time I should start writing another, never finished book"). Instead of a comprehensive description of the Chilean middle class mentality and customs, the writer enlists objects filling interiors of flats he sees in Santiago de Chile. It is a real stylistic firework, a fantastic parade of words whose meanings become comple-

¹² J. Jarzębski, *Kapuściński: from reportage to literature*, [in]: *Contemporary masks. About literature and culture of the 20th century*, ed. L. Burska, and M. Zaleski, Warsaw 2001.

¹³ Independently of the style of the old Polish gentry diaries and their grotesque parody carried out by Gombrowicz, T. Rafferty noticed the irony of Kapuściński's style in *The Emperor*, comparing the construction of the characters' statements to a ceremonial court dance (cf. T. Rafferty, *Portrait of the journalist as a young man*, "Voice Literary Supplement" [Ireland] February 1987).

mentary, as they graduate a certain phenomenon, or contrast with each other. In order to characterize the style of blooming secession that has already achieved the level of kitsch, the author toys with wordplays close to *pure-nonsense*, makes sequences of a few nouns rhyming with each other, and brackets them in syntactic parallelisms. A similar, even more striking example can be found in *Lapidarium*. One of its fragments bases on enumeration of objects thrown away at the large disposal site outside the city. They are damaged, therefore deprived of their primary functions, and they are mixed with each other in the strangest way. In his enumeration, the writer arranges objects' names in such an order that neighboring words evoke the most astonishing associations, not worse than bold surrealists' imagination. Still after reading it, one faces a compelling impression that beyond this overwhelming chaos actually emerges a precise, metaphorical condensed image of our contemporary civilization immersed in mad and immoderate consumption. However, the most unusual chapter in *Imperium, Temple and Palace*, treats about tearing down – as an effect of Stalin's order – the temple of Jesus Christ in Moscow built after the victory over Napoleon. The entire narration is encrusted with sequences of orderly arranged enumerations illustrating the history of its construction, its demolition and the never carried out project of the Soviet Palace which was supposed to be built in the same place as well as numerous Stalin's occupations at that time. Words used in those lists change but syntactic structures rhythmically repeat – not identical but analogical, similar and at the same time changeable which allow dramatic events to be accompanied by the increasing tension of the rhythm of the language comparable to the passage of Ravel's *Bolero*. Owing to the writer's imagination and experience, enumeration – being a simple and shortened stylistic technique – gained much dynamics and expression in his prose. It became a tool to express threat and ridiculousness of the world; its overwhelming, chaotic richness and diversity depicted by Kapuściński in his reportages. Literary treatment of the factographic material turns out as important to the message conveyed in Kapuściński's works as his anthropological point of view shaped by the experience of a person from Central-Eastern Europe.

The third possible variant of narration emerging on the border of cultures should be analyzed here: writing about the others to the others from one's own point of view. This happens when a stranger from the outside, who finds himself in a certain community, creates narration about this community devoted mainly to the described community, and not to his own people that he could make aware of something unknown. It seems that this variant is much more seldom than the other two, where the identity always secured two points providing clear motivation to the story creation. What would be the reasons of creating narration about the others that would be directed to them as well? It appears that this situation evokes an assumption of the narrator's superiority (although carefully hidden) over the subject who is also the addressee of the narration. For instance, it is necessary to tell them something they do not know about themselves. Alternatively, they cannot write anything by themselves. This type of motivation may stand behind storytelling that is educating, persuading or simply imposing the narrator's point of view on the community

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to be subordinated as a result of the conflict. In the case of peaceful coexistence of cultures, the narration can be freed from seeking domination and respective to self-consciousness of the community being both the subject and the recipient. This perspective is possible in narration created by a researcher, ethnographer or another representative of the writing culture who enters the society whose members only use oral communication and have their legends, fairy-tales and myths.

Narration of the colonizer or occupant (as far as he wants to build a narrative about the colonized community and not just use an authoritative discourse of orders and bans) could be possible if, next to submissiveness to military and administrative violence, the aim is to obtain obedience internalized by members of the conquered community. Creating narration for subjects about subjects would then be motivated by desire to colonize consciousness, expropriate the community from its tradition and instead introduce a version prepared for justifying the domination from outside. Such mechanisms of “subjugating the minds” emerge not only when distinct cultures enter into contact but also within one culture (civilization) between separate political systems. Instead of a general, anthropological point of view, we end up observing only one aspect, although it might be difficult to formulate it when a political option is felt as being combined or crossed with the cultural (national, regional) one. Examples could be looked for in Polish history textbooks or history of Polish literature manuals written in Stalin’s times. They violated fundamental scientific procedures, being extremely submissive to the ideology and to the absurd division into “progressing” and “backward” elements. Prepared by Polish scientists who were intellectually formed within the Polish cultural tradition (I do not take into account here its internal diversification and the existing authentic political conflicts) they seemed to have been written according to the rules of the foreign dictate. They were perceived as a version imposed by Soviet Russia – as strange to the Polish people as tsarist Russia had been for de Custine. Historical narration, where a particular community is both the subject and the recipient but not the narrator, can easily be submitted to persuasive activities of propaganda, if there is a political desire to perform ideological manipulation. In a situation of the community being deprived of its narrator, its members have nothing left to do but listen and find out “whom they were and whom they are” or rather whom they are supposed to be according to the Sender’s will (this role is played by the narrator present in the text). The same mechanisms concern not only a colonizer or an occupant but also a native tyrant.

After the digression related with the authoritative discourse, let us get back to the reflection over narration conducted from the anthropological point of view, from outside of a particular culture but about it and for it. An example of a story written down by an author from the outside but with no intention to impose the external domination could be Gallus Anonymus’ *Chronicle*. The narrator’s “superiority” towards the characters and the recipients could originate from only one well-defined reason i.e. the ability to write and the knowledge of Latin. The awareness of the narrator’s linguistic separateness from the story’s main addressees is inseparable

from his conviction that "the present work should be translated out loud."¹⁴ The chronicler turns to bishops composing the episcopate of the time who are his wealthy protectors on the Prince's court and who belong, like himself, to the international class of educated people in medieval Europe. Other aspects of his situation (a monk among the Prince's chancellery) positioned him as being socially inferior towards the sovereign and his court. It was reflected in the theme of modesty consistent with the official convention extensively applied in the introductions to all three books of the *Chronicle*.

Among the underlying motives to create historical narration, the first need is to obtain payment from people who rule the described community. The narrator finds himself in position of someone like a foreign expert initiating international cooperation. He also gives them to understand that he has ambitions because among his motives he mentions his wish "to take a fruit of my work to the place of my monastic vows...to avoid idleness and continue being skilled at dictating" (115). At the same time, he remembers to underline his own cultural separateness from the subject and the recipients. By turning to "Chancellor Michael" and to "Polish Bishop Paul" in the introduction to *Book II*, he marks his stand of a foreigner when he describes his work as "written in honour of princes and your country" (59). In the introduction to *Book III* he calls himself "a strange pilgrim among you" who took up his work "to earn his Polish bread" (115). The publisher's footnote says that this popular saying – later repeatedly quoted – in 19th century became a motto of another foreign historian's work written by an Austrian professor at the university in Lviv Heinrich von Zeissberg who used it in his 1873 book *Polish historiography of the Middle Ages*.

When defined as above, the anthropological point of view of a clerk, a writer or a scholar – from Gall to Zeissberg – rules out the perspective of domination and violence in the newcomer's narration written about and for the local community.

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¹⁴ Gallus Anonymus, *Polish Chronicle*, transl. by R. Gródecki, introduction, footnotes and edition, transl. by M. Plezia, Wrocław 1982 BNT s. I no. 59, 118.