

## Without guilt or shame. Sexuality in eroticism-themed Polish obscene poetry of the Enlightenment period\*

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The development of eroticism-themed obscene literature has been associated with authors being interested in sexuality, the attitude towards sexual vitality as natural energy that governs human behaviour and desires, and their opposition to the narrow view of humans preferred by official morality (especially the one that remained under the influence of religion and the Church), which was enforced by censorship, including preventive Church-enacted censorship which intended to guard the appropriate morals. This kind of literature was particularly prolific in Poland during the Enlightenment, in light of the following factors: libertine attitudes arriving from the West, including hedonistic attitudes which entailed striving for purely sensual erotic pleasure, not built on the basis of any emotional experiences; striving for happiness through corporeal pleasure; factors that resulted from libertinism: anti-clericalism and the criticism of religious dogma; loosening of moral constraints; rejection of existing social and religious norms; opposition to social and moral patterns enforced by the Catholic Church; free choice of ethical norms, and an increase of moral freedom visible not only in the capital or large cities, but also in the province. Some believe that at that time in Europe certain lines in terms of decency were crossed, and the previously unknown loosening of moral principles led court communities, as well as the aristocracy, nobles, and more affluent bourgeoisie to engage in unbridled debauchery and licentiousness.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Z. Wróbel, *Erotyzm w literaturze dawnych wieków* [Eroticism in the literature of past ages] (Łódź: 1986), p. 137.

Polish erotic obscene poetry during the Enlightenment raised topics popular among both authors and readers regarding the intimate sphere of human corporeality against the existing censorship: those of moral or linguistic correctness. It flourished, being circulated among the literary crowd, at courts, and among the many readers who belonged to the nobility. The circulation was mostly unofficial; works existed as manuscripts,<sup>2</sup> while ephemera or larger publications were rare, though erotic poems, which suggested also the physical side of love, could be found in poetic collections published at that time by authors such as: Adam Naruszewicz, Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin, and Franciszek Karpiński, or in individual works published in periodicals such as *Zabawy Przyjemne i Pożyteczne* [Pleasant and Beneficial Play] (especially in poems that belonged to the idyllic strand, which had long used the pastoral mask to express erotic desires,<sup>3</sup> such as works by Franciszek Zabłocki, e.g., in the pastoral poem *Chloe i Likas*). Officially published works by those authors lacked any descriptions of corporal encounters between men and women. Such things were only suggested, just as was the corporal aspect of love and pleasure derived from the physical closeness of lovers.<sup>4</sup>

The existing bans and obstacles placed to hinder the print circulation of erotic obscene works did not hurt their propagation. Poems, reproduced by copyists in many manuscript copies, approached issues of sexuality freely, as their authors ignored the mandates of official morality and sometimes disregarded them with ostentatious contempt. Neither did they care for any prohibitions of specific vocabulary. It is worth mentioning that because of the taboo nature of the topic, any attribution of authorship to the texts that circulated in manuscript form is uncer-

- 2 Extracts from these kinds of works, either anonymous or marked by copyists and later readers with the names of both famous and lesser-known authors, include the following manuscripts: B PAN Kr. 615, B PAN Kórń. 11190, B Ossol.: 451/III; 5833/II; 5834/III; 7070/II, vol. XLIII (*Erotica XVIII wieku* [Erotica of the 18<sup>th</sup> century] – a collection of texts developed by Ludwik Bernacki on the basis of manuscript copies); BAN Lviv, collection of G. Pawlikowski 246; National Central Historical Archive in Kyiv, ref. F. 228, register 2, no. 14 (in this case, narrative poems assigned to Naruszewicz: *Czyśćciec* [Purgatory], *Pielgrzym* [Pilgrim], *Słowik* [Nightingale]); B Pol. w Paryżu 127 (here, e.g., entry 30, a narrative poem entitled *Hilary* by the same author, entitled *Przypadki Imci Pana Hilarego* [The Fortunes of Mr. Hilary]).
- 3 That was visible in Old-Polish bucolics, e.g., in the collection of Szymon Zimorowicz *Roksolanki to jest Ruskie panny* [Roksolanki or Russian girls]. See D. Chemperek, “Miłość i erotyzm w cyklach sielankowych pierwszej połowy XVII wieku” [Love and eroticism in the idyllic cycles of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century], in: *Amor vincit omnia*. *Erotyzm w literaturze staropolskiej* [Eroticism in Old Polish literature], ed. R. Krzywy (Warsaw: 2008), p. 47. Conversely, in *Sielanki* [Idylls] Szymonowicz stipulated the need to maintain erotic passion within the limits of Christian morality (*ibid.*, pp. 42–43).
- 4 Compare: a bucolic by Karpiński entitled *Laura i Filon*, in which the protagonist expressed his hope that Laura would eventually learn ‘co do dzisiejszej łaski przyczynić’ [what could bring today’s grace closer] and that ‘taka miłość niecała’ [such love is partial]; see: *idem*, *Wiersze zebrane* [Collected poems], part I, publ. T. Chachulski (Warsaw: 2005), p. 51 (“Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskiego Oświecenia” [The Library of Writers of the Polish Enlightenment], vol. 5).

tain, as statements by copyists were often unreliable, even though they have been considered as dependable in modern anthologies (e.g., in works by Witold Nawrocki<sup>5</sup> or Andrzej Moźdzzonek).<sup>6</sup> This matter was hardly discussed, which is why most of the names of alleged authors indicated in this article should be inscribed with a question mark (I have indicated this matter by adding the expressions: ‘work assigned to...’ or ‘work ascribed to...’). One common strategy for misleading the censorship was to release works not having signed them or claiming authorship under a different name. This is yet another obstacle that researchers of the second circulation literature have to overcome when establishing who the authors of specific works were.<sup>7</sup> That is why names of authors adopted from *silvae rerum* of noble families (compared to the current state of research, if possible) shall be considered in this discussion as a sign of awareness specific for the literary and moral subculture of that time.

Rhymed obscene works, assigned freely to acclaimed poets, *minorum gentium* writers, and anonymous works differ in terms of their saturation with obscenities. Even though authors of eroticism-themed obscene work did not respect the social ban on raising rarely-mentioned inconvenient topics, they differed in terms of their attitudes towards taboos. These ranged from militant approaches of shattering, in their thematic or stylistic/linguistic processing, any and all barriers established to conceal private matters and intimate temptations (including those of public figures) that were considered immoral or shameful, to those who partly conformed to the tabooisation of sexuality, through the use of humorous morality-themed images, anecdotes, or concepts, metaphors related to sexuality and realistic/lyrical descriptions of sexual encounters, which they also used metaphorically. Those strategies were accompanied by partial or complete linguistic correctness (as in works sometimes defined as Sotadic).<sup>8</sup> A similar strategy was applied by authors of obscene

5 *Amor dziś moim hetmanem. Erotyki wszeteczne i wstydlive* [Amor is my chieftain today. Sexual and shameful eroticism], selection and edition W. Nawrocki (Warsaw: 1995); “*Płodny jest świat w występki*”. *Antologia polskiej libertynskiej poezji erotycznej XVIII wieku* [‘The world of vices is fruitful.’ Anthology of Polish libertine erotic poetry of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], selected and prepared for printing and introduction, and notes of authors and their origins by W. Nawrocki (Piotrków Trybunalski: 1996).

6 *Sekscytacje. Antologia polskiej literatury frywolnej, rubasznej i obscenicznej* [Sexcitations. An anthology of Polish literature, frivolous, coarse and obscene], selection, introduction, bios and notes by A. Moźdzzonek, illustrations by F. Maśluszczak (Brwinów: 2009). Enlightenment poems were included on pages 53-119.

7 See J. Szczepaniec, *Cenzura* [Censorship], in: *Słownik literatury polskiego oświecenia* [Dictionary of Polish Enlightenment Literature], ed. T. Kostkiewiczowa (Wrocław: 2002), 3rd edition unaltered, pp. 43-50.

8 Derived from Sotades of Maroneia (a Greek poet who died in 279 BC), who framed his eroticism-filled poetry in elegant, refined language devoid of any obscenities (compare entry: *Sotades*, in: *Słownik pisarzy antycznych* [Dictionary of Ancient Writers], ed. A. Świderkówna (Warsaw: 1982), p. 432).

works who revealed embarrassing intimate and private matters about public figures, including facts regarding human physiology.<sup>9</sup> When authors focussed on famous people, the private events (facts or insinuations) revealed in works became public issues, which were commonly commented upon.<sup>10</sup>

The disregard for the taboo of eroticism was present in the obscene erotic works in various forms: as derisive or humorously treated uncovering of the phenomena of existing morality in order to discuss them in an impartial reportage manner, or conversely, to disavow opponents in the name of settling personal,<sup>11</sup> social, world-view or even political<sup>12</sup> scores; to wantonly provoke and trigger scandals concerned with libertinism; to accentuate corporal phenomena and desires as something natural and common; to discuss sexual situations and events without any embarrassment; to extol licentiousness; as an opportunity to formulate concepts and humoristic approaches to the sexual struggles of the participants in said events; playful contradiction, and similar motivations behind such approaches.

As I have already mentioned, some authors of erotic poems did respect the linguistic taboo, i.e., they 'steered clear off' any words commonly considered as inappropriate or vulgar. Others, however, as they violated the moral prohibition in terms of the topic, also broke the linguistic prohibition regarding the use of words commonly treated as indecent,<sup>13</sup> though the saturation with such language differed between individual works. Extreme cases of this included either one or a few such

9 Obscene literature applies not only to the sphere of sexuality but also to physiology and revealing intimate private issues in the context of specific persons, though, of course, eroticism is the topic most commonly raised in obscene work, and it is the most popular among readers.

10 This strategy was common in ephemeral political poetry of the Enlightenment, however, the use of private and intimate matters of public figures for the purposes of disavowing them by their political opponents has not yet been studied in a comprehensive manner.

11 This was the character of, e.g., invasive poems by Adam Naruszewicz or Antoni Korwin Kossakowski (the latter being an author of panegyric, reflective, religious and political works, and of *Przewodnik warszawski* [Warsaw Guide], as well as wanton poems, the so-called 'dessert' poems, placed underneath napkins of the guests coming to the King's literary Thursdays) – friends once, who in time began attacking each other, each accusing the other of writing obscene erotic works; see: R. Kaleta, "Bójka literacka A. Naruszewicza z A.K. Kossakowskim" [A. Naruszewicz's literary fight with A.K. Kossakowski], in: *idem, Oświeceni i sentymentalni. Studia nad literaturą i życiem w Polsce w okresie trzech rozbiorów* [Enlightened and sentimental. Studies on literature and life in Poland during the three partitions] (Wrocław: 1971), pp. 137-168.

12 E. Rabowicz, "Oświeceniowe 'przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy" [Enlightenment 'guides' to Warsaw's pleasure homes], in: *Przewodniki warszawskie* [Warsaw Guides], texts organised and edited by *idem*, *Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego UG. (Dodatek do prac historyczno-literackich)* [Scientific Journals of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Gdańsk. (Supplement to historical and literary works)], issue 8-9 (Gdańsk: 1985), p. 22.

13 See an interesting article by Anna Śledź, "Przerywnik czy wykrzyknik? Analiza semantyczna i składniowa pewnych użycí słów uważanych za wulgarne" [Intermission or exclamation mark? Semantic and syntactic analysis of certain uses of words considered vulgar], in: *Poradnik Językowy* [The Linguistic Guide] issue 3 (2003), pp. 69-74.

words, even in extensive narrative poems, or an ostentatious saturation with vulgarity, e.g., in *Oda do Priapa* [Ode to Priapus], a paraphrased version of the famous work by the French writer Alexis Piron by Trembecki and (independently from Trembecki) by Jakub Jasiński,<sup>14</sup> or in *Pochwała bordelu*<sup>15</sup> [Praise of the Brothel], a work by Stanisław Kostka Potocki, which is also known as *Pieśń weselna*<sup>16</sup> [Wedding Song].

There are also relatively many works, sometimes identified as frivolous,<sup>17</sup> in which sexual content was only suggested in a playful manner, through the use of generally acceptable linguistic means (e.g., *Chciało się Zosi jagódek* [Zosia Was Craving Blueberries] by Jasiński). The authors of those works often left the interpretation of their texts open for readers, suggesting various readings – be it innocent (where ambiguous content was considered in the reading) or more blunt (when readers understood the intentions carried by the literary text and treated them as a sign of the author's playful defiance in the face of existing prohibitions).<sup>18</sup>

Authors' rebellious attitude towards the taboo related to the realm of human sexual conduct and their objection to the existing moral forms entailed a hyperbolisation of image-based examinations and depictions. Eroticism was either the dominant theme in a poem, or the text was intentionally saturated with 'erotic portions',<sup>19</sup> with authors exaggerating the magnitude and intensity of sexual stim-

14 Compare: the remarks contextual for these works by Edmund Rabowicz on the influence of Piron on the writers of Polish Enlightenment (*idem*, "Stanisław Trembecki w świetle nowych źródeł" [Stanisław Trembecki in the light of new sources], in: *Studia z Okresu Oświecenia* [Studies from the Enlightenment Period], vol. 3 (Wrocław: 1965), pp. 266-267).

15 This is the title in: E. Rabowicz, "Oświeceniowe 'przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy" p. 23. The title, after applying transcription rules in reference to works of literature from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century: *Pochwała bordelu*.

16 Title in: "Płodny jest świat w występki"... , pp. 105-108; compare also: J. Snopek, *Objawienie i oświecenie. Z dziejów libertynizmu w Polsce* [Revelation and Enlightenment. From the history of libertinism in Poland] (Wrocław: 1986), p. 135 (it includes remarks on the blasphemous narrative poem by S.K. Potocki); rough copy version of the work in: AGAD, Archiwum Publiczne Potockich 250, pp. 126-128.

17 J. Ziomek, *Pornografia i obscenum* [Pornography and obscene], in: *idem*, *Powinowactwa literatury. Studia i szkice* [Affinities of literature. Studies and essays] (Warsaw: 1980), p. 301.

18 These kinds of erotic works will not be discussed in detail here, as fundamentally they did not violate any taboos.

19 The term 'erotic portions' appeared in a discussion of 'salty literature' in the typology of erotic literature proposed by Paul Englisch, who was one of the first researchers to attempt to organise the vast body of literature in this area and who proposed terminology that was intended to encompass the majority of these kinds of works (*idem*, *Geschichte der erotischen Literatur* (Stuttgart: 1927), pp. 3-8). His identification of the branches of erotic literature raises many issues, mainly considering its inconsistent criteria for distinguishing types of erotic literature where, e.g., some criteria considered the linguistic layer while others the topics (the dominant theme or the so-called 'erotic portions'), or the ethical/moral undertone of the erotic content included in the works; other criteria considered the functions being realised in the readings of the texts while other still looked at the intentions of authors (be it to mock, accept, or play). Though it is difficult, if not impossible, to unequivocally ascribe

uli throughout the social structure, with particular emphasis placed on those groups which, within their existing socio-moral recognition, were supposed to be viewed as not being subject to such 'sinful' motivations (in general: secular clergy and monastics; specifically and allusively: indications towards representatives of this group, spiritual leaders of the Church, i.e., primates or bishops). Sometimes the intention of the authors of erotic anti-clerical poems was not only to indicate the large gap between official teachings or Catholic ethics and the morality that actually existed among the clergy and to publicly condemn sinful practices, but also to criticise specific individuals, and, eventually, to settle scores with one's opponents.

The act of providing details of intimate conduct of public figures (both clergy and laypeople) was an effective weapon in the struggle for influence and in gaining support of the public, as is indicated by political poetry texts, e.g., those that attacked primate Gabriel Podoski and revealed his invitations as couples<sup>20</sup> or his affair with Lutheran Emchinia (a resident of Gdańsk, Mrs. Oemingen), or copies of a poem by Jan Czyż entitled *Zdarzenie Młodziejowskiego* [Młodziejowski's Incident], circulated during the partition Sejm, which revealed the bishop's nighttime escapades in search of erotic adventures with Anna Drzewiecka, his lover, a well-known aristocratic lady,<sup>22</sup> or Franciszek Zabłocki's pamphlets released during the Great Sejm intended against Elżbieta Sapieżyna, identified as a licentious Polish Mesalina – 'nierządnicą nierządom ojczyzny pomocną' [a harlot useful in defiling the homeland] (e.g., *Suplika do księżny Sapieżyny [...] o pozwolenie rządu w Polsce czy Kolęda na Nowy Rok 1791*)<sup>23</sup> [A supplication to Duchess Sapieżyna (...) to allow government in Poland or Carol for New Year 1791].

erotic works to a specific type, one must conclude that this division does seem useful, mainly because it inspires one to apply corrections or further specify the types. That seems to be the reason why the views of P. Englisch were so influential on later researchers of this kind of literature, including on Polish scholars (e.g., Zdzisław Wróbel, Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki and Jerzy Ziomek).

- 20 Manuscript B PAN Kr. 1141, p. 160; see also: R. Kaleta, *Oświeceni i sentymentalni...*, p. 247.
- 21 Remarks regarding this text in the context of other poems by Czyż – see: T. Kostkiewiczowa, *Klasycyzm, sentymentalizm, rokoko. Szkice o prądach literackich polskiego Oświecenia* [Classicism, sentimentality, Rococo. Sketches on the literary trends of the Polish Enlightenment] (Warsaw: 1975), p. 370 and 379-380.
- 22 See: B. Wolska, "Poezja polityczna czasów pierwszego rozbioru i sejmu delegacyjnego 1772-1775" [Political poetry during the first partition and the delegation parliament 1772-1775], in: *Studia z Okresu Oświecenia*, vol. 19 (Wrocław: 1983), p. 225; see also: E. Rabowicz, "Oświeceniowe 'przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy", p. 12. A more extensive discussion of the text and its critical edition in: B. Wolska, "Wierszowane pamflety polityczne na przywódców sejmu rozbiorowego (1773-1775)" [Verse political pamphlets for the leaders of the Partition Sejm (1773-1775)], in: *Miscellanea z doby Oświecenia* [Miscellanea from the Age of Enlightenment], 6, ed. Z. Goliński (Wrocław: 1982), *Archiwum Literackie* [Literary Archive], vol. 25, pp. 76-77; 93-95.
- 23 On this topic, see: K. Maksimowicz, introduction to: *Wiersze polityczne Sejmu Czteroletniego* [Political poems by the Four-Year Sejm], from letters by E. Rabowicz edition *eadem*, part I: 1788-1789 (Warsaw: 1998), p. 18; "Wizerunek Wojciecha Suchodolskiego w wierszach czasu Sejmu Czterolet-

Setting aside the numerous erotic minor features spread throughout ephemeral political pamphlets, allow me to focus on selected works from the vast resource of poems devoted to the erotic morality of mostly secular people, but also of diocesan clergy and monastics. When browsing these texts, one will immediately notice how many of them are anti-clerical – they placed the events they discussed, related to the sexual sphere, within this social group. One will also see many mentions in other poems of the erotic practices of clergymen. These poems reveal, within a hyperbolic frame, the sexual vitality of priests (nuns to a lesser extent), their keen interest in the erotic troubles of their parishioners (*Trafność spowiednika* [Accuracy of the Confessor] or *Sąd przeora* [Prior's Judgement] by Marcin Molski), the striving to satisfy those desires, and the use for that purpose of the gullibility of young women (*Uleczenie* [Healing] ascribed to Adam Naruszewicz) or of the compliance of older parishioners (the narrative poem *Czyściec* [Purgatory] by the same author). Anti-clerical works (e.g., those in manuscript copies to which Naruszewicz's name was affixed)<sup>24</sup> also indicate the willingness of clergymen to participate in adventures, or even erotic competition, intended as an indication of the high level of male potency in this group (*Kapituła bernardynów* [Bernadine Chapter], *Ojciec Gaudenty* [Father Gaudenty] – an alternate title of *Dwudziestówka* [Twenty]) and of the physical relations of nuns with men despite the cloister rule (*Świętość reguły* [Holiness of the Order]; sneering remarks in the narrative poem *Słowik* [Nightingale] on morality in monasteries which hosted men that served nuns, as indicated, e.g., by this remark about Mikita the farmhand, who ‘zamiast piwnej beczki/ szpuntuje twardym gwoździem nadobne dziewczeczki’<sup>25</sup> [used his

niego” [The image of Wojciech Suchodolski in the poems of the time of the Four-Year Sejm], in: *Prace Polonistyczne* [Studies in Polish Literature], series LXIV (Łódź: 2009), pp. 49-51.

- 24 Allegedly, Naruszewicz was the dominant figure among the authors who represented the field of erotic literature in the Enlightenment during the rule of king Stanisław II August. It is generally considered that he was unrivalled when it came to the sheer number of texts (ascribed to him). Compare judgements voiced by people from the epoch referenced in: R. Kaleta, “Obiady czwartkowe na dworze króla Stanisława Augusta. Próba monografii” [Thursday dinners at the court of King Stanisław August. An attempt at a monograph], in: *Warszawa XVIII wieku* [Warsaw of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], coll. 2, p. 79, *Studia Warszawskie* [Warsaw Studies], vol. XVI. Today, it is difficult to verify the opinion about the royal poet's major role in writing erotic obscene works. It does seem exaggerated. One cannot trust the indications of copyists indiscriminately. It is also to be noted that Naruszewicz was referenced in manuscript codes as an addition made in a copy of a text in a different handwriting.
- 25 I usually quote fragments of smaller poems as per the manuscript B PAN Kr. 615 or manuscript B PAN Kór. 11190; obscene narrative poems ascribed to Adam Naruszewicz as per the following sources: *Hilary*, per: *Wybór powieści erotycznych wierszem i prozą. Nowa edycja w Knidzie* [A selection of erotic novels in verse and prose. New edition in Knidos] [per the testimony of Karol Estreicher (*idem*, *Bibliografia polska* [Bibliography of Polish works], vol. X (Kraków: 1889), p. 33.) in Warsaw] 1809, pp. 189-229; copy at Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna – Kopernikańska w Toruniu, ref. W F 133; *Pielgrzym* i *Czyściec*, per manuscript of National Central Historical Archive in Kyiv, ref. F. 228, collection: *Kolekcja rękopisów z zakresu historii literatury i prawa* [Collection of manu-

firm nail to plug not the beer barrels but the pretty lasses]; allusions to such habits among 'zakonne panny' [monastic girls] whose 'z głodniałe/ Kominy duże i małe' [hungry/ Chimneys large and small] were fueled by the 'patr' [father] – in the poem *Kominiarz* [Chimney Sweeper], considered in copies as anonymous or as a text by Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin).

The role of this sphere of human activity (in fact, often exaggerated by both known and anonymous authors as a result of their opposition to the existing taboo) was indicated in smaller works of Enlightenment obscene poetry through, e.g., admiration-filled descriptions of the female body,<sup>26</sup> a critical or approving discussion of the appearance, features and significance of sometimes female<sup>27</sup> and mostly male genitalia (with an emphasis placed on the changes in the form);<sup>28</sup> short

scripts on the history of literature and law], register 2, no. 14, sheets 21-25. *Pielgrzym*, sheets 194-197 (*Czyściec*); *Słowik* per ephemera entitled *Słowik. Powieść z francuskiego na polski język przelożona*. [Nightingale. The novel translated from French into Polish] B. m. r. [1777], 8<sup>o</sup>, pp. 1-16; copy of B Ossol. XVIII. 12203 (print description see also: K. Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska* [Bibliography of Polish works], vol. XXIII (Kraków: 1910), p. 50, vol. XXVIII (Kraków: 1930), p. 269).

- 26 For example, in works by Stanisław Trembecki: *Epitalamion Dorantowi i Klimenie. Miłość stateczna* [Epithalamium to Dorant and Climene. Sedate love] (often circulated in copies as *Łoźnicopiew Dorantowi i Klimenie* – e.g., in manuscript B PAN Kr. 615, pp. 34-35) or *Łoźnicopień...* – in manuscript B PAN Kór. 11190, p. 29), *Epitalamion Hipolitowi i Belinie* [Epithalamium to Hippolytus and Belina]; in the poem *Przypadek siostry starszej opowiedziany siostrze młodszemu* [An Older Sister's Incident Told to Younger Sisters], ascribed to either Trembecki or Naruszewicz; in *Uleczenie*, ascribed in copies to Naruszewicz; in a paraphrase from Ovid, assigned to Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz entitled *Spotkanie się południowe* [Encounter at Noon].
- 27 For example, in the libel *Na Elżbietę* [On Elisabeth], ascribed to either Trembecki or Zabłocki (in this case: as a 'monstrum' [monstrosity]); in a work ascribed to Naruszewicz *Do młodzieńca żeniącego się ze starą babą* [To a Young Lad Marrying an Old Hag] (with distaste in this case: 'Wpadniesz w kiep siwy, jak pies w wilczą jamę' [You'll fall into the grey fanny as a dog falls into a wolf's lair], when you consider the old meaning of the word *kiep*, which was a crude reference to female vulva; in *Pieśń* [Song] by Franciszek Ksawery Woyna, also known as *Wab powszechny, czyli wiersz na kątek* [Common Charm or a Poem for the Nook] (in this case with a clear inclination, particularly visible in the distinctive chorus: 'Hej! Wiwat, wiwat! ten miły kątek, / Z którego mamy życia początek!' [Hey! Cheer, cheer! this pleasant nook, / From which life begins!]); in manuscript B PAN Kr. 615 the text of *Pieśń* is marked as by Franciszek Bohomolec; Woyna's authorship was indicated by Roman Kaleta: *idem*, "Antologia poetycka Franciszka Ksawerego Woyna" [A poetic anthology by Franciszek Ksawery Woyna], in: *Ze skarbcza kultury* [From the treasury of culture] coll. 28 (Wrocław: 1983), pp. 111-112.
- 28 A few descriptions in *Kapituła bernardynów* ascribed to Naruszewicz; the broadest depiction can be found in *Przypadek siostry starszej opowiedziany siostrze młodszemu*; in a shorter form, this 'ciekawy przymiot człowieka' [peculiar human feature] signalled by Trembecki in *Epitalamion Hipolitowi i Belinie*; additionally, various phallic metaphors were used in, e.g., the epigram *Wyznanie* [Confession], allegedly written by Węgierski, the poem *Węgierski do Rogalińskiego...* [Węgierski to Rogaliński]; in Czyż's epigram entitled *Pokusa* [Temptation]; in the song *Kotek* [Stake] (modelled after Woyna's *Pieśń*) with the chorus: 'Hej! Wiwat, wiwat! ten miły kolek, / Który się mieścić zdoła w podotek!' [Hey! Cheer, cheer! this pleasant stake, / That fits right into the lap]; inventive metaphors in a poem ascribed to Naruszewicz entitled *O tęgłości wieku* [On the Roundness of Age], where metaphors utilise various musical instruments, losing power as men become older; in the narrative poem entitled *Hilary* an erect penis is referred to as a 'naprężona żyła' [tensioned vein] or 'interes napięty' [tense privates].



and sometimes metaphorical descriptions of sexual intercourse;<sup>29</sup> the suggested portents of the act;<sup>30</sup> an emphasis on a man's inability to perform (too aroused; sexually passive; lacking potency due to old age)<sup>31</sup> and the inability to fulfil the expectations of one's female partner;<sup>32</sup> description of the problems of a husband betrayed by a younger wife;<sup>33</sup> announcement of imminent betrayal and the cuckoldom looming over a husband on boring evenings he spends with his wife 'gdy się siły przewrócą na nico'<sup>34</sup> [when the forces turn into nothing]. Female and male sexual vitality was also often accentuated using narrative forms about one-time 'zdarzenia'<sup>35</sup> [occurrences] or 'przypadki'<sup>36</sup> [events] sometimes intended as a joke but other times, allegedly, as a warning to the inexperienced. Extensive narrative

- 29 *Nice pasterka* [Nice the Shepherdess] by Węgierski; *Epitalamion Dorantowi i Klimentie* and *Epitalamion Hipolitowi i Belinie* by Trembecki; *Pomiarkowanie* [Restraintment], a word ascribed to Onufry Korytyński, inc.: 'Irys z Tyrsysem jadąc w podróż jedną...' [Iris with Tyrsys going on a journey together...]; *Głuszc włośki* [Italian Grouse] by Naruszewicz; applicable fragments of obscene narrative poems by this author (*Czyścić, Hilary, Pielgrzym, Słowik*).
- 30 For example, in a witty epigram *Przedwieczere* [Pre-supper] (in manuscript B PAN Kr. 615, p. 89 signed with the name J. Chrzanowski) or in the poem *Cytryniarka* [Lemon Girl] by Marcin Molski.
- 31 The notion of sexual impotence was also mentioned in Old-Polish literature; it was, e.g., the source of jokes as indicated by some works by Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, Jan Gawiński, and Waclaw Potocki – see: J. Korczak, "Sz. Szymonowic i J. Gawiński a magicznie zadawana impotencja" [Sz. Szymonowic and J. Gawiński and magically inflicted impotence], in: "*Amor vincit omnia*"..., pp. 49-63.
- 32 For example, in anonymous works: *Uskarżanie się wydanej za mąż damy, a w swoim żądaniu omylonej, czyli Desperacja* [Complaining of a Lady Married Off, Mad in Her Desire, or Desperation]; *Skarga młodej żony na męża starego* [Complaint of Young Wife Against Old Husband]; in the poem *Zdarzenie opuszczone* [Omitted Occurrence] by Węgierski; in works ascribed to Naruszewicz, i.e.: *Ojciec Gaudenty* – in reference to the deputy cup-bearer's son whose 'legs got broken by Mercury' ('połamał nogi Merkury') (in this metaphor the author framed the frailty and lack of sexual prowess of the unfortunate lover); *Łóżnica Izraela* [Israel's Bedroom]; *Pierścionek* [Ring] – in this case, the worries and concerns of an old husband betrayed by his young wife whom he could not satisfy sexually was thus described: 'fertyczna, nadobna i gładka, / Pierś wolna, krzyż szeroki, spodem bujne runo' [sprightly, comely and smooth, / Free breast, broad lower back, lush fleece down there]; she 'Zmierziwszy siwy pendant swego Jupitera, / Tam gorzała, gdzie żywsza i mina, i cera' [Having ruffled the grey pendant of her Jupiter, / She glowed where there was a livelier face and complexion] and she was full of eagerness only when 'Można się było z jakim nacackać młokosem' [She could fondle with some kid] (quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kór. 11190, p. 20).
- 33 For example, in the poem *Pierścionek*, which colourfully described the 'troski niezliczone' [countless worries] of the deputy cup-bearer, who as a 'Kawaler sześćdziesiątej paszy, / Poślubił, za indultem, młodzusięnką żonę' [An older bachelor, / Married, on an indult, a very young lass] (*loc. cit.*).
- 34 As per the elegant dedicated work *Do Ignacego Zapolskiego* [To Ignacy Zapolski], ascribed to Naruszewicz by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki based on a testimonial in manuscript: BN 5396 acc. and B PAN Kr. 615, edited in: A. Naruszewicz, *Liryki wybrane* [Selected Lyrics], selection and introduction by J.W. Gomulicki (Warsaw: 1964), p. 129 (quoted therefrom). The author of the poem was most certainly aware of the royal chamberlain's marital problems as he married off to Zapolski the beautiful Józefka, mistress to the king's brother Kazimierz Poniatowski.
- 35 For example, in poems by Węgierski: *Zdarzenie opuszczone*, *Nice pasterka*; in *Spotkanie się południowce* ascribed to Niemcewicz.
- 36 As in works: *Przypadek siostry starszej opowiedziany siostrze młodszym*, ascribed to Trembecki, or in a witty short poem *Przypadek w piwnicy* [Occurrence in the Cellar] by Węgierski.

poems contain stories about erotic adventures within a realistic convention,<sup>37</sup> a semi-fantastical convention<sup>38</sup> or in a quasi-historical setting,<sup>39</sup> though with numerous references to the morality of the Enlightenment period.

Despite the fact that the male perspective dominates the depictions of sexuality, the female characters included in Enlightenment obscene works were not docile slaves, mothers and wives entrapped by patriarchy, or modest young women. They were maidens or married women married off by their self-interested parents to much older sexually passive men, who experienced much frustration on that account. Neither were they respectable widows who abandoned erotic encounters after their husbands' death. In reality, they were women who, irrespective of their age, had specific erotic expectations, who wanted to actively participate in sensual passion with men (such as the female character in *Zdarzenie opuszczone* [Omitted Occurrence] ascribed to Węgierski or in *Pomiarkowanie* [Restraint] ascribed to Korytyński), who craved sexual satisfaction in marriage, but also outside of it, having little qualms when engaging in intercourse with the help (as did the wife of the eponymous character in the narrative poem *Hilary* – she found pleasure in engaging with a soldier, or the wife of king Mieszko with the court midget; the baron's wife with a huntsman in her husband's court in the narrative poem *Pielgrzym*) or with a chance acquaintance (the many wives of officials in *Hilary*, listed in bulk). They also included young women seeking erotic adventures before getting married (as the title lemon girl in Molski's poem or Kasia, the protagonist of *Słowik*); sometimes ready to, in exchange for money or gifts, engage with several partners simultaneously during one night (Salka in *Hilary*, who, however, 'trwoga bodła,/ By już, dosyć zmachaną, nie wzięto do siodła' [was afraid,/ Not be taken for a ride as she was already somewhat tired]); influential women expediting the careers of their common folk lovers (e.g., in the poem *Szczęście* [Happiness] by Czyż) or influential ladies whose sexual partners gained advantages,<sup>40</sup> and pros-

37 For example, in the narrative poem *Pielgrzym*, ascribed to Naruszewicz, adapted from a novella by Boccaccio, specifically the seventh tale from the seventh day in *The Decameron*, and in the narrative poem *Słowik* which is an adaptation of Boccaccio's / La Fontaine's work with the same title.

38 In the narrative poem *Czyszciec*, also associated with Naruszewicz, which constitutes a libertine adaptation of Boccaccio's eight tale from the third day of *The Decameron*.

39 As in the work ascribed to Naruszewicz entitled *Hilary*, which is an adaptation of a fragment of a work by Ariosto entitled *Orlando furioso*, which depicts the joint erotic conquests of king Mieszko (with a 'historical' reference to Mieszko III, son of Bolesław III Wrymouth) and one his subjects, the protagonist of the narrative poem.

40 Influential women ensuring a higher social position for their lovers – it is an interesting premise in Warsaw-set obscene and moral poetry developed within an allusive framework, sometimes with personal references, also present in, e.g.: *Oddalenie się z Warszawy literata* [The Man of Letters Leaves Warsaw] by Franciszek Zabłocki, *Bielany. W poniedziałek Zielonych Świątek* [Bielany. On a Green Week Monday] by Jan Ancuta.

titutes making a living from harlotry in a big city (depicted in various versions by Antoni Felicjan Nagłowski and Antoni Korwin Kossakowski in *Przewodniki warszawskie*).

With this general outline established, it is now time to move on to examples of the attitude of the authors of Enlightenment versed obscene works to the moral and linguistic taboo of eroticism. In the following classification I shall initially discuss the rebellious attacks against all bans which prohibited the presentation in literature of sexual or erotic matters, and then an increasingly careful approach to tabooisation of the areas, in terms of content and lexis, in two other groups of works. I shall also briefly indicate the literary means utilised by authors (anecdotes, concepts, metaphors, and allusions) applied within the strategies selected by them to lift or break the taboo (either through an overt daring attack against the taboo, hit-and-run tactics or cunning evasions).

## 1. AUTHENTIC LITERARY EROTIC OBSCENE WORKS

This group of works includes poems that can be considered as hard sexual literature – indecent both in terms of their content and the language used. For that reason, one can argue they constitute the truly obscene. Sexual situations and erotic experiences that offer satisfaction or corporal pleasure are described in those works as something common, something that is happening at the very moment or is being awaited, through the use of blunt indecent vocabulary (including cacophemisms) repeated many times which appear in various forms and are used in various contexts. Those include many apostrophes, appeals and exhortations that stress the significance and power (sometimes monstrous) of this area of activity in the world of humans, animals, fantastic creatures, etc., as well as various examples of how this officially forbidden sphere works – against that which, as per the existing taboo, was supposed to be left unspoken. These works existed as libertine manifestos maintained within the poetics of scandal, mostly written to shock audiences. Most poems included in this group were the outcome of a resolute open rebellion against the taboo associated with eroticism. In terms of the level of saturation with indecent content and related vocabulary, a few well-known works rank top of this scale: the already mentioned *Pochwała bordelu (Pieśń weselna)* by Stanisław Kostka Potocki addressed to a ‘smutny niewolnik [...] małżeńskiej cnoty’ [sad slave (...) to marital virtue] who decided to enter marriage, i.e., to settle for a boring relationship with a single partner and thus gave up on the most sophisticated diverse sexual pleasures described in the poem that men can taste easily and ‘na życzenie’ [on demand] in ‘bordele’ [brothels]; *Oda Pirona do Priapa*

[Piron's Ode to Priapus], a paraphrase of a work by a French poet developed by Trembecki (inc.: 'Kpię ja z kurew Helikoniek...' [I laugh in the face of Heliconian whores]), allegedly at the request of Stanisław August,<sup>41</sup> or a different one by Jasiński entitled *Oda do Priapa* [Ode to Priapus] (inc.: 'Przebóg, na cóż się zanosi...' [For goodness sake, what is it to come]); the poem *Na Elżbietę* [On Elisabeth] with unclear authorship attribution, most often ascribed to Trembecki,<sup>42</sup> in which the poem embarked on 'odmalować świata/ Piczę straszego warsztatu,/ Biorąc za pędzel chuj osła'<sup>43</sup> [painting for the world/ A cunt of terrible looks,/ Using an ass' dick as the brush], or *Przewodniki warszawskie* by Nagłowski and Kossakowski,<sup>44</sup> narrative poems devised in a reportage form<sup>45</sup> presenting a detail-rich map of debauchery in the capital – from boroughs known for their brothels to hidden erotic services provided by female escorts. Nagłowski in particular ventured to 'define' some 'warszawskie kobietki' [little Warsaw women] as 'kurwy' [whores] that kept spreading venereal diseases ('tryprzy, szankry i szopisy' [gonorrhoea and chancroids]) so that 'Każdego [...] wiadomym uczynić' [Everyone knew], and most of all warn the 'fryce' [young bucks] drawn to the capital.<sup>46</sup>

In terms of saturation with indecent content and vulgarisms, poems with a narrative nature rank slightly lower than the above-mentioned ones, e.g.: *Ojciec Gaudenty* (*Dwudziestówka*) or *Kapituła bernardynów*, both ascribed to Naruszewicz,

41 See: J. Kott, *Uwagi o tekstach* [Notes on texts], in: S. Trembecki, *Obscoena. Dodatek do "Pism wszystkich"* [Obscoena. Supplement to 'All scriptures'] ([Warsaw]: 1953), p. 14 (this is a unique print, which constitutes a separate supplement prepared for academic research to: S. Trembecki, *Pisma wszystkie. Wydanie krytyczne* [All scriptures. Critical edition], ed. J. Kott, vol. 1-2 (Warsaw: 1953); copy at Biblioteka UMK w Toruniu, Cimelia, ref. 183515. Jan Kott emphasised: 'Autorstwo przekładu jest niewątpliwe. (...) Trembecki wiersz ten przełożył niewątpliwie na zamówienie króla' [The authorship of the translation is clear. Trembecki translated this poem most certainly at the king's request]. See also: J. Snopek, *Objawienie i oświecenie...*, pp. 90-91, 95.

42 Initially, Jan Kott had indicated that 'wiersz *Na Elżbietę*, o Sapieżynie, to niewątpliwie utwór Zabłockiego' [the poem *Na Elżbietę*, about Sapieżyna, is certainly a work by Zabłocki] (*idem*, "Trembecki w świetle rękopisów i pierwodruków" [Stanisław Trembecki in the light of manuscripts and first prints], in: *Sprawozdania z Czynności i Posiedzeń Akademii Umiejętności w Krakowie*, vol. LI (1950), (Kraków: 1951), p. 571, and only later indicated that 'autorstwa paszkwiłu *Na Elżbietę* nie potrafimy obecnie rozstrzygnąć' [it is impossible to settle the authorship of the *Na Elżbietę* libel] and considered the arguments that supported both authorships (*idem*, *Uwagi o tekstach*, in: S. Trembecki, *Obscoena. Dodatek do "Pism wszystkich"*, p. [18]).

43 As quoted in: S. Trembecki, *Obscoena. Dodatek do "Pism wszystkich"*, p. 11. The basis for the publication of the poem *Na Elżbietę* was the manuscript B PAN Kr. 615, p. 196.

44 Antoni Felicjan Nagłowski is the author of *Przewodnik warszawski* while Antoni Korwin Kossakowski of *Suplement "Przewodnikowi [Warszawskiemu]"* [Supplement to [Warsaw] Guide]. Both works were edited in: *Przewodniki warszawskie*, established and edited by E. Rabowicz, pp. 27-43; pp. 45-67.

45 Remarks regarding the intrepid and uncompromising remarks in these and other works that depicted the moral realities of contemporary Warsaw – see: T. Kostkiewiczowa, *Klasycyzm, sentymentalizm, rokoko...*, pp. 369-380.

46 References as per: *Przewodniki warszawskie*, established and edited by E. Rabowicz, pp. 27, 28, 29.

suggested extreme sexual vitality among the monks belonging to the Bernadine order. The former is set in Warsaw where a well-endowed monk Gaudenty with an equally high potency stands in for one night for the deputy cup-bearer's son, a weak candidate to marry a certain demanding widow ('pani jurna i zdrowa' [a lustful and healthy lady] who 'Czuła tęsknotę bez pasternaku'<sup>47</sup> [Felt longing without the parsnip]) and engages in multiple sexual acts with her. The latter is set in the Kraków chapter which held a competition that was supposed to reveal a successor to one of the monks in the position of 'mistrz obłapki' ['master fondler']. It is to be noted that these constitute adaptations of texts written in French<sup>48</sup> enriched with the distinct Polish flavour.

The four poems that lead the ranking, because of their obscene content and vocabulary, were literary parodies: one of a song celebrating the act of marriage, a solemn ode,<sup>49</sup> a portrait poem, an inscriptive work intended for, e.g., women celebrating a social event (e.g., a name day or a visit) that required a versed compliment; and a guide for visitors to noteworthy sights in a city. This fact (in addition to other factors) was certainly the reason why the indecent content and vocabulary, discordant with the model, resonated more. This is because a parody, by imitating a model, was intended to mock it or at least challenge its fixed framework – the thematic and stylistic/linguistic fossil that it was. In this case the authors experimented with ossified literary forms giving them a new life, somewhat restoring their social utility – to praise the qualities of the sexual sphere that had been tabooed or to describe matters covered with the cloak of prohibitive silence (debauchery so common in Warsaw, traced not only in the districts famous for it).<sup>50</sup> The banned qualities and phenomena from the sphere replaced in these works the qualities and phenomena originally praised in the parodied models, originally compliant with socio-moral correctness, acceptable by the society and the official

47 Quoted per manuscript B PAN Kr. 615, p. 327. *Pasternak* – 'a tall plant with a spindly white root, with thickness similar to a finger and a raised stem, hairy at the base'; a metaphor of a human penis (similarly in *Przypadek siostry starszej*...).

48 *Kapituła bernardynów* was originally based on the narrative poem *Le Chapitre generale des cordeliers* (see R. Kaleta, *Obiady czwartkowe na dworze króla Stanisława Augusta. Próba monografii*, pp. 78-79), while *Dwudziestówka* on *Le petit fils d'Hercule* – according to Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki written for the Russian empress Catherine II (this opinion of the Warsaw-based researcher was referenced by Roman Kaleta, *ibid.*, p. 79).

49 On the paraphrasing of *Oda do Priapa* by Trembecki see remarks by Teresa Kostkiewiczowa (*eadem*, *Oda w poezji polskiej. Dzieje gatunku* [Ode in Polish poetry. The history of the species] (Wrocław: 1996), pp. 168, 208).

50 That is emphasised by the final fragment of *Przewodnik warszawski*: 'Bo choćbyś nie znał Grzybowa, Nalewek,/ To w którą zechcesz udając się stronę,/ Znajdziesz tych tłuków pełne domy wszędzie./ Gdzie wiecha kurwisk, rajfurek, kurewek' [Even if you don't know Grzybowo or Nalewki,/ Which ever way you go,/ You'll find houses full of those fuckers everywhere./ Where the pinnacle of whores, bawds, harlots] (quoted per: *Przewodniki warszawskie*, established and edited by E. Rabowicz, p. 43).

discourse. Indecent vocabulary was supposed to be yet another proof of their authors' complete liberation from those bans in these obscene texts. As a comprehensive list of those works, phrases and expressions would take up too much space, allow me to focus on a dozen or so examples to indicate how lexical bluntness was a tried and tested strategic tool used by the authors who openly, firmly and daringly opposed the erotic taboo. Vulgarisms were most often used to denote male and female genitalia, as well as sexual intercourse and activities: chuj [dick], dupa [arse], jajca gorące [hot balls], jajec kudłatych szeregi [rows of shaggy balls], jebi (potok), jebne (piczyska), jebiny, jebiec, jebur, kuś, kusiek podwyższenie [variations of 'dick'], kurwy [whores], kurwiska, pichna, pica, picza, piczka [variations of 'cunt'], piczny (handel), pisia, pizda [variations of 'cunt'], macanka [fondling], zady [bottoms]; wyjebany (los) [fucked up (fate)]; chędoży, jebie, kuśkuje [variations of 'to fuck'], jebiący [fucking], jebał pies [the fuck with this], obłapia [fondle], rżnie się [to fuck], wyjechać się [to get fucked].

In the context of *Przewodniki warszawskie* one should note a work by Jan Czyż entitled *Szczęście* – in it the author also emphasised, just as the other authors of the discussed works that are extremely interesting in socio-moral terms, the growing importance of eroticism at the time. With satirical humour and using vulgarisms he indicated the customs that existed in Warsaw in that period.<sup>51</sup> In his view, the most effective means of advancing socially in the capital were to have an active erotic life and be sexually promiscuous, which enabled young men with a 'silny korzeń' [strong root] to fulfil their ambitions, to be successful, and to reach their desired careers ('Będziez on pan i starosta,/ Jak swej pani piczę schłosta' [He will become a lord and starost yet,/ If he smacks his lady's cunt well]). The author argued: 'Zasługa istna upada,/ Chuj i dupa wszystkim włada' [Here's the true virtue,/ Dick and arse rule all]. There is also a mocking appeal: 'Jebmyż wszyscy, a przez gażę,/ Dupa nam tor szczęścia wskaże'<sup>52</sup> [Let us all fuck, and through the pay,/ The arse shall show us the way to our happiness]. This context was significant as it broke the male point of view, so characteristic of *Przewodniki warszawskie*. Female prostitution would never have developed without men seeking this type of sexual service. Nagłowski and Kossakowski revealed in their narrative poems mainly the sheer number of women in this 'handel piczny' [cunt trade], while Czyż in his short work emphasised the phenomenon of covert prostitution of men, who used their physical advantages to achieve influential positions and material gains, usually with the support of the women with whom they engaged in self-interested sex. The

51 Teresa Kostkiewiczowa has stressed that in this and other works by Czyż 'observations regarding sexual freedom are formulated in a provocatively blunt or even vulgar manner'; see: *eadem, Klasycyzm, sentymentalizm, rokoko...*, p. 379.

52 Quoted as per manuscript: B PAN Kr. 615, p. 440; B PAN Kórn. 11190, p. 64.

poem includes many vulgarisms. By including 'żona kurwa' [whore wife] and 'mąż kurewnik' [whore-seeking husband] its author also indicated an important moral fact of the time, i.e., the breakdown of marriage and the high number of divorces, in fact similarly to the authors of *Przewodniki* or Jan Ancuta in the satire *Bielany. W poniedziałek Zielonych Świątek* [Bielany. On a Green Week Monday] or Węgierski in his witty work, free from indecent vocabulary, entitled *Żona. Sen* [Wife. A Dream].<sup>53</sup>

Their audacious fight against the tabooisation of certain spheres of life had led some writers, libertines in particular, to cause scandal and to demand that the sexual aspects of human nature be included as viable literary topics. This produced authentic, in terms of content and vocabulary, literary obscene works. They might be evaluated in different ways, e.g., as triggered by the prohibitions and an overt violation of the taboo, as an extreme outcome of libertinism,<sup>54</sup> or as a socio-cultural proof of the morals of that time. These texts differed in aesthetic/literary terms. The most acclaimed were the works ascribed to Trembecki. A prominent level of moral rebellion or a willingness to reliably describe the banned aspects of the capital's moral life without moralising did not necessarily guarantee high artistic value. Although the 'polished' style, deliberate composition, aesthetic or sociological intent, and similar procedures applied by authors did increase the literary value of their texts, they did not conceal their monotonous and sometimes even forced licentiousness of the content and language.

## 2. MORAL VIGNETTES ABOUT EROTIC OCCURRENCES, EPIGRAMS, AND ANECDOTES

This is a provisional name of the second group of works I have extracted from the studied set of obscene erotic works, that share the same approach to the taboo of eroticism. It includes works less saturated with indecent content, including in terms of indecent vocabulary. In them, the limits of linguistic taboo are observed to an extent, as the authors were not intent on shocking with the sheer number of vul-

53 In non-personal satires, e.g., *Żona modna* [Fashionable Wife] by Krasicki or *Matżeństwo* [Marriage] by Naruszewicz, the authors either indicated other reasons for the crisis of conjugal life or reasons related to eroticism and the fact of drawing various benefits from sexual stimuli suggested in a more subtle manner. In his lyrical poems Naruszewicz emphasised that the breakdown of marriage was caused by the habit of marrying young girls off to older men driven by the girl's family's material interests.

54 See: E. Rabowicz, "Oświeceniowe 'przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy", p.26. This contains the researcher's important remark stating that the poems by Trembecki, Potocki and Jasiński 'reflected the extremes of the ideological approach of Polish libertinism.'

garisms – they are included, but there are fewer of them. Those usually include the most typical common expressions and phrases used, against the taboo, in colloquial speech for denoting matters related to eroticism and sexual physiology.<sup>55</sup> There are also poems free of any vulgarisms. The authors softened the graphicness of certain situations and circumstances associated with sexual intercourse or erotic adventures and desires. Sexuality is still the dominant topic, yet it is developed also by using a humorous take on the discussed erotic events, and the comicality of characters and situations.

The favourite form of these works was a short narrative about the sexual occurrence, or containing a subtext hinting at it. Those works were either versed moral vignettes maintained within a realistic convention, or bawdy or elegant epigrams and anecdotes that utilised witty concepts and wordplay. They depicted and praised sexual freedom and ridiculed the habits of the clergy in a satirical and witty manner. The narrative poems included in this group differ from texts from the first group that shared this form, mainly due to their humorous approach to sexuality and more restraint when it comes to using vulgarisms. This approach tempered the bluntness of the depictions.

The realism of the situations and humorous qualities made the texts more enjoyable for the audience than authentic literary erotic obscene works were, as these were saturated with examples of sexual promiscuity and trivial language. There are, however, also some ‘rich’ anecdotes or strange fabricated stories here that were intended by their authors to satisfy the unrefined tastes of everyday readers who expected outré situations and erotic occurrences. Therefore, the means these texts used to conceal the banned content were only sometimes refined, and most of the time they represented or intentionally imitated the level typical of literary culture of the nobility (nobility’s folklore) by pursuing the strand of the bawdy literalness and vulgarity of those Old-Polish poems written ‘dobrym towarzyszom g’woli’ [to the liking of our good fellows].

The works included in this group were usually devoid of any metaphorical framing of sexuality (a quality that distinguishes the texts included in the third group). Only sometimes and not as a dominant feature did they include a shortened, well-known erotic metaphor, or an allusion to one. In many of these poems the intention was to emphasise that sexual intercourse occurred (or there was a hope that it would soon occur) as a result of the clever conduct of one party or at the consent of both partners. Instead of metaphorical sequences they included lexical means

55 Compare a remark by Anna Śledź that ‘the presence of vulgarisms constitutes an inseparable feature of the syntax and lexis of colloquial speech,’ which refers to modern Polish, but it could just as well be applied to the Polish of previous centuries (*eadem*, “Przerywnik czy wykrzyknik? Analiza semantyczna i składniowa pewnych użyć słów uważanych za wulgarne”, p. 69).



that expressed indecent content, mainly verbs, e.g., 'chędożyć' [old-fashioned 'to have sex'] (*Trafność spowiednika*, *Cytryniarka* [Lemon Girl]), 'schędożyć', 'zdupczyć' [the same] (*Głuszec włoski*), 'jebać' [to fuck] (*Szczęście*) or nouns, e.g., 'piczka' [cunt] (*Do lubieżnicy* [To the Lecher]), 'dupa' [arse] (*Głuszec włoski*). Nonetheless, both in terms of saturation with commonplace vocabulary and the intensity of indecent content, these poems never reached the level of authentic obscene works.

The following examples and their short descriptions will now be discussed: *Trafność spowiednika* and *Sąd przeora* – Molski;<sup>56</sup> *Świętość reguły* by Naruszewicz;<sup>57</sup> *Głuszec włoski*, *Uleczenie*, poems ascribed to Naruszewicz, that depicted how men cunningly used women to satisfy their sexual drive;<sup>58</sup>

*Pokusa* [Temptation] by Jan Czyż (inc.: 'Kusia raz wzięto w areszt, że się miał źle sprawić...' [The prick was once arrested for not performing well]) – this anecdotal epigram resembling with its stylistic/linguistic structure and the underlying concept similar to indecent short poems created by amateur poets among the nobility would fit perfectly to an Old-Polish *silva rerum*;<sup>59</sup>

*Przedwieczerze* by one J. Chrzanowski, a short epigram of which the very first two lines accurately reflect the atmosphere of everyday life of landed gentry ('Pytał

- 56 Entertaining moral vignettes that suggested clergymen's interest and knowledge of sexual matters. The former indicates in a humorous manner the erotic experiences of priests indicated by an absolutely accurate identification of a sexual position by the confessor which caused in the confessing young man 'wielkie zmysłów [...] poruszenie' [stirred his senses greatly]. The priest, discerning the kind of sin at hand, suddenly arrives at a revelation: 'Ach, już wiem – rzecze – z tyłuś ją chędożyć!' ["Oh, I know," he said, "you fucked her from behind"]. The latter is amusing because of the prior's unexpected awareness of the strength of erotic potential of one of the monks; when he learns the name of the 'chwalbiś' [braggart]: 'Powie bez zastanowienia: "Prawda, ojciec Anastazy/ Potrafiłby dziesięć razy"' [He'll say without a moment's hesitation: "Truly, father Anastazy/ He could do it a tenfold"] (quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kórn. 11190: p. 60; p. 58).
- 57 A morality scene from the life of a convent; witty wordplay with a punchline expression: 'nadstawić żywota' [offer your *żywot*] (*żywot* – 'life, health', but also 'womb, lower part of the abdomen; uterus'); in colloquial language this expression otherwise meaning sacrificing something for an important cause (e.g., to defend one's homeland) suddenly gains a completely new meaning. The explanation offered by a nun who apparently became pregnant because a man 'dotrągnął ją po brzuszku' [reached her belly] in a cell during the *silentium* is sneeringly summarised by her mother superior: "O, wielka – rzecze ksienia – zakonnica cnota,/ Dla całości reguły nadstawić żywota" ["Oh, how great," said the abbess, "the nun's virtue,/ To offer her *żywot* for the entire convent"] (as quoted in: A. Naruszewicz, *Wiersze* [Poems], introduction B. Wolska, texts prepared by students of Polish philology at the Faculty of Philology, University of Lodz, editing minor participants (Łódź: 2001), p. 111).
- 58 Versed stories, 'salty' anecdotes proliferated in numerous copies. In the former a sought-after grouse is given to a widow after the cunning huntsman reasons to justify not a one-time but a multiple 'zdupczenie' [fucking] of the woman, while in the latter there occurs an insertion of the penis of a priest and chemist (supposedly his 'thumb' suffering from an ulcer) into the vulva of a girl grateful to him for his advice that helped her treat a similar malady. The credulous girl thinks that she prompted a similar 'healing': 'Ojczy! wasz wrzód pęknął!' [Father! your ulcer burst!] (quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kórn. 11190, p. 93).
- 59 On the similarities of the poem to poems included in nobility *silvae rerum* of noble families, see remarks by Edmund Rabowicz (*idem*, "Oświeceniowe 'przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy", p. 12).

mąż żonę: “Co robić będziemy?/ Wieczerzę, czyli dłubanę zaczniemy?” [Husband asked his wife: “What shall we do?/ Supper or should we start poking?”], and become an excellent testimony of eating and sex being seen as equal sources of pleasure and amusement;<sup>60</sup>

*Do Ignacego Zapolskiego* [To Ignacy Zapolski] by Naruszewicz – the originator, with his numerous erotic experiences (because he ‘skochoł’ [has loved up] ‘przedmieścia i rynki,/ Lecząc z brunetek w czambuł na blondynki’ [suburbs and market squares,/ Running from blondes to brunettes alike]), is a warning to the addressee, outlining the image of his future life in a noble manor once he loses his former verve and boring evenings will settle in, which in turn will bring about the unavoidable unfaithfulness of his wife;<sup>61</sup>

*Już nie możesz* [You Cannot Any More], an anonymous couplet ascribed to Trembecki,<sup>62</sup> wrongly treated as intended for the husband of Elżbieta Sapieżyna<sup>63</sup>: ‘Mój książę! Co król zrobił jednym tylko żartem?/ Ciebie kpem,<sup>64</sup> żonę kurwą, a syna bękartem’<sup>65</sup> [Dear Prince! What did the king do with just one joke?/ Made you a fool, your wife a whore, and your son a bastard]. In fact, it was most probably addressed to another Sapieha: prince Aleksander Michał, field hetman of Lithuania and since 1775 great chancellor of Lithuania, whose wife Magdalena Agnieszka, a beautiful, dynamic, and ambitious woman, was in 1765–1771 Stanisław August’s favourite.<sup>66</sup>

Poems depicting women’s interest in the matters of sex:

*Do lubieżnicy*,<sup>67</sup> an anonymous work with a caustic suggestion that the interest

60 Quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kórn. 11190, p. 89.

61 ‘Pomocnik w skarbcu... ty w kominie z nogi./ Zdrzymiesz się z kuflem... a ockniesz się z rogi!’ [Assistant in the vault... you up in the air./ You doze off drunk... and wake up a cuckold!] (quoted as per: A. Naruszewicz, *Liryki wybrane*, p. 129).

62 J. Kott, *Uwagi o tekstach*, in: S. Trembecki, *Obscoena. Dodatek do “Pism wszystkich”*, p. [18].

63 *Loc. cit.* In his remarks on *Na Elżbietę*, which referred to Sapieżyna, Jan Kott wrote before provided the couplet quoted here: ‘About her husband there circulated the following piece, the authorship of which was also ascribed to Trembecki.’

64 *Kiep* – dated (15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries) vulgar word for female vulva, since the 17<sup>th</sup> century metaphorically denoting also a fool, idiot, and a clod.

65 Quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kr. 615, p. 232.

66 This poem could have been written as a reaction to the birth of his son Michał (1770) or (more probably) Adam (Franciszek) (1772), because in the case of the latter A. M. Sapieha long refused to consider him his rightful son, doubting his fatherhood. This clever couplet is yet another example of how the private matters of the members of the aristocratic elite revealed in erotic obscene works by their authors became public matters and even if the less informed readers could find it difficult to identify the protagonists (as it is also sometimes for modern researchers), they did, however, achieve the satisfaction of spinning speculations.

67 This is the title in manuscript B PAN Kr. 615; in manuscript B PAN Kórn. 11190, p. 6: *Do lubieżnej*. In edition: *Seksycyacje. Antologia polskiej literatury frywolnej, rubasznej i obscenicznej*, p. 68 – text ascribed to F. D. Książnin (under the incorrect title: *Do lubieżcy (!)*).

already begins in fetal life; *Do Rocha Kossowskiego* [To Roch Kossowski], a snide poem by Naruszewicz, in which the author humorously sympathises with the addressee who is constantly being called by his wife to fulfil his marital obligation: 'Ustawnie prosi,/ Nogi podnosi. "A chciejże raczyć!"'<sup>68</sup> [She keeps asking,/ Spreading her legs: "Would you be so kind to please!"]; *Cytryniarka* by Molski – an anecdote that emphasises the sexual readiness of a young seller of lemons;<sup>69</sup> *Śmieszka* [Funny Girl], an anonymous work in which 'dzieweczka Dorota' [young lass Dorothy] who accuses 'pacholik Prot' [young lad Prot] of rape reveals during a court trial the secret reason for her submissiveness to the man;<sup>70</sup> *Skarga młodej żony na męża starego* and *Uskarżanie się wydanej za mąż damy, a w swoim żądaniu omylonej, czyli Desperacja* – examples of female frustration caused by the lack male potency or their husbands' sexual passiveness.

This category also includes anonymous poems that emphasise the fact that a good partnership or marriage depends on a man's sexual performance, e.g., *Ważność małżeństwa* [Marriage Validity] (with the refrain repeated several times 'Kuśki chce małżeńskie łożę'<sup>71</sup> [The marital bed demands a dick]); the epigram *Rada dla mężów* [Advice for Husbands], with a punchline intended for 'rogacze' [cuckolds]: 'Niech róg będzie, gdzie trzeba, nie będzie na głowie'<sup>72</sup> [Make sure your horn is there where it should be, then it won't be on your head]; *Rywale* [Rivals], an epigram indicating the lack of sexual initiative as the reason for lost courtship.<sup>73</sup>

68 Quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kr. 615, p. 255. Kossowski's (who received the nickname 'Rożek' [small horn]) wife was Barbara née Bielińska, known for her beauty and temperament, the protagonist of a work ascribed to Trembecki *Wiersz na pochwałę J. W. Kossowskiej... z okoliczności jej tańca na warszawskiej reducie* [A Poem of Praise for J. W. Kossowska... From the Circumstances of Her Dance at Warsaw's Redoubt].

69 The young rogue enjoyed the man's peculiar proposed method of payment for lemons ('Ja tak nie płacę, lecz jeśli być może,/ To cię za każdą trzy razy schędożę' [I don't pay like that, but if I could,/ I'll fuck you thrice for every one]) so much that she accepted that offer and stated: 'Bierz, co chcesz, ale wiesz o tym, mój ładny,/ Że ci na borg nie dam żadnej' [Take whatever you want, but know this, my fair lad,/ That I won't give a single one without payment] (quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kórń. 11190, p. 56).

70 She stated with absolute candour that she could not have 'Gryźć, tłuc, drapać i zabić zuchwalca w ostatku' [Bite, smack, scratch or kill the insolent fellow eventually] (as the judge had suggested) because she had no strength left to defend herself because during the act she was laughing so hard (*ibid.*, p. 57).

71 Quoted as per *ibid.*, p. 63. In the conclusion, the author reaffirmed it once again, even more emphatically: 'O chuju żadna nie gada,/ Każda mu jest jednak rada;/ Powiem, choć rozgniewam może:/ Chuja chce małżeńskie łożę' [No woman talks about the dick,/ But every one is pleased with it;/ I'll say this but I may dismay some:/ The marital bed demands the dick].

72 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

73 This cause is expressed unceremoniously by one of the two men in love with the same woman: 'Taka tedy różnica była między nami,/ Że on ruszał dupą, a ja ramionami' [That was the difference between us,/ He swayed his arse, and I my arms] (*ibid.*, p. 59).

### 3. METAPHORICAL DEPICTIONS OF SEXUALITY

A distinct feature of works included in this third group, considering their attitude towards the taboo of eroticism and the extent of their indecency in terms of content and vocabulary, is their use of metaphors, circumlocutions, allusions, and ambiguity – the means of describing or suggesting various manifestations of sexuality. In many of the poems these means appear alongside witty concepts and comicality of characters and events, typical for the second group. In obscene narrative poems the humorous approach to the banned topic acquires yet another dimension – it becomes associated not only with the entertainment-focussed function of most such works (a considerable proportion of this kind of literature is constituted by gallant literature, created for amusement and leisure) but also with the attitude of the speaking persona, with the works' digressive nature, a looking-down-upon approach, and a not quite serious view of the setting in which eroticism rules absolutely.

They contain various inspirations in terms of the presentation of erotic content, and extensive metaphorical depictions, especially for discussing sexual intercourse and the kinds and modes of erotic relations. Apart from popular metaphors that had existed in everyday culture and literature for centuries and had been known from previous traditions of world and Polish literature, there appeared new and original metaphorical circles, or the old ones were modified. In terms of style and language, those are characterised by correctness, and it is rarely violated. Vulgar words are omitted and replaced by circumlocutions, and if they do appear they are the fringe of the entire lexis applied when raising topics generally considered as indecent. Many of the works included in this group mostly feature inventive means of violating the taboo and breaking, through the use of metaphors and laughter, prohibitions that apply to this important sphere of human life, i.e., eroticism understood as sexual vitality and sensual experiences, including those purely physical.

Two subcategories can be identified in this group. The first consists of more extensive works: four obscene narrative poems that have been ascribed to Naruszewicz: *Czyścić, Hilary, Pielgrzym, Słowiak* (they are adaptations of works by Boccaccio, Ariosto, and La Fontaine), and shorter witty poems praising the period's erotic freedom, and sexual activeness and vitality. Their distinct feature is dynamism. The second subcategory includes narrative/descriptive works (some short) enriched with a lyrical quality that depict sexual intercourse between woman and man and the related circumstances and conditions of emotional engagement, and all that in a serious manner. The striving for delight and pleasure provided by a corporal interaction of lovers and sexual intercourse are presented in them in a more subtle

way. Some of these short texts include motifs typical for Rococo works.<sup>74</sup> While narrative poems include one or a few vulgarisms, the shorter works are completely devoid of any indecent words. Sexual content is expressed in them using erotic metaphors exclusively.

This author of obscene narrative poems, responding to the common interest among readers in the topic of sexuality, skilfully adapted well-known and appreciated works of world literature. Those texts, which depicted various sexual experiences, are dominated by rich erotic metaphors and witty treatment of human sexuality. As those narrative poems had already been discussed extensively,<sup>75</sup> I will only reference the metaphorical areas used in them for describing sexual encounters, and their sources. In the erotic representations of corporal encounters of lovers lustful for each other, there are metaphorical images already consolidated in literary traditions, as well as new ones, both shortened and extended, with details from other not prohibited human activities, perfectly selected for the topic. Some of the better-known means included, e.g., the use of militaristic style, known in love poetry for centuries, common in erotic poetry of the Baroque, often used particularly in the Rococo poetry of the Enlightenment. In it the sexual act was depicted as conquering a stronghold<sup>76</sup> (in narrative poems: a castle, a castellum,<sup>77</sup> or a bloch)<sup>78</sup> or a struggle between lovers. It was also common to frame the act as a horse ride<sup>79</sup> or activities typical for horse-riding (e.g., dressage) or as hunting.<sup>80</sup> Less common metaphors present in the discussed narrative poems included ploughing a field or drinking.

Despite using traditional erotic connotations of those activities, the author re-

74 E. Rabowicz, *Rokoko* [Rococo], in: *Słownik literatury polskiego oświecenia*, pp. 520-527.

75 See: W. Mincer, "Miscellanea bibliograficzne z epoki Oświecenia" [Bibliographic miscellanea from the Age of Enlightenment], in: *Pamiętnik Literacki* [Literary Memoir] (1956), coll. 1, pp. 171-177; W. Preisner, "Recepcja fragmentu 'Orlando szalonego' u autora polskiego z końca XVIII wieku" [Reception of a fragment of 'Orlando Crazy' by a Polish author from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], in: *Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu* [Reports of the Scientific Society in Toruń] (Toruń: 1958), vol. 10, coll. 1-4 (1956), pp. 66-71; see also discussion of these extensive erotic works in: B. Wolska, "Poematy obsceniczne przypisywane Naruszewiczowi jako adaptacje wzorów obcych" [Obscene poems ascribed to Naruszewicz as adaptations of alien patterns], in: *Literaturoznawstwo* [Literary Studies], issue 1 (1), ed. R. Jagodzińska (Łódź: 2007), pp. 39-68.

76 See: M. Hanusiewicz, *Pięć stopni miłości. O wyobraźni erotycznej w polskiej poezji barokowej* [Five degrees of love. About erotic imagination in Polish Baroque poetry] (Warsaw: 2004), pp. 151-155.

77 *Castellum* – 'a fortified castle, a small fortlet' (from Latin *castellum*).

78 *Bloch* – 'a war fort, a stronghold' (from German *Blockhaus*).

79 The metaphor of horse-riding used for sexual descriptions is present in, e.g., three songs (VIII, X and XXVIII) in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, which inspired the author of *Hilary*. Cf. also: D. Ackerman, *Historia naturalna miłości* [Natural history of love], Polish transl. by D. Gostyńska (Warsaw: 1997), pp. 229-249.

80 Compare the related examples of French poetry, Polish Baroque poetry and fragments of *Orlando furioso* discussed by Mirosława Hanusiewicz (*eadem*, *Pięć stopni miłości...*, pp. 157-162).

mained original, and even independent of his sources of inspiration, usually minimal in those instances. He displayed prolific erotic imagination of the Sarmatic kind. In his descriptions of sexual acts, the activities are vivid, enriched with many details, and demonstrate a Polish flavour. For example, in *Pielgrzym*, *coitus* is the successful hunt for the desired game, repeated many times, with a depiction of a hunt for partridges and other fowl (willing and submissive towards the hunter); the imagery is dynamic, both from the perspective of the tracking pointer, and of the hunter armed with a good musket with 'proch w rogu, kule w sakwach' [powder in the horn, bullets in the bags].

In the narrative poem *Słowik*, yet another metaphor is used, a farming one this time: the sexual act is framed as ploughing the field. This was a sequence common in erotic literature, particularly those works that had been inspired by the folk metaphors of love songs,<sup>81</sup> but since the field was 'nowina' [a 'novelty', or 'virgin'] (i.e., a field that had never been cultivated before), the activities surrounding it were depicted as particularly arduous, requiring much energy as the young lovers lacked experience in the matter. The ingenuity of the author in this adaptation also produced original metaphors related to preparing, sending, and sealing correspondence – careful and precise seal on a letter ('z tyłu i z przodu' [front and back]).

The narrative poem *Hilary* offers other original metaphors derived from the erotic connotations of horse-riding, in the form of activities performed to ensure safe driving of a cart, e.g., an energetic operation, almost brining sweat to the driver's brow (by private Łukasz in Hilary's wife's bed), of a large pole, as if inside the hub of a britzka,<sup>82</sup> to support the vehicle and prevent it from becoming stuck in mud. Short metaphorical depictions of repeated sexual encounters presented as steering a kibitka carriage (to pass 'milczkiem poczt kilka nie złażąc z kibitki' [silently several posts without dismounting the *kibitka*]) also feature the familiar local flavour.

*Hilary* features particularly many erotic adventures, which are even enumerated 'in bulk' to emphasise the sexual vitality of the characters. Metaphors are particularly original in the bulk enumerations of those corporal encounters. The compliance of the wives of starosts, chamberlains, swordbearers, masters of the horse, encountered en route, and other casual partners of king Mieszko and Hilary is treated as, e.g., a willing, without any sense of guilt or shame, submission of those women to activities appropriate to the social positions of their husbands. The protagonists are the active parties, i.e., they fix the seams of the sword sheaths of the wives of swordbearers, they take the 'size' of chamberlains' wives, they saddle

81 M. Hanusiewicz, *Pięć stopni miłości...*, p. 144.

82 *Hub* – 'thick, round, strengthened part of a wheel of a vehicle close to the shaft on which the wheel is placed.'

up the wives of masters of the horse with a 'live saddle', etc. Other erotic activities, discussed in bulk, include the claiming of an entire crop (by a rival) or the collection of appropriate fees (old taxes and internal duties, i.e., tolls, hearth tax, etc.) during joint quasi-official inspections of villages, cities, and manors. Intercourse in which two (or even three) men engage with a single woman is depicted as drinking from one vessel – 'z jednej konewki' [from one watering can] (as if imitating clergymen who drank from one carboy as they maintained one housekeeper). That is an extension of the metaphorical imagery parallel to those which existed in folk love song (drinking, eating, picking fruit, etc.).<sup>83</sup>

In his narrative poems Naruszewicz displayed a surprisingly vivid erotic imagination; he enriched expressions and associations established in literary tradition and created new ones – he associated the sexual act with situations and objects distant from it. His depictions of various sexual encounters are inventive and witty, and thus they add variety to his works, mitigate the sense of saturation with easy adventures and rampant eroticism, and, finally, the overwhelming promiscuity found in the texts. The indicated situations are only sometimes drastic, e.g., in the anti-clerical narrative poem *Czyścić*, which depicts the alleged spiritual exercises of a priest and a married woman using a long 'na półtorej piędzi' [one-and-a-half-long span] relic 'co się koło niej włosy kędzierzawe wiją' [around which curly hair swirl].

Shorter works that utilise erotic metaphors for depicting erotic sensuality utilise ambiguity, a well-known metaphor or a completely new one. These depictions are somewhat humorous, and they forgo any colloquialisms altogether or include some minor instances of those.

The most noteworthy include: *Pomiarkowanie*, a work ascribed by copyists to Onufry Korytyński, an anonymous poem entitled *Kominiarz. Pieśń liryczna* [Chimney Sweeper. Lyrical Song] sometimes ascribed to Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin; the anonymous *Skarga wdowia* [Widow's Complaint]; Naruszewicz's epigram entitled *Na balony* [To Baloons] (an interesting context both for the lofty civilisational ode *Balon* and the author's well-known erotic *Do astronoma* [To the Astronomer]); and a work by Węgierski filled with moral specifics entitled *Węgierski do Rogalińskiego, prosząc o pożyczanie kolaski* [Węgierski to Rogaliński, Asking to Borrow a Britzka].

*Pomiarkowanie* is a slick moral vignette based on a concept that utilises play on the words 'miara' [a measure], 'mierzyć' [to measure], and 'pomiarkowanie' [re-

83 See: M. Hanusiewicz, *Pięć stopni miłości...*, p. 144; D. Wężowicz-Ziółkowska, *Miłość ludowa. Wzory miłości wieśniaczej w polskiej pieśni ludowej XVIII–XX wieku* [People's love. Patterns of peasant love in Polish folk songs of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Wrocław: 1991), pp. 150–160; compare also: T. Kostkiewiczowa, *Erotyk* [Erotic], in: *Słownik literatury polskiego oświecenia*, pp. 116–121, where the researcher has discussed, e.g., the main models that influenced the shape of erotic poetry, including lyrical folk song and within it the means for masking inconvenient content (*ibid.*, p. 117).

strainment]. It depicts a surprising change in the attitude of Irys, a married woman, towards giving herself to another man. Initially she is reluctant and states that a suddenly revealed place in her body that enchanted Tyrsys, the other man, is meant for her husband exclusively. Calmed by the chance partner's assurance that his 'miara' [measure] is matched so well that it will not diminish her husband's pride, she consents to *coitus*. When Tyrsys energetically yet with 'pomiarowanie' [restraintment] 'Rozdziela, mierzy i przegradza śmieie' [Divides, measures, and separates boldly], the woman, sexually satisfied during the activities, wishes to extend the act by reprimanding the 'mierniczy' [surveyor] using his style: 'To, coś zostawił dla męża, jest wiele!' [You have left much still for the husband!].<sup>84</sup>

*Kominiarz* is a playful song in which the title character flaunts his skills by 'chędoży' [he fucks] 'czysto, pięknie, sadzami zakopciałe/ Kominy duże, małe' [cleanly, beautifully, filled with soot/ Chimneys, big and small]. He states that the activity is a 'przedsięwzięcie stałe' [permanent task], constantly desired by women of all ages and social or marital status. He calls on young ladies to care for their 'czeluście' [chasms] from young age and to have their own chimney sweep ('Niech kominiarz, choć malańki,/ Będzie w waszym guście' [Make sure the sweep, even a tiny one,/ Is to your liking]).<sup>85</sup> Male sexual potency, presented as readiness to fulfil women's expectations, has been framed as 'chędożenie' (i.e., cleaning) chimneys, and the author has managed to avoid vulgarisms aptly using the polysemy of this verb.<sup>86</sup>

*Skarga wdowia*<sup>87</sup> – the epigram's farming sexual metaphor was quite common, in this case with the use of a plough, i.e., an active male member during the act.<sup>88</sup>

*Na balony* (inc.: 'Niechaj sobie Francuz lata...' [May the Frenchman fly]) – this short poem established a witty context of balloon flights, carefully followed at the time, promoted in Poland by, e.g., the French aeronaut J. P. Blanchard (and thus

84 Quoted fragments of *Pomiarowanie* as per manuscript B PAN Kórn. 11190, p. 70.

85 The quoted fragment of *Kominiarz. Pieśń liryczna* as per manuscript B PAN Kr. 615, p. 128.

86 Compare the verb *chędożyć* – 'to clean, cleanse, sweep, dust' and in an expression classified as an *obscenum*: *chędożyć kobietę* – 'feel up, have corporal conduct with [a woman]' (S. B. Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego* [Polish Dictionary], 3rd edition photo-offset, vol. 1 (Warsaw: 1951), pp. 237-238).

87 Consider the epigram quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kórn. 11190, p. 65:

'Języki ludzkie do siebie to mają,  
Że źle, czy dobrze o ludziach gadają.  
Mówią, że czyjsis plug bywa w mej roli;  
Gdy mój grunt orzą, niech sąsiad nie boli.'

[Human tongues are like that/ They talk good or bad about people./ They say that someone's plough sometimes visits my field;/ When they plough my field, may the neighbour not pity me] [*nie boli* – in this case: 'nie boleje'].

88 Moreover, the role of the 'plough' is also mentioned in *Słowik*, where the erotic struggles of young lovers end in exhaustion and they fall asleep because 'jeden i druga/ Nie byli zdolni jeszcze do dźwigania pluga' [both he and she/ Were not yet able to pull the plough].



references *Balon*, the well-known ode by Naruszewicz, which commented on such a performance). It is a metaphorical description of a sexual intercourse extolled above the flights of aeronauts already in the initial verse, framed as a similar journey to 'wyższy świat' [a higher world], though this time leading to 'królestwo Wenery' [the kingdom of Venera]. During this journey the spheres that matter (as if in cosmological terms) are the two initial and the two back areas and the rudder that must be waved to achieve a satisfying erotic encounter.<sup>89</sup>

The poem *Węgierski do Rogalińskiego...* seems noteworthy in this group of obscene works. In it erotic encounters are treated as solely physical, yet the descriptions are developed without a single vulgarity; instead it includes short-hand suggestive metaphors of expected sexual relations (driving into a door)<sup>90</sup> and an allusive reference to the phallus as an active factor of the encounter awaited by the man: 'na tę (tylko) myśl samą' [at this (very) thought], 'Sprężyna mi się nadyma,/ Leczyć może u tej prawiczki/ Z tym (dziś) nawet wjadę w drzwiczki,/ Czego Kampanuczy nie ma'<sup>91</sup> [My spring bulges,/ But maybe at this virgin/ With this (today) I shall drive into the door,/ Which Campagnucci is missing].

The second subcategory of metaphorical works includes a dozen or so poems that describe the sexual act using metaphors and/or suggestive allusions. The first or third-person accounts that can be found in them are characterised by an emo-

89 Quoted as per the manuscript in the National Central Historical Archive in Kyiv, ref. F. 228, record 2, no. 14, sheet 4. A discussion of this erotic epigram in the context of Enlightenment poems referring to balloon flight – see: B. Wolska, *W świecie żywiołów, Boga i człowieka. Studia o poezji Adama Naruszewicza* [In the world of the elements, God and man. Studies on poetry by Adam Naruszewicz] (Łódź: 1995), pp. 77-79. See also: A. Ročko, "Astronomowie w poetyckiej apostrofie Adama Naruszewicza i Ludwika Osińskiego" [Astronomers in the poetic apostrophe of Adam Naruszewicz and Ludwik Osiński], in: *Literatura. Historia. Dziedzictwo. Prace ofiarowane Profesor Teresie Kostkiewiczowej* [Literature. History. Heritage. Works donated to Professor Teresa Kostkiewiczowa], eds T. Chachulski and A. Grześkowiak-Krwawicz (Warsaw: 2006), pp. 315-316. This work, indicated as an example of the influence of scientific discoveries made at that time on erotic literary imagination (under a different title *Na podróż Blancharda* [On Blanchard's Journey]), was treated as a text authored by S. Trembecki (as indicated in: S. Trembecki, *Poezje wybrane* [Selected poems], selection and introduction J.W. Gomułicki (Warsaw: 1978), p. 95). Compare remarks by Edmund Rabowicz, who argued that Gomułicki's attribution was incorrect, in: *idem*, "Stanisław Trembecki w świetle nowych źródeł", p. 276.

90 A similar metaphor ('szczupłe do rozkoszy drzwiczki' [slim door to delight]) is present in *Epitalmion Dorantowi i Klimentie* by Trembecki.

91 As quoted in: R. Kaleta, *Sensacje z dawnych lat* [Sensations from the past] (Wrocław: 1986), pp. 114-115. The researcher has indicated that the work was first announced by a Soviet researcher N. P. Bobrik, as per a copy surviving in the National Central Historical Archive in Kyiv, ref. F. 228, record 2, no. 14, sheet 67 ("Neopublikovannoje stikhotvorenje T.K. Wengierskiego", in: *Slavyanskij Archiv* (Moscow: 1959), p. 197). This salty poetic letter was addressed to Kasper Rogaliński, a politician and poet who participated in Thursday dinners and in the years 1778-1788 was the voivode of the Inflanty Voivodeship. The mentioned Kampanuczy (Giuseppe Campagnucci), Italian castrato, delivered guest performances in Warsaw as a soprano in several operas together with the singer Katarzyna Bonafini in the early 1776, a fact enables one to define an *a quo* date when the work was written. See also: E. Rabowicz, "Oświeceniowe 'przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy", p. 17.

tional mood. The authors have emphasised that physical love also carries the experience of intimacy. Metaphorical depictions of stimuli and sexual occurrences are more subtle. Those poems are free from words generally considered as indecent. The major ones include: *Zdarzenie opuszczone* by Węgiński; Trembecki's epithalamiums, particularly the filled with subtle charm and naturalness *Epitalamion Dorantowi i Klimentie*,<sup>92</sup> *Spotkanie się południowe. Z Owidiusza* [Encounter at Noon. From Ovid], a work ascribed to Niemcewicz; and *Przypadek siostry starszej opowiedziany siostrze młodszym*, a work ascribed to Trembecki or Naruszewicz.<sup>93</sup>

This subcategory also includes a Rococo compliment by Naruszewicz entitled *Do astronoma*, though it does not depict a sexual act, only a final allusion referring to such an encounter with a beloved woman. The meaningful motto, the consolidated in the paremiographical tradition Latin expression *Non plus ultra!* ('Nic nadto (ponadto)! [Nothing more], literally: 'Nic więcej poza...' [Nothing more than]) – emphasises the pinnacle of perfection. It promises a description of the fascinating beauty of the addressee concealed under the literary name of Korynna, most probably Magdalena née Eysymont Jezierska, with whom the poet allegedly had an affair.<sup>94</sup> The urge for forbidden sexual satisfaction was skilfully concealed under a cloak made of mythology, astrology and astronomical discoveries. Bold erotic content in this work is hidden using age-old visions and through references made to scientific achievements of the Enlightenment,<sup>95</sup> more emphatically than in *Na balony*. In the witty poem, scientific achievements are, however, depicted with some nonchalance as less alluring than an erotic encounter, while in *Do astronoma* they are extolled as they enable those brave enough to penetrate forbidden realms<sup>96</sup> (the body of a woman), promising pleasure in exploring them.

92 I discussed this work only in short, as one of several poetic descriptions of the sexual act, mainly in terms of the attitude to the taboo of eroticism. A more detailed discussion of this and other epithalamiums by Trembecki can be found in: R. Krzywy, "Rokokowe epitalamiony Stanisława Trembeckiego wobec tradycji gatunku" [Stanisław Trembecki's Rococo epithalamiums versus the tradition of the genre], in: *Wiek Oświecenia* [Age of Enlightenment], vol. 20: *Stanisław Konarski (1700-1773)* (Warsaw: 2004), pp. 119-142.

93 Jan Kott has indicated that Trembecki's authorship was not certain, he mentioned that the copyist in manuscript B Jag. 1924/IV ascribed it to Naruszewicz but also added that 'Obscoena Naruszewicza, a jest ich bardzo wiele, mają jednak często charakter bardziej sarmacki' [Naruszewicz's obscene poems, and there are many of those, often have, however, a more Sarmatic character]; see: *idem, Uwagi o tekstach*, in: S. Trembecki, *Obscoena. Dodatek do "Pism wszystkich"*, p. 16.

94 This was probably why the work was not published during Naruszewicz's lifetime and it was circulated only in the manuscript version. The authorship was indicated by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki: A. Naruszewicz, *Liryki wybrane*, pp. 27-28 (argumentation), pp. 150-151 (text), p. 211 (approximate dating: 1777, with a question mark).

95 See: B. Wolska, *W świecie żywiołów, Boga i człowieka...*, p. 79; A. Ročko, "Astronomowie w poetyckiej apostrofie Adama Naruszewicza i Ludwika Osińskiego", pp. 312-315.

96 It includes a skilful variation on the notion of the overcoming of limitations to the human condition (outside elements) present in the literary traditions of antiquity (e.g., in Horace's works) and the

Węgierski's *Zdarzenie opuszczone* describes an unsuccessful interrupted sexual act when Dorant, driven by his love for Korynna, failed both her and him despite the surprisingly favourable will on the part of his beloved (when she indulged in erotic daydreams). Their physical encounter is again described using a metaphor of arranging the apartment to properly welcome the guest on the part of woman, and using the common metaphor of horse riding on the part of the man. Even though erotic poems of that time did mention limitations of male sexual abilities and some even mention methods of coping with that (aphrodisiacs or substitution by another man), it was rare to find descriptions where despite the efforts of an erotically stimulated woman and a lustful man an act did not come to be. Thus, though Korynna, eager for the meeting, runs out of her 'home' several times to meet her guest, it appears that when he 'już prawie w same wjeżdżał wrota' [when he was entering the very gate], his 'koń' [horse] eventually disappoints his rider bitterly despite 'gęstymi razami macany niecnota'<sup>97</sup> [the scoundrel being whipped many times]. When it becomes clear that the attempt to achieve erotic satisfaction will be unsuccessful, the irate woman reproaches the man who feels ashamed and bitter. In the poem's conclusion the saddened man reprimands the 'scoundrel' by saying he did not help his master 'w tak ciężkim razie' [in such a challenging time]. The work carries a definitive lyrical quality.

In Trembecki's epithalamium and in *Spotkanie się południowe* ascribed to Niemcewicz, inspired by Ovid's erotic poetry, the most important element is narration about new stages of a physical relation of lovers, with such motifs as admiration for the body of the beloved woman (in the epithalamium: 'Chciwym pożera okiem wszystkie cuda:/ Z róży kolanka, z alabastru uda'<sup>98</sup> [Devours all the wonders with his hungry eye:/ Knees made of roses, and thighs of alabaster]); the woman's fear and unease and later the pleasure of erotic satisfaction; and hope (or wishes) that the caresses-filled pleasure will be repeated. In the paraphrase of Ovid's work, the author expanded the description of the body of naked Korynna, whom he likened to Semiramis and Lais (shoulders, arms, 'piersi wysmukłe' [sleek breasts], 'brzuszek wypłaszczony' [flat tummy], 'uda młodzienne' [young thighs], 'boczek gładki z obojej strony'<sup>99</sup> [waist flat on both sides]). Trembecki offered a more detailed description of the act.

These skilled pleasure-focused descriptions of erotic events are filled with bat-

condition underlined in those activities, i.e., the courage to overcome previously unknown areas (e.g., the sea).

97 Quoted as per manuscript B PAN Kórn. 11190, p. 105.

98 Short fragments of *Epitalamion Dorantowi i Klimenie* quoted per: S. Trembecki, *Pisma wszystkie. Wydanie krytyczne*, vol. 1, pp. 31-32.

99 Quoted fragments of poem *Spotkanie się południowe* as per manuscript B PAN Kórn. 11190, p. 13.

tle metaphors. In the epithalamium the phallus is 'grot Kupidyna' [Cupid's arrow-head] with which Clymene is 'tknięta' [touched], defloration is suggested by 'toczenie krwawej i nieznanej wojny' [waging a bloody and unknown war], and repeated sexual acts are expressed through the circumlocution 'sześć razy konał i sześć razy ożył' [he died six times and arose six times, too]; in *Spotkanie...* foreplay is imagined as mutual conquering while the act itself is described as 'znoje' [toils]. The poem ascribed to Niemcewicz resembles versed descriptions of sexual encounters without any specific intended audience. Its universal character is further underlined by the subtitle which enables one to treat it as a translator's literary practice of a universal nature (even Ovid's beloved's literary name has been retained). In his work Trembecki concealed under the names of Dorant and Clymene prince Janusz Sanguszko and Podlasie voivode Karolina Gozdzka as it was in celebration of the couple's wedding that he authored the poem. Those interested understood for whom it was intended, and that was also suggested in the text's copies, however, not all copyists were aware of that fact. Thus, an event of a public nature suddenly acquired a surprising literary framework that emphasised the intimate moments of specific people though hidden under literary names. The poem also circulated as a work devoid of this context, functioning as a description of the wedding night, in which the closing wishes for similar encounters could be referred to any newlyweds. Due to its covert nature and lack of direct information, the reach of such poems increased and their social reception changed. It was no longer important 'who' did something but 'what' they did.

As has already been indicated, readers focussed the most on the very sexual act, though sexual organs, especially male, were also depicted using euphemisms, along with their function and appearance. Usually, descriptions of the phallus corresponded to the metaphors of erotic intercourse (being a factor in a scene, e.g., in *Zdarzenie opuszczone*), but there were some that were independent, as in *Przypadek siostry starszej opowiedziany siostrze młodszym*. In this skilfully devised work, which is probably a translation or a reworked version of a frivolous mid-18<sup>th</sup> century French poem,<sup>100</sup> what is interesting is not the depiction of the very act but the description of the appearance, the changing condition and the circumstances of the functioning of the male member. Sexual intercourse is preceded (as in Trembecki's epithalamium or in *Spotkanie się południowe*) by a motif in which the man admires the woman's body: 'Z jednego ciała dwie najbielsze uda,/ Dwie pełne piersi, brzuszki i kolanka./ [...] / Jakże nad całym zdumiewał się ciałem,/ Jak wszędzie, oczy, ręce, usta mieścił'<sup>101</sup> [From one body two snow-white thighs,/ Two

100 See: J. Kott, *Uwagi o tekstach*, in: S. Trembecki, *Obscoena. Dodatek do "Pism wszystkich"*, p. 16.

101 Quoted fragments of *Przypadek siostry starszej opowiedziany siostrze młodszym* as per: S. Trembecki,

full breasts, tummy and knees./ (...) / Oh, how he admired the body,/ How he swept his eyes, hands, lips all over]. Suddenly, the woman notices a different part of the man's 'skład ciała' [bodily composition] that has 'Szyję czy ogon na kształt pasternaka' [A neck or tail like a parsnip]. Seeing that 'stoi zapalczywa sztuka,/ Śniada, brodata i o jednym oku' [there stands a passionate one,/ Tan, bearded and one-eyed], she likens it to a 'kałmuk' [Kalmyk] and 'ze łbem wielkiego tatarą' [with the head of a large Tatar]. She describes how dynamically and skilfully it sneaked into her 'szczupły zakątek' [slender nook] causing incredible pleasure ('Ledwie się dusza z ciała nie wykradła' [The soul nearly escaped the body]). She concludes that after the act the 'junaczek' [little soldier] changed, though, its figure: 'Smutny, pokorny, główka nachylona,/ Słaby, spocony, właśnie jakby z wanny' [Sad, humble, the head bent,/ Weak, sweaty, as if right from a bath] and only after she consoles it 'Na dawną postać, moc i wzrost się zdobył' [It reached its former shape, strength and height]. No other obscene erotic poem of the Enlightenment contains such a detailed metaphorical description of the male member during a sexual act without the use of vulgarisms. In the account of the 'older sister' it occupies a major portion of the work. The repeated intercourse is depicted in shortened descriptions, using the stylistics of a visit and overcoming obstacles: 'Podważał drągiem furtkę moją z przodu,/ Jam rozumiała, że mię na pal wbijał' [He lifted my gate with his rod from the front,/ I felt like he was impaling me] (first intercourse); 'Wpadał, przebijał, cofał się i srożył' [He dropped by, pierced, moved back and raged] (second one). The poem concludes in a telling remark by a woman in a pre-marital adventure about a marriage with a rich widower who bought her hand 'za znaczne intraty' [for considerable benefits] and the ironic remark about a two-day-long struggle of the 'głupiec' [fool] in bed.

#### EROTIC OBSCENE POEMS AS A CULTURAL AND MORAL SOURCE

Enlightenment obscene poems propagated in manuscript copies say more about the erotic morality of that time than published love poems. The protagonists, stories and contexts presented in the former suggest that they indicate the true morality of people of various social strata, life conditions, age, and sex; the morality that existed at the royal court, in noble manors, and magnate ballrooms; that could be found in cities (and not only in houses located in some 'forbidden' streets), towns, and villages; at monasteries, vicarages; and, finally, at markets where, while

*Obscoena. Dodatek do "Pism wszystkich"*, pp. 7-[10]. This is an edition as per manuscript B PAN Kr. 615, p. 45, with indication of variants as per manuscript B Jag. 1924/IV, p. 321.

trading, people established relations of this kind. The manifestations and mechanisms of this morality depicted in some erotic obscene works have been exaggerated for the following reasons: in order to fight a taboo, it is necessary to magnify and overstate the forbidden topic; the nature of many of the works is provocatively libertine and anti-clerical (exaggeration is also a provocative quality); some texts constituted a literary game or were a display of their author's skills in the fashionable and entertaining topic of the era (which also resulted in saturation with related phenomena). Despite the reasons that caused the distortions and hyperboles, it is clear that one cannot disregard the image of the moral culture that emerges from these works and that a discussion of the morality of the time with reference to such literary sources may offer interesting outcomes, not only in the case of works such as *Przewodniki warszawskie*, filled with details and personal references.<sup>102</sup>

#### AESTHETIC AND LITERARY VALUE OF VERSED EROTIC OBSCENE WORKS

The discussed works are the outcomes of a subculture, purpose-developed literature intended mainly for men; these are texts of various artistic value, which include both small masterpieces and extensive narrative poems skilfully adapted for the Polish reality, as well as well-formed versed anecdotes and moral vignettes and simply-rhymed monotonous obscenity. These works, being a major element of the Enlightenment's literary and moral life that unfolded outside the reach of censorship, receive extreme evaluations even today, and for that reason they are avoided in studies. They are at their most interesting not when they cause distaste in people through their association exclusively with lewdness and being a show of trivial vocabulary, but when, e.g., they amuse through the use of anecdotes, skilful concepts, witty and ingenious sexual metaphors, or when they charm the reader with the poet's skill to enrich a description of a successful erotic encounter, or with lyricism which the poet was able to apply when describing the sadness of a lover who was unable to meet the expectations of his mistress. There are also other qualities that are praiseworthy in them, i.e., the ironic and witty distance displayed by authors towards themselves and the struggles of the characters engaged in erotic adventures described for the amusement of readers.

The spread of erotic freedom in the Enlightenment during the rule of king Stanislaw II August from big cities to provincial noble land districts and their

102 On this topic, see remarks of Edmund Rabowicz, in: *idem*, "Oświeceniowe 'przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy", p. 26.

surroundings had not only a moral effect, but also an aesthetic and literary one. Apart from libertine works that depicted the sphere of sexuality written by literary and social elites, intended as provocations that utilised scandalising manifestos emphatically violating the generally accepted moral and social norms, with a high saturation of content and vocabulary generally considered as indecent, and among depictions of hedonistic attitudes, sexual craving for sensual pleasure expressed through vocabulary free of any vulgarisms, i.e., in an elegant manner that could match the taste of the lovers of Rococo at major manors, there were also course erotic works, related to the unrefined culture of the *szlachta*, which used terse blunt vocabulary and vulgarisms (or even cacophemisms). These indiscriminate ribald works, often displaying a witty or satirical tint, were for a long time created by everyday *szlachta* men, becoming an inseparable part of their own, provincial, folk tradition.<sup>103</sup> Unceremoniously, using anecdotes that were boorish both in terms of their content and form, in those texts they preferred the various forms of freedom in using one's life, especially sexual freedom not bound by any taboo (in terms of the topic or vocabulary), and they praised extra-marital relations and debauchery. The authors of Enlightenment obscene poems who represented an extreme and radical trend in Rococo<sup>104</sup> (or who were close to it) sought inspiration in these manifestations of *szlachta's* mass culture. As indicated by the above discussion, even well-known authors engaged in it (e.g. Naruszewicz or Molski) – they deftly styled their texts while maintaining a certain distance towards the indecent content and means of expression. These inspirations in combination with the poetic talent and intelligence of the authors (e.g., Jan Ancuta, Jan Czyż, Tomasz Kajetan Węgierski, Antoni Felicjan Nagłowski, and Antoni Korwin Kossakowski) produced interesting aesthetic and literary outcomes. Some of the works, e.g., *Przewodniki warszawskie* and poems by Węgierski or Czyż (before the latter poet's metamorphosis) were devoid of criticism and they were limited to unbiased descriptions of big city life.

A less radical trend (represented by, e.g., Naruszewicz) depicted the relationships between the domestic traditions of landed Baroque culture. In fact, this poet craftily used various topics and diverse erotic motifs, and being a poet susceptible to various *inventio* sources, transitioned outside those traditions. He created poems styled to match *szlachta's* folklore and refined Rococo works appreciated (as were

103 *Szlachta's* erotic poetry of the Baroque period drew eagerly 'from native folk tradition or at least developed parallel ideas and imagery,' see: M. Hanusiewicz, *Pięć stopni miłości...*, p. 144, 164.

104 See E. Rabowicz's description of domestic radical literary trend of Rococo, in: *idem*, "Polskie rokoko literackie" [Polish Literary Rococo], in: *Gdańskie Zeszyty Humanistyczne. Prace Literackie* [Gdańsk Humanistic Notebooks. Literary Works] issue 2 (1969), pp. 91-95. Compare also: *idem*, "Oświeceniowe 'przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy", p. 11.

the excellent texts by Trembecki and the poems ascribed to him) at Stanisław August's court, especially among the guests of Thursday dinners where they were read to amused the king's guests.<sup>105</sup>

Works which represent the various trends within obscene erotic poetry often emphatically and openly disregarded the taboo associated with sexuality imposed by upbringing, education and the Catholic Church, and the generally accepted moral norms, or they transgressed them more carefully, partially avoided them by utilising sexual metaphors, comprehensible allusions, circumlocutions, and ambiguity, thus diversifying the level of saturation with sensuality. For that purpose, they used literary language, colloquial language (with lexis typical for the spoken variant), and vulgar language. An important issue in this discussion is the linguistic framing of erotic content. The works are dominated by indecent vocabulary, colloquialisms and hardly tasteful words, which is an expression of the violation of linguistic bans, i.e., actions that (unlike in the case of dialects) were not considered transgressions.<sup>106</sup> The fact of saturating a text with vulgarisms in combination with indecent content is the most obvious feature of the works, yet it is not a 'norm' for erotic obscene poems, though the works that became the most famous were those that combined this kind of content with linguistic development. The triviality of the language in some was mitigated – improper content was expressed using few vulgarisms; additionally, there are many texts devoid of any words generally considered as indecent.

Enlightenment obscene erotic poetry featured violations of existing conventions, attempts to avoid the accepted official norms of writing about male-female relations, and numerous references to that which was prohibited. In this kind of literature operating outside censorship and official circulation, topics related to sexuality were discussed in various manners, though usually the sphere of sexuality was presented as a major one. Its inherent phenomena and events described in the works (either clearly exaggerated or framed in a lyrical/atmospheric or grotesque/comical manner or with the use of concepts, anecdotes, or metaphors) both then and now could seem scandalous, twisted and strange; they can scandalise, intrigue or amuse. Underneath the layer of scandal and provocation, lewdness and

105 See, e.g., S. Tomkowicz, *Nieco o dowcipach, żartach i poezjach okolicznościowych na dworze Stanisława Augusta* [A bit about jokes, jests and occasional poetry at the court of Stanisław August], in: *idem, Z wieku Stanisława Augusta* [From the age of Stanisław August] (Cracow: 1882), vol. 2, pp. 83-96; see also: R. Kaleta, *Obiady czwartkowe na dworze króla Stanisława Augusta. Próba monografii*, pp. 77-79; B. Wolska, "Poematy obsceniczne przypisywane Naruszewiczowi jako adaptacje wzorów obcych", pp. 65-66.

106 This is how violations of linguistic prohibitions, within the realm of sexuality, physiology and other intimate strictly personal matters were treated in folk culture. For more on this topic, see: A. Krawczyk-Tyrpy, *Tabu w dialektach polskich* [Taboo in Polish dialects] (Bydgoszcz: 2001).



unwholesome interest, jest, and desire to enliven and offer amusement there is something more. It is the absolute freedom (in authentic obscene works) or partial freedom, the right self-granted by the authors to speak about matters that are officially passed over with silence, treated as scandalising, indecent, and salacious, to make them known and to frame them in literature any way they want. Obscenity says something significant, even if it is a form of provocation – through distortion and degeneration, a problem becomes noticeable.

The authors of the discussed obscene erotic works violated or partly transgressed the social-moral taboo while usually vulgarising the emotional relations between men and women. These relations were usually reduced to corporal desire, particularly for the sexual act which satisfied the lovers' mutual fascinations. Sensual love, including physical love, striving for ever newer and more extreme experiences, overpowered the selfless spiritual bond.

These texts were multiplied in copies, which means people were eager to read and circulate them. They have survived because their contemporary readers were interested in the banned topic, they recognised the need for and the point in the struggle their authors waged against the erotic taboo, a struggle waged with varying intensity, in all seriousness or for amusement, and with the use of various strategies, but usually with an intention to rectify the distorted reality and expand its literary imagery, eventually with satisfaction and a sense of triumph over the moral norm that prohibited any presentations of this topic.

*Translated by Jakub Wosik,  
verified by Maria Helena Żukowska*

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## ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the strategies used in Polish playful poems, adapted from French and Italian literature (Boccaccio, Ariosto, La Fontaine) for the witty, pleasant in perception performance of sexual vitality of men and women. Those works revealed current manifestations and mechanisms of sexual morality of people of different status, condition, age and gender, not excluding secular clergy, monks and nuns of various orders (“hoods, hairshirts, cassocks, scapulars”). The following issues has been analysed: numerous metaphorical approaches derived from different layers of literary tradition and folklore, and the author’s of these poems creativity, an interesting plot and moral realities (Polish: ‘medieval’ royal court, Sarmatian province; or Italian), a theme of travel rich in erotic adventures, avoiding obscene words, and above all, witty, humorous perspective (in the narrative and linguistic content) to sensitive, from the point of view of morality, taboo issues (like: sexuality – in general, erotic desire as a natural need; young people’s interest in eroticism, sexual performance and its sources; adultery not only in case of marriages unequal regarding the age; lifestyle of clerics seducing married women and hypocrisy; promiscuity at courts and in orders, etc.). All those factors constrain the poems (*Słowik, Czyściciel, Pielgrzym, Hilary*), attributed to Adam Naruszewicz, a Jesuit and a diocesan bishop, entertaining not only a group of writers on Thursday dinners, organised at the court of the King Stanislaw August, but also contributed to a great readership in the manuscripts’ circulation, what is certified by noble *syłwy*. The taboo was disarmed by laughter and emphasising the universality of sexual behaviours, officially hidden, and maybe also by a caricaturing-grotesque image of erotic struggles at times. Reading was probably accompanied by laughter, amusement, which accompany us today, too. In the analysis of the above mentioned scenes of sexual problems, the examined texts can also be situated within the erotic literature, briefly referred to heterogeneous, diverse criteria used for identifying the types,

including: the realm of language, another time the themes (the so-called dominant topic or 'erotic portions'), ethical and moral meaning of sexual contents contained in the works, their functions carried out in the reception of texts, as well as the aim of the authors (the mocking, acceptance, and fun).

**KEYWORDS:** eroticism, playful poems, Naruszewicz Adam (1733-1796)

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