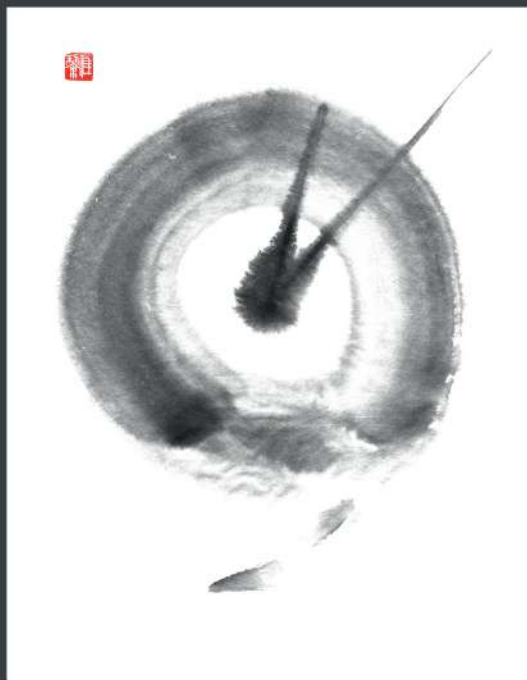


CROSS-ROADS. POLISH STUDIES IN CULTURE,  
LITERARY THEORY, AND HISTORY 28

Beata Śniecikowska

# Transcultural Haiku

Polish History of the Genre



PETER LANG

Beata Śniecikowska

## Transcultural Haiku

The monograph presents the Polish history of haiku and the forms associated with this genre – in literature and visual arts. Polish works are confronted with Japanese poetry (along with its aesthetic, philosophical and ethical contexts) and with haiku-inspired miniatures produced by poets from various European and American countries. The book also touches upon the theory of literary genres and translational problems (translations of Japanese haiku as a touchstone of changes in Western literature). The presented discussion with haiku as the central theme allows for a unique and panoramic perspective of Polish poetry of the last hundred years. It also facilitates original analyses of the relationship between literature and visual arts – in the field of book art, painting and multimedia.

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## Transcultural Haiku

# **Cross-Roads.**

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Literary Theory, and History

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**PETER LANG**

Beata Śniecikowska

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Translated by Justyn Hunia



**PETER LANG**

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*For my Children*





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## Abbreviations

- H Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, with an introduction by Cz. Miłosz. Kraków: 1992.
- H 1 D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku*, Vol. 1, with introductions by K. Dudek, S. Soyka, M. Świetlicki. Warszawa: 2012.
- H 2 D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku*, Vol. 2, with introductions by K. Dudek, S. Soyka, M. Świetlicki. Warszawa: 2012.
- H-i S. Grochowiak, *Haiku-images*. Warszawa: 1978, the cycle *Haiku-images*.
- H-a S. Grochowiak, *Haiku-images*. Warszawa: 1978, the cycle *Haiku-animaux*.
- HdK S. Grochowiak, *Haiku-images*. Warszawa: 1978, the cycle *Haiku dla Kingi*.
- Pz 1 M. Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, *Poezje zebrane*, Vol. 1, collected and edited by A. Madyda, with an introduction by K. Ćwikliński. Toruń: 1997.
- Pz 2 M. Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, *Poezje zebrane*, Vol. 2, collected and edited by A. Madyda, with an introduction by K. Ćwikliński. Toruń: 1997.
- Uz 8 M. Białoszewski, *Utwory zebrane*, Vol. 8: *Rozkurz*. Warszawa: 1998.
- Uz 7 M. Białoszewski, *Utwory zebrane*, Vol. 7: *“Odczepić się” i inne wiersze opublikowane w latach 1976–1980*. Warszawa: 1994.
- Uz 10 M. Białoszewski, *Utwory zebrane*, Vol. 10: *“Oho” i inne wiersze opublikowane po roku 1980*. Warszawa: 2000.
- Uz 11 M. Białoszewski, *Utwory zebrane*, Vol. 11: *Chamowo*. Warszawa: 2009.
- Ww Cz. Miłosz, *Wiersze wszystkie*. Kraków: 2011.





# Introduction

*Night, getting colder.  
Piling up all around  
Mountains of haiku books!*

*Shiki'*

This book is first and foremost an account of Polish literature covering the last hundred years or so. Specifically, it is a story about verse that has been written in Polish (yet not always in Poland) and in various ways can be linked to Japanese poetic miniatures. At the same time, it is a story of the complexities of the broadly understood modernism.<sup>2</sup> However, this book is not conceived as a study of influences

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1 Quoted in: R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów* [Haiku. Haiku of the Masters], Kraków 2014, p. 112.

Where no other translator is identified, all translations from Polish (poetry and scholarship, as well as some haiku poems), are by Justyn Hunia (in the case of poetry, translations are more or less literal). Japanese poems, available to me (and, I suppose, to most readers of this book) only in translation, are quoted here only in English translations. Transcriptions are provided only in exceptional cases (analyses of sound patterns). Works of literature written in European languages are given in both versions: in the main text, I quote the originals, in the footnotes – their English translations. Literary-theoretical texts are referenced only in English-language translations. In the transliteration of Japanese names, surnames and nicknames, Western usage is typically applied. The Japanese first write their surname (family name), which is followed by a given name. In Western scholarship, this order is typically (though not always) reversed. Furthermore, old artists often are better known by their nicknames than family names. To facilitate identification of a given author, the most recognizable element of the proper name in the West, usually a nickname (as in the case of numerous haïjins) or surname (mostly the case of the Japanese scholars quoted here), more rarely the artist's given name, is considered as the basis for the bibliographic record. In footnotes, for the most part, an initial of a name is provided, or, when the artist is known mainly by his/her nickname, an initial of a surname (as in the texts by many other scholars, my footnotes feature M. Bashō, with "M." being an abbreviation of the family name "Matsuo," and "Bashō" being a nickname). In the captions under quoted poems, taking a cue from Japanese and Western authors, I restrict myself only to nicknames or family names.

2 On the broadly defined modernism in Poland see, for example, W. Bolecki 'Modernizm w literaturze polskiej XX w. – rekonesans' [Modernism in 20th Century Polish Literature – a Reconnaissance], in W. Bolecki, *Modalności modernizmu. Studia, analizy, interpretacje* [Modalities of Modernism. Studies, Analyses, Interpretations], Warszawa 2012, pp. 51–96; W. Bolecki, 'Postmodernizowanie modernizmu' [Postmodernizing Postmodernism], in W. Bolecki, *Polowanie na postmodernistów (w Polsce) i inne szkice* [The Hunt for Postmodernists (in Poland) and other Essays], Kraków, 1999, pp. 43–61;

from a certain source in a national literature.<sup>3</sup> I am interested in a broader, transcultural<sup>4</sup> perspective on Polish literary output. I set out to offer readers a comparative monograph – with Polish poetry at its core yet confronted with the poetry of Japan (along with its aesthetic and ethical contexts)<sup>5</sup> and with haiku-inspired twentieth-century miniatures produced by American, English, French, Spanish, and Mexican poets. This monograph also touches upon translational problems (translations of haiku poetry as a touchstone of modern changes in literature) and takes into account interdisciplinary research (visual and multimedia contexts or repercussions of “haikuing” in Japan and, above all, Poland). The idea is not to track real or putative genetic relationships,<sup>6</sup> but to analyse the convergence of forms, aesthetic changes, and fluctuations of cultural phenomena. This monograph seeks to become part of the research that “is best described by the following dialectical formula: ‘literary studies – cultural studies.’”<sup>7</sup> I am convinced that “attempts to look at the

R. Nycz, *Język modernizmu. Prolegomena historycznoliterackie* [The Language of Modernity. Literary-historical Prolegomena], Wrocław, 2002, pp. 9–45; R. Nycz, ‘Literatura nowoczesna: cztery dyskursy (tezy)’ [Modern Literature: Four Discourses (Theses)], *Teksty Drugie*, 2002, No. 4, pp. 35–46; *Odkrywanie modernizmu* [Discovering Modernity], ed. and with an introduction by R. Nycz, Kraków, 1998, pp. 5–18; J. Orska, *Przełom awangardowy w dwudziestowiecznym modernizmie w Polsce* [The Avant-garde Turn in 20th-century Modernity in Poland], Kraków, 2004. See also T. Majewski, ‘Modernizmy i ich los’ [Modernisms and their Fate], *Teksty Drugie*, 2008, No. 3, pp. 43–67; G. Gazda, ‘Modernizm i modernizmy (Uwagi o semantyce i pragmatyce terminu)’ [Modernism and Modernisms (Notes on the Semantics and Pragmatics of the Term)], in *Dialog, komparatystyka, literatura*, eds. E. Kasperski, D. Ulicka, Warszawa 2002, pp. 115–26.

- 3 On studies representing this orientation see, for example, A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie – studia kulturowe* [Comparative Studies. Literary Studies], Kraków, 2013, pp. 291–8; R. Nycz, ‘Możliwa historia literatury,’ *Teksty Drugie*, 2010, No. 5, p. 168 and ff.
- 4 Further below in the *Introduction* I elaborate on the concept of transculturality used in this monograph.
- 5 The book does not claim to be a study of Japanese haiku, however, it is opened by a broadly sketched japanological essay rooted in cultural studies.
- 6 This does not mean, of course, that I put aside all “influencology” (essential, for example, in the case of the study of Western roads to haiku or analyses of Stanisław Grochowiak’s *Haiku-images*).
- 7 A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie*, p. 295. “Accordingly, the focus is simultaneously on philological issues and ones related to multiculturalism, interculturalism or transculturality, intermedia and media society,” Hejmej adds (pp. 295–6). See also, for example A. F. Kola, ‘Komparatystyka kulturoznawcza wobec wielokulturowego świata. W stronę metateorii krytycznej’ [Cultural studies-oriented Comparative Studies in relation to the Multicultural World. Towards a Critical Metatheory], in *Granice kultury*, ed. by A. Gwóźdź, in collaboration with M. Kempna-Pieniążek, Katowice, 2010, pp. 213–24.

functioning of literature in an international dimension [...] ultimately lead to a better understanding of what is own, local, national,<sup>8</sup> “[as] only a comparative and transcultural approach to national culture can give an account of mechanisms of creation of specific values and unique features.”<sup>9</sup>

## I. Haiku and the “Extinction of Genres”

It may be surprising that today, in the era of “genological distance,”<sup>10</sup> the category of genre is the key to the analysis of a substantial part of contemporary Polish poetry (one that at least opens the “first gate” of inquiry). The disappearance of traditional genres (or rather a decrease in their direct productivity), the emergence of syncretic genres, the blurring of boundaries between literature and non-literary forms, the heterogeneity of literary creation, and, finally, the uselessness (or rather: different usefulness) of genre categories in the literary study of *hic et nunc*<sup>11</sup> – all this has already been noted for decades. This diagnosis is

---

8 A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie*, p. 297.

9 Hejmej goes on to add: “It is not so much [...] about abandoning a further pursuit of the national history of literature, but about changing the way of conceptualizing it and the need to situate it in a broad cultural and comparative context” (A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka*, p. 297).

10 P. Michałowski, ‘Gatunki w poezji nowoczesnej’ [Genres in Modern Poetry], in P. Michałowski, *Głosy, formy, światy. Warianty poezji nowoczesnej* [Voices, Forms, Worlds. Varieties of Modern Poetry], Kraków, 2008, p. 84.

11 See, for example, Cz. Zgorzelski, ‘Historycznoliterackie perspektywy genologii w badaniach nad liryką’ [Literary-historical Perspectives of Genology in the Study of Poetry] in *Genologia polska. Wybór tekstów* [Polish Genre Studies. Selected Texts], eds. E. Miodońska-Brookes, A. Kulawik, M. Tatar, Warszawa 1983, pp. 116–34 (originally published in *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1965, No. 2); Cz. Zgorzelski, ‘Perspektywy genologii w poznawaniu poezji współczesnej’ [Perspectives of Genre Studies in the Study of Contemporary Poetry], *Teksty* 1975, No. 1, pp. 7–22; H. Markiewicz, ‘Rodzaje i gatunki literackie’ [Literary Genres], in H. Markiewicz, *Główne problemy wiedzy o literaturze* [The Main Problems of Literary Studies], Kraków, 1980, pp. 148–81; R. Nycz, *Sylwy współczesne. Problem konstrukcji tekstu* [Modern Silvae Rerum. Problem of Text Construction], Kraków, 1996 (1st edition: 1984); K. Bartoszyński, ‘Wobec genologii’ [In View of Genre Studies], in *Genologia dzisiaj* [Genre Studies Today], eds. W. Bolecki, I. Opacki, Warszawa 2000, pp. 6–18; E. Balcerzan, ‘W stronę genologii multimedialnej’ [Towards Multimedia Genre Studies] in *Polska genologia literacka* [Polish Studies in Literary Genres], eds. D. Ostaszewska, R. Cudak, Warszawa 2007, pp. 269–87 (originally published in *Teksty Drugie*, 1999, No. 6); S. Balbus, ‘Zagłada gatunków’ [The Extinction of Genres], in *Genologia dzisiaj*, pp. 156–71 (originally published in *Teksty Drugie*, 1999, No. 6); B. Witosz, ‘Gatunek – sporny (?) problem współczesnej refleksji tekstologicznej’ [Genre – the Disputed (?) Problem of Contemporary Textological Reflection], in *Polska genologia literacka*, pp. 233–51 (1st edition *Teksty Drugie*, 2001, No. 5). See also E. Balcerzan, ‘Sytuacja gatunków’ [The Condition of Genres], in E. Balcerzan, *Przez znaki* [Through Signs],

particularly relevant to extensive, seemingly extra-generic areas of contemporary poetry. Researchers have been at pains to expose – and solve – genre paradoxes of the modern day.<sup>12</sup> In this book, however, I do not seek to focus on the genre big picture. Following Stanisław Balbus, I repeat: “Of course, I do not intend to provide here a review of recent theories in genre studies. Their sheer catalogue would be enormous.”<sup>13</sup> I will restrict myself to findings (or, for the time being, to finding questions) regarding the form that is of immediate interest to me.

In the Polish poetry of recent decades, a phenomenon has occurred that is quite readily given a genre name. What is more, most often we are not dealing here with the practice, diagnosed by Balbus, of affixing a generic term to works that depart from genre paradigms, “entering into sense-generating correlations, coincidences, or even collisions with them.”<sup>14</sup> However, “orthodox” adherence to the genre rules does not exhaust the spectrum of haiku-inspired Polish poetry. The label used by East-Asian artists can be surprisingly ambiguous. Naturally, one should not, as Stefania Skwarczyńska argued fifty years ago, mix up genre objects, concepts, and names.<sup>15</sup> In this study, I want to deal with objects, names, and concepts, which in various ways come together under the umbrella of haiku.

Poznań, 1972 (abridged version in *Polska genologia literacka*, pp. 115–36); R. Sendyka, ‘Metodologiczna dygresja: o nieesencjalnych modelach gatunku’ [A Methodological Digression: on Nonessential Models of Genre], in R. Sendyka, *Nowoczesny esej. Studium historycznej świadomości gatunku* [A Modern Essay. A Study on the Historical Awareness of the Genre], Kraków, 2006, pp. 91–130; G. Grochowski, *Tekstowe hybrydy. Literackość i jej pogranicza* [Textual Hybrids. Literariness and its Peripheries], Wrocław, 2000; R. Cudał, ‘Sytuacja gatunków w współczesnej poezji polskiej a perspektywy genologii’ [The Condition of Genres in Contemporary Polish Poetry and the Perspective of Genre Studies], in *Genologia i konteksty* [Genre Studies and Their Cotexts], ed. Cz. P. Dutka, Zielona Góra, 2000, pp. 25–37; R. Sendyka, ‘W stronę kulturowej teorii gatunku’ [Towards a Cultural Genre Theory], in *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy* [Cultural Literary Theory. Main Concepts and Problems], eds. M. P. Markowski, R. Nycz, Kraków, 2006, pp. 249–83; O. Płaszczewska, ‘Genologia’ [Genre Studies], in O. Płaszczewska, *Przestrzenie komparatystyki – italianizm* [Spaces of Comparative Studies – Italianism], Kraków, 2010, pp. 182–87. On “the devastated genological landscape, wherein instead of genres we see their apparitions wander aimlessly,” see P. Michałowski, *Gatunki w poezji nowoczesnej*, p. 87.

- 12 See esp. E. Balcerzan, *W stronę genologii multimedialnej*; S. Balbus, ‘Zagłada gatunków;’ R. Sendyka, ‘W stronę kulturowej teorii;’ and S. Wyslouch, ‘Nowa genologia – rewizje i reinterpretacje’ [New Genre Studies – Revisions and Reinterpretations], in *Polska genologia literacka* [Polish Studies on Literary Genres], pp. 288–305; D. Pawelec, *Od kołysanki do trenów. Z hermeneutyki form poetyckich* [From Lullaby to Lamentations. Studies in Hermeneutics of Poetic Forms], Katowice, 2006.
- 13 S. Balbus, ‘Zagłada gatunków,’ p. 157.
- 14 S. Balbus, ‘Zagłada gatunków,’ p. 164.
- 15 S. Skwarczyńska, ‘Podstawowy nie dostrzeżony problem genologii’ [The Fundamental and Overlooked Problem of Genre Studies], in *Problemy teorii literatury, Series 2 Prace*

I discuss both poems that meticulously follow a foreign pattern (“Originals or Imitations? On the “Perfectly Genuine” Polish Haiku”) as well as texts that in various ways, intentionally and unintentionally, enter into discussion with rules of the East-Asian poetics, as well as the aesthetics and ethics underpinning it (“Polemic Extremes of “Haiku;” “Oscillations around Haiku”). Some of the poems belonging to this second group can be described in terms proposed by Balbus. I also study verse that indefatigably keeps up – under the guise of fashionable foreign form – the tradition of epigram, aphorism, love poetry or... a *mirohlad* (“A “Haiku” Miscellany; in some part Polemic Extremes of “Haiku”). Finally, I focus my reflection on those miniature verses whose authors never (or almost never) used the Japanese genre name but which nevertheless in various ways approximate to the aesthetics and style of the Oriental form (“Roads to Haiku – the West; to some extent “Oscillations around Haiku”).<sup>16</sup>

The variety of haiku approximations makes methodological decisions considerably difficult. It is impossible, as it turns out, to find one theoretical angle that would afford an in-depth examination of all the groups of texts discussed. I conclude that in the analyses of miniatures very close to the defining characteristics of the East-Asian miniature it is worthwhile attempting to treat haiku as an invariant set of features. In this case, the typological understanding of genre may work.<sup>17</sup> Yet how are we to study poems – often ones highly accomplished artistically – that only tangentially (and from different angles) touch on haiku aesthetics? What about poems that paratextually, not always for obvious reasons, display affinity with Japanese seventeen-syllable poems? In such cases, I decide on the prototypical model of genre.<sup>18</sup>

My book is situated within the framework of cultural comparative studies,<sup>19</sup> which, like Andrzej Hejmej, I perceive as “the individual action of a comparatist,

z lat 1965–1974 [Problems of Literary Theory, 2nd Series, Works from 1965–1974], selected by H. Markiewicz, Wrocław, 1987, pp. 97–114.

- 16 The concept of transculturality, discussed hereafter, turns out to be particularly useful here.
- 17 See S. Sawicki, ‘Gatunek literacki: pojęcie klasyfikacyjne, typologiczne, politypiczne’ [Literary Genre: Classification, Typological, and Polytypical View], in S. Sawicki, *Poetyka. Interpretacja. Sacrum* [Poetics. Interpretation. The Sacred], Warszawa 1981, pp. 111–22 (rpt. in *Polska genologia literacka*, pp. 137–44).
- 18 However, is there a single haiku prototype universally applying to Japanese, Polish, French, American, Australian literature? I describe these problems in detail in Part I of the book, referring to them, naturally, in the subsequent chapters of this monograph.
- 19 See, for example, A. Hejmej, ‘Komparatystyka kulturowa: interpretacja i egzystencja’ [Cultural Comparative Studies: Interpretation and Existence], *Teksty Drugie*, 2010, No. 5, pp. 53–64 (extensive bibliography – *Teksty Drugie*; text published also in *Komparatystyka dzisiaj*, Vol. 1: *Problemy teoretyczne* [Comparative Studies Today, Vol. 1: Theoretical Problems], eds. E. Szczęsna, E. Kasperski, Kraków, 2010, pp. 67–80); A. Zawadzki, ‘Między komparatystyką literacką a kulturową’ [Between Literary and

[...] the endless process of translation.”<sup>20</sup> No universal toolbox for a comparatist has come into being and, as one can safely assume, it never will. The researcher is condemned to endless methodological and interpretative probing.<sup>21</sup> In this book, one of the keys to opening and organizing problems of interest to me is the concept of transculturality.

## II. Transculturality

Wherever justified, terminological hypertrophy should be cut down with an academic Ockham’s razor. It is therefore worthwhile asking whether interculturalism, already established in literature, supported by the discourse on multiculturalism and pluriculturalism, would not be a sufficient tool for my intended research.<sup>22</sup> In

Cultural Comparative Studies], in *Kulturowa teoria literatury 2. Poetyki, problematyki, interpretacje* [Cultural Theory of literature 2. Poetics, Problems, Interpretations], eds. T. Wałas, R. Nycz, Kraków, 2012, pp. 352–62 (my research is consistent with the models of comparative studies discussed by Andrzej Zawadzki: the typological and cultural ones. Adam F. Kola uses the term *komparatystyka kulturoznawcza* (“cultural comparative studies”) to describe the research model close to my research (see A. F. Kola, ‘Komparatystyka kulturoznawcza,’ A. F. Kola, *Kulturoznawstwo a instytucjonalizacja komparatystyki* [Cultural Studies and the Institutionalization of Comparative Studies], in *Komparatystyka dzisiaj*, Vol. 1, pp. 91–5), while Miloš Zelenka uses the term “intercultural comparative studies” (see M. Zelenka, ‘Komparatystyka a badania interkulturowe’ [Comparative Studies and Intercultural Studies], in *Komparatystyka dzisiaj*, pp. 45–53). See also R. Sendyka, ‘W stronę kulturowej teorii,’ pp. 274–8.

20 A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka kulturowa*, p. 56.

21 At this point, we can hardly disagree with Susan Bassnett (despite the fact that on numerous other occasions I feel inclined to take issue with her): “The future of comparative literature lies in jettisoning attempts to define the object of study in any prescriptive way and in focusing instead on the idea of literature, understood in the broadest possible sense, and in recognising the inevitable interconnectedness that comes from literary transfer” (S. Bassnett, ‘Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century,’ *Comparative Critical Studies*, 2006, Vol. 3, No. 1–2, p. 12).

22 For more on these concepts, see, for example, A. Hejmej, ‘Komparatystyka. Studia literackie,’ pp. 196–206; A. Hejmej, ‘Interkulturowość – literatura – komparatystyka’ [Interculturality – Literature – Comparative Studies], *Teksty Drugie*, 2009, No. 6, pp. 34–47; W. J. Burszta, ‘Wielokulturowość. Pytania pierwsze’ [Multiculturalism. Primary Questions], in *Uprogu wielokulturowości* [On the Eve of Multiculturalism], eds. M. Kempny, A. Kapciak, S. Łodziński, Warszawa, 1997, pp. 23–31; T. Rachwał, ‘Dylematy wielokulturowości’ [Dilemmas of Multiculturalism], in *Wielokulturowość: postulat i praktyka* [Multiculturalism: the Postulate and the Practice], eds. L. Drong, W. Kalaga, Katowice, 2005, pp. 13–21; E. Możejko, ‘Wielka szansa czy iluzja: wielokulturowość w dobie ponowoczesności, [A Great Chance or an Illusion: Multiculturalism in the

my opinion, it would not.<sup>23</sup> This is not only the question of the considerable separation, in time and space, of the analysed texts of culture, but also the problem of the very method of profiling analyses. I find that the transcultural perspective allows us to capture the essence of examined phenomena more fully and successfully. In Poland, the term “transculturality” is quite “risky, debatable and not entirely familiarized by students of culture.”<sup>24</sup> However, as this concept is still *in statu nascendi*,<sup>25</sup> it can be further determined and modelled.

Above all, I refer here to the propositions of the “founding father” of the concept, Wolfgang Welsch,<sup>26</sup> who most fully – and in the simplest terms – described

Era of Postmodernity], in *Dylematy wielokulturowości*, ed. W. Kalaga, Kraków, 2007, pp. 141–61.

- 23 For deficiencies of (some) concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism See, for example, W. Welsch, ‘Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,’ in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, eds. M. Featherstone and S. Lash, London, 1999, pp. 194–213; W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization: A Transcultural Perspective.’ *Aesthetics & Art Science*, 2002, No. 1, pp. 85–94; E. Rewers, ‘Transkulturowość czy globalność? Dwa dyskursy o kondycji post-ponowoczesnej’ [Transculturality or Glocalism? Two Discourses on Post-Postmodern Condition], in *Dylematy wielokulturowości* [Dilemmas of Multiculturalism], p. 119 and ff. In addition, in the plethora of discourses of/on interculturalism the researcher can choose – and tailor – a version that will be closest to his/her explorations (see A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie*, p. 196 and ff.; see also M. L. Pratt, ‘Comparative literature and global citizenship,’ in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. C. Bernheimer, Baltimore, 1995, pp. 58–65.
- 24 E. Rewers, ‘Transkulturowość czy globalność?’, p. 119.
- 25 “Transculturalism implies interdisciplinarity. There are no specialists in transcultural aesthetics, as the field of this name, rather than fully existing, is still in its nascent state.” (K. Wilkoszewska, ‘Ku estetyce transkulturowej. Wprowadzenie’ [Towards Transcultural Aesthetics. An Introduction], in *Estetyka transkulturowa* [Transcultural Aesthetics], p. 9).
- 26 Welsch introduced the concept of transculturality, in the sense that interests me here, in 1991 (see *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, Fictions, Realities*, eds. F. Schulze-Engler Schulze-Engler Frank, S. Helff, Amsterdam–New York 2009, p. xi). However, Welsch was not the first scholar to use that term – he explains this, for instance, in Welsch, ‘Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,’ in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, eds. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash; London, 1999, pp. 194–213. The hybridity of modern European culture has already been described in a similar way (yet, of course, without the term in question); for example, among contributions to this understanding of the concept of culture were Ludwig Wittgenstein’s inquiries (Welsch, ‘Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today, pp. 202–3). According to Teresa Kostyrko, ideas akin to Welsch’s understanding of transculturality can be found in the writings of André Malraux (Cf. T. Kostyrko, ‘“Transkulturowość” w ujęciu André Malraux – przyczynek do pojmowania terminu’ [‘Transculturality’ as Understood

the essence of transcultural research. However, following Welsch, I wish to emphasize that his theory “is in no way completely new historically.”<sup>27</sup>

It is time to present some of the most important arguments and findings of the philosopher. I recommend reviewing selected quotes from Welsch’s articles, which I think, give the fullest account of multifarious aspects of the theory that interests me:

The concept of transculturality aims for a multi-meshed and inclusive, not separatist and exclusive understanding of culture.<sup>28</sup>

You might think that the concept of transculturality is tantamount to the acceptance of increasing homogenization of cultures and the coming of a uniform world-civilization, and that it assents without objection to this development, whilst conspicuously conflicting with our intuitions of cultural diversity. BUT DOES TRANSCULTURALITY REALLY MEAN UNIFORMIZATION? NOT AT ALL. IT IS, RATHER, INTRINSICALLY LINKED WITH THE PRODUCTION OF DIVERSITY.<sup>29</sup>

the old homogenizing and separatist idea of cultures has furthermore been surpassed through cultures’ external networking. Cultures today are extremely interconnected

by André Malraux – a Contribution to the Understanding of the Term], in *Estetyka transkulturowa*, pp. 21–9). See also W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization: A Transcultural Perspective,’ pp. 85–94. Hoerder, A. Macklin, ‘Separation or Permeability: Bordered States, Transnational Relations, Transcultural Lives,’ *International Journal*, 2006, Vol. 61, No. 4, pp. 793–812. For various aspects of transculturality, see *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, Fictions, Realities*. See also the collection of studies in Polish, *Wielokulturowość – międzykulturowość – transkulturowość w perspektywie europejskiej i pozaeuropejskiej* [Multiculturalism – Interculturalism – Transculturalism in the European and Non-European Perspective], eds. A. Barska, M. Korzeniowski, Opole, 2007; as well as the discussion on the functions of the prefix “trans-” (and concepts based on it) in literary studies: B. Sosień, ‘Hipoteksty, teksty i mity’ [Hypotexts, Texts and Myths], in *Intertekstualność i wyobraźniowość* [Intertextuality and Imaginationality], ed. B. Sosień, Kraków, 2003, p. 11. On the use of the concept of transculturality (as understood by Welsch) in psychological research, see Z. W. Dudek, A. Pankalla, *Psychologia kultury. Doświadczenia graniczne i transkulturowe* [The Psychology of Culture. Limit and Transcultural Experiences], Warszawa, 2008. Naturally, the concept of transculturality has an entirely different meaning than “transculturation” (See, for example, G. Nielsen, ‘Bakhtin and Habermas: Towards a Transcultural Ethics,’ *Theory and Society*, 1995, Vol. 24, No. 6, pp. 803–35).

27 W. Welsch, ‘Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,’ p. 199.

28 W. Welsch, ‘Transculturality,’ p. 200.

29 W. Welsch, ‘Transculturality,’ p. 203; emphasis added. Welsch also writes about transculturality in the context of globalization and particularization (considering both concepts excessively one-sided) – see Welsch, ‘Transculturality,’ pp. 204–6.



and entangled with each other. [...] Cultures today are in general characterized by hybridization.<sup>30</sup>

It exists NOT ONLY ON THE MACROLEVEL OF SOCIETIES BUT REACHES THROUGH TO THE MICROLEVEL OF INDIVIDUALS’ IDENTITY.<sup>31</sup>

Transcultural identities comprehend a cosmopolitan side, but also a side of LOCAL AFFILIATION. [...] The concept of transculturality goes beyond these seemingly hard alternatives. It is able to cover both global and local, universalistic and particularistic aspects.<sup>32</sup>

The power of great works or conceptions is evidently not limited to a specific cultural context, such as that in which they originated. Rather their force is transculturally effective.<sup>33</sup>

There is also the question of the everyday dimension of transcultural functioning in the world (interestingly, illustrated by the case of Japan):

To the Japanese, the foreign-own distinction or, to be more precise, the foreign-own distinction with respect to origin is not relevant at all. Their basic perspective is that of proximity. If something fits neatly it is Japanese – no matter where it comes from. This is why things foreign can be considered the own as a matter of course.<sup>34</sup>

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30 W. Welsch, ‘Transculturality,’ p. 197.

31 W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization: A Transcultural Perspective,’ emphasis added. Welsch writes: “What is the shape of our cultural formation like? Among academics, it certainly comprises elements not only of one’s home culture but of foreign cultures too. Greek philosophy, South-American literature, Japanese art – to give only a very short list – have had a decisive influence on my cultural formation over the years. And German or French philosophy, Chinese and Russian literature, and the arts from many continents have probably played an important role in your cultural formation, representing strong factors in your world view and way of thinking. [...] Transcultural identities, despite their differences in some respects, will in most cases also have a couple of elements in common. So there is overlap between them, and this allows for exchange, understanding and transitions between those networks. Hence identities of this transcultural type are altogether more capable of affiliation amongst one another than the old cultural identities ever were.” (W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity’). See also T. Kostyrko, “‘Transkulturowość’ w ujęciu André Malraux,” p. 22.

32 W. Welsch, ‘Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,’ p. 205.

33 W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization: A Transcultural Perspective,’ emphasis added.

34 W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity,’ emphasis in original. Welsch supported this conclusion with an anecdote. I am quoting it to demonstrate the specificity of his understanding of transculturality: “On my second day in Kyoto Japanese friends took me to a ‘typical’ Japanese restaurant. Everything was supposed to be genuinely Japanese. Upon entering, I immediately liked the restaurant. But I saw, all over the room,

Thus, transcultural space is “a meeting place: not so much for conflict, but for interferences of values and norms of different cultures.”<sup>35</sup> This perspective on cultural processes seems to provide a convenient research framework for the discussion taking place in my study. I am not interested in the perception of cultures as isolated monoliths.<sup>36</sup> I want, as much as possible, to eschew the sharp East-West dualism which often distorts the real picture.<sup>37</sup> The nuancing of seemingly insurmountable differences, the exposure of the fictitious status of barriers, the identification of similarities and the discovery of surprising points of convergence – these procedures seem the most compelling to me.

At the same time, I do not seek to escape from what is national,<sup>38</sup> characteristic of Polish culture, or, to use Welsch’s idiom, “local.” I want to discern in culture

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a piece of furniture very familiar to me: the chairs. I have the same ones in my dining room at home, and I know they are Italian. So I asked my friends if they really thought everything there is genuinely Japanese, including the chairs which we were just sitting down on. The friends were astonished by the question, even a bit annoyed, and hastily assured me that everything there – including the chairs – was completely Japanese. But the chairs were the model “Cab,” designed by Mario Bellini and produced by Cassina in Milan. Of course I didn’t address the matter further. Still less did I dare to mention that the crockery we were eating from some minutes later were Suomi series plates produced by Rosenthal in Germany – these too I have at home. For days I was puzzled by this experience. What was astonishing, was of course not that European furniture and crockery should be found here, but that my Japanese friends held those items to be genuine products of their own culture. How could they not sense that these items were foreign? How could they THINK AND FEEL that those in fact foreign items were genuinely Japanese? (W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity,’ pp. 41–2; emphasis in original). According to Welsch, the explanation lies in the transcultural specificity of the Japanese identity.

35 E. Rewers, ‘Transkulturowość czy globalność?’, p. 128.

36 “Transculturality does not presuppose relations between cultures conceived as a whole nor is it an encounter or dialogue of two monolithic cultures; transculturality breaks wholes apart and penetrates them all, becoming a vital feature of today’s societies” (K. Wilkoszewska, *Ku estetyce transkulturowej*, p. 14).

37 My study, at least in some measure, is intended as a contribution to the process of recovering the truth about the Orient begun by Edward Said, see E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1978.

38 I find the following statement by Welsch too radical: “The distinction between cultural and national identity is of elementary importance. It belongs among the mustiest assumptions that an individual’s cultural formation must be determined by his nationality or national status. ... Cultural determinants today – from society’s macro level through to individuals’ micro level – have become transcultural.” (Welsch, ‘Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,’ p. 199). I see this judgement as overly general: “For every culture, all other cultures have tendentially come to be inner-content or satellites.” (Welsch, ‘Transculturality,’ p. 198; emphasis in original).

a variety of spaces (also, to some extent, various “hybridities”) open to encounters with what at first glance is altogether foreign and untranslatable. I want to go deeper into this sometimes-ostensible strangeness. To see what it was that made possible the adoption of haiku in the (modernist) West and, above all, in Poland; how native literature moved towards similar aesthetics; where points of commonality occur, and what became the subject of heated (and often artistically fascinating) discussion. I think that these types of issues can be best brought together under the rubric of transculturalism. However, it is not worth becoming too strongly attached to the label itself<sup>39</sup> – what is of utmost importance is the study of literature and culture.

These introductory considerations can be supplemented with a quote from yet another work. I share the approach that Tomasz Bilczewski described as follows:

I perceive comparative studies as interpretative activity aimed at – often through surprising contexts in which various currents of humanistic reflection converge – juxtaposing texts from disparate linguistic and cultural traditions as well as from different spheres of human expression, giving special attention to the gesture of breaking down barriers and the declarations of crossing various types of boundaries. I see in it a reading practice, one often revitalizing traditional reading practices, striving to consciously bring together literary and cultural phenomena, sometimes very different; a peculiar hermeneutic school of exploring that which eludes us and which through

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39 For the purposes of this study, one could make use of, for example, selected elements of the concept of cultural transfer (sometimes almost at odds with Welsch’s transculturalism!), developed especially by German researchers. Karolina Prykowska-Michalak writes about this theory citing the inquiries of Matthias Middell and Michel Espagne: “Investigating primarily a conjuncture, understood as a combination of multiple circumstances and conditions exerting a positive influence on the studied element of transfer, in essence, makes this concept different from procedures used, for example, in comparative studies [one is tempted to ask: what category of comparative studies]. According to Middell, this approach has a deeper sense, as it radically reverses the perspective of perceiving intercultural changes. He writes: “Cultural transfer is not governed by the will to export, but by the desire to import.” According to Espagne, this also allows “to avoid arbitrariness of comparison. Transfer studies give prominence to the existing dynamics of social or humanistic arrangements and pay special attention to the role of the demand for what is foreign in this dynamic.” Thus, it could be said that the transfer is aided not so much by the impact of foreign culture generating some cultural content but by the readiness on the part of the receiving culture to receive this content.” (K. Prykowska-Michalak, *Kurtyna w górę! Relacje między teatrem polskim a teatrem niemieckim po 1990 roku* [The Curtain Goes up! The Relations between Polish Theatre and German theatre after 1990], Łódź, 2012, p. 37). See also E. Miner, *Comparative Poetics. An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1990, p. 32.

the striving to comprehend, which is never a finite process, requires going beyond the confines of our habits.<sup>40</sup>

### III. Notes on “Haikology”

Despite the long-standing fascination with haiku in Poland, no attempt has yet been made at a multi-faceted, monographic description of artistic phenomena in various ways related to the poetics, aesthetics – and ethics – of Japanese miniature poems.<sup>41</sup> Most analyses conducted so far (articles in journals of literary studies, book chapters, introductions to poetry collections) have not shown the complexity and internal dynamics of haiku-related literary processes, often rehashing cultural stereotypes<sup>42</sup> and distorting the already highly sketchy perception of the genre in Poland. The confrontation with the genealogical assumptions of haiku is, for me, merely a starting point for further research. Nevertheless, if at this rudimentary level we come across inaccuracies or even substantive errors, it will be difficult to achieve precision in the following argument, which is at least partially comparative. All the more so because numerous European and American haiku incarnations are unknown to the vast majority of Polish scholars (with the exception of the highly overrated component of Imagism).<sup>43</sup>

The most extensive examination of the Polish poetry that can be linked to haiku was offered by Piotr Michałowski.<sup>44</sup> In my opinion, however, his inspiring analyses are not an exhaustive account of haiku (as well as poetry “streaked with” and

40 T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja. Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii* [Comparative Studies and Interpretation. Modern Comparative Studies with Respect to Translatology], Kraków, 2010, p. 29.

41 Throughout this monograph, I refer to numerous Polish studies dealing (usually contextually) with haiku.

42 In Part 1 of this book, I write extensively about stereotypes prevalent in Western research on haiku.

43 See Part ‘Roads to Haiku’ – the West, as well as the chapters ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey’ and ‘Intertextuality.’

44 P. Michałowski, ‘Barokowe korzenie haiku: ostatnia przygoda Stanisława Grochowiaka’ [The Baroque Roots of Haiku: Stanisław Grochowiak’s Last Adventure], *Akcent*, 1993, No. 4, pp. 9–22 (rpt. in “*W ciemną mą ojczyznę*”. Stanisław Grochowiak znany i nieznan [“To My Dark Homeland.” The Known and Unknown Stanisław Grochowiak], ed. S. Sterna-Wachowiak, Poznań, 1996, pp. 135–56); P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka* [Poetic Miniature], Szczecin, 1999, pp. 67–114; P. Michałowski, ‘Polskie imitacje haiku [Polish Imitations of Haiku],’ in *Polska genologia. Gatunek w literaturze współczesnej* [Polish Genre Studies. Genre in Contemporary Literature], ed. R. Cudak, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 165–75 (originally published in *Teksty Drugie*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 41–53); P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii nowoczesnej’ [Haiku and Modern Epiphany], in P. Michałowski, *Głosy, formy, świat*, pp. 129–44.

masquerading as haiku) in Poland. Michałowski makes only a passing reference to certain aspects, without mentioning specific issues (such as the problem of verbo-visuality, highly relevant to my inquiries). Finally, some of his diagnoses seem disputable. I refer to Michałowski’s works throughout the entire monograph (most extensively in the section *Originals or Imitations? – On the “Perfectly Genuine” Polish Haiku*), at this point, I just wish to recall the tripartite division of Polish haiku proposed by Michałowski:<sup>45</sup>

- 1) Inspirations and approximations – representing this variant are poets freely drawing on the Japanese source, with no consideration for genre rules (examples: Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, Jerzy Harasymowicz, Ryszard Krynicki).
- 2) The syncretism of cultures and dialogue of traditions – conscious, analytical, and comparative poetic experiments, in which three poetics are juxtaposed: Japanese, Imagist and individual (the sole representative of which is Stanisław Grochowiak and his collection *Haiku-images*).
- 3) Imitations – mass imitations, starting from the mid-1970s.<sup>46</sup>

I consider Michałowski’s proposal interesting and in many respects legitimate. However, seen in the perspective of the monographic review of Polish verse which in various ways I link to haiku, this typology is overly simplistic. I put forward my own, more elaborate system of textual categorization and description, where one can detect traces of the modified version of Michałowski’s tripartite classification. I submit to scrutiny miniature poems that are “orthodoxly” haiku-like (although I do not necessarily treat them as imitations of classical seventeen-syllable verse), texts engaging in various ways in dialogues – or discussions – with the foreign form and its cultural background (I describe here not only poems by Grochowiak, but also abundant works by other authors), alongside poems in many ways oscillating around the haiku style. In addition, I discuss a variety of works bearing upon haiku paratextually, revealing very deep roots of other forms that are firmly established in Western poetics. Finally, of vital importance to me are the multi-faceted visual and multimedia entanglements of Polish haiku.

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45 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ pp. 143–4; P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 76; P. Michałowski, *Polskie imitacje haiku*, p. 167; as quoted in ‘Haiku wobec epifanii.’ This proposal can be linked to the typology of architextual strategies offered by Michałowski (referring to quasi-quotes), distinguishing between the “allegational model, implementing the form without modification,” “expanding-adaptive model,” “critical-polemical model” (P. Michałowski, ‘Gatunki w poezji nowoczesnej,’ p. 92). In Part 5 of this book (‘Originals or Imitations? – on the “Most Genuine” Polish Haiku’) I write on Michałowski’s distinction between “Przybosiian” and “Leśmianian” types of Polish haiku.

46 In an earlier text from *Miniatura poetycka* Michałowski traces the origin of this type of poetry to the 1980s (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ p. 106). More on Polish “imitations” of haiku see Part 5 of this book.

I suggest a reading path organized chronologically and thematically. I start with a comprehensive – yet inevitably quite general – description of classical Japanese haiku verse, which constitutes the basic pre-text of further literary and cultural processes analysed below. Subsequently, I identify (still in the first part of the book) a set of features of the Western prototype of the form. The next step (Part 2 of the monograph) is the presentation of haiku's roads to the West: to literatures of Western Europe and the Americas and to Polish poetry (description of the *Vorgeschichte* of haiku starting from the Young Poland period, supported by an analysis of translational issues based primarily, but not exclusively, on Polish translations of the Japanese form from the last hundred years). The next, third, part of the book is devoted to polemic extremes of “haiku” (here the genre name must be most often put in quotation marks). It begins with an analysis of one of the most distinct post-war takes on haiku in Polish literature (chronologically the first one),<sup>47</sup> Stanisław Grochowiak's *Haiku-images*, and concludes with a treatment of contemporary multimedia practices bearing the label of “haiku” and diametrically opposed to the experiments of Grochowiak: works of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz. Part 4 of this monograph shows entirely different approximations and departures from haiku, focusing on the work of two key figures of Polish modernism: Czesław Miłosz (poetry and translation works) and Miron Białoszewski. After walking the reader through the winding paths of modern haiku extremes and oscillations, I go on to offer comprehensive analyses of an extensive group of Polish miniature poems that are very close to the prototype of the genre and are surprisingly difficult to describe (Part 5 of the book). Part 6 of the study is a sort of appendix to the preceding discussion: in *A “Haiku” Miscellany* I present a wide variety of activities (ranging from religious poems to asemantic neodadaist experiment) bearing the East-Asian rubric, but actually not drawing on the style and cultural substratum of haiku and not entering into polemics with the cultural background of the form. The final analytical part of the book deals with various intersemiotic entanglements of Japanese haiku poems and, above all, Polish ones (connections with painting; haiku and the art of arranging exhibitions; haiku and book art; haiku, *haiga* and *haibun* presented online).

My research could be called micrological<sup>48</sup> – I am interested both in focusing on miniature verse (which literary scholars often dismiss with disparaging

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47 If one discounts rare isolated poetic attempts made by Czesław Miłosz (see the first chapter of Part 4 of the monograph) or Ursula Koziół (see the last chapter of Part 2 of the book).

48 See A. Nawarecki, ‘Mikrologia, genologia, miniatura’ [Micrology, Genre Studies, Miniature], in *Miniatura i mikrologia literacka* [Miniature and Literary Micrology], Vol. 1, ed. A. Nawarecki, Katowice, 2000, pp. 9–29; A. Nawarecki, ‘Czarna mikrologia’ [Dark Micrology], *Anthropos?*, 2005, No. 4/5, <http://www.anthropos.us.edu.pl/anthropos3/teksty/tekstA0.htm>, accessed October, 20, 2014.

judgements) and analysing stylistic “minutiae” within it. Micrology<sup>49</sup> – the micro-reading of the small and unremarkable<sup>50</sup> – can, I think, tell us a great deal about the transformations and entanglements of 20th-century Polish poetry. Finally, I set a great value on the very “micrological subtlety, as well as its longing for precision, focus and sharpness.”<sup>51</sup>

Recent years have seen the publication of numerous foreign-language studies (predominantly in English) examining the position of haiku in modernist literature and culture of Europe and the Americas (mainly the United States of America).<sup>52</sup>

49 Following Aleksander Nawarecki, “I look [at this term] [...] with reserve, sensing its arbitrariness and provisionality.” Nawarecki writes: “the emphasis on ‘smallness’ is risky. After all, we are not concerned here only with texts that are small in size, their tiny components and detailed cross-sections. Of no lesser, or, conversely, perhaps even greater importance is the elusiveness of those minute components, their limited knowability, and especially their insignificance. Speaking of ‘insignificance,’ we bring forth the axiological moment: the neglect of that which is devoid of the status of greatness and significance and as such is disregarded, marginalized, refuted. A similar problem is created by the word *mini* contained in *miniature* [however, this is a false etymology – B. Ś]” (A. Nawarecki, ‘Mikrologia,’ pp. 9–10).

50 See A. Dziadek, ‘Sztuka mikrolektury Rolanda Barthes’a’ [Rolanda Barthes’ Art of Micro-reading], in *Miniatura i mikrologia literacka*, Vol. 1, pp. 30–45. I conceive micro-readings (after Adam Dziadek, who, in turn, drew on the writings of Jean Pierre Richard) as “meticulous reading, and at the same time the reading of minor elements (by no means small-sized literary works, although they also may become its subject), seemingly of little importance. [...] Micro-readings direct attention to detail and primarily rely on it.” (A. Dziadek, ‘Sztuka mikrolektury,’ p. 31).

51 A. Nawarecki, ‘Wstęp,’ p. 14.

52 See, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics in Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Poetry*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–Toronto–Plymouth, 2011; Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, New York, 2009; J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre. Fellow-Traveler of Modernism,’ in *Modernism*, Vol. 2, eds. A. Eysteinnsson, V. Liska, Amsterdam–Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 693–714; T. Lynch, ‘Intersecting Influences in American Haiku,’ in *Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism. New Readings*, ed. Y. Hakutani, London, 2001, pp. 114–36. See also K. Satō, ‘Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku? (Japońskie haiku i ruch haiku na Zachodzie) [Is it Possible to Transplant a Rape Flower? (Japanese Haiku and the Haiku Movement in the West)]’, transl. A. Szuba, *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 1, pp. 210–17; P. Michałowski, *Haiku wobec epifanii*. Problems that are of interest to me are also treated in earlier studies: B. Ungar, *Haiku in English*, Stanford, California, 1978; J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1974; T. Ichiki, *Suggestive Brevity. Haiku into the World*, Kyoto, 1985; Y. Yamada-Bochynek, *Haiku East and West. A Semiogenetic Approach*, Bochum, 1985. See also the bibliographic listing: G. L. Brower, D. W. Foster, *Haiku in Western Languages. An Annotated Bibliography (With some Reference to Senryu)*, Metuchen, New Jersey, 1972. For a selection of Polish translations of foreign researchers, see *Metafora haiku* [Haiku Metaphor], ed. E. Tomaszewska, Kraków–Warszawa, 1994.

On numerous occasions, I refer to them throughout this monograph, but I do not treat any of these as an obvious methodological signpost. Many illuminating texts that reveal to the Polish reader the little-known haiku archipelagos of English, American, German, French or Spanish poetry lack methodological coherence, resulting, in some part, from a superficial perspective on genre problems. The omission of findings on category profiling, so relevant here, and the lack of a precise description of various “untranslatabilities” of the Japanese form frequently lead to a significant blurring of haiku’s specificity. As a result, both texts that are “orthodoxically” faithful to the conventions of classical seventeen-syllable poems and works that are akin to Oriental haiku solely in terms of their size are treated equally. At the same time, the scope of the culture-forming influence of this Eastern verse form is extending over a remarkably wide expanse of modern culture.<sup>53</sup> An orthodox treatment of the relationship between Western poetry and classical haiku, close to the classificatory view of genre,<sup>54</sup> results, in turn, in a significant narrowing of the spectrum of studied texts,<sup>55</sup> putting many excellent works that realize only some haikems (prototypical features of haiku)<sup>56</sup> outside the scope of analysis.

What should save me from analytical extremes in this monograph is the flexible profiling of the genre category – the conceptualization and use of the Western prototype of the form, and, in some research situations, treating haiku as an invariant set of features. However, my book is not intended merely as a diagnosis of the state of “genre transplantology”<sup>57</sup> – it also seeks to throw considerable light on Polish poetry and the associated visual arts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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53 These omissions and abuses are, in my opinion, the main flaws of the otherwise highly illuminating studies by Jeffrey Johnson (*Haiku Poetics*) and Walsh Hokenson (*Haiku as a Western Genre*). See also Y. Hakutani, ‘James Emanuel’s Jazz Haiku,’ in Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, pp. 139–58.

54 See S. Sawicki, *Gatunek literacki*.

55 See, for example, Y. Yamada-Bochynek, *Haiku East and West*.

56 This concept was coined by Professor Włodzimierz Bolecki during a discussion on one of the fragments of this dissertation.

57 A phrase coined by Michałowski in the context of haiku studies in Poland – P. Michałowski, *Polskie imitacje haiku*, p. 166.



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# Part 1 Classical Japanese Haiku Verse: Form and Prototype

*Saigyō's waka, Sōgi's renga, Sesshū's painting, Rikyū's tea ceremony – one thread runs through the artistic Ways. And this aesthetic spirit is to follow the Creative, to be a companion to the turning of the four seasons.*

*Bashō<sup>1</sup>*

The primary area of research in this monograph is Polish poetry. However, I look at vernacular verse from a transcultural perspective, focusing on its variously motivated relationships with the poetics and aesthetics of Japanese – and Western – haiku poetry and various kinds of “indeterminable” cultural peculiarities. Therefore, the inevitable starting point for my considerations is classical Japanese haiku verse, the most important current in the context of the evolution of the form in Japan and the West, derived from the work of Matsuo Bashō, and subsequently cultivated by numerous continuators (and reformers) of this lineage.<sup>2</sup> Classical haiku poems are a vital pre-text of the literary and cultural processes analysed here.

For many reasons, a description reduced to strictly genre matters would be insufficient here, since haiku poems indeed “encompass a whole philosophy of life developed over the course of the centuries.”<sup>3</sup> If the diagnoses presented are to prove to be accurate, they must take into account the cultural substratum of the form that is so deeply ingrained in the thought and traditional aesthetics of Japan. Therefore, I start by outlining key problems of philosophy, religion and aesthetics, from time to time taking the liberty to present an array of the most insightful observations of other researchers. However, in this part of the study, my ambition

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- 1 M. Bashō, ‘*Knapsack Notebook*,’ in M. Bashō, *Bashō's Journey, The Literary Prose of Matsuo Bashō*, translated and with an introduction by David Landis Barnhill, Albany 2005, p. 29.
  - 2 The widely recognized four great masters of classical haiku are Matsuo Bashō, Yosa Buson, Kobayashi Issa, and the twentieth-century haiku reformer Masaoka Shiki (See, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics in Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Poetry*, Lanham-Boulder-New York-Toronto-Plymouth, 2011, p. 13). Naturally, in my study I will also make a reference to poems by other haijins, whose works I see as belonging to the corpus of classical Japanese haiku, and – rather incidentally – to texts of authors not belonging to Bashō's line of evolution of the form.
  - 3 Cz. Miłosz, ‘*Wprowadzenie*’ [Introduction], in Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, Kraków, 1992, p. 9.

is to arrive at an entirely original description of the haiku prototype in Western literature.

## I. A Glimpse at the Culture of Japan

The cultural foundations of haiku were, on the one hand, Shintō, Zen Buddhism, Daoism (and, to some extent, Confucianism) and, on the other, ink painting, calligraphy, *ukiyo-e* woodblock print, *nō* theatre, traditional Japanese landscape architecture, and the tea ceremony. This catalogue of relevant contexts could be easily extended.<sup>4</sup> Their multitude arises from, amongst other things, “exceptional receptiveness to external influences characterising Japanese art and entire culture [...], with the attendant ease of processing and assimilating foreign borrowings in order to create something of their own, unique.”<sup>5</sup>

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- 4 See, for example, B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska* [Japanese Aesthetics and Art], Kraków, 2009 (see also the bibliography therein, pp. 21–6); A. Kozyra, *Estetyka zen* [Zen Aesthetics], Warszawa, 2010; as well as numerous works by Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda, Mikołaj Melanowicz, and Wiesław Kotański cited below.
- 5 B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 109. The scholar goes on to add: “Japanese art has always been defined in this country by the opposition to art borrowed initially from Korea and China, and later from the West” (B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka*, p. 109). Japanese culture was long considered a second-rate copy of the older Chinese civilization. Donald Keene likens the relationship between both countries to one between modern France or England and Greek-Roman antiquity. “We do not say of Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* or of Racine’s *Phèdre* that they are ‘nothing but’ imitations. I do not think it fair, either, to say it about those Japanese works which obviously have their roots in China.” (D. Keene, *Japanese Literature*, New York, n.d., p. 1). Japan’s innovative approach is evidenced, for instance, by *nō* theatre and, indeed, haiku (see, for example, D. Keene, *Japanese Literature*). It is no accident that Wolfgang Iser accords Japan a special place on the map of transcultural experiences: “in Japan different cultural or aesthetic or philosophic styles and models have coexisted throughout history. Once something was established it remained. Buddhism didn’t outdo Shintō, and modernism didn’t outdo tradition. [...] This coexistence of different models [...] certainly paved the way to future transcultural blending. People are used to having several models, they aren’t afraid of manifoldness, they don’t have to acquire a new mentality in order to come to terms with contemporary plurality” (W. Iser, ‘Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization: A Transcultural Perspective,’ *Aesthetics & Art Science*, 2002, No. 1, p. 94). The consequences of Japanese transculturality diagnosed in this way can also be shown from another angle. A culture absorbing and assimilating various inspirations is also more susceptible to getting close to other (and perhaps to some extent transculturally related) universes. See also, for example, M. Zamorska, ‘Transkulturowość “butō.” Japonia, Welsch i pytania o tożsamość’ [The Transculturality of “butō.” Japan, Welsch and Questions about Identity], *Kultura – Historia – Globalizacja*, No. 9, <http://www.khg.uni.wroc.pl/files/khg6ZamorskaT.pdf>, pp. 89–91, accessed April 20, 2015.



**Illustration 1.** Utagawa Hiroshige, *Jūmantsubo Plain at Fukagawa Susaki*, 1857 (from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*) (in A. Król, *Japonizm polski / Polish Japonism*, Manggha, Kraków, 2011)



**Illustration 2.** Poem by Zen master Hakuin Ekaku, 17–18th century (from: *Zen und die westliche Kunst*, hrsg. H.-G. Golinski, S. Hiekisch-Picard, Wienand, Köln, 2000, p. 9)



**Illustration 3.** Tearoom, Nara, 1671 (photograph from T. Hayashiya, *Japanese Art and the Tea Ceremony*, New York–Tokyo 1980, reproduced in *Estetyka japońska. Antologia*, Vol. 1: *Wymiary przestrzeni*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Universitas, Kraków, 2001)



**Illustration 4.** Daitoku temple, Kyoto, 1961, photograph Rene Burri (from G. C. Calza, *Japan Style*, Phaidon, London–New York, 2007)



## 1. Religions, Worldviews

Zen Buddhism is widely recognized as a philosophical “vital key”<sup>6</sup> to haiku.<sup>7</sup> This pronouncement is not devoid of a certain validity, yet it oversimplifies the complex philosophical and religious contexts of the art form I am interested in.

Japan’s native religion was Shintō. In this system, “every material object of the world is endowed with a certain force, power, and ability. With this power, it influences other objects, associating with them, transforming them, or even destroying them.”<sup>8</sup>

Visible beings and spirits live side by side, and people “have a no less divine nature than their divine ancestors.”<sup>9</sup> To a large extent, Shintō is based on the observation of reality accessible to the senses, deities (*kami*) are associated with objects of the visible world – they can inhabit them permanently or temporarily, and sometimes can even be identified with real objects.<sup>10</sup> Hence, among other things, the characteristic attitude towards nature, “from which the Japanese do not separate themselves and which they do not try to oppose.”<sup>11</sup> According to Wiesław Kotański, Shintō is a quintessentially Japanese religion, still deeply seated in the minds of the islanders. The scholar even goes as far as to see the influence of other religious systems as superficial, claiming that “the main core of the Shintō doctrine has remained intact.”<sup>12</sup>

- 6 S. Fagerberg, *Iluminacja*, transl. from Swedish A. Krajewski-Bola, *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 28.
- 7 See, for example, D. T. Suzuki, ‘Zen and Haiku,’ in D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, New York, 1959, pp. 215–67; R. Aitken, *A Zen Wave. Bashō’s Haiku and Zen*, foreword by W. S. Merwin, Washington D.C., 2003; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 32; see also: K. Lindström, ‘A Broad Perspective on Estonian Haiku as Compared to Its Japanese Origins,’ *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia*, 2001, No. 2.B.2, <http://www.ut.ee/klassik/sht/>, accessed January 20, 2012; R. Császár, *Fusion of Zen and Cubism in E. E. Cummings’s Poetry. Haiku Pictures in Cubist Frame*, Saarbrücken, 2008, pp. 16–7; A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki Ryszarda Krynickiego* [Transformations in Ryszard Krynicki’s Poetics], Kraków, 2004, p. 165.
- 8 W. Kotański, *W kręgu shintoizmu* [In the Circle of Shintō], Vol. 1: *Przeszłość i jej tajemnice* [The Past and its Mysteries], Warszawa, 1995, p. 41.
- 9 W. Kotański, *Dziedzictwo japońskich bogów* [The Legacy of Japanese Gods], Wrocław, 1995, p. 15.
- 10 W. Kotański, *W kręgu shintoizmu*, Vol. 2: *Doktryna, kult, organizacja* [The Doctrine, Cult, Organization], Warszawa, 1995, p. 179; S. Kato, *Japan – Spirit and Form*, n.p., 1994, p. 46.
- 11 J. Tubielewicz, *Kultura Japonii. Słownik* [The Culture of Japan. A Dictionary], Warszawa, 1996, p. 73. See also J. Tubielewicz, *Japonia: zmienna czy niezmienna?* [Japan: Changeable or Changeless?], Warszawa, 1998.
- 12 W. Kotański, *W kręgu shintoizmu*, Vol. 2, p. 179. As Earl Miner declares, “The animistic legacy of Shintō undoubtedly influenced the Japanese understanding of Buddhism”

From the sixth century onwards, Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism began to spread across the archipelago.<sup>13</sup> Seen in the perspective of my inquiries, the first two worldviews are especially vital. Daoism, a philosophical system believed to have been originated by Confucius' contemporary, the sage Laozi<sup>14</sup> (sixth century BC), is above all a formula of living in harmony with the laws of nature, rather than a set of tenets arising from intellectual inquiry. Any attempt to describe this system may seem like an exercise in audacity, since already in the first sentence of the fundamental work of Daoism, *Daodejing*, we read the following: "Of ways you may speak, / but not the Perennial Way."<sup>15</sup> A Daoist attentively observes the world, without trying to squeeze reality into the framework of concepts, because typologies and categorizations do not carry the truth about life, and the only unchanging feature of the world, "the most important agent regulating the universe"<sup>16</sup> is changeability.<sup>17</sup> Finally, a Daoist is someone who indulges in thoughtless inactivity of mind, who follows the principle of *wu-wei* (acting through inaction, not forcing oneself and others to do anything that is not necessary and in harmony with nature).<sup>18</sup> He does not attach himself to objects, people nor, above all, his own beliefs and ideas. What matters is spontaneity, focus on reality, profound experience of everyday life and inner peace.<sup>19</sup> The conditions for maintaining this

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(E. Miner, *Comparative Poetics. An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature*, Princeton, New Jersey 1990, p. 93).

- 13 I do not discuss in more detail the relationship between Confucianism and Zen Buddhism and the impact of Confucianism on haiku. This impact was certainly less pronounced than the haiku-Zen relationship. Confucianism, however, is sometimes associated with the haiku's conciseness, gravity, and moral sense. See, for example, J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, Rutland, Vermont-Tokyo, Japan, 1974, p. 26 and ff.; Y. Hakutani, 'Bashō and Haiku Poetics,' in Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, New York, 2009, pp. 19–25.
- 14 Other transcriptions of his name occurring in English-language scholarship are Lao Tzu and Lao-Tze.
- 15 Laozi, *Daodejing*, transl. Edmund Ryden, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, p. 5.
- 16 J. Kryg, 'Tao zmieniającej się przyrody' [Dao of the Changing Nature], in *Taoizm*, p. 149.
- 17 Pointing to two aspects of all things, *yin* and *yang*, is not a symptom of the dualistic perception of reality; in their constant interpenetration the two are inseparable, impossible to abstract from each other. See, for example, P. Glita, 'Taoizm,' in *Filozofia Wschodu* [Eastern Philosophy], ed. B. Szymańska, Kraków, 2001, pp. 329–45.
- 18 *Filozofia Wschodu*, p. 337; F. Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, New York, 1984; D. T. Suzuki, T. Merton, 'Wisdom in Emptiness: A Dialogue by Daisetz T. Suzuki and Thomas Merton,' in T. Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (Part Two), New York, 1968, pp. 99–138.
- 19 See, for example, J. Marzecki, *Systemy religijno-filozoficzne Wschodu* [Eastern Religious and Philosophical Systems], Warszawa, 1999, pp. 174–85; J. Zamorski, 'Filozofia taoistyczna wobec cierpienia (na przykładzie księgi "Zhuangzi")' [Daoist

attitude are emptiness, purity of mind that is ready to accept any moment and does not withhold things, does not judge but only observes.<sup>20</sup>

Zen Buddhism<sup>21</sup> in many aspects is, as it turns out, very close to Daoism,<sup>22</sup> and some went as far as to claim that “Daoism’s greatest influence on Buddhism was in the development of Zen Buddhism.”<sup>23</sup> Wisdom is here expressed through conscious everyday life and peaceful, attentive observation of the world. It is not worthwhile pursuing specific goals, “the purposeless life misses nothing, for it is only when there is no goal and no rush that the human senses are fully open to receive the world.”<sup>24</sup> Embracing dogmas, pondering philosophical and religious writings is of no use: “personal experience, therefore, is everything in Zen.”<sup>25</sup>

Considered as the cultural essence of the Zenist “celebration of the commonplace”<sup>26</sup> is the tea ceremony, described as “greatness [experienced] in the smallest incidents of life.”<sup>27</sup> Enlightenment itself is always at hand, within easy reach, it is at once something ordinary and a miracle:

Before I had studied Chan for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains, and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains, and waters are not waters. But now that I have got its very substance I am at rest. For it is just that I see mountains once again as mountains, and waters once again as waters.<sup>28</sup>

Philosophy on Suffering (the Example of *Zhuangzi*), *Orient*, 2006, nos. 1–4 (7–10), pp. 81–96.

- 20 “The Way is empty, yet in using her, there is something that does not fill her.” (Laozi, *Daodejing*, p. 11).
- 21 At the beginning of the sixth century, Buddhism made its way to Japan, where following its inclusion into the belief system of Shintō gods it quite easily gained acceptance and quickly became the dominant religion. However, the spread of the meditative branch of Buddhism, Zen, across the archipelago did not take place until the twelfth century. (See, for example, H. von Glasenapp, ‘Buddyzm,’ in *Buddyzm*, eds. J. Sieradzan, W. Jaworski, M. Dziwisz, Kraków, 1988, p. 27). Kotoński explains Buddhism’s success in the following way: “the concept of Shintō, closer to the rational understanding of reality, was somewhat too mundane and, as a result, less appealing.” (W. Kotoński, *W kręgu shintoizmu*, Vol. 2, p. 179).
- 22 See, for example, B. Szymańska, *Buddyzm chan i taoizm* [Chan Buddhism and Daoism], Kraków, 2009, pp. 41–51; D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, New York, 1959.
- 23 J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1974; p. 22.
- 24 A. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, New York, 1957, p. 176. See also S. Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*, New York, 1970.
- 25 D. T. Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, New York, 1964.
- 26 D. Hirota (ed.), *Wind in the Pines: Classic Writings of the Way of Tea as a Buddhist Path*, Kyōtō, 1995, pp. 21–2.
- 27 K. Okakura, *The Book of Tea*, Tokyo–New York–London, 1929, p. 71; see also B. Kita, *Cha-do Tee und Zen – der gleiche Weg*, München, 1993.
- 28 The saying by Qingyuan (d. 740), as quoted in A.S. Cua (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, New York, p. 2001 22; A poem by Ritangen (11th c.) reads as follows: “For

Zen Buddhism also shares with Daoism the emphasis on an open, empty mind,<sup>29</sup> “a state of emotional peace in which there is no effort of the will.”<sup>30</sup> The idea of change is also vital here: without the realization that “everything is in flowing change,”<sup>31</sup> no true harmony can be found. In Zen, there is no mention of the dualism of spirit and matter, good and evil – all phenomena are manifestations of one existence.<sup>32</sup> This worldview finds expression, for example, in Zen gardens, where the Westerner sees “almost exclusively a whim of the creator, who ordered a certain amount of boulders to be arranged ... on a gravelled surface, and then had gravel hoed carefully around the stones, forming spectacular curves, circumferences, and drawing parallel straight lines.”<sup>33</sup> The point is, however, to bring home the fact that the world consists of uniform matter, “whose consistency can only differ inasmuch as gravel differs from rock.”<sup>34</sup> Finally, Zen is liberation from time. “For if we open our eyes and see clearly, it becomes obvious that there is no other time than this instant, and that the past and the future are abstractions without any concrete reality.”<sup>35</sup>

Thus, there are no timeless recipes for enlightenment except this one: being at every moment attentive to the stirrings of “what the Chinese call Dao, or what the Christians call the indwelling Spirit.”<sup>36</sup>

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forty-eight years totally unaware, / Now I've gained it. What difference? / The rushing Ben river, the broad Zui banks. / Arrow-waves are shooting east. I'm going home.” (as quoted in L. Stryk et al., *Zen Poems of China and Japan*, New York, 1973).

- 29 See, for example, E. Fromm, D. T. Suzuki, R. De Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, New York, 1960.
- 30 M. Wawrzyniak, ‘Wprowadzenie do kaligrafii japońskiej: związki z “zen” i “nanga”’, [Introduction to Japanese Calligraphy: Links with “Zen” and “Nanga”], *Japonica*, 1994, No. 2, p. 117.
- 31 S. Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, p. 138. This intuition of Eastern philosophers has often been paired with similar – despite the geographical and cultural distance – observations of Heraclitus. It is also noteworthy that both Heraclitus' conception and the East Asian idea of change originated at around the same time – in the sixth century BC.
- 32 S. Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, pp. 107–108. “All life reveals itself in a superficial dualistic form, but we know that reality is one” (R. Yasutani, ‘Dualizm i absolut’ [The Dualism and the Absolute], *Droga Zen*, 1983, No. 3, p. 10). In writings on Zen, change is less prominent than in Daoist literature. However, two categories also appear here, *shō* and *hen*, which according to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki correspond to yin and yang in Chinese philosophy (E. Fromm, D. T. Suzuki, R. De Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*).
- 33 W. Kotański, *Sztuka Japonii*, Warszawa, 1974, p. 205.
- 34 W. Kotański, *Sztuka Japonii*.
- 35 A. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, p. 199.
- 36 A. Huxley, ‘Notes on Zen,’ in *Huxley and God: essays*, ed. J. Hazard Bridgeman, San Francisco, 1992, p. 227.

Proximities occurring in inquiries of Western philosophers from various centuries and Zen and Daoism are quite numerous. For example, placed in this context are the concepts put forth by Heraclitus and Plotinus, some motifs of early Christian philosophy in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, Saint Augustine, and Saint Ambrose, or, Master Eckhart's mysticism.<sup>37</sup> Affinities between Eastern and Western thought can also be detected in the work of Emanuel Swedenborg, Immanuel Kant, Thomas Carlyle, Edmund Husserl, Arthur Schopenhauer, Henri Bergson, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Simone Weil.<sup>38</sup> Naturally, diverse literary works are also seen from this perspective.<sup>39</sup> Reflections on the culture of the last century abound in a large number of such threads (I will refer to some of them in this book).

The issues outlined above certainly find their "reflection" in haiku. As we have seen, researchers primarily emphasize the influence of Zen Buddhism on

- 37 See, for example, B. Szymańska, *Kultury i porównania* [Cultures and Comparisons], Kraków, 2003; D. T. Suzuki, T. Merton, *Wisdom in Emptiness*; A. Sobolewska, *Mapy duchowe współczesności. Co nam zostało z Nowej Ery?* [Spiritual Maps of Modern Times. What is Left from the New Age?], Warszawa, 2009, p. 40 and ff.; A. Korczak, *Heraklit i Lao-zi* [Heraclitus and Laozi], Kraków, 2009; J. L. Borges, 'Buddhism,' in *Seven Nights*, transl. E. Weinberger, New York, 1984, pp. 58–75; Cz. Miłosz, I. Kania, "wołę polegać na Łasce – albo na braku Łaski" O buddyzmie' ["I prefer to Rely on Grace – or on the lack of Grace" On Buddhism], in Cz. Miłosz, *Rozmowy polskie 1979–1998* [Polish Conversations 1979–1998], Kraków, 2006, p. 500; Cz. Miłosz, 'Postscriptum,' in Cz. Miłosz, *Życie na wyspach* [Life on Islands], Kraków, 1997, p. 117 and ff.; M. Wendland, *Motywy gnostyckie i buddyjskie w filozofii A. Schopenhauera* [Gnostic and Buddhist Motifs in the Philosophy of A. Schopenhauer], [http://mumelab01.amu.edu.pl/SKH/archiwum001\\_04-2005/M.Wendland2.htm#\\_ftn3](http://mumelab01.amu.edu.pl/SKH/archiwum001_04-2005/M.Wendland2.htm#_ftn3), accessed November 28, 2014.
- 38 Naturally, this list can easily be extended. In the context of various affinities with Zen and haiku, for example, the recent pronouncements by Jolanta Brach-Czaina sound interesting: "I think that when philosophers speak with despair about the silence of being, this stems from a misunderstanding of the language of being, which does not address us as a whole, but through existential details, meaningful trifles. It is true that they are able to hint at the voice of the whole, but one invariably resounding in trifles of existence." (J. Brach-Czaina, *Szczeliny istnienia* [The Cracks in Existence], Kraków, 1999, p. 8).
- 39 See, for example, Cz. Miłosz, 'Wprowadzenie,' p. 10; D. T. Suzuki, 'Zen and Haiku,' pp. 263–7; A. Kluba, 'Poetyka a światopogląd. O twórczości Marii Pawlikowskiej-Jasnorzewskiej' [Poetics and a Worldview. On the Work of Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska], *Przestrzenie Teorii*, 2010, No. 8, p. 140 and ff.; B. Szymańska, *Kultury i porównania*, p. 140; M. Wielgosz, 'Medytacyjny odbiór rzeczywistości w polskiej literaturze i fotografii' [Meditative Reception of Reality in Polish Literature and Photography], in *Obrazy dookoła świata* [Images Around the World], eds. J. Bielska-Krawczyk, S. Kołos, M. Mateja, Toruń, 2013, p. 302. See also bibliography of the chapter *Poetry of Mindfulness – Czesław Miłosz and Haiku*.

the poetry of *haijins*,<sup>40</sup> sometimes even writing about a kind of Zen “emanating” from seventeen-syllable poems.<sup>41</sup> The approach of a number of artists – and the modality of their poems<sup>42</sup> – validate the linking of haiku with Zen. However, the direct impact of this branch of Buddhism – or other religions/worldviews – on haiku should not be overestimated. Kazuo Satō and Lee Gurga provide an interesting insight into this:

From the Second World War onwards, for many Westerners haiku has been the embodiment of Zen thought. This view was popularized by the eminent Buddhist expert, Daisetsu Suzuki and others, such as R. H. Blyth. Blyth even claimed that haiku is Zen.<sup>43</sup> This approach to haiku is relatively fresh.<sup>44</sup>

Japanese poets and scholars are often surprised at the close identification in America of haiku with Zen. Shirane, for example, has written to dispel this notion, offering instead a culture-based interpretation of classical haiku. Some English-language poets, too, object to the continued association of haiku with Zen. Many believe that there is no relation at all – Zen is Zen and haiku is haiku. It is true that both in Japan and increasingly in the West, haiku is being approached as a form of literature rather than as the path of spiritual liberation that Blyth appreciated. ... The aesthetic ideals of haiku are not uniquely associated with Zen; aspects of them can be found in almost any spiritual tradition.<sup>45</sup>

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- 40 In this book I use the Japanese form *haijin* (“haiku writer”), frequently occurring in Western (and Polish) publications, interchangeably with *haikaïste*, found in English and French texts; See, for example, J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre. Fellow-Traveler of Modernism,’ in *Modernism*, Vol. 2, eds. A. Eysteinnsson, V. Liska, Amsterdam–Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 693–714). In the Polish original I occasionally make use of the neologism proposed by Dariusz Brzóska–Brzósiewicz: *haikowiec* ([http://www.polskieradio.pl/7/15/Artykul/766678,Soyka-o\\_fascynacji-najkrotsza-poezja-swiata](http://www.polskieradio.pl/7/15/Artykul/766678,Soyka-o_fascynacji-najkrotsza-poezja-swiata), accessed August 23, 2013), but avoid such propositions as *haikarz* (*Haiku*, 1995, No. 3 (4), p. 25) and *haikaista* (W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec haiku’ [Japanese 17-syllable Verse Haiku], *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 8).
- 41 D. T. Suzuki, ‘Zen and Haiku,’ R. Aiken, *A Zen Wave*.
- 42 I write at greater length on this in the chapter ‘Haiku Poetics, Haiku and Senryū’ in this part of the book.
- 43 See R. H. Blyth, ‘Introduction. I. Haiku and Zen,’ in R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku, Vol. 1: From the Beginnings up to Issa*, Tokyo 1963, p. 4. See also: K. Sugawara, ‘Devising Context: R. H. Blyth’s Translation of Haiku,’ in *Identity and Alterity in Literature, 18th–20th c.*, Vol. 3: *Translation and Intercultural Relations. Proceedings*, eds. A. Tampaki, S. Athini, Athens 2001, pp. 235–7.
- 44 K. Satō, ‘Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku?’ transl. A. Szuba, *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 1, p. 213.
- 45 L. Gurga, *Lee Gurga, Haiku: A Poet’s Guide* (Lincoln, IL, 2003), p. 132; Wiesław Kotański simply states: “some works explicitly mention Zen’s influence on haiku, but I would consider this to be an oversimplification.” (W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 10). However, Kotański writes about haiku’s connections

Reginald Horace Blyth indeed situated classical haiku within the sphere of Zen, however, he saw that haiku taboos, excluding wars, cataclysms, vulgarity or the abject from the spectrum of artistic interest, are at variance with the Zenist acceptance of all manifestations of life.<sup>46</sup> To me, even more important is the inability to strictly separate “Zen-ness” from the traditional aesthetic categories of Japanese art (which I will discuss shortly), which are suffused with Zen, but also related to Shintō, Daoism, and Confucianism. Zen “has entered internally into every phase of the cultural life of the people,”<sup>47</sup> which, however, does not mean that these aspects should be reinterpreted only in terms of this philosophy. Quite appropriately, a certain universality of the worldview offered by Zen has actually been noted.<sup>48</sup>

Let us have a look at some examples. Zen influences seem to be particularly conspicuous in the work of Bashō, a student of the Zen master Butchō<sup>49</sup> (Bashō even considered entering a Buddhist monastery).<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, “Daoist thinkers were among Bashō’s favourite authors,”<sup>51</sup> and both worldviews in many points are convergent. In Bashō’s writings, we can also trace quite frequent Confucian inspirations, originating, indirectly, from his intimate familiarity with Japanese and Chinese literature, which absorbed various philosophical inspirations.<sup>52</sup> Thus, “allusions to Zen are scattered through his poetry and other writings, even though it is sometimes difficult to tell whether they refer directly to Zen or are simply reflections of Japanese culture, which had assimilated Zen by Bashō’s time.”<sup>53</sup>

with meditation practices (W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec’). The reasons for the close linking of Zen with haiku in the West have also been discussed in Y. Yamada-Bochynek, *Haiku East and West. A Semiogenetic Approach*, Bochum, 1985, p. 452 and ff.

- 46 R. H. Blyth, *Introduction. I. Haiku and Zen*, p. 4. I treat haiku taboos in more detail in the chapter *Poetics of Haiku; Haiku and Senryū* in this part of the book.
- 47 D. T. Suzuki, ‘General Remarks on Japanese Art Culture,’ in *Zen and Japanese Culture*, New York, 1959, p. 21.
- 48 T. Lynch, ‘Intersecting Influences in American Haiku,’ in *Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism. New Readings*, ed. Y. Hakutani, London, 2001, pp. 116–9.
- 49 Most likely, Bashō came into contact with koans through Butchō – W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 12. See also L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie pod bananowcem’ [Central-European Hermitages under the Banana Tree], in *Droga na Wschód. Polskie inspiracje orientalne. Materiały z forum dyskusyjnego* [The Road to the East. Polish Oriental Inspirations. Materials from the Discussion Forum], ed. and with an introduction by D. Kalinowski, Słupsk, 2000, pp. 114–5; M. Ueda, *Zeami, Bashō, Yeats, Pound. A Study in Japanese and English Poetics*, London–The Hague–Paris, 1965, p. 35.
- 50 See M. Ueda, *Bashō and His Interpreters: Selected Hokku with Commentary*, Stanford, 1995, p. 68.
- 51 L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 119.
- 52 For analyses of Bashō’s work in the context of Buddhism and Confucianism, see Y. Hakutani, *Bashō and Haiku Poetics*, p. 19 and ff.
- 53 M. Ueda, *Bashō and His Interpreters*, p. 68.

What is more, not all haiku authors were equally interested in problems of philosophy and religion, and different artists espoused different traditions. For example, Bashō was much more preoccupied with questions of religion and world-view than Yosa Buson,<sup>54</sup> who, for that matter, identified more strongly with a school of Buddhism different from Bashō.<sup>55</sup> Masaoka Shiki, in turn, was to a greater degree shaped by Confucian texts.<sup>56</sup> These issues can only be observed to a limited extent in poetry, especially if they are viewed through the eyes of a Westerner. Therefore, strictly ideological or religious issues should not overshadow the literary – and aesthetic – essence of haiku.

## 2. Aesthetic Categories

One of the keys to understanding haiku is the traditional aesthetics of Japan.<sup>57</sup> European thinking on art did not recognise the concepts I discuss in this section as aesthetic categories; typically, we have perceived questions of beauty from entirely different viewpoints. However, this does not automatically mean that the problems under scrutiny here were altogether alien to Western art.

From the haiku perspective, the triad of concepts (aesthetic categories): *sabi*, *wabi*, and *karumi* is of utmost importance.<sup>58</sup> *Sabi* is associated with solitariness, distance, and calm observation of the world:<sup>59</sup>

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54 See M. Melanowicz, 'Od pieśni japońskich do haiku' [From Japanese Songs to Haiku], in *Haiku*, transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda, afterword by M. Melanowicz, Wrocław, 1983, p. 301.

55 Ch. A. Crowley, 'Buson and Haiga,' in Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival*, Leiden–Boston, 2007, p. 211.

56 D. Keene, *Landscapes and Portraits: Appreciations of Japanese Culture*, n.p., n.d., p. 158.

57 In recent years, numerous comprehensive compendiums of Japanese art and art theory have been published in Poland. See, for example, B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska; Estetyka japońska*, Vol. 1: *Wymiary przestrzeni*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków 2001; *Estetyka japońska* [Japanese Aesthetics], Vol. 2: *Słowa i obrazy* [Words and Images], ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków, 2005; *Estetyka japońska*, Vol. 3: *Estetyka życia i piękno umierania* [The Aesthetics of Life and the Beauty of Dying], ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków, 2005. See also M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1: *Od VI do połowy XIX wieku*, Warszawa, 1994, pp. 250–9; A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły Matsuo Bashō (lata 1684–1694)* [The Poetics of the Matsuo Bashō's School, 1684–1694], Warszawa, 2007, pp. 23–6.

58 See B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 84; A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Od tłumaczki' [Translator's Note], *Literatura na Świecie*, 2002, No. 1/2/3, p. 284.

59 See A. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, p. 181.



[It is] the beauty of solitude, seclusion, detachment, spiritual isolation, containing at once elements of calmness, old age, and coldness. It derives from the noun *sabishisa*, which means loneliness, but it is the loneliness one has accepted. [...] it was Bashō who in his poetry gave [...] [*sabi*] a singular air of peace and solitude.<sup>60</sup>

Seen as belonging to *sabi* are *shiori*, *hosomi* and *kurai*<sup>61</sup> (all strongly associated with haiku).<sup>62</sup> *SHIORI* is described as a sense of the transience of beauty and fragility of life, reconciliation with loss, acceptance of helplessness.<sup>63</sup> “It manifests itself primarily in the style and manner of writing poetry and gives priority to the ability to describe the fleeting nature of short-lived beauty.”<sup>64</sup>

*HOSOMI* is about taking notice of value and beauty in everything, even the most commonplace and fleeting phenomena.<sup>65</sup> “It is, as it were, a fine vibration of the poet’s heart in response to the smallest stimulus in nature. [...] a sensitive working of the heart which penetrates into the innermost nature of things.”<sup>66</sup> Such a “penetration” is possible, however, only if on encountering another being the artist leaves aside his beliefs, prejudices, and scattered thoughts.

As Bashō said:

Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine, or to the bamboo if you want to learn about the bamboo. And in doing so, you must leave your subjective preoccupation with yourself. Otherwise you impose yourself on the object and do not learn. Your poetry issues of its own accord when you and the object have become one – when you have plunged deep enough into the object to see something like a hidden light glimmering there.<sup>67</sup>

*KURAI*, in turn, is associated with dignity and loftiness. It is “the beauty of cool and restrained poems.”<sup>68</sup>

60 B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 84.

61 I. Rutkowska, *Sabi*, in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 276 (the entry from *Słownik terminologiczny estetyki i sztuki japońskiej* [Dictionary of Japanese Aesthetic and Artistic Terms], ed. E. Machotka, I. Rutkowska, complementing the study by Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi).

62 I. Rutkowska, ‘*Hosomi*’, in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka*, p. 251; I. Rutkowska, ‘*Shiori*’, in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka*, p. 281; I. Rutkowska, ‘*Kurai*’, in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka*, p. 263 (entries in *Słownik terminologiczny estetyki i sztuki japońskiej*).

63 See A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły Matsuo Bashō*, pp. 24, 255.

64 I. Rutkowska, ‘*Shiori*’, p. 281.

65 I. Rutkowska, ‘*Hosomi*’, p. 251.

66 M. Ueda, *Zeami*, p. 51; see also L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 118; T. Lynch, ‘Intersecting Influences,’ p. 120.

67 As quoted in M. Nepo, *The Exquisite Risk: Daring to Live an Authentic Life*, New York, 2005, p. 169. See also Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 14.

68 I. Rutkowska, ‘*Kurai*’, p. 263.

*Sabi* can be associated with the old category of *yūgen* (“mysterious depth”), which in the tenth century was assimilated from Buddhism into the theory of poetry and is difficult to define. It signifies elusive, hidden, sublime beauty.<sup>69</sup>

Over time, [*yūgen*] began to denote mystery and sublimity, only to become, in the Middle Ages, [...] the most important category in poetry, one used primarily to refer to the style of a poem and its overall effect on the reader. What mattered the most was the hushed and undisturbed beauty, elegant and gentle, which also acquired an air of mystery.<sup>70</sup>

Another important concept is *wabi*, associated with loneliness that brings wisdom and peace of mind, and with noticing the uniqueness of ordinary things.<sup>71</sup> *Wabi*, linked also to the tea ceremony, is relatively close to *sabi*, as it is “beauty tinged with the passage of time, patina, and poverty.”<sup>72</sup> *Sabi*, however, is more linked to emotions, while *wabi* refers to the realities of life and material objects characterised by refined simplicity.<sup>73</sup>

*KARUMI* can be described as lightness and simplicity of verbal expression. A concise characterisation of this category can be found in Bashō’s comment in which he compares the lightness of form and inter-strophic enjambments of a good poem to “a shallow, clean stream flowing over a sandy bottom.”<sup>74</sup> *Karumi* is described as “a literary medium [!] that makes it possible to describe the deepest truths and feelings in a plain and restrained way.”<sup>75</sup>

Haijin’s life and artistic choices were also determined by the concept of *FŪGA NO MAKOTO*, “denoting the compatibility of life attitudes and embraced aesthetic values,”<sup>76</sup> “genuineness of aesthetic

69 See K. Szebla-Morinaga, *Tajemna głębia (yūgen) w japońskiej poezji. Twórczość Fujiwary Shunzeia i jej związki z buddyzmem* [The Mysterious Depth (*yūgen*) in Japanese Poetry. The Work of Fujiwara Shunzei and its Connections with Buddhism], Warszawa, 2012, pp. 27–41; M. Ueda, *Zeami*, pp. 15–23; B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, pp. 59–63, 84, 296–7; D. T. Suzuki, *Zen i haiku*, p. 143. Jeffrey Johnson considers *yūgen* to be a category that is essential to classical haiku and avant-garde incarnations of the genre (what is puzzling, however, is that he makes no mention of any other categories of traditional Japanese aesthetics). See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 16, 19–28.

70 I. Rutkowska, ‘*Yūgen*,’ in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, pp. 296–7 (entry in *Słownik terminologiczny estetyki i sztuki japońskiej*).

71 A. Watts, ‘Zen in the Arts,’ in *The Way of Zen*.

72 B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 86.

73 Cf. the deliberations of Kubiak Ho-Chi – *Estetyka*.

74 As quoted in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka*, p. 87. See also A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły*, p. 26.

75 I. Rutkowska, ‘*Karumi*,’ in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 258 (entry in *Słownik terminologiczny estetyki i sztuki japońskiej*). See also B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 87.

76 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły*, p. 26.

creativity,<sup>77</sup> truthfulness of feelings and experiences, which were to be conducive to clarity and honesty of expression.<sup>78</sup> According to Bashō,

if we live in a truthful attitude towards the beauty of form and spirit (*fūga no makoto*), our ordinary day and *haikai* become one [...]. One who lives by the reality of *haikai* [...] does not draw a borderline between his inner life and the outside world. Conversely, he unites them, or rather they unite in him. They become one being (body) in him and realize themselves in the form of *haikai* stanzas. The poetic object is then received “as it is” [...], without the interference of the poet’s “I.” If, however, at the moment of creative activity the poet is lacking in the purity of heart and childish simplicity, his own will, his own “I” begins to work [...]. His poem will merely be an edifice of beautifully composed words.<sup>79</sup>

The next term – *AWARE* – may derive its name from exclamations of amazement, admiration or deep emotion, but nonetheless, it is, above all, an expression of respect and seriousness:<sup>80</sup>

It is a bowing of the head with admiration for the extraordinary, splendour, exquisite charm, and dignified beauty. On the other hand – it is compassion, grief, pity, love, yet always expressed with the same bow of the head, with respect.<sup>81</sup>

*Aware* “has become a sign of the poet’s sensitivity to beauty, whose essential feature is the impermanence of life and things of this world.”<sup>82</sup>

These aesthetic categories (of course, in the context of haiku one could discuss a larger number of them) are also connected with various types of Japanese visual arts and applied arts (*sumi-e* ink painting, calligraphy, Zen gardens, the tea ceremony). This is an obvious linkage: art and material culture (discussed in more detail in Part 7 of the book) had an impact on literature and philosophy (inseparable from them), while literature and philosophy determined the choices of visual artists.

77 T. & T. Izutsu, *The Theory of Beauty in the Classical Aesthetics of Japan*, The Hague–Boston–London, 1981, pp. 68–9.

78 Lee Gurga writes engagingly about three stages of the coming to full poetic maturity of a haijin, referring to the inquiries of Shiki and Makoto Ueda. The goal of the development of the poet’s creative personality is to arrive at the “landscape of the heart,” truthfulness, and *makoto* (L. Gurga, ‘From Bashō to Barthes,’ in L. Gurga, *Haiku: A Poet’s Guide*; see also A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘O kireji – “sylabie ucinające” w haiku’ [On *Kireji* – the Cutting Syllable in the Haiku] *Japonica*, 1994, No. 2, p. 65).

79 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły*, p. 253.

80 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły*, p. 248. See also B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 234.

81 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły*, p. 248. See A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły* for another possible etymology.

82 M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, p. 252.

It is also worthwhile looking at haiku from the perspective of concepts current in European philosophy and theory of art. One of them is the SUBLIME, which has been surprisingly rarely referenced in literary-theoretical discussions of this poetic form.<sup>83</sup> Jarosław Płuciennik counts among “genres especially amenable to inducing sublimity – odes, hymns, psalms, blessings, curses, epitaphs, challenges, supplications, oaths, riddles, maledictions, and invocations to Muses.”<sup>84</sup> It seems that haiku can be appropriately added to this list. All the more so because the experience of the sublime is accompanied by such sensations and emotions as delight, amazement, and enthusiasm.<sup>85</sup> And precisely these effects are experienced by haiku readers (and haiku authors before them). We will not find here too many “sublime objects,”<sup>86</sup> but there are relatively many “objects associated with infinity”<sup>87</sup> (Japanese miniatures frequently juxtapose the inconspicuous with vast, all-encompassing planes, such as the sea, sky, and mountains). The presentation of sensorially condensed images with the concurrent calming (but not annihilation) of the subject’s emotive voice paves the way to deep empathy.<sup>88</sup> Haiku can also be associated with “figures of the discourse of the sublime:”<sup>89</sup> asyndeton or ellipsis (omission).<sup>90</sup> Finally, seventeen-syllable verse shows the incessant balancing act between expression and inexpressibility, between mimesis and anti-mimesis.<sup>91</sup>

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- 83 One of the few exceptions is the essay by Beata Mytych-Forajter, who writes: “Bashō, investing three haiku lines with simplicity and lightness, and employing the category of the sublime, likes to create a dazzling effect by ‘confronting’ a dragonfly with a mountain, or a grasshopper with a rock” – B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne... Rzecz o *Haiku-images*’ [The Spectre of Childhood in the Face of Death is so Dreadful. On *Haiku-images*], in B. Mytych-Forajter, *Czule punkty Grochowiaka. Szkice i interpretacje* [Grochowiak’s Sore Points. Sketches and Interpretations], Katowice, 2010, p. 94. In inquiries carried out in the field of Japanese aesthetics, *renga* and *haiku* have also been associated with sublimity – B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 263.
- 84 J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości w dziele literackim* [The Rhetoric of the Sublime in a Literary Work], Kraków, 2000, p. 36.
- 85 J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, pp. 162–6.
- 86 See J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, pp. 159–60.
- 87 J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, p. 160. See also T. Gryglewicz, ‘Czy awangarda jest wzniosła?’ [Is the Avant-garde Sublime], *Teksty Drugie*, 1996, No. 2/3, pp. 165–6.
- 88 “The concept of ‘in-feeling’/‘feeling-with’ or COMPASSION is absolutely crucial here. [...] With compassion and automatic interferences, IMITATED LANGUAGE BEHAVIOUR can produce similar effects on listeners/readers. In other words, this compassion makes resonance possible: by observing some expressions of emotions, linguistic effects of deep emotions, the recipient can recreate these emotions within himself/herself. This recreation, or imitation, is very important (J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, p. 180; emphasis in original).
- 89 J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, p. 184.
- 90 J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, pp. 186, 190–1.
- 91 J. Płuciennik, *Figury niewyobrażalnego. Notatki z poetyki wzniosłości w literaturze polskiej* [Figures of the Unimaginable. Notes on the Poetics of the Sublime in Polish

Another perspective vital for the transcultural examination of haiku may be offered by the notion whose “traces ... can be detected already in Plato, or even earlier in the Pythagoreans”<sup>92</sup> – namely empathy. Analysis of the numerous Western discourses treating of this category would be out of place here,<sup>93</sup> and it will suffice to outline briefly the problem of the relationship between empathy and haiku (its detailed elaboration would give rise to an entirely different study). Anna Łebkowska writes:

This category [empathy] can be an index (in equal measure through its presence and absence ...) of many concurrent problems. Namely, it reveals itself as an indicator of: 1) the function of art, 2) the role of literature, 3) ways of understanding subjectivity, 4) the reader-work relationship, 5) the reader-literary character relationship (mainly as a variant of identification), 6) interpersonal relations, 7) and, last but not least, it manifests itself as an index of an approach to literary studies.<sup>94</sup>

I consider problems 3, 4, and 5 from the list above to be of paramount importance to haiku studies. I share Jarosław Płuciennik’s opinion that “in poetics, empathy is interesting mainly by virtue of perspective-taking and infecting with emotions.”<sup>95</sup> Writing about the prose of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Łebkowska observes: “in literature today, becoming open to others’ subjectivity rarely goes hand in hand with cognitive optimism.”<sup>96</sup> Numerous Polish haiku poems – including ones written in recent years – do not seem to take notice of such tendencies. However, this is discussed in more detail in the following pages of the book.

### 3. Language (and Poetry)

In a comparative study on poetry, one cannot leave aside strictly linguistic issues, vital in the perspective of later discussions of translations of Japanese miniature verse and attempts to map out the semantic ambiguities of classical haiku in the original poetic output of Polish authors.

Literature], Kraków, 2002, pp. 16–7; J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, p. 170 and ff. Płuciennik writes here of two elements: “anti-mimetic evocation of the unimaginable and *mimesis* (including the *mimesis* of emotions)” – *Retoryka wzniosłości*, p. 170.

92 J. Płuciennik, *Literackie identyfikacje i oddźwięki. Poetyka a empatia* [Literary Identifications and Resonances. Poetics and Empathy], Kraków, 2004, p. 7.

93 See J. Płuciennik, *Literackie identyfikacje*, esp. pp. 7–21, 125–40; A. Łebkowska, *Empatia. O literackich narracjach przełomu XX i XXI wieku* [Empathy. On Literary Narratives of the Turn of the twentieth and 21st Centuries], Kraków, 2008, pp. 20–31, 189–219.

94 A. Łebkowska, *Empatia*, p. 189.

95 J. Płuciennik, *Literackie identyfikacje*, p. 16.

96 A. Łebkowska, *Empatia*, p. 19.

Contrary to popular belief prevalent in the West, Japanese is not related to Chinese.<sup>97</sup> It is a language of unknown genetic affiliation, structurally close to Korean and Ainu.<sup>98</sup> In the fourth century, Japan adopted characters and some vocabulary from China.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the Chinese writing system (*kanji*), the Japanese also use phonetic characters (*kana*)<sup>100</sup> developed in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Archipelago's first indigenous writing system, as well as the Latin alphabet, mainly used for writing Japanese words in foreign dictionaries and, for example, on signposts. These three notation systems can occur simultaneously in one text.<sup>101</sup> Texts are written vertically, in one line, starting from the upper right-hand corner of a leaf. In the traditional layout of poems, the delimitation of "verses" was purely rhythmic, "the reader – if he/she was highly proficient in reading – knew that he/she was dealing with rhythmic poetry."<sup>102</sup>

No less vital from the comparative perspective are strictly grammatical issues. In Japanese, there is no clear distinction between singular and plural, nor is there a case category (equivalents of cases are formed through the use of particles).<sup>103</sup> Wherever possible, the subject of utterances is omitted<sup>104</sup> – the recipient has to read its identity from the context. In turn, verb forms are very complex, for example conveying information about the degree of familiarity and the "type" of respect in the relationship between interlocutors.<sup>105</sup> The predicate usually occurs at the end of the sentence.

The structure of the language is sometimes interpreted in a broader cultural perspective. The frequent disregarding of the subject category is explained by the

97 Linguistic differences between the two are clearly evident in the versification of local poetry. See, for example, D. Keene, *Japanese Literature*, p. 3.

98 M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, p. 12.

99 "In Japanese hands [however] the Chinese writing system underwent complete Japanisation (absolutely incomprehensible to Chinese)" (W. Kotański, *Dziedzictwo*, p. 7).

100 Initially, the syllabic script (*kana*, also known as *onna-de* – "woman's hand") was used only by women who were not taught the complex system of Chinese characters. See B. Nowak, *Słownik znaków japońskich* [Dictionary of Japanese Characters], Warszawa, 1995, pp. 11–2; A. Kazuko, 'U źródeł poezji japońskiej' [The Origin of Japanese Poetry] in *Wiśnie rozkwitłe pośród zimy. Antologia współczesnej poezji japońskiej* [Cherries Blooming in Winter. An Anthology of Contemporary Japanese Poetry], eds. A. Kazuko, W. Kotański, T. Śliwiak, Tokyo, 1992, p. 521.

101 *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Japan*, eds. R. Bowring, P. Kornicki, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 116–7.

102 W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 4.

103 M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, p. 14.

104 *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Japan*, p. 115.

105 *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Japan*, p. 105. See, for example, K. Okazaki, 'Współczesne japońskie wyrażenia grzecznościowe' [Contemporary Japanese Polite Expressions], in *Język i kultura Japonii. IV Ogólnopolskie Seminarium, Toruń, 15 June, 1998*, ed. K. Stefański, Toruń, 2001, pp. 53–9.

“uninterest in marking person,” lying “not so much with grammar as with a cultural preference for oblique reference”<sup>106</sup> Mikołaj Melanowicz also looks for parallels between sentence structure and the composition of literary works. In Japanese utterances, the qualifying components of a sentence are placed before the qualified component. In everyday communication, and in artistic texts, the Japanese are first confronted with information about details, things of secondary or even tertiary importance. Only when a broad canvas of events has been delineated, does a lexeme appear, or part of the message that, at least from the European point of view, carries basic meaning.<sup>107</sup>

Haiku verse is sometimes described as the “poetry of nouns.”<sup>108</sup> These poems use relatively few adjectives and adverbs, there are texts without a single verb, adverb or adjective.<sup>109</sup> As a result, their roughly delineated images rely on the names of things or phenomena. Occasionally it is very difficult to identify the subject of the utterance, which in Japanese is often to be reconstructed from the context of a sentence or event. However, if the context is limited to a very short lyrical poem, things can get much more complicated.<sup>110</sup>

Translation of a Japanese poem<sup>111</sup> is largely an arbitrary interpretative proposal – the information presented in the original is often more of a suggestion than a semantically “closed” message, rather a sketch than a full picture and complete message. The poet Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041) writes about linguistic ambiguity: “The language is magical and conveys more meanings than the words themselves express.”<sup>112</sup> Precision would limit the ability to suggest, and suggesting seems superior to speaking explicitly.<sup>113</sup> The reader of Japanese literature cannot

106 *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Japan*, p. 115; see also I. Kania, ‘Czesław Miłosz a buddyzm’ [Czesław Miłosz and Buddhism], *Dekada Literacka*, 2011, No. 1/2 (244/245), p. 89.

107 M. Melanowicz, ‘Oświecenie i mądrość w głosie bambusu, w kwiatach brzoskwini – jasność serca’ [Enlightenment and Wisdom in the Voice of Bamboo, in Peach Flowers – the Clarity of the Heart], *Literatura na Świecie*, 1976, No. 10, p. 8. See also, for example, I. Kania, *Czesław Miłosz a buddyzm*, p. 89.

108 K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku. Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English, with Selected Examples*, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1957, p. 53. Occasionally it is characterized in similar terms in the West – see J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 161.

109 K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, p. 53.

110 See Żuławska-Umeda’s analysis, for example ‘Od tłumacza’ [Translator’s Note], in *Haiku*, transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda, afterword by M. Melanowicz, Wrocław, 1983, p. 9 (henceforward: *Haiku*, [1983]).

111 I write about haiku translations in more detail in the following chapters: ‘Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku,’ and ‘Poetry of Mindfulness – Czesław Miłosz and Haiku.’

112 D. Keene, *Landscapes*, p. 13.

113 See, for example, D. Keene, *Landscapes*, p. 17.

remain passive in response to artistic messages.<sup>114</sup> In the (special) case of haiku, the reader's activity is elicited both by the grammatical specifics of the language, stylistic devices, and the characteristic condensed pictorial composition of texts (as discussed below).

## II. A Brief History of Haiku

A comparative monograph on haiku cannot overlook the history of the genre in its place of origin. I will limit myself to presenting the most important processes and phenomena,<sup>115</sup> devoting more space to the problems of poetics. For the most part, I am interested in the so-called classical haiku, derived from the tradition established by Matsuo Bashō and the creative activity of the most accomplished continuators of his work (including Yosa Buson, Kobayashi Issa, and Masaoka Shiki).<sup>116</sup> However, it is impossible to completely ignore the earlier – and later – developments of the form, especially as certain genre intricacies can be treated as signposts pointing to interesting byways of transcultural analyses.

Let us start with the basics. The rhythm and syllabic scheme characteristic to haiku are deeply rooted in Japanese language and literature: the five- and seven-consonant syntagmas that have co-existed for several centuries are the most common and natural systems.<sup>117</sup>

Haiku is derived from humorous linked verse. A courtly contest, a parlour game often gave rise to poems. In this way, a short linked song (*tan-renga*) came into being, whose intensive development took place between the ninth and twelfth centuries. The first participant composed the upper stanza of the poem (5 + 7 + 5 syllables), the second one compiled the lower stanza (7 + 7 syllables). The game of composing playful upper stanzas and cutting retorts grew in size, and ultimately it could be played by not two but by even a dozen or so poets.<sup>118</sup> These battles of words resulted in *chō-renga* ("chained linked song," twelfth-seventeenth centuries), made up of a succession of 31-syllable *tanka* schemes iterated over and over.<sup>119</sup>

114 See, for example, A. Tchórzewski, 'Między pierwszym a drugim Poundem' [Between the First and Second Pound], *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 53.

115 The Japanese road do haiku has been quite thoroughly discussed by Polish Japanologists. See, for example, M. Melanowicz, 'Od pieśni japońskich,' pp. 266–308; W. Kotański, *Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec*; M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1; M. Melanowicz, *Formy w literaturze japońskiej* [Forms in Japanese Literature], Kraków, 2003, pp. 46, 99–102; and the above-quoted studies by Żuławska-Umeda.

116 See footnote 2 in this part of the book.

117 Such syntagmas were predominant in Japanese already in the seventh century (W. Kotański, *Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec*, p. 4). See also M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, p. 29.

118 W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 4.

119 M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, p. 46; M. Melanowicz, 'Tanka lub mijikauta,' in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich* [Dictionary of Literary Forms



The joining of stanzas was of paramount importance to the composition. The principles of analogy or opposition of the semantic or rhetorical content of a text were employed here. The whole, therefore, relied on various associations, and as a result, the fourth and tenth stanzas would no longer display any semantic relationships. However, the *renga* song, replete with meanings, remained harmonious. *Renga* sessions evolved into a special ceremonial, presided by a master-poet, with the secretary recording the newly created sections of the poem. Some linked poems contained up to ten thousand stanzas, however, the most popular were ones of a hundred stanzas.<sup>120</sup>

Importantly from the perspective of the haiku form,

groups composing *renga* treated the first stanza – *hokku* – with particular care. *Hokku* was regarded as a representative part of the whole, as by its very nature it set the tone of the poem, introducing the mood determining the rest of the composition. It is no wonder then that it was usually intoned by a member of the group who enjoyed the elevated status as a poet. The success of the whole verse-linking session often hinged on a deftly laid-down subject .... Therefore, the skill of *hokku* composition was eagerly practised, and the best *renga* poets – most likely also teachers – frequently put into print collections of ready-made patterns suitable for various occasions.<sup>121</sup>

Already during the heyday of *cho-renga* the correct composition of *hokku* required depicting immediate surroundings and replacing long descriptions of nature with signs indicating a specific season, *kigo* words. Initially (during the time of the *renga* master Nijō Yoshimoto 1320–1388)<sup>122</sup> there were only a dozen or so *kigo* words, while during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries “their number increased to 599 words, and shortly after to 1,031.”<sup>123</sup> *Hokku* also increasingly tended to come into its own.

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and Genres], eds. G. Gazda, S. Tynecka-Makowska, Kraków, 2006, pp. 744–7. To the first stanza (the upper one, 5 + 7 + 5 syllables) another stanza (7 + 7) was added, then a stanza of the 5 + 7 + 5 pattern was created, to which a sequence of two seven-syllable entities was added. The preceding stanza was called *maeku*, while the added stanza – *tsukeku*. This is how the 17 + 14 + 17 + 14 + ... + 14 sequence was created. See W. Kotański, *Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec*, p. 5. See also *Haiku before Haiku. From the Renga Masters to Bashō*, transl., with an introduction by S. D. Carter, New York, 2011, pp. 11–147.

120 See, for example, M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, pp. 46–8.

121 W. Kotański, *Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec*, p. 6.

122 The information from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/415176/Nijo-Yoshimoto>, accessed December 30, 2014.

123 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Od tłumacza*, p. 10. Examples of *kigo* words taken from the *Haiku* anthology (A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Od tłumacza*): spring – “nightingale,” “fern,” “frog,” “foggy nights,” “moon hidden by the fog,” “a little sparrow,” “cherries,” “fish,” “flowers,” “white plum trees: autumn – “clover,” “Milky Way,” “moon,” “roe deer’s roar,” “white dew,” “fallen leaves,” “lightning,” “knotgrass,” “chrysanthemum,”

The evolution of *renga* concerned the subject matter and the category of its writer. The end of the thirteenth century and the fourteenth century saw the development of the so-called commoner *renga* (*jige-renga*) – a collective literary game for samurai, which through the activity of several outstanding poets evolved from “a form of trivial word-play”<sup>124</sup> into a mature poetic form on a par with tanka songs.<sup>125</sup> In the following decades, until the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, *renga* went through a crisis. Alternatively, the sixteenth century brought considerable popularity of playful linked-verse poems. They were called *haikai-no-renga* (*haikai* – “funny, playful, humorous;” the term *haikai* referred to all poems that were not court poems, serious or sad).<sup>126</sup> Around this time Arakida Moritake composed a collection *A Thousand Playful Stanzas by One Songster*. This is when “*haikai* became an autonomous form of poetry reminiscent of linked epigrams.”<sup>127</sup> The bold and vulgar language in these poems is a response to the refinement of court poetry. What counts in dialogues is the acuity of mind and wit. “The more absurd or puzzling the content of the first man’s lines, the greater the achievement of the second man if he managed to add two or three lines that, perhaps by a clever play on words, made sense of the whole.”<sup>128</sup>

Pleasure and improvisation often took precedence over adherence to rules. From the seventeenth century onwards, playful verse began to steadily gain in popularity among samurai and townspeople.<sup>129</sup> Increasingly, attention was also paid to the beauty of landscapes.

With the rapid development of the jocular *renga*, the process of autonomization of the first stanza was nearing its end. The presence of cutting syllables, *kireji* (which will be discussed in detail below) held *hokku* together. The autonomization of the stanza might have been occasioned also by... quasi-literary forms of Zen practice. In their conversations with disciples, masters often quoted couplets from Chinese poetry;<sup>130</sup> Buddhist koans were also pithy, peculiarly vivid statements,<sup>131</sup> intended not for intellectual speculation but for a deep experience.

“autumn sky.” To the Western reader, the connection of Japanese *kigo* with specific seasons apparently is arbitrary.

124 J. Konishi et al., *A History of Japanese Literature*, Vol. 3, Princeton, 1991, p. 522.

125 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich.’

126 M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, p. 51.

127 M. Melanowicz, ‘*Haikai*. Materiały do “Słownika rodzajów literackich”’ [*Haikai*. Materials for the “Dictionary of Literary Genres”], *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich*, 1972, No. 2, p. 151.

128 D. Keene, *World within Walls. A History of Japanese Literature*, Vol. 2: *Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era 1600–1867*, New York, 1999, p. 11.

129 M. Melanowicz, *Haikai. Materiały*, p. 151.

130 Alan Watts, ‘Zen in the Arts,’ in *The Way of Zen*.

131 For possible links between the evolution of *haikai* and koans, see W. Kotański, *Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec*, p. 12; L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 117. See also, for example, *The Kōan. Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, eds. S. Heine, D. S. Wright, Oxford, 2000; A. Kuik-Kalinowska, D. Kalinowski,

One of the key figures in the development of haiku is Matsunaga Teitoku (1571–1653).<sup>132</sup> Throughout his life, Teitoku was a great exponent of the *waka* verse<sup>133</sup> and nothing “indicated that [this] traditionalist [...] would contribute to the renewal of anything, let alone poetry.”<sup>134</sup> When he was not busying himself with “serious” work, however, Teitoku composed the so-called crazy songs (comical *waka*) and humorous *renga* poems. It is believed that in his artistry he surpassed the *haikai-no-renga* writers before him, Yamazaki Sōkan (1465–1553) and Arakida Moritake (1473–1549).<sup>135</sup> Teitoku founded a school, named after his family name, Teimon (and existing for several centuries), in which he taught calligraphy, reading and composition of *waka*, *renga* and *haikai* verse. He determined the trajectory of haiku’s development somewhat inadvertently, “as he did not value *haikai*, and was even ashamed of his own name’s association with this form.”<sup>136</sup> However, his poems were written down and published (along with their compositions) by his disciples; the popularity of the anthology *Enokoshū* (*Puppy Collection*, 1633) had the effect of toning down Teitoku’s opinions on *haikai* art. Of paramount importance here, however, are the literary directives that Teitoku laid down for compositions in this style. *Haikai* – as a form of *waka* – could not, in his opinion, employ vulgar or even common language, this art was also to be marked by verbal elegance. What differed *haikai* from traditional *waka* poetry was the inclusion of comic words, *haigon*, the use of words of Chinese origin, and, simply, drawing ideas and modes of expression from everyday life. Teitoku “declared that *haikai* is simply *renga* with humorous and witty expressions incorporated into it, and that it can be a sort of preliminary step towards enlightenment, leading to an understanding of *waka* and *renga* poetry.”<sup>137</sup>

Soon the Teimon School was confronted with competition from the Danrin school (which prospered for twenty short years), founded by Nishiyama Sōin and Ihara Saikaku. Danrin poets freed *haikai* from all restrictions (even, at some point, syllabic ones), liberally sprinkled their poems with humour, reproducing through literary means contemporary, everyday life – primarily that of the middle class.

Aristocratic refinement was consciously rejected in favour of the plebeian vocabulary, faithfully describing specific objects and new mores of townspeople; they ridiculed not only others but also themselves and relished the very act of creation. *Haikai* was

‘Bezbramna brama czyli koany zen’ [The Gateless Gate, or Zen Koans], in *Droga na Wschód* [The Road to the East], pp. 135–42.

132 D. Keene, *Landscapes*, p. 71.

133 M. Melanowicz, ‘Waka,’ in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, p. 788.

134 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 275.

135 See an excellent comparison of the poetics and idea of the role of poetry in the work of Moritake (1473–1549), Sōkan (1464?–1552?), and Teitoku (1571–1653) – D. Keene, *World within Walls*, pp. 13–9.

136 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 276.

137 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 278.

regarded as collaborative intellectual entertainment, as a form of collective recreation, rejecting the contention that *haikai* is the first step towards attaining a higher level of initiation, which was the court poetry of *renga* and *waka*. [...] Unlike the Teimon School, whose plebeian character was limited to an external verbal layer not derived from life experience, *haikai* verse of the Danrin School became poetry of manners, extolling the sorrows and joys of townspeople, also playing a large role, in its subject matter and means of expression, in the rise of full-fledged democratic poetry. The most important achievement of the Danrin School was directing attention to the meaning of the poem, which was manifested, inter alia, in the so-called *kokorozuke*, i.e. the linking of a new stanza with the preceding one based on semantic and mood relationship, in contrast to the principle prevalent in the Teimon School called *monozuke*, which involved linking stanzas through selected words [things] of the preceding stanza. [...] If it had not been for the democratization of *haikai* and the popularization of *kokorozuke* by the Danrin School, Bashō's poetry might have been unthinkable, and the *shōfū* style, which elevated *haikai* to the status of national poetry, might have never been created.<sup>138</sup>

The Danrin School is also famous for hardly commendable literary records, *yakazu-haikai*, which were competitions to compose “as many extemporaneous poems as possible within a fixed period of time.”<sup>139</sup> Saikaku is said to have composed as many as one thousand six hundred *haikai* stanzas during a single night, and twenty-three and a half thousand stanzas in a single day and night.<sup>140</sup> Naturally, these verses did not adhere too closely to the principles of the poetics of the form, nor were they accomplished artistically.

The crystallization of the genre was brought to its completion in the work of Matsuo Bashō (the pseudonym of Matsuo Munefusa, 1644–1694),<sup>141</sup> who was instrumental in the process of *hokku*'s final rise to the status of a “valued art form.”<sup>142</sup> Born to a family of an indigent samurai from Ueno, he could have made a good living by teaching samurai and townspeople the art of composing increasingly popular *haikai* verse. However, he chose a solitary life in a house which he called Bashō'an (“banana tree hermitage,” hence the poet's pen name). Bashō's artistic evolution led him, among other things, to the fascination with Chinese poetry (Li Po, Tu Fu) and vernacular medieval poetry. Initially, his poetry showed

138 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 283.

139 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 284.

140 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich.’

141 For accounts of Bashō's biography, see, for example, A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Noty o poetach’ [Notes on the Poets], in *Haiku*, transl. and with an introduction by A. Żuławska-Umeda, Bielsko-Biała, 2006, pp. 239–42 (henceforward: *Haiku*, [2006]); R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, Kraków, 2014, pp. 60–3; D. Keene, *World within Walls*, p. 72 and ff.; M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, transl., annotated, and with an introduction by J. Reichhold, Tokyo–New York–London, 2008, passim. I make use of the sources quoted.

142 M. Ueda, *Zeami*, p. 35.

a significant influence of the Teimon and, later, the Danrin Schools. Vital to the development of the original style, aesthetics and ethics of Bashō's verses were his long wanderings all around the country.<sup>143</sup>

The poet departed (literally!) from the *haikai* filled with urban scenes, in favour of depicting life through natural phenomena and everyday events – filtered through small sensorial experiences. Bashō created his own style (*shōfū*), “combining the seriousness and refinement of the finest examples of Japanese and Chinese classics with high sensitivity to changes in nature”<sup>144</sup> and the simplicity of expression. He also founded his own school of poetry, Shōmon,<sup>145</sup> where he taught not only rules of poetic art, but also the principles of life conducive to the composition of successful *haikai*.<sup>146</sup> Bashō was an enthusiastic participant of sessions of *renga* verse composition, during which he paid special attention to *hokku*, and “as a result, it was only in the Shōmon School that it became a separate literary genre and was not used merely for attaching new pieces of the linked verse.”<sup>147</sup> By virtue of its sophisticated simplicity, Bashō's poetry “became more flexible and more accessible to the wider audience.”<sup>148</sup> However, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter, it was not simplicity and availability denoting semantic obviousness and stylistic transparency that were at stake here.

143 Bashō left a journal embellished with *haikai* (*haibun*) verses. See Matsuo Bashō, ‘Knapsack Notebook,’ ‘The Narrow Road to the Deep North,’ ‘Sarashina Journal,’ transl. David Landis Barnhill, in *Bashō's Journey: The Literary Prose of Matsuo Bashō* (Albany, 2005). Kotański interestingly reverses the perspective (perhaps venturing a bit into hyperbole): “Bashō and ... his disciples alike virtually spent their lives in incessant pursuit of ever-new sensations, embarking on long walking trips around the country, paying surprise visits to each other and to distant friends, exploring places of interest, feasting their eye on views of nature, and holding intoxicating poetic feasts without food and drinks. According to Zen, one does not need to look for enlightenment as it can overcome and fall upon one for any reason. But it seems the poet had to be more active, looking for some variety of these reasons, as he was concerned not only with his own enlightenment but also about sharing it with others.” (W. Kotański, *Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec*, p. 12). See also D. Keene, ‘The World of *Haikai* Poetry,’ in *Appreciations of Japanese Culture*, Tokyo, New York, 1990.

144 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 293.

145 For Bashō's school and poetry gatherings (*renku no za*) of the master and his disciples, see A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły*, pp. 26–38.

146 In this respect, Bashō's attitude was close to the work of another haijin active at around the same time, Uejima Onitsura (1661–1738). See, for example, M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 285; K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, pp. 8–22.

147 W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 8. For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that “a *hokku* poem as a grammatically incomplete utterance requiring formal completion was considered of no value” already before Bashō (W. Kotański, *Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec*).

148 W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec.’

After the Master's death, the Shōmon school was continued by his disciples, including Enomoto Kikaku, Hattori Ranetsu, Mukai Kyorai, Kagami Shikō, and Naitō Jōsō (the most accomplished among them are known as the Ten Sages of the Shōmon School).<sup>149</sup> However, none of Bashō's immediate literary heirs matched his talent and expressiveness. Their work quite soon began to diverge from the Master's models (e.g. Kikaku was given to celebrating the joys of urban life).

Following the death of Bashō's associates, *haikai* assumed a markedly popular character and was vulgarized. A substantially lighter variety of *haikai* developed. "Surprising word combinations became all the rage, bawdiness and wit were valued, and various technical ploys were experimented with. Followers of the Teimon and Danrin Schools became active."<sup>150</sup> This is when – in the first half of the eighteenth century – seventeen-syllable *senryū* emerged, the satirical, unrefined "reverse" of the *haiku* that crystallized in Bashō's school (as discussed below). However, these ludic transformations were conducive to increasing autonomization of the strictly seventeen-syllable form, one not directly connected with *renga* anymore.

It was not until the second half of the eighteenth century that a revolt took place against the "mass mediocrity of *haikai*."<sup>151</sup> This period saw the activity of another eminent *haijin* – Yosa Buson.<sup>152</sup> Buson (family name Taniguchi, later Yosa,<sup>153</sup> 1716-83), a peasant son who gained recognition as a painter<sup>154</sup> and a poet, sought in literature somewhat different values than ones embraced by the wabi-loving Bashō. For him, art was not merely an image of reality, but also the domain of imagination (within the experiential confines of the human sensorium.)<sup>155</sup> Buson abandoned Bashō's ascetic simplicity in favour of the aesthetics of colour (frequent play of colour).<sup>156</sup> Like Bashō, he drew extensively on traditions of Japanese and Chinese culture,<sup>157</sup> however, avoiding, the commonplace.<sup>158</sup> In his verse, we deal

149 M. Melanowicz, 'Od pieśni japońskich,' p. 294; W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 12. See also D. Keene, *World within Walls*, pp. 123–48.

150 M. Melanowicz, 'Od pieśni japońskich,' p. 297.

151 M. Melanowicz, *Haiku. Materiały*, p. 152.

152 See, for example, Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai* Poet Yosa Buson; Y. Sawa, E. Marcombe Shiffert, *Haiku Master Buson. Translations from the Writings of Yosa Buson – Poet and Artist – with Related Materials*, Buffalo–New York, 2007.

153 Buson is a pen name (M. Melanowicz, 'Od pieśni japońskich,' p. 299). For biographical information, see also, for example, R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, pp. 75–6.

154 See Part 7 of the book for more on this.

155 For which Buson was valued by Masaoka Shiki, who discredited the alleged antiquatedness of Bashō's poetry. I write more extensively on this subject towards the end of this subsection and in Part 5 of the book.

156 M. Ōoka, 'Wstęp' [Introduction], in *Wiśnie rozkwitłe pośród zimy*, p. 532.

157 M. Melanowicz, 'Od pieśni japońskich,' p. 301.

158 As Buson declared: "*haikai* [or *haiku*] is to use ordinary words and yet get away from [or escape] the ordinary. Get away from the ordinary and still use the ordinary. This is the most demanding principle in art." in J. Cahill, *The Lyric Journey: Poetic Painting in China and Japan*, Cambridge, MA, p. 1996 172.

not only with the world of nature but often with a man in the world of nature.<sup>159</sup> Melanowicz describes the essence of Buson's work and his role in the evolution of *haikai* as follows:

Yosa Buson was a brilliant poet, renovator of the *haikai* form, especially of stand-alone *hokku* poems, which did not limit his individuality to the extent that *haikai* constricts the poet participating in the composition of linked verse [*renku*]. Even as he drew themes and situations from Chinese and indigenous traditions, he also successfully bent the tradition to his will. Specifically, Buson went beyond the idea of beauty prevailing in Japanese poetry since the Middle Ages and referred to as *sabi* [solitude and simplicity], demonstrating that in a short seventeen-syllable *hokku* form one can extol and depict human feelings and be sensitive to colours and shapes of nature.<sup>160</sup>

Another great *haijin* was Kobayashi Issa (original name Kobayashi Nobuyuki, also called Kobayashi Yatarō, 1763–1828),<sup>161</sup> who gained recognition, among other things, for being “the first one to depict in literature, with such force and sincerity, the feelings and mindset of the peasant.”<sup>162</sup> Issa's poetic journals are primarily an honest chronicle of a rough life filled with tragic twists of fate,<sup>163</sup> devoid of sophisticated intertextual references and cultural allusions. However, the poet's numerous haiku are texts marked for their superb “clarity,” cheerful, affirmative, and permeated with empathy. The hallmark of Issa's poetry is the special tenderness shown in the portrayal of the most common phenomena and smallest tiniest creatures.

Changes in *haikai* poetics and vital re-evaluations in the reception of this form were inspired by the activity of Masaoka Shiki (original name Masaoki Tsunenori, 1867–1902)<sup>164</sup> – the reformer of the art of *haikai*,<sup>165</sup> promoter of haiku as a stand-alone type of poem no longer connected in any way with linked verse, and finally,

159 J. Cahill, *The Lyric Journey*, pp. 301–3; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 37. Johnson compares the composition of Buson's poetic images to *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints.

160 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 305.

161 See <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/320747/Issa>, accessed November 5, 2014.

162 M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 307.

163 See D. Keene, *World within Walls*, pp. 364–8. See also R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, pp. 96–9. “Recording events of his miserable life, with no embellishments, he did not lose faith in himself and the world around him. He explicitly showed his pain of losing his children but would go beyond his own fleeting moods and feelings. Issa sympathized with the weak and disadvantaged, being one of them. He extolled losers, poor fishmongers, wrestlers, beggars, handicapped girls forced into prostitution.” (M. Melanowicz, ‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ p. 307).

164 See <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/367729/Masaoka-Shiki>, accessed November 5, 2014.

165 See the part ‘Originals or Imitations? – the Question of the “Most Genuine” Polish Haiku’ for more on this subject.

an artist keenly interested in Western culture.<sup>166</sup> In his short life (the poet died following a severe illness that confined him to bed for many years), Shiki not only wrote haiku and tanka poems, but also diaries, and was also a highly regarded essayist, founder of the influential haiku magazine, *Hototogisu* (Cuckoo).<sup>167</sup> He spoke out against the fossilization of *haikai*, provocatively deprecating Bashō's poetics, which he saw as evidently antiquated. As he argued (probably deliberately trying to provoke heated discussions with his confrontational judgements):

Bashō's work was devoid of those qualities that form the crux of modern poetry – complexity, dynamic passion, soaring imagination. To seek a model in Bashō ... would be to go back to a pre-modern ideal – to allow a regression in poetry.<sup>168</sup>

Apart from the syllable count requirement and the necessity to use *kigo*, Shiki did not postulate any rigid rules for the art he modernized (and it should be noted that nineteenth-century masters eagerly multiplied rules). Of utmost importance to him was the individual, subjective observation of beauty in nature or human life (he did not rule out the use of various motifs drawn from civilization)<sup>169</sup> and total freedom from stereotypes. According to the poet, a good haiku “will always be new in its motif, unhackneyed in its material, uninhibited in its vocabulary, and therefore direct in its emotional appeal and fresh in its overall impression.”<sup>170</sup> One of the chief concepts in Shiki's inquiries is *shasei* (derived from analysis of Western art!) – an objective, non-idealistic presentation of reality.<sup>171</sup> Shiki is seen in Japan as the “father of modern haiku,”<sup>172</sup> whose work set the stage for twentieth-century modernizing tendencies of the genre.<sup>173</sup>

The haiku form is still alive in Japanese literature, where it is practised by “hundreds of thousands and maybe even millions of enthusiasts,”<sup>174</sup> who publish their

166 See, for example, B. Watson, ‘Introduction,’ in M. Shiki, *Selected Poems*, transl. B. Watson, New York, 1997, pp. 1–3.

167 For more biographical details, see R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, pp. 117–9.

168 As quoted in *Modern Japanese Haiku. An Anthology*, compiled, transl. and with an introduction by M. Ueda, Toronto–Buffalo 1976, p. 6.

169 See D. Keene, *Landscapes*, pp. 162–3.

170 *Modern Japanese Haiku. An Anthology*, p. 8.

171 See M. Ueda, *Modern Japanese Poets and the Nature of Literature*, Stanford, 1983, pp. 10–9; R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, p. 119.

172 J. Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki. His Life and Works*, Boston–Worcester, 2002, n.p. (‘Preface’).

173 J. Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki*.

174 M. Melanowicz, ‘Haiku XX wieku’ [20th-century Haiku], *Japonica*, 1996, No. 6, p. 66. As Kazuo Satō writes: “In Japan, about a million people write haiku. The Tokyo Haiku Museum ... receives more than five hundred haiku magazines monthly, publications by more than five hundred of Japan's haiku societies. These numbers alone prove that haiku is the most popular poetic form here.” (K. Satō, *Czy można przesadzić*, p. 216; the article is a summary of the paper from 1984). For a discussion of the poetics of individual haiku schools, see the text by Mikołaj Melanowicz,



work in hundreds of periodicals devoted to the genre. The most straightforward “worshipfulness” towards old models<sup>175</sup> characterizes, above all, the prolific epigonal work of “participants of numerous popular competitions.”<sup>176</sup> The end of the nineteenth century (Shiki’s activity) and the twentieth century, however, saw numerous haiku-related discussions among esteemed writers and critics, as well as marked changes in the poetics of form. Following the example of Shiki, “Bashō-style” haiku was often deemed alien to the spirit of modernity, antiquated and not amenable to original continuation. Twentieth-century Japanese haiku poems were at times written in free verse, absorbed the lesson of symbolism and surrealism, abandoned seasonal words (*kigo*), brought into prominence the sentient subject over the object of perception, and occasionally were erotic or politically engaged. As a result, for example, the wide *new haiku* / *New Rising Haiku* movement (*shinkō haiku*) (one of the products of the twentieth-century modernization of the genre) only to a limited extent cultivated the assumptions of Bashō’s and his followers’ poetics.<sup>177</sup> However, the experimental current of haiku that is close to the classic realizations of the genre has never petered out.

Western poets primarily refer to models derived from Bashō’s poetry and the *shōfū* style.<sup>178</sup> Knowledge about permutations of haiku in Japan since Shiki’s time is only accessible to a handful of (passionately) interested enthusiasts. This is not to suggest, however, that haiku in the West merely duplicates old models that have

‘Od pieśni japońskich,’ and Y. Okazaki et al., *Japanese Culture in the Meiji Era*, Vol. 1, Tokyo, 1969. The haiku poems “worshipfully” faithful to the tradition of the form are discussed in the following parts of this book: ‘Originals or Imitations? – the Question of the “Most Genuine” Polish Haiku’ and ‘The Verbo-visibility of Haiku, Haiku and Visual Arts’ (subsection ‘Multimedia Haiku?’).

175 A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘O kireji,’ pp. 65–6.

176 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 15.

177 See, for example, *Modern Japanese Haiku. An Anthology*, p. 3 and ff. See also I. Yūki, ‘New Rising Haiku. The Evolution of Modern Japanese Haiku and the Haiku Persecution Incident,’ *Simply Haiku: A Quarterly Journal of Japanese Short Form Poetry*, 2007, Winter, Vol. 5, No. 4, <http://www.simplyhaiku.com/SHv5n4/features/Ito.html> (accessed May 2, 2015); ‘Gendai Haiku Translations,’ transl. R. Gilbert, I. Yūki, *Roadrunner Haiku Journal*, 2007, May, Issue 7: 2, <http://www.roadrunnerjournal.net/pages72/translation72.htm> (accessed June 22, 2011); <http://gendaihaiku.com/> (accessed February 27, 2016). For attempts to modify haiku, see also, for example, K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, pp. 59–67; Y. Yamada-Bochynek, *Haiku East and West*, p. 346 and ff.; J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, p. 21.

178 William R. La Fleur almost too bluntly described the Western fascination with Bashō’s haiku: “Cross-cultural borrowing can at times resemble a garage sale. Items that the original owners have come to dislike and wish not to have to see again in their own home can become items that seem like discoveries of great value to the exploring passerby. During the 1960s the poetry of Bashō had become an item somewhat like that” (W. R. La Fleur, ‘Skeletons on the Path: Bashō Looks Forward,’ in *Matsuo Bashō’s Poetic Spaces*, ed. E. Kerkham, New York, 2006, p. 79).

been modernized, discussed, dissected and cultivated in Japan for over a hundred years. As it seems, things are more complicated, even in the case of “worshipful” Occidental haiku. I will discuss this in later parts of this book.<sup>179</sup>

Finally, it should be stressed that the term “haiku” came into widespread use as late as at the end of the nineteenth century, “promoted” by Shiki. Although it was used for the first time in the 1663 collection of linked verses in the *haikai* style entitled *Obaeshu*, during the centuries that followed it was referenced only sporadically.<sup>180</sup> In critical texts, especially foreign ones, one can still come across the interchangeable use of the terms *haiku*, *haikai* and *hokku*.<sup>181</sup>

Last but not least, poems by Bashō, Buson or Issa more often than not coexisted with other forms of artistic expression. For example, they were written in the *haibun* form, widespread in Japan, combining prose (in many cases a journal or travel journal) with haiku poetry.<sup>182</sup> Narrative literature often elucidates the convolutions of poetry here, revealing the circumstances surrounding poems’ composition, and sometimes also suggesting their fact-based interpretation. What is more, haiku also co-existed with *haiga* paintings, to which they were linked through various intersemiotic relations. Sometimes, finally, one scroll or book would contain prose, poems and their illustrations (this form is referred to as *haibunga*).<sup>183</sup>

### III. The Poetics of Haiku; Haiku and *Senryū*

Some of the Western treatments of haiku poetics sound intriguing and exhibit deep fascination with Japanese miniature verse, yet they do not bring any verifiable

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179 See esp. Part 5 of my book.

180 See for example A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘O kireji,’ p. 65.

181 Already in the highly seminal study from over a hundred years ago, Basil Hall Chamberlain uses all three terms (although “haiku” was a relatively new term in Japan at the time). See B. H. Chamberlain, ‘Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram,’ in B. H. Chamberlain, *Japanese Poetry*, London, 1911, pp. 147, 158, 164–5. In French and English literary studies, the term *haikai* is still well-established. In Poland, the term *haiku* is most commonly used (in literary-theoretical reflection and in general use). However, there is no universally applicable terminological interpretation. Melanowicz elucidates the semantic ranges of these terms with clarity and taking into account diachrony (M. Melanowicz, ‘*Haikai*. Materiały,’ p. 150; in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, pp. 284–6), while in *Słownik terminów literackich* [The Dictionary of Literary Terms] (entry ‘Haiku,’ by Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, p. 190), the concepts of *haiku*, *haikai*, *hokku* were treated as identical. For variants of the term across European countries, see K. Satō, ‘Czy można przesadzić,’ p. 212.

182 Combining prose and verses is no exception in Japanese literature – for example *uta-monogatari* blended *waka* poetry with narrative prose. *Haibun* is prose interwoven with haiku or haiku-style prose (see for example M. Melanowicz, ‘*Haikai*,’ p. 284; more on Bashō’s *haibun*, see also footnote 143 in this part).

183 I write about the visual forms accompanying haiku in Part 7 of this study.

hints for scholars of literature and transcultural relations. For example, Roland Barthes writes:

The haiku's accuracy (which is not at all an exact depiction of reality, but an adequation of signifier and signified, a suppression of margins, smudges, and interstices which usually exceed or perforate the semantic relation), this accuracy obviously has something musical about it (a music of meanings and not necessarily of sounds): the haiku has the purity, the sphericity, and the very emptiness of a note of music [...].<sup>184</sup>

NOTHING SPECIAL, says the haiku, in accordance with the spirit of Zen: the event is not namable according to any species, its specialty short circuits: like a decorative loop, the haiku coils back on itself, the wake of the sign which seems to have been traced is erased: nothing has been acquired, the word's stone has been cast for nothing: neither waves nor flow of meaning.<sup>185</sup>

In this monograph, I set out to develop tools to conduct coherent, verifiable comparative studies. As one specialist in literary studies declares:

I suspect there is a group of researchers who incautiously, seduced by a text, take up haiku and at some point, are overcome by infinite sadness. After all, on the road to understanding and interpretation, insurmountable obstacles stand in our way.<sup>186</sup>

In my book, which indeed is a result of the “seduction by the text(s),” I want to accurately describe comparative obstacles, attempting to get round (or overcome) them, and showing the most interesting elements of Polish poems that in various ways claim their “haiku-ness.” Naturally, “no two [haiku] are the same”<sup>187</sup> – just as there are not two identical sonnets, villanellas, or prose poems. However, it is possible to pinpoint key features of the genre – in Japan and beyond its vernacular cultural and linguistic context – as well as to discuss various genealogical and cultural intricacies of the form.

184 Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, transl. by Richard Howard, New York, 1992, pp. 75–6.

185 Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, pp. 83–4. As Adam Dziadek aptly declares (referring to the diagnoses of Maurice Pinguet), Barthes treated Japan as a “text to read,” “a text special to the extent that it derives more from Barthes’ fantasies than from reality.” (A. Dziadek, ‘Sztuka mikrolektury Rolanda Barthes’a’ [Roland Barthes’ Art. of Micro-Reading], in *Miniatura i mikrologia literacka* [Literary Miniature and Micrology], Vol. 1, ed. A. Nawarecki, Katowice, 2000, p. 37). Much more insightful are Barthes’ micro-readings of the haiku written down in R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman I et II. Cours et séminaires au Collège de France (1978–1979 et 1979–1980)*, texte établi, annoté et présenté par N. Léger, Paris, 2003, pp. 53–141.

186 A. Krawczyk, “‘Widzialny porządek’ czy ‘ukryty wymiar?’ “Haiku-images” Stanisława Grochowiaka’ [A Visible Order or A Hidden Dimension? Stanisław Grochowiak’s *Haiku-images*], *Postscriptum Polonistyczne*, 2012, No. 1, p. 197, [http://sjikp.us.edu.pl/ps/pdf/ps2012\\_1.pdf](http://sjikp.us.edu.pl/ps/pdf/ps2012_1.pdf), accessed May 28, 2013.

187 K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, p. 38.

I will start with a brief description of the poetics of classical haiku. Its fundamental features include BREVITY, determined by the 5-7-5 syllable pattern (which, however, was not followed slavishly),<sup>188</sup> the embrace of the natural world, the use of *kigo* words, designating the season of the year and immediately locating an image or event in the calendar and appropriate setting.<sup>189</sup> Another important element is the presence of the SPEAKER that does not reveal his/her emotions and intensively experiences the world (and transports the reader into these experiences), whose attitude is a corollary of the aesthetic (and often ethical) categories discussed above. Haiku typically is a record of a single, specific, strong “punctum-like” sensory experience, most often referring to the common and everyday experience of reality and captured in an expressive frame of sensorial imagery (as discussed below). Haiku’s powerful SENSORIAL MIMESIS<sup>190</sup> allows the reader to recognise in the text his/her own experiences, to reconstruct impressions recorded in the poem, to literally live through them.<sup>191</sup> What is also important is a sort of “PICTORIAL DISINTERESTEDNESS” of poems – the image primarily fixes attention on itself, without referring to higher (!) planes of reflection, cultural references, etc., even if the text carries intertextual allusions.

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- 188 Approximately five per cent of classical haiku poems (including Bashō’s) did not respect the established rhythmic pattern. Some of Bashō’s haiku consist of up to ten syllables in the first verse; the famous poem about a crow on a branch at dusk (the text is quoted in this subsection) has nine syllables in the middle rhythmic unit. As Bashō writes in a letter to one of his disciples: “Even if you have three or four extra syllables, or even five or seven, you needn’t worry as long as it sounds right. But if even one syllable is stale in your mouth, give it all of your attention.” (M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 50; N. Dzierżawska, “Synestezja w poezji Matsuo Bashō” [Synaesthesia in the Poetry of Matsuo Bashō], Warszawa, 2008 – Master’s Thesis written under the supervision of M. Melanowicz at the Department of Japanese and Korean Studies of the University of Warszawa, typescript, p. 61). Bashō also composed haiku without *kigo* words (M. Ueda, *Zeami*, p. 46).
- 189 As a result, the presentation of momentary events overlaps with another aspect of time – changes related to the cyclical nature of the seasons.
- 190 The term *mimetyzm sensualny* used in the original Polish version of this study has a slightly different semantic scope than the term “sensorial mimesis” occurring in English studies (however, both notions have a lot in common). See, for example, A. Oesmann, *Staging History: Brecht’s Social Concepts of Ideology*, Albany, 2005, p. 38; J. Nieland, *Feeling Modern: The Eccentricities of Public Life*, Urbana–Chicago, 2008, passim. I discuss the category of sensorial mimesis in Part 5 of this study. See also B. Śniecikowska, *Mimetyzm sensorialny haiku* [Haiku’s Sensorial Mimesis], www.sensuanosc.bn.org.pl/mimetyzm-sensorialny-haiku-986/, accessed June 24, 2016.
- 191 See, for example, R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman*, pp. 105–8; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 27; Ph. R. Thompson, “The ‘Haiku Question’ and the Reading of Images,” *The English Journal*, 1967, Vol. 56, No. 4, pp. 547–51.

Contrary to the common Western perception of haiku's utmost simplicity, this form was determined by very specific STYLISTIC MARKERS. As Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda writes:

The sophisticated beauty and artistry of Japanese poetry [including haiku] lay, in part, in certain elusive METAPHORS, TRADITIONAL EPITHETS, and in associations of even distant concepts through the use of APPROPRIATE IDEOGRAMS in the text. Words could be written via characters SIMILAR IN SOUND BUT DIFFERENT IN MEANING.<sup>192</sup> Among aesthetic values treated as traditional in Bashō's school were stylistic devices. For example, TATOE, SIMILES OR ALLUSIONS, and similarly HONKADORI, THE ART OF CITING. The latter consists in the skilful borrowing of a phrase from classical poetry, which testifies to familiarity with it and makes it possible to evoke subjects, images, and moods occurring throughout the foundation poem. Another one is MUGON, PASSING OVER IN SILENCE, THINGS THAT REMAIN UNSTATED [...]. The [...] "passing over in silence" [*przemilczenie*] in [Cyprian Kamil Norwid's] sense neatly corresponds to the aesthetics of "silence," from which Japanese haiku verse takes its shape, or to blank space in ink drawing. KAKEKOTOBA, [...], [whereby] a given word becomes an axis around which two semantic contexts come alive. For instance, the word *matsu* can be read as a "pine" (most often a solitary one), or as a verb "to expect" (most often, a loved one). So this is a word spanning [...] with its sound two distant meanings. [...] Another one is ENGO, i.e. various words or morphemes which through their similar content are associated with each other in deeper layers of meaning [...].<sup>193</sup> [Finally,] MAKURAKOTOBA, words-attributes that impart a special semantic value to the phrases succeeding them.<sup>194</sup>

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192 A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Od tłumacza,' p. 13; emphasis added. To quote an example: "In the following stanza by the poet Onitsura: 'Autumnal Fuji blends so high with the clear sky,' the name of Mount Fuji was written with unusual characters. Their semantic value in this poem can be rendered with the word 'unreachable.' Phonetically, it was enriched with the sense of 'unique,' 'the only one.' [...] Equally rich in meaning is the phrase 'dim lights' in one of Issa's haiku: 'When will I come back, fate in dim lights of Kyushu like far mist.' In the original, the word *shiranui*, which consists of two elements – *shiranu* and *hi* – literally: unknown fires, is a conventional epithet referring to the land of Tsukushi, the old name of the island of Kyūshū. A story about Emperor Keikō was reminded here [...]. When he reached the shores of Tsukashi [...], all of a sudden bright lights appeared on the surface of the sea" (A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Od tłumacza,' p. 14). For more examples and explanations, see A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Od tłumacza,' pp. 13–4. Such allusions are completely inaccessible to readers without a profound knowledge of Japanese language and culture. Luckily, intertextual or paronomastic implications of haiku are not central to haiku art.

193 A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Okolice poetyki Matsuo Bashō' [The Poetics of Matsuo Bashō and Its Surroundings], in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 231; emphasis added. See also K. Lindström, *A Broad Perspective*.

194 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły*, p. 25; emphasis added. See also A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'O kireji', p. 65 and ff. Cf. complex stylistic analyses in M. K. Hiraga, 'How

The sound-texture of seventeen-syllable verse (unrhymed poems) was also far from acoustic “transparency.” Haiku poems contained ALLITERATIONS, ASSONANCES, AND ONOMATOPOEIAS, often employing sense-making HOMOPHONY.<sup>195</sup> When dealing only with translations, one indeed could come to the conclusion that “in haiku the language becomes suspended, not stimulated, as it is in Western literature.”<sup>196</sup> Seen in the perspective of Japanese originals, this claim turns out to be false. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that classical seventeen-syllable poems are essentially far removed from VERBAL AND PICTORIAL CONCEPTISM (conceptist texts are relatively few in number, however, they are widely “advertised” in the West – like Bashō’s poem about a winged pepper pod or a text by Moritake about flowers returning to their branch).<sup>197</sup> Their imagery – as, contrary to opinions of some Western

Metaphor and Iconicity are Entwined in Poetry. A Case in “Haiku,” in *From Sign to Signifying*, eds. W. G. Müller, O. Fischer, Amsterdam–Philadelphia, 2003, pp. 317–35.

195 See, for example, H. Minoru, ‘Exploring Bashō’s World of Poetic Expression: Soundscape Haiku,’ in *Matsuo Bashō’s Poetic Spaces*, pp. 160–1; E. Sütiste, ‘A CROW ON A BARE BRANCH: a Comparison of Matsuo Bashō’s Haiku “Kareedani” and its English Translations,’ *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia*, 2001, No. 2, p. 4 (online version: [https://www.ut.ee/klassik/sht/2001/sytiste1\\_a.html](https://www.ut.ee/klassik/sht/2001/sytiste1_a.html), accessed July 24, 2016); J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, p. 126.

196 A. Dziadek, ‘Haiku,’ *Zeszyty Literackie*, 1994, No. 2 (46), p. 144. Dziadek quotes Barthes’ claims from *Empire of Signs*, which have an effect of misrepresenting haiku.

197 Here are these poems in English translation (in, respectively, H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, p. 17; A. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, p. 188):

Red pepper pods!  
 Add wings to them,  
 and they are dragonflies!  
                   Bashō

A fallen flower  
 Returning to the branch?  
 It was a butterfly  
                   Moritake

The above-quoted poem by Moritake is “relatively unpopular” in Japan (K. Satō, ‘Czy można przesadzić,’ p. 213), while in the West as far back as a hundred years ago Paul-Louis Couchoud considered it the most typical example of haiku (see Y. Shibata, ‘The Influence of Haiku on Rilke,’ *Interlitteraria*, 1998, No. 3, p. 337; I write more about Couchoud in the first chapter of Part 2 of this book). I discuss haiku conceptualism at greater length in Part 5 of this study, where in footnote 123 more examples of conceptual Japanese haiku are provided. At this point, I will cite two less known compositions by Bashō:

The petals of the yellow rose,  
 Do they flutter down  
 At the sound of the waterfall?  
                   (transl. R. H. Blyth)

researchers,<sup>198</sup> imagery does appear here quite often – never overshadows the aesthetic sphere,<sup>199</sup> nor does it distort the sensorial image of the described fragment of reality.

Finally, a vital role in haiku is played by a cutting syllable or word, *KIREJI*, occurring at the end or, less often, inside the rhythmic whole, at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a stanza.<sup>200</sup> Again, Żuławska-Umeda provides the most insightful explanation here:

The presence of a caesura, which forces us to suspend our voice, is indicated by the so-called “cutting syllable” (or several syllables) (Japanese: *kireji*). [...] *Kireji* can take the form of both a grammatical particle, an inflectional ending, and a whole word. It is a vehicle of sense, but it also performs another, very important function. Namely, it is supposed to make a fanciful cut at an appropriate point of a stanza. A cut that makes it possible for *hokku* to become a deeply poetic stand-alone composition.<sup>201</sup>

In a sense, these caesuras allow the reader to join in the process of composition and at the same time, their presence allows the first stanza of a linked poem to exist as an independent whole. While it was only European researchers who neatly divided it into three lines, the Japanese one-line format did not establish any logical coherence. This is where these caesuras assume an important role (of course, in addition to the role they play in creating the rhythm). They separate the subject from the predicate

Eight views? – Ah, well;  
mist hid seven when I heard  
Mii-dera's bell

(transl. H. G. Henderson)

Aleksander Janta explains the latter text as follows: “Being a famous poet already during his lifetime, Bashō [...] would be frequently invited to compose haiku on specific topics. He was noted, among other things, for finding a way to enumerate Japan’s eight famous landmarks, or eight wonders of the world, in a single seventeen-syllable poem. It should be known that in the past through an ingenious play of words these eight gems of the Japanese landscape were named in a tanka poem consisting of thirty-one syllables. The idea was to repeat this feat in a much terser form. Bashō accomplished this task wittily and effortlessly [...] [here Janta quotes the poem in question]. It goes without saying that the said temple is the eighth of the famous views” (A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczkii*).

198 See, for example, K. Lindström, *A Broad Perspective*.

199 “Signs and emblems associated with the sensory perception of the world” – E. Balcerzan, ‘Widzialne i niewidzialne w sztuce słowa’ [The Visible and Invisible in the Art of Writing], *Teksty Drugie*, 2009, No. 1/2, pp. 40–1.

200 A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘O kireji,’ p. 67; A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Wstęp do wydania pierwszego’ [Introduction to the First Edition], in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 22. The distribution of *kireji* in specific texts can be examined, for instance, in the transcription of Bashō’s all poems in *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 234 and ff. See also Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, p. 33; H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, p. 8.

201 A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘O kireji,’ p. 67. See also R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman*, pp. 104–5.

and the complement, which creates an elusive atmosphere of mystery, as this complement can be accorded the role of the subject. One of Bashō's *hokku* is a good example here: "for a while,/ secluded at a waterfall—/ start of the summer retreat" – is it the poet who paused and took shelter behind the waterfall, or is it the beginning of summer that shyly crouched down there for a rest before continuing on its way?<sup>202</sup>

It is difficult to look for similarities between *kireji* and the versification and logical caesuras of European poetry. Analogies with a caesura and clausula of a verse are superficial, diminishing the importance of this poetic device that is central to haiku.

It would also be fitting here to discuss some additional problems of haiku semantics that have been examined in Polish only cursorily. Poems by Bashō and continuators of the Shōmon School are not humorous in the popular Western sense of the term.<sup>203</sup> We will not find here any "loud" jokes, facetiae, conceits, or scathing irony. There is no trace of mockery, derision or sarcasm here. The SUBTLE HUMOUR of haiku stems from the keen, tender,<sup>204</sup> emphatic observation of reality, from the distance from oneself and the world,<sup>205</sup> finally – from lightness and simplicity of expression (*karumi*). It is often gently tinged with sadness (*sabi*, *wabi*), and combines humour with seriousness. No less important are subtle situational humour, playful self-irony, and, finally, the way of seeing and naming ordinary scenes (a kind of the "devotion of humourists").<sup>206</sup> Kobayashi Issa was a master of subtle comic haiku compositions:

My neighbour scouring saucepans  
and the tree frogs piping—  
What a duet!<sup>207</sup>

The man pulling radishes  
pointed my way  
with a radish.<sup>208</sup>

202 A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Od tłumacza,' p. 9. See also A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'O kireji,' pp. 65–70. English translation of Bashō's poem in Bashō, *Bashō's Journey*, p. 89.

203 See, for example, B. Dziemidok, Sz. Kobyliński, *O komizmie* [On the Comic], Warszawa, 1967.

204 In the chapter 'Grochowiak's Longest Journey' I write in more detail about the category of tenderness in transcultural discussions of haiku.

205 B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 87. See also W. Kotański, 'Z czego śmieje się Japończyk' [What Makes the Japanese Laugh], *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, 1952, No. 4, pp. 119–28; A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Od tłumaczki,' p. 284; B. Śniecikowska, 'In the Beginning Was... Laughter' – Humour in the Japanese and Polish Haiku Poetry,' in *Humour. Teorie, praktyka, zastosowania / Humour. Theories, Applications, Practices*, Vol. 2/2: *Making Sense of Humour*, eds. S. Dżereń-Głowacka, A. Kwiatkowska, Piórków Trybunalski, 2009, pp. 91–102.

206 Cz. Miłosz, *Wprowadzenie*, p. 11.

207 As quoted in W. H. Cohen, *To Walk in Seasons. An Introduction to Haiku. An Anthology (with Study Guide) of Japanese Haiku in English Versions*, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1972, p. 31.

208 As quoted in S. Cowing, *Fire in the Sea: An Anthology of Poetry and Art*, Honolulu, 1996, p. 113.



Rain there spring  
 fire curious like me  
 of a pot's backside.<sup>209</sup>

geese murmur-murmur—  
 are they spreading  
 gossip about me?<sup>210</sup>

Occasionally, the humorous effect is produced by mere slightly “inappropriate” and dissonant juxtapositions of phenomena:

A frog in the evening croaks  
 Lining up its bottom  
 With the top of Mount Fuji  
 Issa<sup>211</sup>

No place  
 to throw out the bathwater—  
 sound of insects  
 Onitsura<sup>212</sup>

The bright moon.  
 No dark place  
 To empty the ashtray.  
 Fugyoku<sup>213</sup>

I move horse's muzzle  
 aside and pick  
 violets from the grass  
 Sampu<sup>214</sup>

A poem can also be imbued with humour<sup>215</sup> through semantic ambiguities of haiku, arising from both the structure of the language and its sophisticated use (e.g. through semantically surprising “cutting” of the text by *kireji* or the use of

209 As quoted in Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, introduction Cz. Miłosz, Kraków 1992, p. 83.

210 As quoted in S. Addiss, *The Art of Haiku: Its History Through Poems and Paintings by Japanese Masters*, Boston, 2012, p. 244.

211 *Haiku*, [2006], p. 96.

212 As quoted in F. Bowers, *The Classic Tradition of Haiku: An Anthology*, Dover, 1996, p. 38.

213 Transl. R. H. Blyth, as quoted in R. Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel: Lecture Courses and Seminars at the Collège De France, 1978–1979 and 1979–1980*, New York, 2011, p. 381.

214 As quoted in W. Kottański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 19.

215 A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Od tłumacza,’ p. 9. See also H. Minoru, *Exploring Bashō's World*, p. 160.

*kakekotoba* – “words with double function and meaning”).<sup>216</sup> The same is the case with relatively infrequent conceptist procedures.<sup>217</sup>

The problems discussed here are closely related to the notion of MODALITY crucial to comparative studies on haiku.<sup>218</sup> Seventeen-syllable verses merit analysis both in terms of the “modalities of culture” (which include modalities of “literary schools, currents or artistic trends”),<sup>219</sup> as well as reception. Here, in turn,

the category of modality demands the recognition of a subject’s presence in the textual utterance. In other words, it is a modality that compels readers to acknowledge that literary communication is personal, that is, that in the text the reader seeks the author as the guarantor of the poem’s modal frame, although at the same time he knows that he is dealing with utterances of fictitious (fake) instances.<sup>220</sup>

In the case of classical haiku verse, a type of “life-writing” (*fūga no makoto*) is a guarantee of the deep (and non-fake) personal nature of an utterance. I consider affirmation, calmness, tenderness, and compassion as the central modalities of these poems. I will come back to these issues on numerous occasions throughout this book.

Last but not least, of special importance in the historical and literary-theoretical perspective is the distinction between haiku and its satirical “reverse,” a form of popular literature that became crystallized in the eighteenth century: the seventeen-syllable *senryū* verse.<sup>221</sup> *Senryū* are poems remote from the natural

216 M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, p. 135.

217 See footnote 197 and Part 5 of this book (chapter ‘Conceptism’).

218 Włodzimierz Bolecki rightly views studies on modality as indispensable to the sphere, which “comprises all issues related to the examination of differences between various cultures, historical systems, communication systems, expression, customs etc.” (W. Bolecki, *Modalność. Literatura i kognitywizm (rekoncesans)* [Modality. Literature and Cognitivism (A Reconnaissance)], in W. Bolecki, *Modalności modernizmu. Studia, analizy, interpretacje*, Warszawa, 2012, p. 199). Bolecki adds, “Wherever we deal with the explanation of cultural causes of misunderstandings as a condition for understanding the dissimilarity of these cultures, and subsequently with the problem of dialogue, i.e. various forms of mediation and translations between cultures (including linguistic, literary ones), problems of modality should take the centre stage. Modality is, after all, one of the fundamental determinants of the anthropological dimension of culture – one we come face to face with through language, texts, and all types of utterances. (W. Bolecki, *Modalności modernizmu*).

219 W. Bolecki, *Modalności modernizmu*, p. 184.

220 W. Bolecki, *Modalności modernizmu*, p. 193.

221 The name *senryū* (an eponym of the pen name of the poet Karai *Senryū*, 1718–1790) came into use as late as the mid-nineteenth century, to become firmly established in the twentieth century. Earlier, these poems were variously termed *maekuzuke*, *kyōku*, *zareku*. Today the term *senryū* also includes earlier texts. (See *Light Verse from the Floating World. An Anthology of Premodern Japanese Senryū*, compiled, transl. and with an introduction by M. Ueda, New York, 1999, p. VII). In the parlour game *maekuzuke* (taught, among others, by *Senryū*, who was also a judge in

world and focusing on the description of interpersonal relations. It is no coincidence that Makoto Ueda divided the anthology of texts of this kind into thematic units calling to mind chapters in collections of coarse jokes, known probably the world over, about rulers, lovers, spouses, and relatives, etc. *Senryū* are stylistically simple, anonymous<sup>222</sup> poetic works devoid of any precise formal characteristics – apart from the 5-7-5 syllable pattern typical of Japanese poetry. This type of verse dispenses with *kigo* and *kireji*, yet is thick with colloquialisms and slang words, referencing popular culture of various centuries (which from today’s perspective adds cryptic overtones to those texts).<sup>223</sup> We will not find here sophisticated compositional tensions or subtle intertextual allusions typical of haiku (although, there were occasional references to well-known cultural texts, including haiku).<sup>224</sup> Let us take a look at a handful of satirical seventeen-syllable verses:

samurai’s quarrel  
does not end, until it produces  
two widows<sup>225</sup>

professional smile  
of the mortician’s wife:  
a look of grief<sup>226</sup>

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poetry contests: he is reported to have adjudicated on over two million *maekuzuke* entries), the first stanza, *maeku*, typically consists of two seven-syllable verses, while the second one, *tsukeku*, contains three verses of 5 + 7 + 5 syllables. *Senryū* developed from *tsukeku* (*Light Verse*, pp. 1–3; M. Kobayashi, ‘“*Senryū*.” Japan’s Short Comic Poetry,’ in *Understanding Humour in Japan*, ed. J. Milner Davis, Detroit, 2006, p. 156 and ff.). See also, for example, M. Melanowicz, ‘*Senryū*,’ in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, pp. 689–91; *Senryū. Japanese Satirical Verses*, transl. and explained by R. H. Blyth, Tokyo 1949; L. Martinek, ‘Głębia w detalu’ [The Depth in the Detail], *Tygiel Kultury*, 2003, nos. 10–12, p. 115 (text also available online at [http://www.tygielkultury.eu/10\\_12\\_2003/aktual/21ram.htm](http://www.tygielkultury.eu/10_12_2003/aktual/21ram.htm)). I also discuss *senryū* in the following chapters: ‘Haiku? “Senryū?” “Mironu?” Miron Białoszewski and Haiku,’ and ‘Haiku-Blague or “Haiku Freestyle?” – The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.’

222 Little is known about identities of *senryū* writers (during contests only names of the winners’ groups were announced). Nor is it clear whether *Senryū* himself actually wrote *senryū*, although he certainly composed the first two lines of *maekuzuke*, called *maeku*. There is no doubt, however, that authors of *senryū* verse were representatives of various occupations (mainly commoners): labourers, sculptors, inn-keepers, fishmongers, and cooks. Among them, however, we also find a Zen monk, Kabuki actor, and *ukiyo-e* artist. Occasionally *senryū* composition was practised by samurai (*Light Verse*, p. 15). Very few women engaged in this entertainment as it was considered improper and unrefined (*Light Verse*, p. 17).

223 M. Ueda, *Introduction*, in *Light Verse*, p. VII–VIII; H. Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600–1900*, New York, 2008, p. 250 and ff.

224 See *Light Verse*, pp. 18–9, 227 and ff. (the chapter *Heroes without Halos*).

225 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 21.

226 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 24.

“Lock up the doors  
when you go to bed,” says the thief  
leaving for work<sup>227</sup>

the official’s little son  
how fast he’s learned to open  
and close his fist!<sup>228</sup>

while her mouth recites  
prayers, her eyes shoot daggers  
at her daughter-in-law<sup>229</sup>

the nanny  
all dressed up  
chasing the naked<sup>230</sup>

his wife knows  
how to scare a collector:  
“He’s down with typhoid”<sup>231</sup>

what a coward!  
he eats nothing but the radish  
in the fugu soup<sup>232</sup>

The screens  
The women’s bath  
Riddled with holes<sup>233</sup>

“Don’t go out  
with that fellow,” both fathers  
tell their sons<sup>234</sup>

“Don’t let this worry you”  
he says, then tells you something  
that has to worry you<sup>235</sup>

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227 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 91.

228 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 25 (imitating his father’s gesture of taking bribes).

229 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 180.

230 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 149.

231 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 226.

232 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 221. *Fugu* is a fish whose innards contain deadly poison. However, prepared by an experienced cook, this delicacy is safe to eat.

233 As quoted in Timon Screech, *Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Images in Japan 1700–1820*, Honolulu, 1999, p. 74.

234 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 178.

235 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 254.

visit to a new house—  
on the way back, there's always  
something bad to talk of<sup>236</sup>

waiting  
for another sneeze to come—  
instant clownface!<sup>237</sup>

“Looks are not  
what I seek in a girl”  
says a liar<sup>238</sup>

The following are *senryū* poems parodically referring to the famous haiku by Bashō – the last poem written by the master<sup>239</sup> and a poem about fallen warriors:

locked up at home  
his dreams roam  
the pleasure quarters<sup>240</sup>

Ill on a journey;  
My dreams wander  
Over a withered moor<sup>241</sup>

footprints in the snow:  
all that remains of those  
bloody fools<sup>242</sup>

summer grass:  
all that remains  
of warriors' dreams<sup>243</sup>

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236 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 253.

237 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 263.

238 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 264.

239 For circumstances surrounding Bashō's death, see *Japanese Death Poems Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death*, compiled and with an introduction by Y. Hoffmann, Tokyo–Rutland, Vermont–Singapore, 1986, p. 144. According to Jane Reichhold, there is one later poem by Bashō, however, it is a modification of an earlier one (see Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, pp. 231, 394). See also the chapter 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'

240 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 177.

241 As quoted in R. H. Blyth, *Japanese Life and Character in Senryu*, Tokyo, 1960, p. 329.

242 As quoted in *Light Verse*, p. 220.

243 As quoted in *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 93.

The disparities between haiku and *senryū* modalities are evident precisely at the level of the comic. *Senryū* is focused on human flaws,<sup>244</sup> portraying them without stylistic elegance, lexical sophistication, and sensorial clarity. The comic character of satirical (often ironic or cynical) *senryū* verses oftentimes relies on unsophisticated situational humour. It is a record of observations of insolent “voyeurs,” who at the same time are also perceptive and intelligent observers of reality, scrutinizing – sometimes benevolently – small everyday scenes.<sup>245</sup> *Senryū*’s mechanisms of the comic do not differ from those well known in Western culture.<sup>246</sup>

Another vital issue is haiku DECORUM. Classical haiku verses were – which sometimes escapes our notice – extremely TABOOISTIC,<sup>247</sup> as they virtually never represented cruelty, natural disasters, killing (at best periphrastically suggesting death or expressing loss).<sup>248</sup> Disorder, vulgar behaviour or extremely abject phenomena were shunned. If there was any ugliness, it was only the ugliness of the common, of what is commonly perceived as unpleasant and yet sometimes is treated with tenderness or has comical overtones:<sup>249</sup>

244 M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, p. 54.

245 See *Light Verse*, p. 27.

246 Ueda makes a reference to writings of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Bergson, Bakhtin, Kant, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Freud, noting the sense of superiority singularly expressed in *senryū* (poems about “others.” illiterates, disabled persons, fanatics, concubines or... warriors), criticism of all things rigid and inflexible; vitality, sexuality, carnivalesqueness, and, finally, discrepancies, duly noted here, between theory (e.g. principles of morality) and real life. Ueda analyses ways of creating irony, dark humour, the use of puns, and various types of plays with meanings. He also points out that in *senryū* one can also encounter friendly, affectionate laughter (see for example the above-quoted poem about a nanny and a child) – *Light Verse*, pp. 20–29.

247 See R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 1, pp. 4, 27; Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, p. 47.

248 This tendency is neatly illustrated by this haiku by Bashō (quoted in Bashō, *Classic Haiku: An Anthology of Poems by Bashō and His Followers*, translated and annotated by Asatarō Miyamori, Minneola, NY, 2002, p. 23):

O cricket, from your cherry cry

No one could ever guess

How quickly you must die.

I will treat this subject more extensively in Part 5 of this book (subsection ‘Death’).

249 An interesting account of the Occidental understanding of haiku’s decorum can be found in the poem *Living Sepulchres* by the Imagist poet Richard Aldington:

One frosty night when the guns were still

I leaned against the trench

Making for myself *hokku*

Of the moon and flowers and of the snow.

But the ghostly scurrying of huge rats Swollen with feeding upon men’s flesh

Filled me with shrinking dread.

ice is bitter  
 in the mouth of the rat  
 quenching its thirst  
 Bashō<sup>250</sup>

A warbler  
 excreting on a rice cake  
 on the veranda  
 Bashō<sup>251</sup>

blown away  
 by the horse's fart  
 a firefly  
 Issa<sup>252</sup>

Haiku verses also shied away from eroticism.<sup>253</sup> This fact is highly interesting in the light of Western incarnations of the genre (and discussed to a very limited extent). Authors of classic seventeen-syllable verses rarely took up this subject, and once they did so, they tried to write in an unusual, euphemistic or periphrastic way.<sup>254</sup> Some poems, which in the eyes of the Western reader seem to be very remotely related to the sphere of sexuality, can be read through the prism of subtle erotic allusions:

wrapping rice dumplings:  
 with one hand she puts back

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250 As quoted in Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 30.

251 As quoted in P. Qiu, *Bashō and the Dao: The Zhuangzi and the Transformation of Haikai*, Honolulu, p. 2005 151.

252 As quoted in M. Ueda, *Dew on the Grass: The Life and Poetry of Kobayashi Issa*, Leiden, 2004, p. 149.

253 I discuss this subject in Part 5 of this book. Takafumi Saito and William R. Nelson (T. Saito, W. R. Nelson, 'Preface,' in *1020 Haiku in Translation*, North Charleston, South Carolina, 2006) divided all their haiku translations thematically. However, in their collection no space was given to haiku representing erotic relationships (even in the category "Feelings and Human Condition"). The collection by Saito and Nelson is in a way the reverse of the *senryū* anthology edited by Ueda (*Light Verse*).

254 It is no coincidence that in the volume *Love Haiku* (translated and eds. P. Donegan, Y. Ishibashi, Boston – London, 2010) we find only a handful of texts by masters of classical haiku (Bashō, Buson, Issa). The first poet to distinctly break down haiku's erotic taboos, Hino Sōjō was active as recently as the twentieth century (See, for example, *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, Vol. 3, Tokyo–New York, 1983, p. 80). For erotic haiku poetry written by contemporary Japanese women poets, see *Far Beyond the Field. Haiku by Japanese Women. An Anthology*, compiled and transl. M. Ueda, New York, 2003, pp. xxxvi–xxxviii.

her fallen hair  
 Bashō<sup>255</sup>

Putting back hair falling over the forehead can be interpreted as a subtly erotic gesture. However, to detect additional connotations of this scene, one needs a more intimate knowledge of Japanese life. When a traditionally dressed Japanese woman raises her hand, her kimono, with its underarm openings left unsewn, can reveal not only the arm but also a fragment of a woman's breast.<sup>256</sup>

Here is a handful of other poems replete with more or less decipherable erotic undertones (in a large measure composed by Buson who was especially interested in exploring human affairs), picked out from hundreds of haiku poems distant from descriptions of this sphere of life:

The expected visitor's  
 footsteps sound so far away –  
 fallen leaves  
 Buson<sup>257</sup>

It makes her glad to  
 To see her lover's fan  
 Stand out so white.  
 Buson<sup>258</sup>

Picking plum blossom  
 and fretting at my wrinkled hand–  
 fragrance  
 Buson<sup>259</sup>

A woman  
 reading a letter by moonlight  
 pear blossoms  
 Buson<sup>260</sup>

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255 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku: Selected Poems of Matsuo Bashō*, translated and with an introduction by D. L. Barnhill, Albany, 2004, p. 124.

256 I rely here on the interpretation presented by Żuławska-Umeda during the haiku workshop at the State Ethnographic Museum in Warszawa, May 2011. See also *Light Verse*, p. 98.

257 As quoted in A. Persinger, *Foxfire: the Selected Poems of Yosa Buson, a Translation*, Doctoral Dissertation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Ramet, Adèle, 2007, p. 306.

258 As quoted in *Literature East & West*, No. 15, 1972, p. 749.

259 As quoted in Y. Sawa, E. Marcombe Shiffert, *Haiku Master Buson. Translations from the Writings of Yosa Buson – Poet and Artist – with Related Materials*, Buffalo–New York, 2007, p. 61.

260 As quoted in F. Bowers, *The Classic Tradition of Haiku*, p. 58.



cats' love  
 when it is over, hazy  
 moonlight in the bedroom  
 Bashō<sup>261</sup>

My indolence  
 Woken up by her touch I was—  
 Spring rain.  
 Bashō<sup>262</sup>

Is there a woman  
 Who yearns for me?  
 Autumn nightfall.  
 Buson<sup>263</sup>

A spring rain —  
 Next to me in the carriage  
 Sweet murmuring of yours.  
 Buson<sup>264</sup>

Pillowed on my arm I dreamed  
 Of hair pinned up  
 With a sprig of cherry blossoms.  
 Buson<sup>265</sup>

Let us contrast these with an almost pornographic seventeen-syllable *senryū*:

Using a 'likeness picture'  
 She sticks it in  
 The serving woman<sup>266</sup>

The poetics of haiku – the form which in the West is considered to be highly simple, “stylistically” transparent, almost a-literary and verging on banality – turns out to be highly complex and, at the same time, distant from the style of the miniature verse known for centuries in European literature (epigram, aphorism, sententia, etc.). I find this neat formulation by Alina Świeściak very appealing: “As the quintessence of metaphysical affirmation of reality, haiku is also the high point of language asceticism.”<sup>267</sup> It should be remembered, however, that the metaphysical

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261 As quoted in M. Ueda, *Bashō and His Interpreters: Selected Hokku with Commentary*, p. 435.

262 As quoted in T. Saito, W. R. Nelson, ‘Preface,’ in *1020 Haiku in Translation*, p. 7.

263 As quoted in *1020 Haiku in Translation*, p. 166.

264 As quoted in *1020 Haiku in Translation*, p. 29.

265 As quoted in *1020 Haiku in Translation*, p. 30.

266 As quoted in T. Screech, *Sex and the Floating World*. p. 19.

267 A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki*, p. 167.

nature of haiku does not come solely from Zen Buddhism,<sup>268</sup> and language asceticism allows for limited – albeit sophisticated – use of stylistic devices.<sup>269</sup>

As I said before, the PERCEPTION OF HAIKU should be treated in a broader perspective.<sup>270</sup> In my opinion, reading Japanese miniature verse in the context of Umberto Eco's theory of open work is legitimate. Following Wiesław Kotański and Kenneth Yasuda, one could also successfully apply to haiku Roman Ingarden's idea of places of indeterminacy.<sup>271</sup> Finally, one can resort to Stefania Skwarczyńska's reflections on places passed over in silence and places of understatement.<sup>272</sup> As Bashō claimed: "The haiku that reveals seventy to eighty percent of its subject is good. Those that reveal fifty to sixty per cent we never tire of."<sup>273</sup> By the same token, good haiku are open to the creative participation of the reader – their indeterminacy, as long as sensorial mimesis is maintained, allows the reader to move quite freely in a lucidly yet sketchily depicted world, one closely intertwined with the universe of the recipient's own sensorial experiences.

Indeed, "To the Western reader, accustomed to a more wordy, rhetorical, philosophical type of poem, the haiku often seems fragmentary and incomplete."<sup>274</sup> However, there is no point in going to extremes and treating haiku as utterly obscure poems, ones requiring the degree of the perceptual effort that from the European perspective is exceptional. The haiku reader's involvement could be fittingly described by quoting... Mikhail Bakhtin: "one must enter as a creator

268 As Świeściak would claim – see A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki*, p. 165.

269 On haiku's antilaocoönism and its affinities with the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* – see Part 7 of this book. See also J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 25–7.

270 See, for example, K. Lindström, *A Broad Perspective*.

271 W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 8; K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, p. 6.

272 See S. Skwarczyńska, *Przemilczenie jako element strukturalny dzieła literackiego* [Passing over in Silence as a Structural Element of a Literary Work], Łódź, 1947. In spite of her thorough knowledge in genre studies, Stefania Skwarczyńska did not write about haiku (which in the light of Polish knowledge of this genre at the time is quite obvious). Based on her findings, one could argue that, in the case of haiku, we would be dealing primarily with "the passing over in silence that stretches, as it were, 'between the lines,' perceptible through the analysis of the logic of the work" (See S. Skwarczyńska, *Przemilczenie jako...*, p. 4). These would be "postulatory passings over in silence," when the author expects "the recipient to add, in concretizations, other elements, ones he/she passed over in silence, to complete the elements given by the author, with the complete elements suggesting the nature of those additions" (See S. Skwarczyńska, *Przemilczenie jako...*, p. 5). See also D. Wojda, *Milczenie słowa. O poezji Wisławy Szymborskiej* [The Silence of the Word. On the Poetry of Wisława Szymborska], Kraków, 1996, p. 21 and ff.

273 As quoted in K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature and History*, 1957, rpt. Boston, 2001, p. 7.

274 W. H. Cohen, *To Walk in Seasons*, p. 20.

into what is seen, heard, or pronounced, and in so doing, overcome the material, extracreatively determinate character of the form.<sup>275</sup>

#### IV. Prototype, Invariant, Stereotype: Haiku in the West

As it turns out, a direct correspondence between classical Japanese haiku and haiku poetry written in the languages – and culture – of the West is impossible, not only on account of inadequate genological knowledge of non-Japanese haikins. The complete Japanese genre model cannot be reproduced in Western poetry. From the perspective of Polish literature – and literature created in European languages – the most vital problems concerning the adoption of the style and aesthetics of this form include the following:<sup>276</sup>

- absence of equivalents of the cutting syllable *kireji*
- absence of codified seasonal references (*kigo*).<sup>277</sup>
- absence of the marked difference between seventeen-syllable haiku and *senryū*<sup>278</sup>
- absence of a one-to-one correspondence between Japanese aesthetic categories and categories of European aesthetics (and ethics)

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275 M. Bakhtin, 'Supplement: The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art,' in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, eds. M. Holquist and V. Liapunov, transl. and notes V. Liapunov, Austin, 1990, p. 305.

276 See haiku's "normative rules" provided by Piotr Michałowski (P. Michałowski, *Barokowe korzenie haiku*, p. 9; P. Michałowski, 'Polskie imitacje haiku,' in *Polska genologia. Gatunek w literaturze współczesnej*, ed. R. Cudak, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 167–8). See also Y. Yamada-Bochynek, *Haiku East and West*.

277 According to Kati Lindström, the use of *kigo* (in her opinion, the haiku component that is the most recognizable outside Japan) is central to the process of the genre's "domestication" in other literatures (K. Lindström, *A Broad Perspective*). I do not share this opinion. The fact, quoted by Lindström, that orthodox haiku authors in Hawaii compiled a dictionary of *kigo* words for the four seasons (that in the local climate are barely distinguishable, which probably created such a strong need for the creation of an artificial lexicon) or that similar attempts were made by William Higginson (it should be added that today some minor Polish haikins make similar efforts) does not change anything in the general reception (and creation) of haiku.

278 These forms are placed side by side in Western anthologies of miniature verse – see, for example, *The Haiku Anthology. Haiku and Senryū in English*, ed. C. van den Heuvel, New York–London, 2000. For differences existing between haiku and *senryū* also in the West, see J. Reichhold, *Writing and Enjoying Haiku. A Hands-on Guide*, Tokyo–New York–London, 2002, pp. 39–41; for difficulties in drawing demarcation lines between genres, see W. J. Higginson, P. Harter, 'Beyond Haiku,' in W. J. Higginson, P. Harter., *The Haiku Handbook. How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku*, Tokyo–New York–London, 1989, pp. 228–31.

- versification requirements. Naturally, the 5-7-5 syllable pattern can be reproduced in Polish, but is not deeply motivated in Polish rhythm and versification<sup>279</sup> (as in the systems of many other Western languages and literatures). As such, it is imposed artificially, in contradiction with the “inner nature” of the genre (classical haiku followed the most obvious and simplest of the available versification routes).<sup>280</sup> Attempts at “forcing” a text into the syllabic straitjacket devoid of evident aesthetic values do not seem to offer any benefits.
- Haiku humour is far removed from what we consider to be comic in Western art.<sup>281</sup> Its appreciation and understanding (and potential imitation) must stem from command of a large body of texts and the adoption (or at least understanding) of a certain attitude in experiencing and observing the world.
- In a contemporary culture (and, naturally, Japanese one as well) haiku’s focus on the world of nature with the concomitant insistence on immersion in everyday reality and reliance on experience becomes a contradiction.

As a result, Japanese characteristics of the form cannot be normatively applied to Western haiku. However, from over a century of Occidental tradition of the genre, two genological constructs emerge with varying degrees of crystallization and different analytical “operability.” The one with well-defined contours, which I refer to as a prototype, combines and profiles crucial features of haiku that can be reproduced (and creatively complemented) outside the cultural and linguistic reality of Japan.<sup>282</sup> I will elaborate on it later in this chapter. The second construct – universal, non-specific, considerably wide-ranging – is based to a large extent on stereotypes and a superficial examination (of translations) of Japanese miniature verses. It will be my starting point.

Roland Barthes writes excitingly about “quite intelligible,” uncomplicated haiku, which he knows, however, from (inevitably) oversimplifying translations. On the one hand, if we apply his words to the poetic output of Bashō, Kikaku, and Buson as seen through the eyes of a Japanologist, he is wrong; on the other hand, he is right, as he captures the essence of Western non-expert fascination with this foreign form:

While being quite intelligible, the haiku means nothing, and it is by this double condition that it seems open to meaning in a particularly available, serviceable way – the way of a polite host who lets you make yourself at home with all your

279 Czesław Miłosz sees here components of 11- and 13-syllable poems (Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 18), however, in the typical haiku pattern these forms are not well-established in Polish literature (see L. Pszczółowska, *Wiersz polski*, Wrocław, 2001). Reproduction of haiku’s versification model in the Polish language is discussed in more detail in the chapter *Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku*.

280 Bashō insisted that for various reasons he permits departures from rhythmical strictures. See footnote 188 in this part.

281 See B. Śnieciewska, “In the Beginning Was... Laughter,” pp. 91–102.

282 I discuss this in more detail in Part 5 of this book.

preferences ... the haiku's "absence" (we say as much of a distracted mind as of a landlord off on a journey) suggests subornation, a breach, in short, the major covetousness, that of meaning. ... Hence the haiku seems to give the West certain rights which its own literature denies it, and certain commodities which are parsimoniously granted. You are entitled, says the haiku, to be trivial, short, ordinary: enclose what you see, what you feel, in a slender horizon of words, and you will be interesting; you yourself (and starting from yourself) are entitled to establish your own notability; your sentence, whatever it may be, will enunciate a moral, will liberate a symbol, you will be profound: at the least possible cost, your writing will be *filled*.<sup>283</sup>

Remigiusz Rzyziński characterises haiku poetry in different terms (yet referring to reflections of Barthes!):

this handful of words making up the haiku turns into a never-ending narrative poem of a palimpsestic structure. In their inexorable and incremental self-fashioning and self-presentation, without describing anything but merely issuing from the structure of language, these words contemplate their own beauty. ... This poetry is pure language.<sup>284</sup>

Another extreme is the valuation of haiku poems based on how much they reflect the "inner nature of things,"<sup>285</sup> which, after all, is not amenable to objective examination.

Quotations are a neat illustration of extremes of the Western perception of the genre. Numerous readers and critics have a highly vague "vision" – or, perhaps, due to the fuzziness of the construct – "visions" of haiku.<sup>286</sup> They originate in stereotypes based on false or, at best, simplifying judgements. The following is a list of some of the most deeply rooted convictions of this kind (which frequently are mutually exclusive as well):

1. Haiku poems accommodate contradictions,<sup>287</sup> contain strongly contrasting

283 Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, pp. 69–70.

284 R. Rzyziński, 'Rolanda Barthes'a odkrycie Japonii. Tekst haiku' [Roland Barthes' Discovery of Japan. A Haiku Text], in *Estetyka transkulturowa* [Transcultural Aesthetics], p. 323.

285 B. Ungar, *Haiku in English*, Stanford, California 1978, pp. 17–9.

286 Cor van Heuvel bemoans the misconception still persisting in Anglo-American literature that haiku is anything "written in three lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables each." (*The Haiku Anthology*, p. xiv). This is a very orthodox – albeit superficial – criterion. A broad examination of the genre outside Japan demonstrates that often "anything" written in a few verses is considered to be a haiku. It is even better if the text is distinctly conceptist.

287 Michałowski (*Polskie imitacje haiku*, p. 44) defines "pictorial-reflective composition of haiku" as dissonant and synecdochical. The classical haiku, however, does not rely on dissonances, but rather on a harmonious view of the world. Furthermore,

elements<sup>288</sup> (often not co-existing in the real world),<sup>289</sup> and employ a clear antithesis.<sup>290</sup> Meanwhile, in the haiku form (I invariably refer to the classic prototype of the genre), semantically unlikely juxtapositions do occur occasionally, yet the ostensible contradictions are contradictory in a very subtle (harmonious?) way. The focus is not on shocking dissonances, but rather on juxtapositions that gently de-automatize perception, ones derived from the everyday experience of the world.<sup>291</sup> After all, having originated in Zen, Daoism, and Shintō, haiku does not valorise phenomena and experiences as strongly as Western readers who are accustomed to it (rats, fleas, a urinating horse are fully-fledged protagonists of texts, seen in their non-judgmental “suchness” – it was the depiction of such common personages, for instance in a majestic natural setting, that may have contributed to the Occidental conviction of haiku’s antithetical quality).

2. Haiku enacts in its successive verses the pattern of thesis–antithesis–synthesis.<sup>292</sup> However, it is in very few texts that one actually comes across this type of patterning (two seemingly distant images become connected with each other), and essentially this quasi-Hegelian parallel turns out to be false.
3. The fundamental principle of haiku composition involves the superimposition of various images.<sup>293</sup> Indeed, a haijin can occasionally impose on, or,

typically reflexiveness is not expressed explicitly; synecdochism, on the other hand, can be understood merely as a depiction of life through detail – representing the macrocosm in the microcosm.

- 288 See, for example, T. Cieślak, ‘Prawie haiku Mirona Białoszewskiego’ [Miron Białoszewski’s Almost Haiku], in *O wierszach Mirona Białoszewskiego. Szkice i interpretacje* [Notes On Poems by Miron Białoszewski. Sketches and Interpretations], ed. J. Brzozowski, Łódź, 1993, p. 122.
- 289 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 9.
- 290 P. Michałowski, ‘Barokowe korzenie haiku,’ pp. 11, 17. Looking for affinities between the poetics of the baroque and the classic haiku, Michałowski even talks of haiku’s “concor discordia” (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin, 1999, p. 88).
- 291 Barthes rightly talks of the parataxic quality of haiku (R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman*, p. 120). See also W. H. Cohen, *To Walk in Seasons*, pp. 26–7.
- 292 This is one of the prevailing didactic stereotypes. For this type of Western reading of haiku, see R. Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, pp. 136–8. The Hegelian dialectical triad underlying the composition of successive verses is also treated by Piotr Michałowski, who, however, applies it to the structure of Polish texts (selected poems from Grochowiak’s book *Haiku-images*). See P. Michałowski, *Barokowe korzenie haiku*, pp. 17, 21; P. Michałowski, *Haiku*, pp. 97, 103.
- 293 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 207. This stereotype (popularized by Ezra Pound) is undercut by Earl Miner in his essay E. Miner, ‘Pound, Haiku, and the Image,’ *Hudson Review* 9 (1956–57), pp. 570–84. Neither is it valid to detect in haiku paradoxes created through the superimposition of images. See, for example, R. L. Tener, ‘Richard Wright’s Haiku: “This Other World,”’ in *Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism*, pp. 148–9).

more precisely, put side by side two or three entirely disparate representations. Usually, however, we deal with a one-picture, one-event – and juxtapositional<sup>294</sup> – multiple-stage technique of presenting the selected shape/shapes against a homogeneous background. Thus, these are not several disparate representations imposed on each other, but one coherent, although at times surprisingly framed, image crafted from several (often two – the figure and the ground) components.

4. Haiku makes use of a potent punchline.<sup>295</sup> However, a punchline understood as “a fortuitous conceit, a witty inversion of an anticipated outcome, a paradoxical phrase, an unexpected turn of a thought or a depicted situation”<sup>296</sup> is very rare in haiku.<sup>297</sup> Occasionally, a poem’s ending carries a distinct pictorial and/or humorous note; however, this is not a common occurrence; moreover, even in such cases the resulting pattern turns out to be far removed from the European punchline.
5. Haiku is a conceit, a riddle poem. Numerous articles treating of this poetic form make a reference to significantly conceitist poems, seen as the most representative.<sup>298</sup> However, such texts are only a small fraction of the large body of poetic output of Japanese haijins.
6. Haiku is a “literary toy.”<sup>299</sup> Naturally, the ludic context and humour are important here, however, they have little in common with the idea of a poem as a verbal game. On the contrary, haiku poems grown out of Bashō’s School invariably speak about the world with lightness (*karumi*) and seriousness at the same time.
7. Haiku is solely an account of an experience, (almost) devoid of artistic values,<sup>300</sup> formulated purely intuitively. Such a perception of the genre was largely shaped

294 The great importance of juxtaposition in haiku has been repeatedly stressed by Jeffrey Johnson in *Haiku Poetics*. However, Johnson does not differentiate uses of juxtaposition, and he also seems to attribute all discontinuity in modernist poetry to more or less direct influences of the Japanese form.

295 See T. Kostkiewiczowa, ‘Haiku,’ in *Słownik terminów literackich*, ed. J. Sławiński, Wrocław, 2000, p. 190; and a commentary by Jacek Łukasiewicz, in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji* [Selected Poetry], ed. and with an introduction by J. Łukasiewicz, Wrocław 2000, p. 250.

296 J. Sławiński, ‘Pointa,’ in *Słownik terminów literackich*, p. 406

297 See L. Martinek, *Głębia w detalu*, p. 114.

298 See the subsection *Conceptism* in Part 5 of this book.

299 See B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ p. 92.

300 See, for example, J. W. Hokenson, *Haiku as a Western Genre*, p. 694; A. Kuik-Kalinowska, D. Kalinowski, ‘Od fascynacji do mody – refleksje o haiku’ [From Fascination to Fashion – Reflections on Haiku], *Opcje*, 1998, No. 3, p. 14; S. Jasionowicz, ‘Lektura bez interpretacji? (Czytając wiersze haiku)’ [A Reading without an Interpretation? On Reading Haiku Poems], *Dekada Literacka*, 1992, No. 20 (56), p. 4.

by its great populariser, Reginald Horace Blyth (who, by the way, devoted hundreds of pages of his numerous publications to the analysis of haiku's artistry).<sup>301</sup> However, this (exclusive) understanding of seventeen-syllable poetic forms is disproved by texts written by haijins themselves:

As early winter showers fell desolately, I sought a night's lodging. I dried my wet clothes by the hearth fire and scooped water to my mouth. The master of the inn treated me with kindness, comforting for a while the troubles of the journey. As the day ended, I laid down under the lamp, took out my ink and brush set, and started to write.<sup>302</sup>

Calling "cuckoo," "cuckoo,"  
All night long,  
Dawn at last!<sup>303</sup>

8. Language – not split into the signifier and the signified, not enmeshed in symbolism – serves solely an indexical function in haiku, permitting the recipient a "clean" perception of reality.<sup>304</sup> This conviction is associated with the already noted misconception about the stylistic "transparency" of haiku.
9. Haiku is a record of *satori*, a document to the experience of illumination and enlightenment.<sup>305</sup> Yet there is no way whatsoever to measure the content of

301 "A haiku is not a poem, it is not literature; it is a hand beckoning, a door half-opened, a mirror wiped clean," writes Blyth (R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Volume One (Tokyo, 1981, p. 243).

302 Bashō, *Bashō's Journey*, p. 131. It is hard to resist the temptation to make a comparison with painterly practices that are more familiar to us. Rosalind E. Krauss discusses the alleged spontaneity and instantaneousness of Claude Monet's painting "Through layers of underpainting by which Monet developed the thick corrugations of what Robert Herbert calls his texture-strokes, Monet patiently laid the mesh of rough encrustation and directional swathes that would signify speed of execution, and from this speed, mark both the singularity of the perceptual moment and uniqueness of the empirical array. On top of this constructed 'instant,' thin, careful washes of pigment establish the actual relations of colour. Needless to say, these operations took—with the necessary drying time—many days to perform. But the illusion of spontaneity—the burst of an instantaneous and ordinary act—is the unshakable result." (R. E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde, and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge MA, 1985, p. 16).

303 Naomi Beth Wakan, *Haiku: One Breath Poetry*, Torrance, Calif., 1997, p. 31. For a Zenist interpretation of this poem (text as a way of overcoming a futile intellectual search), see D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, p. 225.

304 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 4, 8–9, 222. Surprisingly, Johnson links indexicality with... allegoresis (J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 222). See also, for example, R. Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, p. 91. S. Jasionowicz, *Lektura bez interpretacji?*, p. 4.

305 See, for example, R. Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, pp. 91, 147; S. Odin, *Artistic Detachment in Japan and the West. Psychic Distance in Comparative Aesthetics*, Honolulu, 2001,



*satori* in a text. It is rather risky to treat events and emotions recorded in poems (*haiku moments* according to Yasuda,<sup>306</sup> or Harold G. Henderson's *high moments*<sup>307</sup>) as documents of the deepest spiritual experiences. One should rather speak of "small illuminations"<sup>308</sup> represented in a haiku, of everyday epiphanies, of a captured "spark of epiphany"<sup>309</sup> than of "great" enlightenment, attainment of ultimate insight into the nature of reality. To some incarnations of haiku (especially contemporary ones), one can also apply the somewhat more "measurable" category of modern epiphany.<sup>310</sup>

10. Haiku is an art par excellence intellectual (see opinion by Rzyziński cited above). However, haiku poems call not so much for intense intellectual effort,<sup>311</sup> but for "feeling-with" (*współ-odczucie*). Poems can be intertextual<sup>312</sup> (entering into an allusive dialogue, for example with Chinese poetry or medieval Japanese poetry, sometimes they are ekphrases), while not overwhelming the sensorial experience itself. In haiku indeed, between words "spaces of silence stretch out."<sup>313</sup>

Literary and cultural stereotypes and the fuzzy status of the "core" of the genre contribute to the blurring of outlines of this formally disciplined art (taken in its canonical version). Nebulous, Occidental haiku "visions" will repeatedly recur on the pages of this book.

However, a considerably handier research tool is provided by the WESTERN PROTOTYPE of HAIKU. A large body of poetic texts attests to the existence in Polish literature<sup>314</sup> (and, more broadly, literatures of the West: of Europe and the

p. 188; W.H. Cohen, *To Walk in Seasons*, p. 21; P. Sobolczyk, 'Od "Karmelickich plot" do wierszy medytacyjnych. Białoszewskiego "obrotu transcendencji"' [From 'Carmelite Gossips' to Meditation Poems. Białoszewski's "Revolutions of Transcendence"], in *Doświadczenie religijne w literaturze XX wieku* [Religious Experience in 20th-Century Literature], eds. A. Gleń, I. Jokiel, Opole 2006, pp. 165–6; P. Michałowski, *Polskie imitacje haiku*, p. 167; A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki*, pp. 165, 168–9.

306 K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, p. 24.

307 H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku*, p. 2.

308 "Small epiphanies" of haiku are discussed, for example, by Aleksandra Olędzka-Frybesowa ('Przeciw czemu protestują haiku' [What are Haiku Protesting against?], *Teksty Drugie*, 1994, No. 2, p. 114).

309 W. H. Cohen, *To Walk in Seasons*, p. 21.

310 I write about this subject at greater length in Part 5 of this study.

311 See K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, p. 5.

312 See, for example, analyses by Ch. A. Crowley, *Buson and "Haiga"*, pp. 225–7, 230–3.

313 J. Gielo, 'Haiku-images Stanisława Grochowiaka,' *Poezja*, 1979, No. 7, p. 83.

314 I have in mind primarily Polish texts from the 1990s and those written as recently as the twenty-first century (as well as selected earlier poems). See esp. Part 5 of the book.

Americas)<sup>315</sup> of a haiku prototype created primarily in accordance with genre “parameters” of classical haiku and, at the same time, taking into account the possibility of reproducing these characteristics in a different culture and language.<sup>316</sup> The genre markers existing in Japan are “harder,” more readily verifiable than the ones we will discuss now (rhythmic patterning, the use of *kigo* and *kireji*, preservation of typically Japanese aesthetic categories). In the case of Western literature, one has to resort to a different approach, using other, but also “operational,” features of haiku.

In this study, I seek to reconcile two seemingly contradictory perspectives: the prototypical profiling of the genre and the more traditional treatment of the genre as a typological concept.<sup>317</sup> References to the idea of the prototype derived from the studies of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Eleanor Rosch<sup>318</sup> (expounded in Poland by, amongst others, Bożena Witosz, Ryszard Nycz, Roma Sendyka, and Romuald Cudak)<sup>319</sup> permit a wide examination of Polish poems through the prism of

315 I base the proposed construct on the readings of numerous European haiku poems (Polish, English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Czech, and Estonian) as well as American and Canadian. These findings are confirmed by the poems by authors from Central and South America that I am familiar with (to a lesser extent). However, I do not comment, for example, on haiku written in Australia or Asian countries (except Japan, naturally).

316 For the creation of prototypes in the human mind, see R. Sendyka, ‘Metodologiczna dygresja: o nieesencjalnych modelach gatunku, in R. Sendyka, *Nowoczesny esej. Studium historycznej świadomości gatunku*, Kraków, 2006, pp. 112–4. For a possible variability of the prototype, see also footnote 32 in this part of the book.

317 See B. Witosz, ‘Gatunek – sporny (?) problem współczesnej refleksji tekstologicznej,’ in *Polska genologia literacka*, eds. D. Ostaszewska, R. Cudak, Warszawa, 2007, p. 244; A. Wierzbicka, *Język, umysł, kultura*, ed. J. Bartmiński, Warszawa, 1999, p. 27; S. Sawicki, ‘Gatunek literacki: pojęcie klasyfikacyjne, typologiczne, polityczne?’ in *Polska genologia literacka*, pp. 137–44 (originally published in *Problemy metodologiczne współczesnego literaturoznawstwa*, eds. H. Markiewicz, J. Sławiński, Kraków, 1976). In his research on haiku, Piotr Michałowski cites the concept put forth by Danuta Danek, describing Polish references to haiku as a kind of structural quotation (quasi-quotation) (see for example P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 75). I do not use this theoretical perspective.

318 Naturally, continued by numerous other psychologists, linguists, aestheticians (including George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, François Rastier, John R. Taylor, and Georges Kleiber) – See, for example, R. Grzegorzczkova, ‘O rozumieniu prototypu i stereotypu we współczesnych teoriach semantycznych’ [On the Understanding of the Prototype and Stereotype in Contemporary Semantic Theories], in *Język a kultura*, Vol. 12: *Stereotyp jako przedmiot lingwistyki. Teoria, metodologia, analizy empiryczne* [Stereotype as a Subject of Linguistics. Theory, Methodology, Empirical analyses], eds. J. Anusiewicz, J. Bartmiński, Wrocław, 1998, p. 111. See also R. Sendyka, *Metodologiczna dygresja*, p. 95 and ff.

319 See, for example, B. Witosz, ‘Gatunek – sporny (?) problem,’ R. Nycz, ‘Intertekstualność i jej zakresy: teksty, gatunki, światy’ [Intertextuality and its

approximations to a certain model defined here.<sup>320</sup> This perspective is especially useful in the study of texts realizing only some of the central features of the genre. Many of the poems discussed in this book (not all of which I have classified as “haiku”) are indeed linked together by a kind of “family resemblance,” one not always readily noticed.

Many of the texts under scrutiny here realize several central (prototypical) markers of the genre (which I also call *haikems*), yet in some respects, they radically differ from haiku. A vivid account of prototypes is provided by Marie-Laure Ryan:

This approach invites us to think of genres as clubs imposing a certain number of conditions for membership, but tolerating as quasi-members those individuals who can fulfil only some of the requirements, and who do not seem to fit into any other club.<sup>321</sup>

Prototype modelling of the genre permits considerable flexibility of argumentation, just as it enables broader diagnoses of modern Polish poetry that at various levels and from different angles approximates the Japanese form.<sup>322</sup> In addition,

Scopes: Texts, Genres, Worlds]’ in B. Witosz, *Tekstowy świat. Poststrukturalizm a wiedza o literaturze* [The Textual World. Poststructuralism and Literary Studies], Kraków, 2000, pp. 91–4; R. Sendyka, ‘W stronę kulturowej teorii gatunku,’ in *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy*, eds. M. P. Markowski, R. Nycz, Kraków 2006, pp. 255–6; R. Sendyka, ‘Metodologiczna dygresja,’ R. Cudak, ‘Sytuacja gatunków we współczesnej poezji polskiej a perspektywy genologii,’ in *Genologia i konteksty*, ed. Cz. P. Dutka, Zielona Góra, 2000, pp. 35–7; R. Grzegorzyczkowa, ‘O rozumieniu prototypu,’ pp. 109–15 (of relevance to my research is the second and third explanation of the concept of a “prototype” in semantic studies discussed by the author: “a set of features typical for a given category” and “semantic centre” – R. Grzegorzyczkowa, ‘O rozumieniu prototypu,’ p. 112). See also D. de Geest, H. van Gorp, ‘Literary Genres from a Systemic-Functionalist Perspective,’ *European Journal of English Studies*, 1999, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 33–50; J. R. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*, Oxford, 1989; B. Witosz, *Genologia lingwistyczna. Zarys problematyki* [Linguistic Genology. An Outline of the Problem], Katowice, 2005 (esp. pp. 62–95).

320 Agnieszka Kluba adopts a similar perspective to describe the presence in Poland of another literary genre, namely a prose poem. See A. Kluba, *Poemat prozą w Polsce* [The Prose Poem in Poland], Warszawa-Toruń, 2014, pp. 117–8.

321 As quoted in J.E. Cumming, *The Motet in the Age of Du Fay*, Cambridge, 1999, p. 11. Nycz writes: “Not only a representation of an actual copy can be a prototype, but also a system of typical features, creating a schematic image, in the sense of ‘statistical average’ or weighted average,” R. Nycz, ‘Literatura nowoczesna: cztery dyskursy (tezy)’ [Modern Literature: Four Discourses (Theses)], *Teksty Drugie*, 2002, No. 4, p. 35, footnote 2.

322 Naturally, literary genres evolve. This is particularly the case with genre borrowings. Haiku in the West has been undergoing change, while in Poland it is in fact still a genre “youngster.” At present, however, one can speak of a quite clear-cut Western prototype of haiku.

the conceptualization of the prototype also provides an opportunity to show some gradability or radial status of “haiku-ness” in Polish literature (and other Western literatures). Furthermore,

open-endedness of categories, prototypicality and family resemblance, wherein category membership does not require that category members possess all the common features, not only permit grouping variants of one genre around the model (prototype, nuclear category) but also serve to indicate resemblance (of varying degrees of proximity) between disparate genres.<sup>323</sup>

However, there are dangers attendant on the prototypical examination of haiku.<sup>324</sup> It is not my goal to arrive solely at a description of more or less clear resemblances to the central model. I do not want to confine myself to the diagnosis of the “haiku-ness” of a vast, “amorphous”<sup>325</sup> body of texts.<sup>326</sup> I agree that features constituting a prototype may be inequivalent and highly variegated, that establishing their hierarchy may be problematic, finally, that sometimes “it is not known at which point the aggregation of attributes describing the category should be stopped.”<sup>327</sup> Moreover, in the case of a specific highly conspicuous group of Polish – and, more generally, Western – miniature poems, certain features now seem invariant: permanent, crucial, and generally unchanging.<sup>328</sup> Naturally, these are the features that define the centre, the prototype of the genre. For a better view

323 B. Witosz, ‘Gatunek - sporny (?) problem,’ p. 243.

324 See, for example, R. Sendyka, *Metodologiczna dygresja*, pp. 104–30.

325 As Witosz writes: “The structure of the prototype-modelled genre includes salient attributes (positioned in the centre of the category) and marginal attributes (located at the periphery). As a rule, the category CENTRE is clear-cut and well-defined, while its PERIPHERIES are blurred and often overlap with border areas of other categories” (B. Witosz, ‘Gatunek - sporny (?) problem,’ p. 240; emphasis in original). Witosz goes on to clarify this: “The use of a prototype defined in such a ‘flexible’ way as a tool for characterising a genre must also entail acceptance of the relativity of its perception, which results from (inter)subjective selection of criteria. This also explains the fact that in the process of reading, the same text can be assigned by members of a cultural community to different genre models, and that the same recipient can perform different categorization of the same object, because ... categorization via prototype effects is not set in stone, it is DYNAMIC” (B. Witosz, ‘Gatunek - sporny,’ emphasis in original). See also B. Witosz, *Gatunek – sporny*, p. 245. For other pitfalls of genological research using the prototype category, see S. Wyslouch, ‘Nowa genologia – rewizje i reinterpretacje,’ in *Polska genologia literacka*, pp. 290–2 (however, the author makes a reference to the study of the novel, one of the most difficult genres in terms of genological description).

326 Which, for instance, is exactly what Jeffrey Johnson does in his study *Haiku Poetics* (who, however, does not make use of the prototype category).

327 R. Sendyka, ‘Metodologiczna dygresja,’ p. 115 (Sendyka sets forth the opinion of Jane Aitchinson).

328 See esp. Part 5 of this study.

of this group of poems, it is advisable to abandon prototype-based studies, which are useful in describing large sets of highly heterogeneous texts with varying degrees of centrality. In this case, “haiku” can be treated as a typological concept “not requiring the identicalness, homogeneity of features of all entities of the set,” but “including all entities resembling the established model, primarily displaying the same features like the model, but to various degrees,”<sup>329</sup> and, finally, also allowing for quantitative fluctuations: acceptable possession “of some (not all) model features.”<sup>330</sup> As Anna Wierzbicka writes: “in semantic analysis, there is room not only for prototypes but also for invariants – one does not exclude the other.”<sup>331</sup> I see haiku-related genre research in a similar vein.

As basic defining characteristics of haiku in the West – ones constituting the centre of the genre from the perspective of prototypes – I consider the following (in hierarchical order):<sup>332</sup>

- CONCISENESS, usually a three-verse grouping<sup>333</sup> (with no requirement of the imitation of the Japanese syllabic pattern).<sup>334</sup> Haiku remains a “one-breath poem.”<sup>335</sup>
- REJECTION OF STRONG, DIRECT EXPOSURE OF THE SPEAKER’S EMOTIONS.<sup>336</sup>

329 S. Sawicki, ‘Gatunek literacki,’ p. 140.

330 S. Sawicki, ‘Gatunek literacki,’ p. 141.

331 A. Wierzbicka, *Język, umysł*, p. 27. See also D. de Geest, H. van Gorp, ‘Literary Genres,’ p. 50.

332 I consider the topmost attributes from the list as key to the haiku prototype, while those from the bottom of the list as less essential. Prototype categories are “gradable, can be broadened to include new examples, do not possess clearly defined boundaries, and their construal invariably occurs in the ‘background outline,’ i.e. through the knowledge of the context.” (R. Sendyka, ‘Metodologiczna dygresja,’ p. 110, see also pp. 110–2).

333 For the role of the three-line pattern as a haiku “marker,” see E. Sütiste, *A CROW ON A BARE BRANCH*, p. 3. This notation, reproducing the three-part rhythmical structure of haiku, sometimes is treated as a superfluous Western convention – K. Sugawara, ‘Devising Context,’ p. 229 and ff.

334 See, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 12–3; R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman*, pp. 54–6. Some Polish scholars (e.g. P. Michałowski, ‘Polskie imitacje haiku,’ p. 172) and translators (see the chapter ‘Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku’) view the eschewal of the verse pattern, the common practice in the West, as a groundless oversimplification.

335 K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, p. 41; see also J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, p. 76; R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 2: *From Issa up to the Present*, Tokyo, 1984, p. 350; L. Gurga, *Haiku: A Poet’s Guide*; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 24–5.

336 In my opinion, the conviction that haiku poems do not represent emotions is a complete misunderstanding. (See also, for example, H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku*, p. 5).

- SENSORIALITY – usually expressed in clear, simple formulas – sensorial images (most typically: FIGURE–GROUND), often combining disparate sensory experiences.<sup>337</sup> Juxtapositional composition of the representation can be interpreted as a part of SENSORIAL MIMESIS.<sup>338</sup> Sometimes an element of (slight) surprise is more important than a witty semantic conceit.
- (Non-discursive) record of a specific FRAGMENT OF REALITY. In the “frame” usually there is an element of the natural world or universally experienced social realities.
- SPARING USE OF STYLISTIC DEVICES – imagery, linguistic conceptism, etc. do not eclipse sensoriality. Used in moderation, they can become a crucial component of the modern epiphany crucial to some contemporary haiku.<sup>339</sup>
- TENDERNESS linked to empathic “feeling-with,” seen not as rococo-esque mawkishness, but as an affirmative, empathic, attentive observation of even the smallest entities.<sup>340</sup>
- Unpretentious HUMOUR conceived as light self-irony or looking at the world with cheerfulness, yet, paradoxically often tinged with sadness (traces of *sabi*).
- Use of VIVID KIREJI in juxtapositional combinations of images or components of one image.

Most of the attributes of the haiku prototype noted here do not require further exegesis. I will briefly note several vital and problematic issues. The starting point for the Western prototype of the genre is, of course, the poetics of classical haiku, innovatively continued by poets of the West.

Fundamental to my studies are SENSORIAL SCHEMAS of haiku – playing an important role in the structure of the majority of classical haiku and in the poetics, and analyses, of haiku in the West. “What distinguishes haiku from (other forms of) poetry,” writes Blyth, “is this physical, material, sensational character, and it might be termed ‘the fleshly school of poetry,’ but with no sexual implications.”<sup>341</sup> In numerous Japanese seventeen-syllable poems, the seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting of the small and inconspicuous, singled out from other

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337 For correspondences between the senses in haiku, see, for example, M. Ueda, *Zeami*, pp. 57–9; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 13. Not infrequently, experts even write of haiku’s synaesthetic quality (See, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 4–13, 19; R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman*, pp. 98–100), even though typically we are not dealing here with “metaphorized expressions wherein some sensory experiences are presented in terms of other senses” (A. Okopień-Sławińska, ‘Synestezja’ [Synaesthesia], in *Słownik terminów literackich*, p. 551). Later in this chapter, I discuss a general view of synaesthesia in haiku and in research on haiku.

338 Issues of sensorial mimesis are treated in more detail in Part 5 of this study.

339 I elaborate on this subject in Part 5.

340 For the category of tenderness in transcultural studies on haiku, see the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

341 R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

phenomena by the observer's careful attention – all this is arranged in certain patterns. Visual sensations<sup>342</sup> occupy the most prominent place here (additionally legitimised by links to painting and calligraphy),<sup>343</sup> with aural sensations<sup>344</sup> not far behind them, often intertwined with the visible in multi-sensory or even synaesthetic imagery.<sup>345</sup> Among the vital sense-impressions here, one should also mention proprioception, the awareness of the body in space, usually overlooked by researchers. Broadly conceived synaesthesia is occasionally regarded as a necessary condition for identifying haiku in the non-Oriental context.<sup>346</sup> While in my opinion, a thesis formulated so emphatically is incorrect, I suggest that special attention should be paid in studies of haiku in Western literature to sensorial mimesis and distinct sensorial schemas strongly affecting the reader. Given that certain aesthetic and ethical attributes of classical miniature poems cannot be transplanted to a different cultural setting, these issues are fundamental to the haiku outside the Orient.

Haiku's essence lies in a precise, yet only sketchy "understated" (*niedomówiony*)<sup>347</sup> image. To readers intimately familiar with Japanese culture, plants, objects and places featured in classical seventeen-syllable poems can carry

342 See, for example, L. Gurga, *Haiku: A Poet's Guide*, Lincoln, 2003, pp. 45–8. For the erroneous reduction of haiku's sensorial models to visual images, see J. W. Hokenson, *Haiku as a Western Genre*; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 12–3; E. Miner, *Pound, Haiku...*, p. 576 ff.

343 See, for example, S. Addiss, 'Haiku i haiga,' pp. 201–4; M. Takeuchi, 'Wiersze i obrazy' [Poems and Pictures], in *Estetyka japońska*, Vol. 2, p. 198. See also Part 7 of this study.

344 About one-ninth (110 out of over 980) poems by Bashō employ aural imagery (soundscape) – H. Minoru, 'Exploring Bashō's World,' p. 165. Interestingly, occasionally the haijin invites the reader to listen attentively to supremely subtle, or even non-existent sounds:

spider, with what sound  
and for what are you crying?

autumn wind

Bashō

come listen to the sound

of a bagworm—

my thatched hut

Bashō

(as quoted in H. Minoru, *Exploring Bashō's World*; p. 165; see it also for intertextual entanglements of these poems).

345 See, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, passim; M. Ueda, *Zeami*, pp. 57–9; A. Kwiatkowska, 'A Cognitive Linguist Reads Haiku Poetry,' in *Cognitive Perspectives on Language*, ed. B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, pp. 187–97; B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' in B. Szymańska, *Kultury i porównania*, pp. 155–6.

346 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 4–13, 19.

347 See, for example, A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'O kireji,' pp. 67–8; K. Lindström 'A Broad Perspective.'

symbolic connotations.<sup>348</sup> To specialists, the very choice of ideograms, sound allusions of the original, subtle intertextual signals are meaningful.<sup>349</sup> However, cultural intricacies are not of ultimate importance in haiku, even though in their verse-making practice the most prominent haijins often engaged in hidden intertextual dialogues, unfathomable to the reader not immersed in their cultural universe. In classical realizations of the genre, the most important invariable elements include: withdrawal of the speaker along with precisely sensoriality – the capturing of sensorially experienced everyday events in simple sensorial systems, by means of uncomplicated, yet highly artistic language.<sup>350</sup>

Almost every classical haiku poem – this also applies to Western haiku verse actively continuing<sup>351</sup> the Oriental form – carries a distinct, pivotal sensorial signal. The reader's attention is directed at small objects, animals, manifestations of everyday phenomena. Their shape is foregrounded, yet not depicted in detail. This is a supremely clear system: what is seen is only the salient element, the main "protagonist" of the poem (two, three shapes at the most) as well as a uniform, often "single-sense" ground, typically delineated already in the first syntagma of the text (which usually takes the form of a visible surface – frequent "visualisms"<sup>352</sup> such as a field, grass, lake surface, or a uniformly auditory space).<sup>353</sup> Sometimes a poem can be enriched with an added sensorial plane: a two-element fragment of reality can be presented against an additional all-encompassing sensorial setting (e.g. an evening, chill, and silence). As a rule, a poem registers a single moment of

348 See, for example, K. Sugawara, 'Devising Context,' p. 232. Thus, Barthes is grossly wrong excluding the symbolic qualities of haiku – R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman*, p. 124 (see also A. Dziadek, *Haiku*, p. 144).

349 See A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Okolice poetyki*, p. 231.

350 This seeming contradiction of haiku is engagingly explained by Żuławska-Umeda – see, for example, 'Wstęp do wydania drugiego' [Introduction to the Second Edition], and 'Wstęp do wydania pierwszego' [Introduction to the First Edition], in *Haiku*, [2006], pp. 5–27. For contrasts of colloquial language and "high" language (and semantic and perceptual consequences of such confrontations), see H. Shirane, 'Double Voices and Bashō's *Haikai*,' in *Matsuo Bashō's Poetic Spaces*, pp. 105–26.

351 For the notion of active continuation, see S. Balbus, 'Stylizacja i zjawiska pokrewne w procesie historycznoliterackim' [Stylization and The Related Phenomena in a Historical-literary Process'], *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1983, No. 2, p. 145.

352 "Words and phrases belonging to the lexical-phraseological plane and belonging to the linguistic representation of human visual experience" (E. Balcerzan, *Widzialne i niewidzialne*, p. 34).

353 See A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Od tłumacza,' pp. 5–7. Many texts seem to be a vivid illustration of the Japanese proverb: "For the moon there is the cloud. For the flower there is the wind."



action taking place in a specific space-time;<sup>354</sup> occasionally, the main component of the scene is in motion, which makes the sensorial arrangement ever clearer.<sup>355</sup>

Thus, one can speak of a plain figure-ground alignment, an interdependent relation of two elements, one of which is more active and more prominent. In poetics, figures (against a ground) are discussed in relation to various textual “dominants,” occurring on different levels of a literary work (construction of the protagonist, defamiliarization of the motif, stylistic devices drawing the reader’s attention to a given “field” of the poem, etc.).<sup>356</sup>

In this study, however, with respect to haiku, the figure and ground are interpreted in the most literal and sensorial way. It also seems advisable to invoke here cognitive categories of the landmark (“secondary participant of a situation or profiled relationship, a point of reference for the primary participant of a situation of relationship”)<sup>357</sup> and trajector (“the primary figure within a profiled relationship or a primary participant of a situation,” “primary focus (or ‘figure’) within the profiled relationship”).<sup>358</sup> These concepts, created to describe linguistic phenomena, can also be transferred most simply and vividly onto the domain of poetics.<sup>359</sup> However, my ambition here is not to engage in terminological import for the sheer pleasure of inter- and interdisciplinary activities, but to show a certain rudimentariness of image-making and text-making activities of haikins. The clear

354 M. Melanowicz, ‘Time in Japanese Culture,’ in *Categories of Time and Space in Eastern and Western Poetics*, eds. E. Czapplewicz, M. Melanowicz, Warszawa, 1992, p. 9 and ff.

355 See A. Kwiatkowska, ‘A Cognitive Linguist,’ R. W. Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, Vol. 1: *Theoretical Prerequisites*, Stanford, California 1987, p. 120.

356 See P. Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London, 2002, pp. 14–17. Studies on the figure-ground relationship, originally embedded in Gestalt psychology, were transplanted to other disciplines of the humanities (See D. Stanulewicz, ‘Figura i tło – wędrówka idei’ [Figure and Background – a Journey of the idea], in *Językoznawstwo kognitywne III. Kognitywizm w świetle innych teorii* [Cognitive Linguistics III. Cognitivism in the Light of other Theories], eds. D. Stanulewicz, O. Sokołowska, Gdańsk, 2006, pp. 281–9). Numerous cognitivist studies discuss, to note a few, the figure-ground organization with respect to the role of the subject and complement, perfective and imperfective verb forms, affirmative and negative statements (See, for example, E. Tabakowska, *Cognitive Linguistics and Poetics of Translation*, Tübingen, 1993, p. 48).

357 R. W. Langacker, *Wykłady z gramatyki kognitywnej* [Lectures on Cognitive Grammar], Lublin, 2001, transl. H. Kardela, P. Łozowski, Lublin, 2005, p. 174.

358 R. W. Langacker, *Wykłady...*, p. 178.

359 See B. Śniecikowska, ‘Figure/Ground Sensory Segregation in Japanese and non-Oriental Haiku,’ in *Texts and Minds. Papers in Cognitive Poetics and Rhetoric*, ed. A. Kwiatkowska, Frankfurt am Main, 2012; P. Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, London, 2002. The categories of “trajector” and “landmark,” borrowed from cognitive linguistics, are also (sporadically) put to use in texts dealing with a study of various cultural phenomena – P. Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics*, pp. 15–18.

exposition of figures against the background (or, in a slightly different theoretical approach, presentation of the trajector and landmark) in haiku is an artistic attempt at an uncomplicated, yet aesthetically refined representation of the basic RULES OF PERCEPTION. It is about picking out one or several distinctive, often moving, elements from other, less salient ones perceived as the background.<sup>360</sup> As Alina Kwiatkowska writes: “The deep awareness of the mechanisms of human perception and conceptualization ... has made it possible for them [haiku poets] to express so much, so effectively, in such a condensed form.”<sup>361</sup>

It is no accident that the title of the text from which the quote was taken (one of the few ones discussing the problems of figure and ground in haiku) is *A Cognitive Linguist Reads Haiku Poetry*. The treatment of the concept of figure and ground presented here is rooted in the psychology of perception (it also references findings of Gestalt psychology), however, one filtered (from the perspective that interests me this is quite an indirect circulation) through theoretical conceptualizations of cognitivists studying language.<sup>362</sup>

Without doubt, haiku is thus a “story of perception.”<sup>363</sup> Sensory patterns conveyed in these short poems allow the reader to literally make deep sense of depicted scenes. If haiku were, as some claim, striking clusters of contradictions, naturally one could not talk of such regularities.

Finally, one more word of theoretical clarification is in order here. Throughout this book, I invariably use the term “image,” which for the most part evokes “oculocentric” connotations. However, I am interested, as I have tried to demonstrate, in more broadly conceived representations invoking various senses<sup>364</sup> (I often use the term “sensory images” or “sense-images”). To the issues studied here, one could also apply cognitivist findings concerning MENTAL IMAGING<sup>365</sup>

360 See, for example, *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*, ed. D. Reisberg, New York, 2013, pp. 16, 21–3, 105; S. Rathus, *Psychology: Concepts and Connections*, Belmont, 2012, pp. 121–3; *Themes in Speculative Psychology*, ed. N. Jordan, Abingdon, 2001 (1st ed. 1968), pp. 50–3, 93–5, 108.

361 A. Kwiatkowska, ‘A Cognitive Linguist,’ p. 196; see also K. Lindström ‘A Broad Perspective.’

362 See, for example, R. W. Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, Vol. 1, p. 120; E. Tabakowska, *Cognitive Linguistics*, p. 47; F. Ungerer, H.-J. Schmid, *Figure and Ground*, in F. Ungerer, H.-J. Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*, London–New York, 1996, pp. 156–204; A. Kwiatkowska, *The Visuo-Spatial Determinants of Natural Language*, Łódź, 1997, p. 78.

363 P. Michałowski, *Haiku wobec epifanii*, p. 134.

364 This concretization is close to the second meaning of the term “image” in Janusz Sławiński’s entry “obraz” (image) in *Słownik terminów literackich*, p. 349.

365 Magdalena Rembowska-Płuciennik writes extensively on this in her book *Poetyka intersubiektywności. Kognitywistyczna teoria narracji a proza XX wieku* [The Poetics of Intersubjectivity. The Cognitivist Theory of Narration and the Prose of the 20th Century], Toruń, 2012, pp. 278–96. See also, for example, Z. Łapiński, ‘Widziane, wyobrażone, pomyślane’ [The Seen, Imagined, Thought], *Teksty Drugie*, 2009,

(not reduced to visual images only),<sup>366</sup> concerning “the increased importance of the experiential nature of reading”<sup>367</sup> and “embodiment, sensorial construal of the meaning of words or self-contained units of a work.”<sup>368</sup>

As Magdalena Rembowska-Pluciennik points out,

rather than constructing qualitatively clear quasi-perceptual views of the world based on a description, mental imaging is about conferring a sensorial character on the very process of reading and construal .... A mental image produced in the mind of the reader is a bundle of synchronically related information, developing through simultaneously accruing memories and associations of the reader, which invariably are emotionally charged.<sup>369</sup>

In the case of haiku, mental images seem to be especially intense and clearly designed. This results from the use of simple figure-ground alignments and fidelity to sensorial mimesis anchoring the representation in individual and common<sup>370</sup> sense experiences simultaneously. For the same reasons, “quasi-perceptual images” based on the description may come surprisingly close to mental imaging itself. Due to the small size and stylistic simplicity of haiku poems, visualization (or rather “sensorialisation”) of the text is almost instantaneous, flash-like, and intense<sup>371</sup>

No. 1/2, pp. 46–56; E. Balcerzan, ‘Widzialne i niewidzialne,’ pp. 32–45. In the case of haiku there is less emphasis on the so-called indirect linguistic imagery (e.g. use of devices such as similes, enumerations, animalization) – M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, p. 292.

366 However, these are the most vital and frequent in mental imaging, see M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, pp. 278–9, 288 (footnote 74), 290.

367 M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, p. 278.

368 M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, p. 282. (The author refers here to the findings of Keith Opdahl about the reader’s emotions). Rembowska-Pluciennik writes: “I treat the relationship between the word, mental image and emotions ... as a dynamic, multidirectional interaction of three mental codes participating in the reading process, not necessarily dependent on the phrase structure and linearity of concretization, nor on direct or indirect linguistic visibility (*obrazowość*). Visuality is not merely a linguistic category – it has a mental character and accompanies the processing of linguistic information in a continuous manner, of which, however, we are not always aware” (M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, p. 283). For synaesthesia related to mental imaging, see M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, p. 285.

369 M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, p. 294.

370 B. Śniecikowska, ‘Between Poem and Painting, between Individual and Common Experience – the Art of Haiku in Japan and in Poland,’ *Art Inquiry. Recherches sur les Arts*, 2007, Vol. 9 (18), pp. 243–70.

371 “The speed at which readers visualize elements of the world depicted is directly dependant on the linguistic and textual properties of a poem: the greater the complexity, the slower the production of mental images, the slower the reading process, and the more it requires attention and the reader’s commitment”

(after all, these are short poems and roughly sketched representations) – one could talk here of a kind of SENSORIAL (NOT ONLY VISUAL) HYPOTYPOSIS,<sup>372</sup> a “description that is suggestive to the point of tangibility.”<sup>373</sup> One might probably agree that “mental images evoked in readers by superb literary texts tend to eclipse direct sensory stimuli.”<sup>374</sup> However, one can barely talk about this type of “eclipses” in the case of the form that is supremely concise, not stylistically overloaded, and that masterfully grasps mechanisms of perception. This complex, wide-ranging issue can merely be roughly outlined here. These tentative findings will be developed in subsequent sections of this study.

The time has come now to present a selection of representative figure-ground alignments occurring in haiku verse, illustrating the issues discussed above (below I present Japanese haiku, while in the following parts of this study I will quote numerous samples of Polish-language poems as well as English-, French- and Spanish-language texts):

These white clouds  
flow swayed  
by trees' greenness  
Saimaro<sup>375</sup>

the sea darkening,  
a wild duck's call  
faintly white  
Bashō<sup>376</sup>

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(M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, p. 295). The haiku reader's involvement is manifested differently. In haiku it is a momentary relationship (See, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 24–5, and Part 7 of the book). Rembowska-Pluciennik enumerates genres “more markedly based on” mental imaging – these include “descriptive long poem, *obrazek* [a sketch, literary genre popular during Poland's positivist period], thriller, Gothic novel, travel book, or detective novel, wherein the setting (e.g. crime scene) or the movement of protagonists in space are of high importance” (M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, *Poetyka intersubiektywności*, p. 295). I would add haiku to this list, although the role of “flash-like” mental imaging is derived from other properties of poetics.

372 Hypotyposis is typically (but not exclusively) analysed through references to painting. In haiku, reference is based primarily on everyday-life and sensory knowledge. Clear imagery that affects strongly the reader's mind leads to a vivid, though naturally individually profiled, visual presentation.

373 A. Dziadek, *Hipotypoza*, <http://sensorialnosc.bn.org.pl/pl/articles/hipotypoza-69/>, accessed June 24, 2016.

374 Z. Łapiński, *Widziane, wyobrażone*, p. 47 (Łapiński cites the findings of Elaine Scarry).

375 Based on the Polish translation in *Haiku*, [1983], p. 122.

376 Bashō, D. L. Barnhill, *Bashō's Journey*, p. 19.

usually hateful,  
 yet the crow too  
 in this dawn snow  
 Bashō<sup>377</sup>

The evening breezes—  
 The water splashes against  
 A blue heron's shins!  
 Bashō<sup>378</sup>

clear cascade stream —  
 falling into the waves,  
 green pine needles  
 Bashō<sup>379</sup>

as though  
 plowing the field  
 walks the crow  
 Issa<sup>380</sup>

The bat  
 Lives hidden  
 Under the broken umbrella  
 Buson<sup>381</sup>

in morning dew,  
 dirty and cool,  
 a mud-smeared melon  
 Bashō<sup>382</sup>

whiter than  
 the stones of Stone Mountain  
 autumn's wind  
 Bashō<sup>383</sup>

snow morning:  
 alone, I manage to chew  
 dried salmon  
 Bashō<sup>384</sup>

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377 M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 14.

378 D. Keen, *World Within Walls*, p. 351.

379 M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 148.

380 S. Addiss, *The Art of Haiku*, p. 246.

381 R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 4, p. 1256.

382 M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 148.

383 M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 100.

384 M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 26.

Crawl out  
from under the shed  
toad-croak  
Bashō<sup>385</sup>

How clear –  
cicada over  
sunset lake.  
Issa<sup>386</sup>

How lovely,  
Through the torn paper-window,  
The Milky Way.  
Issa<sup>387</sup>

A brushwood gate;  
For a lock,  
This snail.  
Issa<sup>388</sup>

even in snow  
the noonflower does not wither:  
the sun's light  
Bashō<sup>389</sup>

paper kite  
in the same place as it was  
in yesterday's sky  
Buson<sup>390</sup>

Winter desolation  
in the northern shade of the house  
I pick a tuberose bulb  
Buson<sup>391</sup>

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385 M. Bashō, *Moon Woke Me Up Nine Times: Selected Haiku of Bashō*, New York, 2013, p. vii.

386 K. Issa *The Dumpling Field*, transl. L. Stryk and N. Fujiwara, Athens, 1991, p. 37.

387 R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 3, p. 920.

388 R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 3, p. 830.

389 M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 27.

390 Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival*, Leiden, Boston, 2007, p. 91.

391 English translation based on the Polish translation in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 142.

The short night;  
 Upon the hairy caterpillar,  
 Beads of dew  
 Buson<sup>392</sup>

Moonlight –  
 Blind boy  
 Calling out in vain  
 Issa<sup>393</sup>

Beautiful full moon—  
 nothing extraordinary  
 to the old scarecrow  
 Issa<sup>394</sup>

a yellow-green spider  
 crawling on  
 a red rose  
 Shiki<sup>395</sup>

Reaped rice paddy  
 and helpless camellias  
 by the dirt road.  
 Shiki<sup>396</sup>

In lightning flashes  
 A glimpse of a human figure  
 On a dirt road  
 Shiki<sup>397</sup>

The desolation of winter;  
 passing through a small hamlet,  
 a dog barks.  
 Shiki<sup>398</sup>

Amid snow  
 Sunray blooms alive

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392 R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 3, p. 671.

393 English translation based on the Polish translation in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 208.

394 K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life and Selected Haiku*, transl. Sam Hamill, Boston, 1997, p. 109.

395 English translation based on the Polish rendering in R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, p. 81.

396 English translation based on the Polish rendering in R. Krynicki, *Haiku*, p. 85.

397 English translation based on the Polish rendering in R. Krynicki, *Haiku*, p. 87.

398 English translation based on the Polish rendering in R. Krynicki, *Haiku*, p. 106.

with noonflower

Bashō<sup>399</sup>

Just outside the smoke  
Of the smudge,  
Mosquitoes are humming.  
Shirao<sup>400</sup>

The cry of the cuckoo  
goes slanting—ah!  
across the water  
Bashō<sup>401</sup>

spring rains—  
Two houses stand before  
The swollen river  
Buson<sup>402</sup>

The prominence of figure-ground alignments in classical haiku verse is often determined by the separation of both elements by means of the above-mentioned untranslatable intra-strophic caesura – *kireji*.<sup>403</sup> It is often associated with certain isolation of the former (introduction, exposition) or of the final text unit (poem's ending and the "finishing" of the image), giving rise to slightly biphasic and bifocal imagery. For example, in Bashō's famous *hokku* with the frog jumping into a pond, the *kireji* occurs after the first rhythmic unit comprising the "old pool." The "frog," "jump" and "splash/plop" fill the remaining part of the poem.<sup>404</sup> Naturally, Western haijins have no way of using Japanese particles as haiku caesuras. However, they can employ sharp image cuts to effect an internal division of a poem (and even its individual lines) and to suggest internal tensions and ambiguities.<sup>405</sup> I define

399 English translation based on the Polish rendering in R. Krynicki, *Haiku*, p. 107.

400 R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 3, p. 137.

401 R. Aitken, *A Zen Wave*, p. 40.

402 H. Larrabee, *Haiku: Classic Japanese Short Poems*, p. 43.

403 See A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Okolice poetyki*, pp. 9–14; A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'O *kireji*,' pp. 65–70.

404 K. Sugawara, 'Devising Context,' p. 230. I discuss translations of this *hokku* in more detail in the chapter 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'

405 I discuss this problem at greater length in Part 5 of the book, making use of the category of pictorial *kireji* in my analyses of the most "genuine" Polish-language haiku poems. See also investigations presented in the article by Mariusz Bartosiak '“Szelest kwitnących wiśni” w najnowszej poezji polskiej. Korespondencje z klasyczną estetyką japońską,' [*The Rustle of Blooming Cherries in the Latest Polish Poetry. The Correspondences with Classical Japanese Aesthetics*]' in *Nowa poezja*



sudden juxtapositional transitions between successive parts of the image (frames, details, the close-up view and the general view) or between images themselves as PICTORIAL *KIREJI*. In such arrangements, analogies with experiences of European avant-gardes, especially Cubism, have been traced (which can sometimes be a bit far-fetched).<sup>406</sup>

It should also be noted that, on occasions, the entire text of a classical haiku is filled with a uniform background plane – typically embedded in one sense, sometimes made up of intermingling sensations of disparate senses:

The day became beautiful on the snow.  
A blanket of fresh snow  
glistens under the sun.  
Taigi<sup>407</sup>

The sea of spring,  
Rising and falling,  
All the day long.  
Buson<sup>408</sup>

Silvery fish  
hatching relentlessly  
or is it the night fog  
Issa<sup>409</sup>

Suggestive sensorial images can sometimes be employed metaphorically, but this does not tone down their sensorial charge. Especially as the “endpoint” of these metaphors is typically the depiction of nature and not the linguistically refined description of the human world:

the solitary nun  
aloof in her straw hut:  
white azalia  
Bashō<sup>410</sup>

*polska. Twórcy – tematy – motywy* [New Polish Poetry. Authors – Themes – Motifs], eds. T. Cieślak, K. Pietrych, Kraków, 2009, pp. 513–22.

406 See, for example, J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre,’ pp. 700–4; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, passim (esp. pp. 8, 49).

407 English translation based on the Polish rendering in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 201.

408 R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 2, p. 453. See also T. Ichiki, *Suggestive Brevity. Haiku into the World*, Kyoto, 1985, p. 12.

409 English translation based on the Polish rendering in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 89.

410 *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 111.

A leaky ladle  
 comes rolling across the field  
 autumn wind  
 Buson<sup>411</sup>

Naturally, not all classic seventeen-syllable poems can be fitted into the patterns discussed here, it seems, however, that such systems are typical for a significant number of poems. Sometimes – yet rather sporadically – *haijin* reaches the limits of verbalization. In such cases, a poem can become a lyrical account of the inexpressibility of experience:

This! This!  
 I could only say at blossoms  
 of Mount Yoshino  
 Teishitsu<sup>412</sup>

Matsushima!  
 Matsushima!  
 oh! Matsushima!  
 Bashō<sup>413</sup>

In this book, I set out to show the broadest possible intricacies – and entanglements – of miniature verse transplanted to the West. Of utmost interest to me, however, is the very transformation of European poetry, and Polish poetry in particular. Inevitably, the next stage in our investigations is the reconstruction of haiku's roads to Western literature.

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411 English translation based on the Polish rendering in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 166.

412 Aitken, *A Zen Wave*, p. 115.

413 H. Akmakjian, *Snow Falling From a Bamboo Leaf: The Art of Haiku*, Santa Barbara, 1979, p. 12.

## Part 2 Roads to Haiku: In the West

*The possibility of haiku being easily understood by someone unfamiliar with the language and the culture is obviously remote, and yet if what haiku was thought to be was imitated and promulgated, who may sneer? [...] the point is that significant poetry has often resulted from such partial understanding.*

Earl Miner<sup>1</sup>

### I. Haiku in Europe, Haiku across the Pond

In Western Europe and the Americas, haiku took root and gained considerable acclaim as early as the beginning of the twentieth century. This genre has even been considered the source of “the most powerful poetic influence upon western poetry in the last century,”<sup>2</sup> that “came to serve as a crucial apprentice form for so many modern writers in the West.”<sup>3</sup> Polish scholars for the most part point to the Imagist origins of non-Oriental forms of the genre.<sup>4</sup> This is a significant oversimplification, disregarding vital facts from the history of “one of the few truly international genres of the twentieth century.”<sup>5</sup>

It is not my ambition to provide a thorough description of Occidental roads to haiku, and, besides, in recent years this issue has been quite extensively discussed.<sup>6</sup>

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- 1 E. Miner, ‘Pound, Haiku and the Image,’ *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter, 1957), p. 570.
  - 2 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics in Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Poetry*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–Toronto–Plymouth, 2011, p. 6.
  - 3 J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre. Fellow-Traveler of Modernism,’ in *Modernism*, Vol. 2, eds. A. Eysteinson, V. Liska, Amsterdam–Philadelphia, 2007, p. 693.
  - 4 See, for example, P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii nowoczesnej,’ in P. Michałowski, *Głosy, formy, światy. Warianty poezji nowoczesnej*, Kraków, 2008, pp. 142–3. Among the few Polish authors mentioning non-Imagist sources of haiku in the West are Leszek Engelking (‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie pod bananowcem,’ in *Droga na Wschód. Polskie inspiracje orientalne. Materiały z forum dyskusyjnego*, ed. and with an introduction by D. Kalinowski, Słupsk, 2000, pp. 119–120), and Andrzej Szuba (‘Haiku w Stanach Zjednoczonych i Kanadzie’ [Haiku in the United States and Canada], *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 1, pp. 268–73). For more on Imagism and haiku, see the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’
  - 5 J. W. Hokenson, *Haiku as a Western Genre*, p. 693.
  - 6 See esp. J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*; J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre;’ Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, New York, 2009.

I would like to raise only a handful of key issues, also crucial for a wider view of Polish poetry's discovery of haiku. Jeffrey Johnson writes:

After the first translations of haiku appeared between 1898 and 1906,<sup>7</sup> haiku became unquestionably the most popular and widely circulated example of image-centred, non-narrative poetry available to western reformers. Its influence seemed to know no language or geographical boundaries and it appeared almost simultaneously and spread rapidly throughout the continents of North America, South America, and Europe during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Its vogue [...] seemed to be enhanced during World War I but was truncated by the Second World War. Once it resurfaced in the avant-garde of the fifties, it ran for the duration of the century.<sup>8</sup>

Jan Walsh Hokenson has pointed to four key facts that were crucial to "the haiku's modernist career":<sup>9</sup>

1. The considerable influence (from around 1860 onwards) of Japanese visual arts on the Western artist (redefinition of formal foundations of artistic practices, reconfiguration of mimesis, the demise of illusionism, and new ways of seeing and representing the world).<sup>10</sup>
2. French translations of haiku and tanka verse, initially published in magazines and limited-edition book publications (Léon de Rosny's *Anthologie*, 1871; *Poèmes de la libellule* by Judith Gautier, 1885). These translations – due to their literary (especially in the case of Gautier's books) and visual (for instance, *Anthologie* featured original Japanese *kanji* texts) qualities – exerted significant influence on the artistic milieu.
3. Highly influential English-language publications (1877–1911) of haiku translations and accompanying literary-theoretical discussions by Basil Hall Chamberlain. These volumes enjoyed great popularity in London, Boston, and New York. Chamberlain's opinions were cited by numerous translators, researchers, and editors describing haiku in various European languages, including Karl Florenz, August Pfizmaier, William Aston,<sup>11</sup> and William Porter. Even if, as Hokenson claims,<sup>12</sup> Chamberlain's

7 Jan Walsh Hokenson also describes in detail earlier Western translations of haiku (which will be discussed below). See J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 693 and ff.

8 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 41.

9 J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 695. The above list is based on J. W. Hokenson, *Haiku*, pp. 695–9. A slightly different view is presented by Johnson – see J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 6 and ff.

10 I discuss this topic at length in Part 7 of the book. See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 87.

11 For Aston's translations, see J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 28–35.

12 According to Hokenson, Chamberlain "viewed the haiku as minor exemplar of a primitive (and 'feminine') literature deficient in the West's highest values, [and wrote] "what Japanese literature most lacks is genius. It lacks thought, logical grasp, depth, breadth, and many-sidedness." (J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 695). Nevertheless, Chamberlain's translations and commentary are proof to his considerable knowledge and decent (while at the same time somewhat reductive)

pronouncements should be seen as a manifestation of the colonial approach to distant cultures, the popularizing significance of his writings cannot be overestimated.

4. Writings of Paul Louis Couchoud (starting from 1905)<sup>13</sup> and his successors, crucial for the continued reception of haiku within European modernism (especially the French, but also the English one – Couchoud was read by, amongst others, Thomas Ernest Hulme and Frank Stuart Flint). Couchoud is by no means belittling this small literary form and sees in haiku much more than merely a pictorial ornament (viewing Japan's cultural heritage as equal to Greek or Italian heritage). In this East-Asian miniature verse, he values the juxtapositional discontinuity (opposed to Occidental rhetoricity), sensoriality, instantaneity, non-intellectuality, and, finally, considerable reader involvement.<sup>14</sup>

Considered among the first Western writers of haiku are<sup>15</sup> José Juan Tablada (his first attempts at haiku-making date back to 1902), Couchoud (works from 1905

understanding of haikins' poetry. See, for example, B. H. Chamberlain, 'Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram,' in B. H. Chamberlain, *Japanese Poetry*, London, 1911, pp. 145–260.

- 13 Most notably, Couchoud's 1906 essay on haiku (complete with his translations), whose extended version was published as *Sages et poètes d'Asie* in 1916 and went through several French reprintings as well as saw multiple European translations. See also J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 35–9.
- 14 Hokenson clearly distinguishes the English, colonial, reductive view of haiku (writings of Chamberlain and his followers) and its French reading, closer to the understanding of the essential values of this form, begun by Couchoud, who "placed it [haiku] firmly on the modernist ground, inserting it into contemporary discourses of Cubism and literary modernism as 'discontinuous poetry'" (J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 694). Hokenson goes as far as to say that "the Anglo-American critical concept of the haiku is anomalous" (p. 693; Johnson sees this issue differently – see J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 61 and ff). In Hokenson's view, however, haiku evidently loses significant artistic values – she sees here primarily the condensing, picking out and naming of concrete things. Following Couchoud, she presents a vision of "the literary genre from which LITERATURE is the most completely excluded" (J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 694; emphasis in original). As it would seem, Hokenson fails to notice that haiku is an economical yet artistically refined form employing a variety of stylistic devices. Furthermore, her analyses lose sight of haiku's sensoriality (which at first was strongly emphasized by the author) – as excellent examples of haiku Hokenson presents poems that for all practical purposes are aphorisms or epigrams). Finally, her illuminating line of reasoning is also adversely affected by oversimplifying descriptions of classical Japanese haiku per se and by the fact that the pen name of the most acclaimed haikin is spelt "Bash" (!).
- 15 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 42; J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 694; W. J. Higginson, P. Harter, 'Early Haiku in the West,' in W. J. Higginson, P. Harter, *The Haiku Handbook. How to Write, Share and Teach Haiku*, Tokyo–New York–London, 1989, pp. 49–57. In this and subsequent parts of this book, I refer to the work of selected Western poets.

onwards), Antonio Machado (from 1907), Thomas Ernest Hulme (from 1908), and Ezra Pound (from 1911). Shortly before World War I, there was a significant surge in the genre's popularity, brought about, amongst other things, by widely influential translations by Yone Noguchi,<sup>16</sup> Curtis Page, Michel Revon, and William Porter.<sup>17</sup> In the following years, haiku writing was also practised on the battlefield by artists directly participating in the war: Julien Vocance, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Paul Éluard, and Richard Aldington. Haiku turned out to be a modern form ideal for recording traumatic combat experience – simple, nonjudgmental, and focusing on sense experiences.<sup>18</sup>

Parallels with the haiku form (sometimes controversial ones) have also been detected in the work of Stéphane Mallarmé and Guillaume Apollinaire,<sup>19</sup> in Imagist verse (the already mentioned Pound, Hulme, Flint, Aldington as well as Amy Lowell, John Gould Fletcher, and Hilda Doolittle),<sup>20</sup> in the work of French surrealists (Éluard, Louis Aragon, Max Jacob, André Breton, and Jean Cocteau),<sup>21</sup> in modernist Spanish poetry (Machado, Federico García Lorca, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Juan José Domenchina, and Guillermo de Torre).<sup>22</sup> Analyses have been made of Haiku's influence on the poetry of German-language authors: Rainer Maria Rilke, Arno Holz, Paul Ernst, Imma von Bodmershof, Alfred Mombert, and Max Dautheney,<sup>23</sup> affinities with haiku have been pointed

16 See Y. Hakutani, 'Yone Noguchi and Japanese Poetics,' in Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, pp. 37–51.

17 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 100.

18 J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 694; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 101–4.

19 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 44–5, 88 and ff; J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 704.

20 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 61–86; Y. Hakutani, 'Ezra Pound, Imagism, and Japanese Poetics,' in J. Johnson, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, pp. 69–88.

21 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 104–13; J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' pp 704–5.

22 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 117–52; G. L. Brower, 'The Japanese Haiku in Hispanic Poetry,' *Monumenta Nipponica*, 1968, Vol. 23, No. 1/2, pp. 187–9.

23 See F. Heller, 'Haiku w niemieckim obszarze językowym' [Haiku in the German-language World], in *Ślady stóp wiatru. Haiku z Niemiec, Austrii i Szwajcarii* [Footprints of Wind. Haiku from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland], with an introduction by F. Heller, selected, transl., and ed. by P. W. Lorkowski, Kraków, 1996, p. 6; T. Krajewski, 'Krótka forma poetycka w liryce światowej' [A Short Poetic Form in World Poetry], in *Ślady stóp wiatru*, p. 110; Y. Shibata, 'The Influence of Haiku on Rilke,' *Interlitteraria*, 1998, No. 3, pp. 335–45 (the text discussed later French-language verses of the poet); M. Motoyoshi, 'Das japanische Kurzgedicht in der europäischen Moderne,' in *Humanität in einer pluralistischen Welt?*, hrsg. Ch. Kluwe, J. Schneider, Würzburg, 2000, p. 203 and ff.; see also J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 707; p. Sommerkamp, *Die deutschsprachige Haiku-Dichtung. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, <http://tereess.hu/english/haiku/deutsch.html>, accessed November 15, 2014.

out in the work of numerous Latin American poets (Tablada, José Rúbén Romero, Francisco Monterde, Jorge Luis Borges, Octavio Paz, Haroldo de Campos, Pedro Xisto).<sup>24</sup> Finally, haiku's linkages with the work of Beat poets (Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder) is a widely discussed issue in its own right.<sup>25</sup> The more recent popularity of the genre can also be linked to New Age movements. It should be added that Polish translations of texts of Western haikuists are relatively few in number and for the most part scattered in various magazines.<sup>26</sup>

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24 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 155–88.

25 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 189–219; Y. Hakutani, 'Jack Kerouac's Haiku and Beat Poetics,' in Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, pp. 89–109. See also chapter 'Haiku? Senryū? Mironū? Miron Białoszewski and Haiku.'

26 The relatively moderate number of translations by Leszek Engelking as well as renderings by Andrzej Szuba and Krystyna Rodowska (even fewer in number) can be found primarily in literary magazines (See, for example, 'Haiku' – wybór [Haiku – a Selection], transl. L. Engelking, *Tytuł*, 1995, No. 3/4b, pp. 348–60; 'Haiku poetów Stanów Zjednoczonych i Kanady,' transl. L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 1, pp. 218–53; 'Haiku poetów Meksyku' [Haiku by Mexican Poets], transl. L. Engelking, K. Rodowska, *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 1, pp. 254–67; O. Paz, 'Południe, Później' [Noon, Later], transl. K. Rodowska, *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1990, No. 6, p. 7; O. Paz, 'Wiersze,' *Kresy*, 1994, No. 17, p. 80). We also have an anthology of Czesław Miłosz' translations of modern English-language haiku verse alongside Japanese classics (*Cz. Miłosz, Haiku*, introduction by Cz. Miłosz, Kraków 1992), *Antologia haiku kanadyjskiego* (translated and introduction by E. Tomaszewska, Kraków, 1993) and a small volume by Leszek Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze* [Own and Someone Else's Haiku] (Kraków, 1990), bringing together original miniature verses composed by the Polish poet alongside translations of classical Japanese haiku and haiku by Western poets (Amy Lowell, Richard Wright, Jorge Luis Borges). Several miniature verses written by contemporary American poets and close to the haiku prototype (Larry Gates, Robert Spiess, Mabelsson Norway, Geraldine C. Little) found their way, through Andrzej Szuba's translations, to the article by Stanisław Jasionowicz, 'Lektura bez interpretacji? (Czytając wiersze haiku)' [A Reading without an Interpretation? (Reading Haiku Poems)], *Dekada Literacka*, 1992, No. 20 (56), p. 4. See also 'Haiku amerykańskie,' [American Haiku] transl. A. Szuba, in *Metafora haiku* [Haiku Metaphor], ed. E. Tomaszewska, Kraków–Warszawa, 1994, pp. 15–7; 'Haiku z Chorwacji' [Haiku from Croatia], transl. E. Budzyńska, ed. P.W. Lorkowski, in *Metafora haiku*, pp. 25–6; 'Niemieckojęzyczne haiku' [German-language Haiku], transl. P.W. Lorkowski, in *Metafora haiku*, pp. 28–9; *Ślady stóp wiatru; "petals on a wet black bough."* *Poezja Imagistyczna angielskiego modernizmu* ["petals on a wet black bough." Imagist Poetry of English Modernism], with an introduction and transl. by S. Wąciór, Lublin 2002; L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir. Antologia anglo-amerykańskiego imagizmu* [Image and Vortex. Anthology of Anglo-American Imagism], Warszawa, 2016. This is not an impressive selection, nor – more importantly – does it present poems that intensively explore haiku's "frontiers."

In my opinion, the influence of Japanese miniature poetry on transformations of Western literature tends to be grossly overemphasized. Jeffrey Johnson views haiku as the main (!) driving force behind the changes of modernist, post-symbolist poetry of the second and third decades of the twentieth century and one of the chief catalysts for the ongoing evolution of literary art.<sup>27</sup> Haiku has been linked to cubism, impressionism, *arte povera*, and cinematic montage.<sup>28</sup> Undoubtedly, the typical features of East-Asian miniature verse: condensation, understatement, juxtaposition techniques, syntactic, and visual discontinuity,<sup>29</sup> played a significant role in the modernist transformations of poetry, and art, of the West. These lineaments of the Oriental seventeen-syllable verses open the possibility of connecting seemingly extremely distant works (e.g. classical haiku—collage). However, besides the influence of “Japanism,” one should take notice of many other impulses conducive to the transcultural convergence of forms.<sup>30</sup>

The most important question I bring up in this part of the book concerns precisely the problem of convergence. The main area of speculation here is Polish literature until the mid-1970s (one of the turning points is the publication of the monographic haiku-centred issue of the *Poezja* magazine, 1975, No. 1, which paved the way for Stanisław Grochowiak’s *Haiku-images*).<sup>31</sup> Can we even talk about the literary – and literary-theoretical – presence of haiku in Poland before the belated (when compared to other European countries)<sup>32</sup> explosion of this genre in the last quarter of the twentieth century?

27 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 88–8. See also Part 7 of this book.

28 See, for example, J. W. Hokenson, *Haiku as a Western Genre*, pp. 700–4; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, passim (esp. pp. 8, 49).

29 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 88–9.

30 Much more acceptable is the measured judgement expressed by Piotr Michałowski: “Interest in this genre [haiku] in the European-American cultural world is related to the peak of the broadly conceived modernism and cannot be reduced to just another stage of fascination with the Orient, preceded by a similar fad in the eighteenth century or in European Romanticism. This time, the inspiration of Eastern methods of poetry-making distinctly begins to bolster the emergent paradigm of modernity. Haiku’s ideology harmonised with the main tenets of modern poetry, serving as a sort of accompaniment stimulating experiments of modernists, providing them with arguments and revealing new, hitherto unexplored horizons of poetics. This resulted in an encounter of distant traditions, Mediterranean and Oriental, and a confrontation of religious and philosophical foundations of both cultures: Judeo-Christian and Confucian-Buddhist, although it should be added here that the idea was not to effect an equal dialogue between cultures, but merely to enrich Western poetry with pragmatically selected Oriental themes.” (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ p. 142).

31 For more on this subject, see the chapter *Grochowiak’s Longest Journey*.

32 To Czech Republic and Slovakia as well – see L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 121.



## II. *Vorgeschichte* of Haiku in Poland: Young Poland, the Interwar Period

The investigation of the beginnings of interest in haiku in Poland has been, in comparison with the tracing of the genre's origin in France, England or Germany, a difficult process relying on circumstantial evidence. One has to start by studying the potential "haiku-ness" of Young Poland and interwar poetry. Some literary-theoretical practices – and omissions – are puzzling. For example, the "haiku-like" quality of poems by Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska (who never used the genre terms "haiku," "hokku" or "haikai") has been repeatedly pointed out, yet the problem has never been explored further; the interesting episode in Anatol Stern's early poetic output, the "hay-kay" (to use the poet's term) in his volume *Futuryzje* [Futurisations], was overlooked; finally, recently an examination was undertaken, surprising at first glance, of connections between haiku and the poetry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Closer inspection from the haiku perspective should also be given to Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's *Uty*, placed time and again in the Oriental context (but also his *Piosenki* [Songs] from *Oktostychy* [Octastichs] or *Bilety tramwajowe* [Tram Tickets], the work of Julian Przyboś linked to the poetics of Japanese miniature verse, the poetry (and translation work) of Leopold Staff, as well as the interwar poetic output of Czesław Miłosz.<sup>33</sup>

Our explorations should start by answering several questions about the literature and literary studies of the Young Poland period. To what extent could Japanese seventeen-syllable verses have been known to the Polish authors of the first decades of the twentieth century?<sup>34</sup> How much was known about haiku? Finally, was there any transcultural convergence of poetic forms (haiku and Polish poetry of the turn of the twentieth century)?

### 1. Knowledge of Haiku (Prior to 1939)

To begin with, I want to offer a corrective to opinions about the knowledge of haiku during Young Poland and later in the interwar period.

Given the early history of the genre in Western Europe and the Americas, it comes as no surprise that Polish audiences of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were much more familiar with Japanese theatre and visual arts (chiefly woodblock prints and applied arts) than with the local literature,

33 The interwar poetry of Miłosz is discussed in the chapter 'Poetry of Mindfulness – Czesław Miłosz and Haiku.'

34 *En masse* Japanism has been discussed by Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska ('Inspiracje japońskie w literaturze Młodej Polski. Rekonesans' [Japanese Inspirations in the Literature of the Young Poland Period. A Reconnaissance], *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1983, No. 2, pp. 61–82) and Katarzyna Deja (*Polski japonizm literacki 1900–1939* [Polish Literary Japanism 1900–1939], Kraków, 2021). From the perspective of haiku research, Podraza-Kwiatkowska's intuitions demand a more detailed treatment.

which requires particularly competent translation.<sup>35</sup> What is curious, however, is the almost total omission of haiku in Polish translation praxis<sup>36</sup> and specialist literary-theoretical texts. The only publication touching upon issues of Japanese literary art is an outline of universal literature, the second volume of Julian Adolf Świącicki's *Historia literatury powszechnej* [History of World Literature] (which, in the Young Poland period, went through several editions).<sup>37</sup> No further information about haiku is provided there, except for this surprising mention on the last page: "That 'Tanka' and 'Haikai' will not return is beyond doubt."<sup>38</sup> Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska mentions, in the Japanese context, the popularizing *Literatura japońska* by Remigiusz Kwiatkowski,<sup>39</sup> however, she fails to note that this is actually an abridgement and compilation of Świącicki's earlier texts. The catalogue of glaring literary-critical omissions does not end here. In Kwiatkowski's anthology *Chiakunin-Izzu (Hyakunin isshu)*,<sup>40</sup> which was republished several times and has repeatedly been referenced by scholars writing about Polish links with the

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- 35 See M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Inspiracje japońskie*, pp. 61–82; E. Tomaszewska, 'Inspiracje japońskie w kulturze i sztuce europejskiej' [Japanese Inspirations in European Culture and Art], in *Antologia polskiego haiku* [Anthology of Polish Haiku], ed. and with an introduction by E. Tomaszewska, Warszawa, 2001, pp. 7–17. I discuss Japonism in Polish visual arts at length in Part 7 of this study (wherein the reader will also find an extensive bibliography on the subject).
- 36 Michałowski claims that "first Polish translations of haiku poetry date from the late nineteenth century" (P. Michałowski, 'Haiku,' in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin, 1999, p. 74, footnote 19). However, he does not furnish any precise information, and already in the next sentence writes about the work of Stefan Łubiński (misspelling the latter's name as Łupieński) and Bogdan Richter from the 1920s and 1930s (I discuss these translations later in this chapter). I have established that in the nineteenth century no Polish translation of haiku was published (and probably no such translation was ever made). The earliest Polish translation of haiku verse is probably a rendering of a poem by the woman-writer Chiyo, who composed it after her son's death, published in the Polish version of the poetry-infused book by Inazo Nitobe, *Bushidō: dusza Japonii*, Lwów–Warszawa, 1904, p. 65 (the author's and translator's name are not available; rpt. Warszawa, 1993, quote – p. 70, English edition Inazo Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, Tokyo, 2002; see also W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec haiku,' *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 16). The text published in *Bushidō* (divided into two lines) reads as follows: "Gdzież to pobiegł dziś mój mały myśliwiec / Aby nałowić sobie ważek" [Where has my little hunter run today / To catch dragonflies].
- 37 See J. A. Świącicki, *Historia literatury powszechnej*, Vol. 2: *Historia literatury chińskiej i japońskiej* [History of Chinese and Japanese Literature], Warszawa, 1901.
- 38 J. A. Świącicki, *Historia literatury powszechnej*, p. 435.
- 39 See R. Kwiatkowski, *Literatura japońska*, Warszawa, 1908; M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, 'Inspiracje japońskie,' p. 76.
- 40 See R. Kwiatkowski, *Literatura japońska*, Warszawa, 1908; M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, 'Inspiracje japońskie,' p. 76.

Far East, the reader will not find even a single mention of haiku. The author is solely absorbed with the translation of 31-syllable tanka. In any case, these are not overly successful attempts, as the triolet system<sup>41</sup> misrepresents the key form of Japanese poetry that is organised around completely different formal rigours.<sup>42</sup> Much better translations of tanka by Maria Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa and her competent measured descriptions of the poetics of these poems can be found in a 1912 issue of *Tygodnik Polski*.<sup>43</sup> Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa also mentions *hokku* (she translates four poems, additionally enhancing them with obtrusive rhymes for artistic effect) – but provides rather scanty information.<sup>44</sup> However, in Antoni

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- 41 Kwiatkowski squeezed a variety of Oriental texts into the straitjacket of the elaborate triolet. He accorded this form (completely eliminating their aphoristic “flash-like” quality) to his translations of Chinese, Japanese, and Indian aphorisms (See, for example, R. Kwiatkowski, *Parasol noś i przy pogodzie. Przekłady aforyzmów wschodnich* [Take an Umbrella even in a Good Weather. Translations of Eastern Aphorisms], Poznań, 1921; R. Kwiatkowski, *I nocą nie wychodź nago... Aforyzmy wschodnie* [And at Night, do not Go out Naked... Eastern Aphorisms], Poznań–Warszawa, Wilno, n.d. [1921]; R. Kwiatkowski, *Nie zaglądaj za parawan... Orientaljów seria 3* [Don't Look behind the Screen... Orinetalia Series 3], Warszawa, n.d. [ca 1925]). As emphasized by Wiesław Kotański, we cannot really speak of translation here: “these are only travesties of Eastern themes, composed in the same manner regardless of the content and origin of themes from various parts of the Orient.” (W. Kotański, ‘Z czego śmieje się Japończyk?’, *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, 1952, No. 4, p. 119).
- 42 Kwiatkowski’s translations and literary-critical summaries profiled the Polish reception of Japanese verse in a peculiar way distant from the spirit of the originals, occasionally showing that the translator’s level of competence was not too high. (See, for example, W. Kotański, ‘Z czego śmieje się Japończyk?’, pp. 119–28). The artificiality of the triolet form in haiku translations is best seen in the volume *Poezja starojapońska* [Old Japanese Poetry] (selected, ed., and with an introduction by A. Żuławska-Umeda, Warszawa, 1984) bringing together Japanese poems (mainly tanka) translated by various Polish translators: Kwiatkowski, Kotański, Kamil Seyfried, Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda, and Aleksander Janta. See also, for example, J. Kwiatkowski, *Poezja Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza na tle dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* [The Poetry of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz against the Backdrop of the Interwar Period], Warszawa, 1975, pp. 218–21; M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie,’ pp. 78–9.
- 43 M. Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa, ‘Poezja japońska’ [Japanese Poetry], *Tygodnik Polski*, 1912, No. 4, pp. 53–7. Translations: *Z poezji japońskich* [A Selection of Japanese Poetry], transl. M. Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa, *Tygodnik Polski*, 1912, No. 4, pp. 54–7. See also M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie,’ p. 81.
- 44 M. Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa, ‘Poezja japońska,’ p. 57. Maria Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa translates, among others, the famous conceptual poem by Arakida Moritake. Unlike in her tanka translations, there are clear attempts here to make these miniatures more attractive (a single rhyme scheme, personification):  
Opadły zwiędły kwiat [A fallen withered flower

Lange's anthology *Sintaisi-Sho* we do not find any haiku.<sup>45</sup> Lange also passed over this Japanese poetic form in his literary-critical introduction to *Sintaisi-Sho* dealing with Japanese poetry of the nineteenth century (even though this genre also flourished during this century). The poetic seventeen-syllable verse is also overlooked by Juliusz Starkel, despite the fact that his *Obrazki z Japonii* [Pictures from Japan] treats of Japanese poetry and painting.<sup>46</sup> In the early years of the twentieth century, several works by the Japan enthusiast Lafcadio were published in Poland – however, these again did not provide any information about haiku ('s books chiefly include essays on Japanese mores and Japanese stories from various periods).<sup>47</sup> Even so, haiku, tanka and other types of lyric verse were woven through the prose of Waclaw Sieroszewski.<sup>48</sup> The reader also found therein perceptive yet sketchy outlines of Japanese literature and art.<sup>49</sup> Despite that, one can hardly talk of any systematic account in the case of remarks cropping up unpredictably here and there in various texts of this author.<sup>50</sup>

In fact, the only study on haiku properly belonging to the Young-Poland period is the essay *Haikai* by Adolf Nowaczyński,<sup>51</sup> who, interestingly, was regarded as a die-hard Occidentalist.<sup>52</sup> Literary-theoretical misunderstandings abound in and

Ku swej gałęzi wraca rad: Gladly returns to its branch:

Motyl w przepychu szat A butterfly in rich attire]

(Wiesław Kotański's rendering of this poem is quoted in the chapter *Intertextuality*).

- 45 See *Sintaisi-sho. Poeci nowojapońscy* [*Sintaisi-sho. New Japanese Poets*], transl. A. Lange, with an outline of the history of nineteenth-century Japanese literature, Warszawa, 1908.
- 46 J. Starkel, *Obrazki z Japonii*, pp. 1–2, Warszawa, 1904.
- 47 See, for example, L. Hearn, *Ko-Ko-Ro*, Kraków, 1906; L., *Lotos. Rzut oka na nieznaną Japonię*, transl. D. Z., Warszawa, n.d. (probably ca 1909; the book was reissued in the 1920s, English edition L. Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, Cambridge, Mass., 1894.); L. Hearn, *Japonja*, transl. B. Bielecka, ed. A. Lange, Warszawa, n.d. [the late 1920s], 2nd edition: Warszawa, 1932.
- 48 W. Sieroszewski, 'Japonja w zarysie' [Japan: an Outline], in W. Sieroszewski, *Z fali na falę* [From Wave to Wave], Kraków, n.d., pp. 9, 40–1.
- 49 "The assertion that Japanese painting is solely ornamental is an outright falsehood. It does possess, however, one feature that is independent of the theme and mood of paintings – it is, much like a Japanese poem, like a minuscule "tanka" or "haikai" – a masterful hint rather than an image of reality, first and foremost seeking to evoke a painterly impression through a vivid visual presentation of an object" (W. Sieroszewski, 'Japonja w zarysie,' pp. 40–1).
- 50 See also Z. Kempf, *Orientalizm Waclawa Sieroszewskiego. Wątki japońskie* [Waclaw Sieroszewski's Orientalism. Japanese Threads], Warszawa-Wrocław, 1982, pp. 79–97.
- 51 See A. Nowaczyński, 'Haikai,' in A. Nowaczyński, *Co czasy niosą* [What the Time Bring], Warszawa-Lwów, 1909, pp. 57–68.
- 52 See E. Kuźma, *Mit Orientu i kultury Zachodu w literaturze XIX i XX wieku* [The Myth of the Orient and Western Culture in the Literature of the 19th and 20th Centuries], Szczecin, 1980, pp. 183–5, 257.

about this text. As Podraza-Kwiatkowska declares: “Mocking, derisive *haikai* were particularly suited to Nowaczyński’s writerly temperament, so he enthusiastically extolled ‘lofty *haikai*, invincible *haikai*, immortal *haikai*.’”<sup>53</sup> It is hard to see why Podraza-Kwiatkowska writes about the purportedly derisive *haikai* – this Oriental form (in Nowaczyński’s text, *haikai* is synonymous with haiku and *hokku*),<sup>54</sup> especially in the poetry of Matsuo Bashō, to whom the essay’s author refers, utterly fails to match her description. Perhaps Podraza-Kwiatkowska refers (in this case illegitimately) to the haiku of the Danrin School or to the *zappai* variety, or maybe she has mistaken haiku for its ironic “reverse,” *senryū*.<sup>55</sup> Without doubt, however, Nowaczyński does not write about *senryū*; let us also remember that the information he provides has little to do with literary-theoretical accuracy. A clear discussion of this concise, disciplined form (defined by the author as “the sacred sacrosanct form of ancient Mongolian Gothicism”)<sup>56</sup> is also hampered by bathos and the abstruse line of reasoning. Finally, Nowaczyński does not give any literary examples. Instead, he proclaims:

the lyric poet Matsuo-Bascho would occasionally thunder with a booming roar of alpine horns of fallen angels. Even as contempt for lowly crawling human vermin choked his throat, he let out a hoarse whine of hatred and harsh negation, lashing out sneers as if with a whip in the hands of bonzas flagellating themselves in wooden cages, tirelessly, until his last days hurling condemnations and protests, aware of his mission at his pulpit towering above society, and lived to see his hair grey, succumbing to only one thing, that is the inherited form of a literary outpouring of *Haikai*. In the confines of this poem, Matsuo incorporated all spheres of life, committing to paper his views on freedom, idealism, naturalism, pessimism, political currents, transcendental mysteries, and otherworldly longings.<sup>57</sup>

The almost complete lack of access to translations of Japanese seventeen-syllable verses prevented readers from confronting Nowaczyński’s (or, for example, Świącicki’s) pronouncements with even the vaguest “textual world” of haiku.<sup>58</sup> For the most part, the Young Poland authors did not appreciate Japanese literary art, “invariably [...] placing ‘deep’ European literature in opposition to the superficial beauty of Japanese poems.”<sup>59</sup>

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53 M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Inspiracje japońskie*, p. 77.

54 For the origin and later co-occurrence of these terms, see Part 1 of this book.

55 These literary varieties and forms are discussed in Part 1 of this book.

56 A. Nowaczyński, ‘*Haikai*’, p. 57.

57 A. Nowaczyński, ‘*Haikai*’, pp. 63–4.

58 Texts of literary criticism of the Young Poland are only quoted in English translations, poetic texts – both in the original versions and in English.

59 M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, ‘*Inspiracje japońskie*’, p. 81. It is worth quoting Lange’s commentary on translations of Japanese poems: “we give here a number of popular Japanese poems of 31 syllables, the so-called *uta* [actually *mijikauta*]. – These

The interwar period did not bring any major improvement,<sup>60</sup> especially in the first post-war decade (which is particularly interesting to me because of the literary exemplifications discussed below). It was not until 1927 that in the book *Między Wschodem a Zachodem* [Between the East and the West]<sup>61</sup> Stefan Łubieński published a handful of translations of “heiku Basio” [Basio’s haiku] with his own, reasonably valid comments. In Trzaska, Evert and Michalski’s *Wielka literatura powszechna*, a dozen or so haiku poems appeared in decent translations by Bogdan Richter.<sup>62</sup> Prior to the Second World War, haiku was also translated by Kamil Seyfried, but these interesting renderings did not see print at the time.<sup>63</sup> 1937 saw the publication of the “Japanese” issue of the *Wiadomości Literackie* weekly (No. 46) – the information about seventeen-syllable poetry was surprisingly laconic.<sup>64</sup>

are epigrams, excerpts, trifles, supplements, observations, etc. – To our European eyes these poems will seem less interesting” (*Sintaisi-sho*, p. 58). But then again, for Poles Japan was at the time a model of patriotism and heroism (see M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Inspiracje japońskie*, p. 82). Erazm Kuźma writes: “The safest form of the myth of the Orient was one that glorified Japan. The anti-Japanese myth of the Yellow Danger never really gained currency in Poland: after all, this country defeated Poland’s enemy, Piłsudski and Dmowski staked certain political hopes on it, and besides, Poland had no industry to be afraid of Japanese competition, nor borders that Japan would threaten. Japanism was very much in keeping with the spirit of modernity, and that also worked to its advantage: it did not imply occultism – the curse of the classical Orient – nor did it compromise its followers. Thus, the cult of Japan survived the events of 1905 and made itself felt as late as in the interwar period. The myth of Japan will repeat the pattern already known from Polish romantic and post-romantic mythology: considerable similarity of Poland and Japan was suggested (just like once it was seen between Poland and India), on account of which the two countries have the best understanding of one another. By this virtue, Poland will once again become an intermediary in the renewal of Europe and the world.” (E. Kuźma, *Mit Orientu*, p. 202). See also J. Starkel, *Obrazki*, part 2, p. 104.

- 60 (Relatively scarce) information on this subject is provided by Ewa Tomaszewska (‘*Inspiracje japońskie*,’ pp. 16–7). Leszek Engelking is also rather unforthcoming on this question (L. Engelking, ‘*Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie*,’ pp. 120–1). A selection of haiku poetry in translations from the 1920s, however, containing only a few texts, was published in the *Poezja* magazine, 1975, No. 1., pp. 22–3.
- 61 See S. Łubieński, *Między Wschodem a Zachodem. Japonia na straży Azji* [Between the East and the West. Japan Standing Guard over Asia], with an introduction by W. Sieroszewski, Kraków, 1927, esp. pp. 42–4.
- 62 See B. Richter, *Literatura chińska i japońska, Wielka literatura powszechna* [Chinese and Japanese Literature, Great World Literature], Vols. 1 and 5 (anthology), Warszawa, 1929–1932.
- 63 E. Tomaszewska, ‘*Inspiracje japońskie*,’ p. 17; *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 23; *Poezja starojapońska*, passim.
- 64 Mukyoku Naruse made mention of haiku (in his discussion of *senryū*) in the article ‘*Japońskie poczucie humouru*’ [Japanese Sense of Humour], *Wiadomości Literackie*,

Naturally, multilingual translations of Japanese poetry as well as foreign authors' texts dealing with literary and cultural studies, read by Poles at the turn of the twentieth century and in the interwar period, may have served as a source of knowledge; it is possible that a special role was played by French literature and literary studies, still influential at the time.<sup>65</sup> While there is no confirmation of this kind of readership, interest in East-Asian poetry and the assimilation of foreign aesthetics were undoubtedly boosted by relatively numerous translations of Chinese and Indian literature.<sup>66</sup>

What is especially noteworthy in this context is one of Leopold Staff's translations, which occasionally has been, wrongly – perhaps indirectly through the agency of Czesław Miłosz<sup>67</sup> – closely associated with the assimilation of haiku in the Polish language. Adela Kuik-Kalinowska and Daniel Kalinowski write: “The literary genre referred to as haiku made its presence clearly felt in Polish literature

1937, No. 46, p. 11. Similarly, in Nobutsuna Sasaki's text ‘Dawna poezja japońska’ haiku is mentioned only briefly (*Wiadomości Literackie*, p. 13).

65 According to Aleksander Janta, Pawlikowska's miniature verses may have been inspired by Japanese poems discovered via French (A. Janta, ‘Słowo wstępne’ [Foreword], in A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczki. Mała antologia poezji japońskiej* [The Hour of the Wild Duck. A Small Anthology of Japanese Poetry], Southend-on-Sea, Essex, 1966, p. XI).

66 M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Inspiracje japońskie*, pp. 61–82. The Young Poland period brought the publication of “anthologies: Józef Jankowski's *Skarbczyk poezji chińskiej* [A Treasury of Chinese Poetry] (1902) and Remigiusz Kwiatkowski's *Antologi chińskie* [Chinese Anthologies] (1914). For the »Biblioteka Hermetyczna« series Józef Jankowski and Jan Lemański independently translated the Daoist classics, *Tao czyli Droga Niebios* [Dao or the Way of Heavens] (1910). In 1901 Li Xingdao's acclaimed play *The Circle of Chalk* (*Kredowe koło*) was staged in Lviv (subsequently revived on numerous occasions) in A. Szczepański's translation. The Polish audience was introduced to the Indian and Buddhist East by Antoni Lange, the translator of masterpieces of Indian literature, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Lange was also behind the first anthology *Poeci nowo-japońscy* [New-Japan Poets]. By the end of the period, the majority of the most outstanding works of Indian literature were available to Polish readers at least through selections. *Upanishads* (*Upaniszady*, 1907) were translated by Berent, *Bhagawadgita* (*Bhagawadgita*, 1910) by S.F. Michalski, Olszewski, and Lemański, while *Rigveda* by Michalski (*Pieśni Rigwedy*, 1912). Finally, translations were produced of the greatest Bengali poet and prose writer, recipient of the Nobel Prize, Rabindranath Tagore, including *Pieśni ofiarne* (The Sacrifice, 1918) in Jankowski's translation” (A. Hutnikiewicz, *Młoda Polska*, Warszawa, 1997, pp. 396–7). See also J. Kwiatkowski, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne* [The Interwar Period], Warszawa, 2000, p. 110.

67 In the introduction to his volume of haiku translations, Czesław Miłosz recalls – in the context of his fascination with East-Asian poetry – reading Staff's translations during the war. Nowhere, however, does he specify that *Fletnia chińska* is a book of haiku translations. See Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ in Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, pp. 5–7.

already before the Second World War thanks to Leopold Staff, who translated from French a collection entitled *Fletnia chińska* (1922).<sup>68</sup> And yet the volume of Staff's translations contains – as the title indicates – paraphrases of Chinese poetry. The translation was based on Franz Toussaint's French translations published in the book *La flûte de jade: Poésies chinoises*.<sup>69</sup> All these paraphrases “follow a uniform convention of subtly rhythmic prose poetry, while the overwhelming majority of the originals are regularly structured poems, classical in form, thus employing a fixed number of syllables in a verse and always rhyming.”<sup>70</sup>

Staff's small poetry book is often regarded – in my opinion undeservedly so – as an essentially unsuccessful work.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, apart from the considerable artistic value of these brief, economical texts, one should also acknowledge the great respect on the part of the translators (both the Polish and French ones)<sup>72</sup> for the culturally and formally distant poetry. Unlike Kwiatkowski's triolets, paraphrases from *Fletnia* (and from *La flûte de jade*) make no pretence at representing the literary equivalent of the haiku form. Certainly, Staff's translations brought Polish

68 A. Kuik-Kalinowska, D. Kalinowski, ‘Od fascynacji do mody. Refleksje o haiku,’ *Opcje*, 1998, No. 3 (22), p. 13.

69 For a comparison of Toussaint's *La flûte de jade. Poésies chinoises* and Staff's *Fletnia chińska*, see K. Fazan, ‘Dwugłos na chińską fletnię’ [The Chinese Flute Duet], in *Poezja Leopolda Staffa. Interpretacje* [Leopold Staff's Poetry. Interpretations], eds. A. Czabanowska-Wróbel, P. Próchniak, M. Stala, Kraków, 2005, p. 427 and ff. Katarzyna Fazan also juxtaposes Leopold Staff's translations with four translations of Chinese poems produced by the poet's brother, Ludwik Maria Staff.

70 M.J. Künstler, ‘Posłowie’ [Afterword], in *Fletnia chińska*, transl. L. Staff, Warszawa, 1982, p. 203. For versification regularities “slipped” by Staff into his translations (in contradiction to Toussaint's typography), see K. Fazan, *Dwugłos*, pp. 445–6.

71 See, for example, Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 6; A. Tchórzewski, ‘Między pierwszym a drugim Poundem,’ *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 50. However, Włodzimirz Wójcik remarks that this is an “anthology of creatively translated prose poetry” (W. Wójcik, ‘Leopolda Staffa “Lux ex Oriente”’ [Leopold Staff's “Lux ex Oriente”], in *Orient w literaturze i kulturze modernizmu* [Orient in the Literature and Culture of Modernism], ed. E. Łoch, Lublin, 2011, p. 159; see also *Orient w literaturze*, pp. 165–7).

72 See K. Fazan, ‘Dwugłos,’ pp. 430–1. At the same time, “Toussaint's translation brought into being a new form, completely independent of originals, one in which Eastern themes, motifs, images took root. Similarly to the painterly stylizations practised by modernist artists, what turned out to be vital was creating an Oriental aura, a system of allusions to Eastern art or ideas associated with it.” (K. Fazan, ‘Dwugłos,’ p. 443). It is not without reason that Fazan also makes the following remark: “prosaisation [simultaneous use of prose and colloquial language] of poetry, occurring at the time when paraphrases of Eastern poetry were produced, was not only connected with the gesture of modernization of old poetry but also gave birth to a strictly innovative effect – it was an act of boldly moving beyond the canon of traditional means of expression.” (K. Fazan, ‘Dwugłos,’ p. 444).



readers in contact with a distant aesthetic, in some measure akin to the Japanese aesthetic. In this context, it is worth reading a handful<sup>73</sup> of miniatures, immersed in Staffesque “mellifluous,” yet carrying very clear East-Asian overtones. Here is the delicacy of a sensorial image, the beauty of suggestion, the record of fleeting impressions. And the praise of the stand-alone short form:

‘Pawilon Muzyki’

Muzykantki odeszły. Bzy, które ostawiły w wazonach z jadeitu, kłonią się ku lutniom i zdają się słuchać jeszcze.<sup>74</sup>

[Music Pavilion

The women musicians are gone. The lilacs they have left in jade vases drop towards the lute and seem to be still listening]

‘Pawilon Poezji’

W jej oknie kwitnąca gałąź brzoskwini.<sup>75</sup>

[Poetry Pavilion

A blossoming branch of a peach tree in her window.]

‘Czapla’

Ten wielki płatek śniegu był czapłą, która spoczęła na modrym jeziorze. Nieruchoma na skraju piaszczystej ławicy biała czapla przygląda się Zimie.<sup>76</sup>

[A Heron

This great snowflake was a heron that alighted on a deep blue lake. Motionless at the edge of a sandy shoal, the white heron is gazing at winter.]

‘Noc zimowa’

Trzeszczenie bambusów poucza mnie, że śnieg pada<sup>77</sup>

[Winter Night

The crackling of bamboos instructs me that it is snowing.]

This part of the discussion on the Young Poland and interwar period is summed up well by two quotes – contradictory at times – from an illuminating sketch by Maria Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa, ‘Poezja japońska’ (1912), concerned primarily with tanka poems, and from a 1937 text by Bolesław Leśmian (review of the Russian translation,

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73 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 6.

74 *Fletnia chińska*, p. 27.

75 *Fletnia chińska*, p. 30.

76 *Fletnia chińska*, p. 56.

77 *Fletnia chińska*, p. 84.

by Nikolai Iosifovich Konrad, of *Ise monogatari*). Leśmian is one of the few Polish writers of that time who undertook translations of classics of Japanese literature. Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa exquisitely captured the specificity – and untranslatability – of Japanese poetry, while not subscribing to opinions, prevalent in the Young Poland era, about its peculiar superficiality and decorativeness. It seems that such reception of Japanese poetry is the quintessence of the “enlightened” response to Japanese literature, different from Nowaczyński’s reception that was laden with distortions.

In the search for the written word that would simultaneously appear to be the most uncontrived response of the human soul and the most exquisite, proficient mastery of the language, our gaze involuntarily fixes on the pages of Japanese literature. The feel for nature is strangely close, a certain immediacy of feeling, which cannot even be called the love of nature, a kind of an inner bell that sounds at the slightest puff of wind, the buzz of an insect, passage of a bird; an instantaneous and direct transposition of external phenomena to the domain of human utterance – and, on the other hand, the refinement of this utterance, the wordplay, toying with the flexibility of a polysemic Japanese word, the subtlety and vagueness of metaphors! [...] The very character of the language, overloaded with words with multiple meanings, vague on account of influences of Chinese and the use of several types of writing systems [...] predisposed the Japanese to relish metaphors, nebulous statements, to use words with different meanings depending on whether they are read in the Japanese or Chinese manner. Let us throw in the enormous burden of myths, legends, ancient rituals, and customs, to which Japanese so often allude in poetry, and we will find ourselves in an eminently mysterious world, wherein a single impression or sensation brings forth an entire intricate mesh of other threads, spun out like a cobweb [...]. The concise form [of tanka] almost precludes translation to European languages, which often have to resort to a whole sentence to express something that in this strange language is contained in a single word [...]. In the very choice of topics, in the invariable embrace of nature, in the delighted gazing at wonders of nature, one realizes how much the Japanese dislike talking about themselves [...]. Japanese poetry is not as cool as it might seem; there is only something discreet about it, one feels in it fear of verbal excess and dramatics; it is replete with understatements, and always devoid of exaggeration – that is why almost every Japanese stanza is a tiny gem that can please the most sophisticated literary taste.<sup>78</sup>

Japanese poetry differs markedly from ours. We will not find in it deep feelings, fiery passions, and surprising thoughts. This is poetry that does not move the reader, yet charms the Japanese with felicitous similes, the high level of erudition, the subtlety of hints, in other words, with everything that in their eyes is a mark of social polish. A magical snippet of arbitrary beauty, a particoloured speck of elusive mood, vainly ingenious wordplay, mist of ethereal mood, ostensibly mysterious yet always explorable – this is the butterfly-like stuff of Japanese poetry, contained in a songful and

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78 M. Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa, ‘Poezja japońska,’ pp. 53–4.

intricate miniature called tanka or *mijika-utta* (i.e. a short poem) [*Ise monogatari* comprises 125 sections, each containing tanka poems and prose pieces], which does not so much captivate or enchant as compel attention, gain recognition, endear and convince the Japanese reader. In Japan, poetry is written not only by poets but by everybody at large. They write not only to achieve poetic fame but also to demonstrate their education and “knowledge of life,” despite the fact that Japanese poetry (ultimately like any poetry) has nothing to do with life experience and “knowledge of life.”<sup>79</sup>

## 2. Young-Poland Haiku?

In her brilliant essay *Haiku i Młoda Polska* [Haiku and Young Poland],<sup>80</sup> Beata Szymańska provides evidence of clear analogies between Polish poetry of the “anti-positivist turn” and Japanese seventeen-syllable verse. Nobody before her discerned these connections. It should be remembered, however, that these were not transcultural points of commonality that had been sought (in vain),<sup>81</sup> but the INFLUENCE of Japanese poetry on the work of Young Poland’s authors. In Szymańska’s conception, what serves as a link between literatures is mood; she writes about the

remarkable similarity in the understanding of mood as an aesthetic category [...]: in Buddhism-inspired aesthetics of Japan (especially in haiku poetry)<sup>82</sup>

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79 B. Leśmian, ‘*Ise-Monogatari*,’ in B. Leśmian, *Dzieła wszystkie. Szkice literackie* [Complete Works. Literary Sketches], collected and ed. by J. Trznadel, Warszawa, 2011, p. 519; originally published in *Kurier Warszawski*, 1937, No. 202, pp. 512–3. Interestingly enough, Anna Kamińska treats this review of the Russian translation of *Ise Monogatari* (published in 1937) as a testimony to the reception of Oriental poetry by the Young Poland movement (A. Kamińska, *Od Leśmiana. Najpiękniejsze wiersze polskie* [From Leśmian Onwards. The Most Beautiful Polish Poems], Warszawa, 2000, p. 56).

80 B. Szymańska, ‘Haiku i Młoda Polska’ [Haiku and the Young Poland], in B. Szymańska, *Kultury i porównania* [Cultures and Comparisons], Kraków, 2003, pp. 127–60. See also B. Szymańska, ‘Haiku i literatura polska przełomu XIX i XX w. O estetycznej wartości nastroju’ [Haiku and Polish Literature of the Turn of the 20th Century. On the Aesthetic Value of Mood], *Estetyka i Krytyka*, 2002, No. 1 (2), online version: <http://estetykaikrytyka.pl/art/2/SZYMANSK.pdf>, accessed June 14, 2016; see comments on poetic resonances of East-Asian thought in the literature of the Young Poland period, E. Tomaszewska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie,’ pp. 8–11. I refer to Szymańska’s arguments in Part 5 of this study.

81 See M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie,’ pp. 80–1. Podraza does not exclude the possibility of proving the influence of Japanese poetry on the work of Nowaczyński and Staff. However, she views similar investigations as “very risky scholarly exercises.” (M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie’).

82 For the partial ambivalence of linking haiku with Zen, see Part 1 of this book.

and in European aesthetics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>83</sup>

Szymańska invokes Edward Abramowski's thesis that is close to the assumptions of haiku (beauty can be found even in the commonplace),<sup>84</sup> noting that the simplest things occasionally were the subject and inspiration of Polish artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>85</sup> She devotes ample space to reflections on Young Poland literature and its use of allusiveness, symbols, blurred imagery, and the presentation of emotions that change without a clear motivation. This context brings remarks about the "apparent illogic, ... the impression of totally free associations" typical of haiku (and in my opinion not too frequent).<sup>86</sup> Szymańska analyses similarities in philosophical underpinnings of haiku and the literature of the turn of the twentieth century (Zen philosophy and Arthur Schopenhauer, Thomas Carlyle, and Emanuel Swedenborg), discussing Zen art per se, the illogicality and metaphoricity of certain products of East-Asian art (including koans), a similar view of the role of silence shared by Eastern and Western thinkers (the example of Maurice Maeterlinck).<sup>87</sup> According to Szymańska, the search for analogies between haiku and *état d'âme* of the poetry of the "anti-positivist turn" is legitimate, as there are commonalities in the "interpenetration of the 'state of the soul' of the artist and the landscape."<sup>88</sup> The scholar goes on to juxtapose the Japanese aesthetic category of *yūgen*<sup>89</sup> and symbolist indeterminacy, uncertainty, and incommunicability.<sup>90</sup> She recognizes the role of synaesthesia in haiku and literature of the turn of the twentieth century,<sup>91</sup> declaring that the poetry of Young Poland, like haiku, can be treated as the poetry of the seasons.<sup>92</sup>

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83 B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' p. 127. An interesting – somewhat parallel to Szymańska's thesis – argument on the resemblances and divergences between haiku and the symbolist poetry is offered by Jeffrey Johnson (J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 45). Johnson concludes, however, that the differences between poetics (and their cultural backgrounds) are too vast to permit any real search for close affinities.

84 See B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' pp. 134–5.

85 See B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' pp. 156–7.

86 B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' p. 145.

87 See B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' p. 140.

88 B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' p. 151. See also M. Ueda, *Zeami, Bashō, Yeats, Pound. A Study in Japanese and English Poetics*, London–The Hague–Paris, 1965, p. 40.

89 See Part 1 of the book. Szymańska also mentions other Japanese aesthetic categories.

90 B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' p. 152.

91 B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' p. 153. For synaesthesia in haiku, see esp. Parts 1 and 5 of this book.

92 See B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' p. 138.

I see Szymańska's proposition as revealing, innovative, importantly calling attention to hitherto overlooked transcultural parallels.<sup>93</sup> It seems that of utmost interest, from the perspective of my research, are her comments about mood and affinities in its perception in haiku and the Young Poland poetry, and, preceding them, the philosophical discussion on the projection of mood onto nature and artefacts. Unquestionably, haiku and the Young Poland poetry made use of similar motifs, not infrequently evoking a similar mood (although in Polish texts it was typically more distinctly filtered through human emotions). While I acknowledge the importance of the proximities accurately pointed out by the author, I wish to emphasize the differences between haiku and Polish poetry of the turn of the twentieth century, which determine the actual impossibility of diagnosing any convergence of forms here.

Of fundamental importance are differences in the construction of the speaking subject, which in poems of Young Poland, including ones evoking atmospheric images of nature, is very strongly focused on his/her own emotions. This is evident even in the text declaring the "interfusion" of the subject with nature (incidentally, one of the very few poems by Staff from the Young Poland period that can be juxtaposed with haiku):

'Czucie niewinne'

[INNOCENT FEELING

Łakami idę. W krąg kwiaty  
I słycać brzęki pszczelne.  
W powietrzu modro-złotym  
Śni próżnowanie niedzielne.

The meadows I roam. A circle of flowers  
And bee buzzes can be heard.  
In the golden-blue air  
Sunday languor slumbers.

Słońce świeci spokojnie,  
Jak gdyby od niechcenia;  
Obłoki są tak białe,  
Jakby nie mogły siać cienia.

The sun shines placidly,  
Somewhat nonchalantly;  
The clouds are so white  
As if they could not sow shade.

Ptak śpiewa, jakby śpiewać  
Nikomui ani się śniło.  
Jest mi tak dobrze na duszy,  
Jakby mnie wcale nie było.

The bird is singing, as if no one  
Ever dreamt of singing.  
I feel so good in my soul  
As if I did not exist at all.

Najpiękniej bowiem jest, kiedy  
Piękna nie czuje się zgoła

For things are most beautiful  
When beauty is not felt at all

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93 The issue of Japanism in the artistic production of the turn of the twentieth century is, not without reason, much more widely discussed in the field of art history. See Part 7 of this book.

I tylko jest się, po prostu  
Tak jak jest wszystko dookoła.<sup>94</sup>

When you simply exist, just like that  
Like everything around.]

One should also mention haiku's brevity, standing in sharp contrast to the verbosity of Young Poland's verse. In addition, Szymańska briefly mentions the extreme dissimilarity of the poetics of the compared texts<sup>95</sup> (a multitude of stylistic devices, verbosity versus brevity, and stylistic economy). In the same vein, one cannot unreservedly accept the thesis about shared allusiveness, vagueness, and indeterminacy of haiku and the poetry of Young Poland. Haiku poems may indeed be sketchy and understated, yet they clearly present a concrete slice of life, in keeping with sensorial mimesis.<sup>96</sup> Indeterminacy proceeds here from, among other things, considerable verbal economy, however, it does not lead to the defamiliarization of the depicted reality, and such defamiliarization is well known from the poetry of the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, haiku's understatement is not related to mysteriousness bordering on fantasy (and during the Young Poland period often crossing this border). Imagery is extremely "focused" (typically featuring simple, one- or several-element sensorial schemas),<sup>97</sup> while free associations frequently turn out to be illusory in the face of the considerable compositional discipline of juxtapositional texts. Haiku is a sketch, yet despite leaving ample room for the reader's involvement, it is a specific and precise sketch. Meanwhile, to Polish poets of the "anti-positivist turn," focus on a small, roughly outlined scene from the real world is most often a mere prelude to the "proper" poem or a fragment of such a poem. Finally, one cannot legitimately recognise the poetic production of the turn of the century as the poetry of the seasons in view of the fact that in short haiku verses, *kigo* (specific words indicating the time of the year)<sup>98</sup> were an indispensable element. In haiku, the focus on the most commonplace things is a given, while in the literature of Young Poland this feature is not utilized too frequently.

Proximities and differences are best seen in concrete literary examples. Let us take a look at some of them. Dreamy mood, affirmative acceptance of the world, vividness, and even effective calming of emotions – all this can link Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer's poem 'W zatoce neapolitańskiej' [In the Bay of Naples] to haiku. However, the poetics of the Polish text creates an insurmountable barrier separating the two forms:

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94 The poem from the collection *Galąz kwitnąca* [Flowering Branch], 1908; as quoted in L. Staff, *Poezje zebrane*, Vol. 1, ed. L. Michalska, Warszawa, 1967, p. 625. Podraza-Kwiatkowska points specifically to the volume *Galąz kwitnąca* (alongside *Uśmiechy godzin* [Smiles of Hours]) as an area wherein one could look for possible Japanese influences on Staff's poetic output from the Young Poland era.

95 B. Szymańska, 'Haiku i Młoda Polska,' p. 160.

96 See Part 1 of this book.

97 See Part 1 of this book.

98 For the role of *kigo* in haiku history and poetics, see Part 1 of this book.

Srebrno-modra, jak metal błyszcząca,  
nieskończonych wód powierzchnia leży;  
słońce wsparło się o wodę blaskiem  
i zasnęło w błękitnej bezbrzeży.

[Silver-blue, glinting like metal,  
the surface of infinite waters lies;  
the sun leaned on the water with its light  
and fell asleep in the blue vastness.

Jaka dziwna, jaka dziwna cisza,  
jaki dziwny spokój w tej naturze...  
wszystko tonie: woda, ziemia, niebo,  
w przezroczystym, świetlistym lazurze.

How eerie, how eerie the silence  
how eerie this peace in nature...  
water, earth, sky – all is sinking  
in see-through, luminous azure.

W jeden lazur świat się zmienia cały,  
cisza ziemi z senną nieba głuszą;  
w jeden lazur świat zmieniony zda się  
być swą własną zadumaną duszą.<sup>99</sup>

The whole world turns into azure,  
the earth's silence with sky's torpid  
stillness;  
the world, now one vast azure, seems to be  
its own pensive soul.]

Yosa Buson and Bronisława Ostrowska described flying birds. These are very clear pictorial schemas, almost demanding painterly representations (the texts could be regarded as ekphrases of Japanese ink paintings depicting a shape against an indeterminate background).

What is striking, however, is the ultimate “selflessness” of Buson’s image, on which the Polish poet superimposed an additional semantic layer (constituting the endpoint of her poems). And, naturally, huge differences in style:

Into a line they wheel  
the wild geese; at the foothills,  
the moon is put for seal.  
Buson<sup>100</sup>

Summer green hills  
flying over Kyoto  
a solitary heron  
Buson<sup>101</sup>

99 K. Tetmajer, *Poezje wybrane* [Selected Poems], ed. and introduction by J. Krzyżanowski, Wrocław, 1968, p. 51. Similar imagery can be found in poems such as, to name a few, ‘Na Capri’ [In Capri], ‘Pod Portici’ [Outside Portici], ‘Pod martwą skałą’ [Under the Dead Rock], ‘Daleko został’ [Left Far Behind] (K. Tetmajer, *Poezje wybrane*, pp. 51–2, 73–4).

100 As quoted in H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, p. 96.

101 English translation based on the Polish rendering in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 115.

## 'Żurawie'

## [HERONS]

Nad puste ścierniska i ugory,  
 Nad pożółkłe lewady i jary,  
 Odlatywały klucze żurawiane...  
 Długie, długie, rozwiane na bezmiary,  
 Obląkane,  
 Leciąły po szarym niebie...  
 Przez mgłę bezdenną,  
 Nad nagie pola i bory,  
 W pustkę beznadziejnie jesienną  
 Odlatywały nie patrząc poza siebie...  
 Sznury za sznurami, sznury za  
 sznurami,  
 Hen, hen,  
 Leciąły nad polami  
 VanishingJak sen... jak sen...  
 Pamiętam... życie mi zbiegło tak prawie,  
 Jak te żurawie we mgły odlatujące...  
 Jak te żurawie...<sup>102</sup>

Over bare stubble fields and fallows,  
 Over yellowed glades and ravines,  
 Crane skeins were flying away...  
 Long, long, blown over infinite spaces,  
 Mad,  
 They were flying across the grey sky...  
 Through bottomless fog  
 Above bare fields and forests,  
 Into the hopeless autumn void  
 They flew away without looking back...  
 Skeins after skeins, skeins after skeins,  
  
 A long way away  
 They flew over the fields  
 Like a dream... like a dream...  
 I remember... my whole life almost went by,  
 Like those cranes flying into mists...  
 Like those cranes...]

## 'Jaskółka'

## [A SWALLOW]

Czarna jaskółka leci w dal  
 Nad głębie wodnych toni,  
 Czarna jaskółka leci w dal,  
 A cień jej śmigły pośród fal  
 Wciąż goni ją i goni...

A black swallow flies into the distance  
 Above waters' depths,  
 A black swallow flies into the distance,  
 And her swift shadow amidst waves  
 Keeps chasing her on and on...

Jaskółka płynie w cichy szlak  
 I widzi cień w głębinie,  
 Jaskółka płynie w cichy szlak,  
 I myśli, że to bratni ptak  
 Z nią razem w błękit płynie.

The swallow glides along a quiet route  
 And sees a shadow in the depths  
 The swallow glides along a quiet route  
 And she thinks it is a fellow bird  
 And floats with it into the blue.

Lecz gdy już minie głębie fal,  
 I w słońcu skrzydłem świeci,  
 Lecz gdy już minie głębie fal,

But when she passes depths of waves,  
 And her wings shine in the sun  
 But when she passes depths of waves,

102 As quoted in *Antologia liryki Młodej Polski* [An Anthology of the Poetry of Young Poland], Wrocław, 1990, pp. 68–9.



Widzi, że sama leci w dal.  
 Że za nią nikt nie leci...<sup>103</sup>

She sees she's been flying on her own.  
 No one flies behind her...]

The differences are even more pronounced in the following, “iconographically” kindred Japanese and Young Poland’s images of trees (the latter come from sonnets, which are a strictly rigorous form, yet one very remote from haiku’s verbal asceticism):

the tree by the gate  
 is here as it always was---  
 evening coolness  
 Issa<sup>104</sup>

a spring wind  
 combs on a mask  
 willow hair  
 Bashō<sup>105</sup>

loneliness—  
 among the blossoms  
 a false cypress  
 Bashō<sup>106</sup>

it is now the moment  
 when white plum blossoms  
 lighten into dawn  
 Buson<sup>107</sup>

‘Świerk’

Los go rzucił na skałę nieczułą a hardą;  
 Wśród kurhanów praczasu, wśród górskich rozłomów  
 Ćwierć wieku ten swierk pośród śniegów, burz i gromów  
 Prowadził bój rozpaczny o swą bytność hardą.

Gór tytany nań patrzą z kamienną pogardą:  
 On, młodzieniec, żyjący pył, atom atomów,

103 B. Ostrowska, *Poezje wybrane*, ed. and introduction by A. Wydrycka, Kraków 1999, p. 52.

104 As quoted in M. Ueda, *Dew on the Grass* p. 24.

105 As quoted in *Matsuo Bashō's Haiku Poems in Romanized Japanese with English Translations*, ed. G. Terebess, transl. J. Reichhold, online version [https://www.academia.edu/40839613/Bashō\\_in\\_romaji\\_and\\_english](https://www.academia.edu/40839613/Bashō_in_romaji_and_english) accessed January 1, 2020.

106 As quoted in Bashō, *Bashō's Journey*, p. 108.

107 As quoted in Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival*, p. 2.

Życie wszczepiać chce pośród ich martwych ogromów,  
 Ku słońcu dąży głową młodą, tęskną, hardą!  
 F. Nowicki<sup>108</sup>

[SPRUCE

Fate threw him on a dead and hardy rock;  
 Amid barrows of primaeval time, among mountain crags  
 For a quarter-century, mid snows, storms, and thunders, this spruce  
 Has waged a fierce battle for his proud existence.

Mountain-titans glance at him with stony scorn:  
 He, a youngster, living dust, atom of atoms,  
 Strives to implant life amid their dead vastness  
 Turning his head, young, longing, proud, towards the sun!]

‘Krzak dzikiej róży w Ciemnych Smreczynach’

W ciemnosmreczyńskich skał zwaliska,  
 Gdzie pawiookie drzemią stawy,  
 Krzak dzikiej róży pąs swój krwawy  
 Na plamy szarych złomów ciska.

U stóp mu bujne rosną trawy,  
 Bokiem się piętrzy turnia śliska,  
 Kosodrzewiny węzowiska  
 Poobszywały głaźne lawy...

Samotny, senny, zadumany,  
 Skronie do zimnej tuli ściany,  
 Jakby się lękał tchnienia burzy.  
 J. Kasproicz<sup>109</sup>

[A BRIAR ROSE BUSH IN THE VALLEY OF DARK SPRUCES

In the screes of the Valley of Dark Spruces  
 Where the peacock-eyed tarns slumber,  
 Briar rose bush flings its blood-red blush  
 Upon patches of grey debris.

Lush grasses grow at his feet,  
 A sleek crag rises sideways,  
 Tangles of creeping pines  
 Trimmed the rocky ledges...

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108 *Antologia liryki Młodej Polski*, p. 50.

109 *Antologia liryki Młodej Polski*, pp. 47–8.

Lonely, sleepy, broody  
 He nestles his head against the cold wall,As if he feared the storm's breath.]

'Próżnia'

[VOID

Drzewo samotne, obnażone  
 Podnosi chude swe ramiona,  
 Rozpaczy hymny śle chropawe  
 Do stalowego nieba próżni.

A bare solitary tree  
 Raises its lean arms  
 Sending harsh hymns of despair  
 To the steel void of the sky.]

[...]

S. Korab-Brzozowski<sup>110</sup>

With their verbosity and “multi-description” of phenomena, all the Polish poems cited above – even if their “iconography” includes a clear-cut shape presented against a uniform background (e.g. a tree against rocks, a bird against the sky) – profile the perception of images altogether differently. The abundance of epithets and references creates dense sensorial and intellectual networks,<sup>111</sup> in many ways clarifying (and at the same time, occasionally, “blurring”) the image. With the much stronger personification, the transposition of human emotions onto the “emotions” of nature becomes obvious. Finally, the modalities of these poems are more diverse.<sup>112</sup>

Now and then poetic works of Young Poland feature images related to those known from haiku, however, in these cases “haiku-like” representations are merely an extended and repeatedly changed the second component of a simile:

'Wyrosłaś tak...'

[YOU GREW UP SO MUCH...

Wyrosłaś tak  
 Jako ta srebrna brzoźka,  
 Co listki wiatr jej muska –  
 Jak polny mak,  
 Co czerwoną sukienką  
 Pośród łąnu się pali –  
 [...]  
 Jak ten kwiat jabłoni,  
 Co w śnieżystej bieli

You grew up so much  
 Like this silver birch,  
 Whose leaves are stroked by wind –  
 Like a field poppy  
 That burns in its red dress  
 Amid a cornfield –  
 [...]  
 Like this apple blossom,  
 That in snow whiteness

110 *Antologia liryki Młodej Polski*, p. 62.

111 For “un-haiku-like” intellectualization of Pawlikowska’s miniatures, see A. Kluba, ‘Poetyka a światopogląd. O twórczości Marii Pawlikowskiej-Jasnorzewskiej,’ *Przestrzenie Teorii*, 2010, No. 8, p. 152.

112 For modalities of classical haiku, see Part 1 of this book.

Różowo się płoni –  
 Jak dziewanna złocista,  
 Gdy ku słońcu wystrzeli  
 W królewskiej przyodziewie...  
 [...]  
 L. Rydel<sup>113</sup>

Flushes with pink –  
 Like a golden mullein,  
 When it shoots towards the sun  
 In its regal attire.]

‘Bogdajem’

[I WISH

Bogdajem rosła jako krzaki głógów  
 W słonecznym złocie,  
 Albo wykwitła wśród pustych rozłogów  
 Jako stokrocie.

I with I could grow like hawthorn bushes  
 In the sun’s gilding,  
 Or bloom amidst bare expanses  
 Like daisies.

Bogdajem była jako brzoza biała  
 Liście rozwiała,  
 Lub pokraśniała wśród leśnej gęstwiny  
 Jako kaliny.

I wish I were white as a birch  
 With leaves blown away,  
 Or turned crimson in the forest thicket  
 Like guelder roses.

Bogdajem była dziewanną tą złotą,  
 Słońca pieszczotą,  
 Albo wyrosła jak kwiecie kąkolu  
 We szczyrim polu.  
 B. Ostrowska<sup>114</sup>

I wish I were this golden mullein,  
 The sun’s darling,  
 Or grew like corncockle flowers  
 In a bare field.]

This is how we arrive at a list of differences between Young Poland and haiku writing. However, the picture of Polish poetry at the turn of the century is not one-dimensional. My previous diagnoses can be corroborated by analyses of the vast majority of Young Poland’s poetry. Having said that, works essentially close to haiku patterns do occur here, albeit relatively infrequently. We could even view from this perspective poetic “icons” of Young Poland. Thus, for example, Przerwa-Tetmajer’s poem ‘Widok ze Świnicy do Doliny Wierchcichej’ [View of the Wierchcicha Valley from Mt. Świnica] can actually be perceived as... a series of three-line haiku poems or a *haikai-no-renga* chain composed by a single author,<sup>115</sup> providing in each subsequent stanza a new, sophisticated, stylistically

113 L. Rydel, *Poeci polscy: Lucjan Rydel* [Polish Poets: Lucjan Rydel], Warszawa, 1977, p. 66.

114 B. Ostrowska, “Bogdajem,” in B. Ostrowska, *Poezje wybrane*, ed. and introduction by A. Wydrycka, Kraków, 1999, p. 43. Szymańska also refers to this text.

115 See Part 1 of this book. *Renga* chains composed by one poet have been attested.

and compositionally balanced figure/ground alignment: a multisensory (at times synaesthetic) image of nature.<sup>116</sup> The poem's ending transports the reader to the affective universe of the speaker, yet without eclipsing the sequence of sensorial images. In Tetmajer's poetic output we find at least a few poems like this – below, alongside the above-noted 'Widok ze Świnicy do Doliny Wierchcichej,' is a series of images (approximating haiku yet "artificializing" nature to a much larger extent than haijins' verses), put together in the poem 'W lesie' [In the Forest]:

'W lesie'

[IN THE FOREST]

Wolno i sennie chodzą  
spo jasnym tle błękitu  
złocistobiałe chmurki  
z połyskiem aksamitu.

Golden-white cloud  
with a velvet sheen  
walk slowly and dozily across  
light background of blue sky.

Niekiedy się zasrebrzy  
pod słońca blask z ukosa  
jaskółka śmigła, czarna,  
sunąca przez niebiosy.

At times against the sun  
a swift black swallow  
will glitter slantwise  
gliding through the skies.

Po łące cichej, jasnej,  
w srebrne objętej ramy  
przez opalowy strumień,  
złote się kładą plamy.

Across the quiet, bright meadow,  
set in a silver frame  
through the opal stream,  
golden patches stretch.

Szmaragdem słońce błyska  
na ciemnej drzew zieleni,  
lub przez konary rzuca  
ognistych pęk promieni.

The sun glints with emerald  
upon dark greenness of trees,  
or casts through branches  
a bundle of fiery rays.

Po niebie i po lesie,  
po łąk zielonych łanie,  
przejrzyste, zwiewne idzie  
błękitne zadumanie<sup>117</sup>

In the sky, in the woods,  
across green meadows,  
lucid, airy – walks  
a blue reverie.]

116 For Tetmajer's imagery, see, for example, J. Bajda, *Poezja a sztuki piękne. O świadomości estetycznej i wyobraźni plastycznej Kazmierza Przerwy-Tetmajera* [Poetry and Fine Arts. On the Aesthetic Awareness and Artistic Imagination of Kazmierz Przerwa-Tetmajer], Warszawa, 2003, pp. 222–71 (esp. pp. 242–3).

117 K. Tetmajer, *Poezje wybrane*, pp. 130–1. See also the poems 'Poranne mgły...', [Morning Mists...], 'Ciemnosmreczyński staw' [The Tarn in Ciemnosmreczyńska Valley], in K. Tetmajer, *Poezje wybrane*, pp. 170, 172–3.

‘Widok ze Świnicy do Doliny Wierchcichej’ [VIEW OF THE WIERCHCICHA VALLEY FROM MT. ŚWINICA]

Taki tam spokój... Na gór zбочa  
światła się zlewa mgła przezrocza,  
na senną zieleń gór.

Such peace down there... On the  
mountainside  
of light, on the somnolent green of  
mountains  
a translucent fog descends.

Şzumiący z dała wśród kamieni  
w słońcu się potok skrzy i mieni  
w srebrnotęczowy sznur.

Murmuring away among rocks  
a brook sparkles and shimmers  
into a silver-rainbow string.

Ciemnozielony w mgle złocistej  
wśród ciszy drzemie uroczystej  
głuchy smrekowy las.

Dark green in golden fog  
in solemn silence  
mute forest is dozing.

Na jasnych, bujnych traw pościeli  
pod słońce się gdzieniegdzie bieli  
w zieleni martwy głaz.

On a bright, lush bedding of grass  
Here and there amid greenness  
a dead boulder stands out so white.

O ścianie nagiej, szarej, stromej,  
spiętrzone wkoło skał rozłomy  
w świetlnych zasnęły mgłach.

Against a bare, steep, grey wall  
piled up around rocks  
craggs fell asleep in luminous fogs.

Ponad doliną się rozwiesza  
srebrzystoturkusowa cisza  
nieba w słonecznych skrach.

Silvery turquoise silence  
of skies is draped over the valley  
in sunny sparkles.

Patrzę ze szczytu w dół: pode mną  
przepaść rozwarła paszczę ciemną –  
patrzę w dolinę, w dal:

I gaze down from the summit: at my feet  
a dark chasm yawns –  
I look down the valley, into the distance:

i jakaś dziwna mię pochwycą  
bez brzegu i bez dna tęsknica,  
niewysłowiony żal...<sup>118</sup>

Seized by some strange,  
bottomless, boundless, yearning,  
unspeakable grief...]

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118 K. Tetmajer, *Poezje wybrane*, pp. 128–9.

Even in the few poems that can be compared with haiku, sensorial images are predominantly woven from an inordinately larger number of words, and the scene is not closed until it reaches at least several stanzas in size. The Young Poland literature was not ready for the poetic miniature. Substantial changes would come, however, during the interwar period.

### 3. Haiku and Interwar Poetry

The interwar period is a rewarding area to conduct comparative analyses. This is because that time saw a decisive move away from verbosity and a search for new means of expression. Numerous texts of the period exhibit the following characteristics:

- brevity (a multiple line miniature),
- the construction of the silent speaker (keeping a low profile and reticent)
- the focus on the detail known from everyday experience,
- the avoidance of abstract ideas,
- the use of colloquial language,
- the more sparing, in comparison to the Young Poland period, use of stylistic devices (e.g. lower occurrence of various types of repetitions<sup>119</sup> and verbosity),
- rejection of fantasy.

In interwar Polish poetry, a large group of texts can be singled out which can be interestingly juxtaposed with haiku, even though they lack the most readily identifiable external determinants of this form (syllabic patterning, metatextual cues). It is not the “influencology” and the purported following of foreign models that seem to be of the greatest interest here (it is difficult, as I have demonstrated, to speak of a closer acquaintance with the genre during the first decades of the twentieth century in Poland). First and foremost, I am interested in how Polish literature went off in a direction that was similar to haiku (the final development in the twentieth century is the genuine eruption of haiku and “haiku”), in what were contributing factors here, and, finally, in the key elements distinguishing Polish texts from classical haiku and the haiku composed at the time in Western literatures. This rarely employed perspective affords a different view on interwar writing, which seems to have already exhaustively been described and diagnosed.

Among the poems that meet the criteria in question, the most numerous are works by Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, coming mainly from her early books of poetry (primarily, though not exclusively, from *Pocałunki* [Kisses]). However, it is not worth reducing research on interwar haiku writing in Poland to analyses of Pawlikowska’s verse.

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119 See B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu”? *Koncepcje dźwięku w poezji polskiego futuryzmu* [‘Nife in the Eere’? Concepts of Sound in the Poetry of Polish Futurism], Wrocław, 2008, pp. 53–80.

A. “Hay-kay” by Stern, *Tanka Poems by Iwaszkiewicz*

The interwar period brought verses which demanded a confrontation with haiku and which – through their title and versification – were assigned to this genre framework. Therefore, we cannot agree with Piotr Michałowski’s claim that the interwar “attempts at imitation ... did not concern haiku specifically, but an unidentified model of Oriental poetry”<sup>120</sup> (another thing is that imitation is not the question here).

Anatol Stern is the author of almost completely forgotten poems, which he himself termed “hay-kay.” These are the first works of poetry in Polish (the only ones of this kind created during this decade) bearing the above genre designation that consistently follow the syllabic pattern of haiku, peculiarly and playfully referring to East-Asian topoi. Surprisingly, no scholar studying the work of Stern (or interwar poetry) has ever devoted attention to them.<sup>121</sup>

The “Hay-kay” cycle from the book *Futuryzje* (Futurizations, 1919) enters into interesting, intercultural (!) relationships with the preceding texts characterized by a completely different structure. The cycle *Ludzie chorzy wiosną* (3 hay-kay) [People Sick in Spring (3 Hay-Kay)] exists side by side with the controversial ‘Uśmiech Primavery (Jak umieramy)’ [Primavera’s Smile (How We Die)] (the public reading of this poem led to the author’s arrest and subsequent prison sentence, confinement in “a fortress for blasphemy”).<sup>122</sup>

120 P. Michałowski, ‘Polskie imitacje haiku,’ in *Polska genologia. Gatunek w literaturze współczesnej*, ed. R. Cudak, Warszawa, 2009, p. 168.

121 Literary-theoretical omissions are striking. Discussing the presence of Oriental motifs in avant-garde writing, Erazm Kuźma makes absolutely no mention of Stern’s texts (at the same time he remarks: “Dynamic Japan could have been close to the spirit of Futurism, but this was not the case” – E. Kuźma, *Mit Orientu*, p. 240). Paweł Majerski also overlooks “hay-kay,” analysing the generic entanglements of Stern’s poems from 1919–1924 (P. Majerski, *Anarchia i formuły. Problemy twórczości poetyckiej Anatola Sterna* [Anarchy and Formulas. Problems of Anatol Stern’s Poetry], Katowice, 2001). There are no traces of interest in Stern’s poetry cycles in Grażyna Pietruszewska-Kobiela’s monograph *O poezji Anatola Sterna* [On the Poetry of Anatol Stern], Częstochowa, 1992. These texts are also omitted by Andrzej Krzysztof Waśkiewicz, the brilliant editor the poet’s collected poems (Waśkiewicz only mentions that the publication of the volume *Futuryzje* was the original edition of these poems – A. K. Waśkiewicz, ‘Dodatek krytyczny’ [A Critical Supplement], in A. Stern, *Wiersze zebrane* [Collected Poems], Vol. 2, ed. A. K. Waśkiewicz, Kraków–Wrocław, 1986, p. 273). Interestingly, neither were these texts included in the selection of Stern’s poems produced by the poet himself – *Poezje (1918–1968)* [Poems (1918–1968)], with an introduction by K. Wyka, Warszawa, 1969. The only mention I found there of Stern’s “hay-kay” is to be found in the introduction to *Antologia polskiego haiku*, and even there only one of the cycles was noticed, *Ludzie chorzy wiosną* (see E. Tomaszewska, *Inspiracje japońskie*, pp. 14–5).

122 A. K. Waśkiewicz, ‘Dodatek krytyczny,’ p. 269.



Na obłoku okrakiem,	[Astride on a cloud
Na białym obłoku	A white cloud
Anatol Stern (futur z Warszawy)	Anatol Stern (a futurist from Warszawa)
Popłynę gwizdząc do raj	I'll float, whistling, to paradise
[...]	[...]
[...] uśmiechnięty paż	[...] a smiling page
W pomarańczowym gaju	In an orange grove
Całuje usta Lil i Kaś	He kisses the lips of Lillas and Kates
I każe się im na trawie kłaść;	And tells them to lie on the grass;
[...]	[...]
Kiwnie mi głową uśmiechniętą	The dressed-up Holy Virgin
Wystrojona Panna Święta,	Will give them a smiling nod
Na Jej twarzy grają dołki,	With dimples playing on her face,
Wonne rzuca mi fiołki –	She throws me sweet-scented violets –
A na tacy złocistej	And on the golden tray
Z ukłonem Bożek, <sup>123</sup> jak lokaj,	The Idol, with a bow, like a butler,
Aromatyczny, soczysty	Aromatic, juicy
W kieliszku poda mi tokaj	Will serve me a glass of tokay
W raj	There are buds in paradise –
i otwiera je	and opening them
senna panna	is the sleepy virgin
primavera. <sup>124</sup>	primavera.]

Alternatively, the *People Sick in Spring* series is made up of triplets:

Ta senna panna	[This sleepy virgin
Zwie się tak: primavera,	Primavera is her name,
Ta wonna donna.	This lame dame.
Przyszła (był chory),	The spring (he was sick),

123 Stern reported that originally (probably in the manuscript version of the poem, as the poem's typography quoted in the main body of text comes from the original edition) this verse would read as follows: "Sam Bóg [jak lokaj,]" (God Himself [like a butler,])" Waśkiewicz adds: "In [...] the documentation of Stern's imprisonment, as well as in the book by J. Stradecki, *W kręgu Skamandra* [Within the Skamander Group], Warszawa, 1977, p. 237 (footnote 104) a different version of this verse is given: "Sam Bóg-Ojciec nalewa mi tokaj" [God Himself, the Father pours me a tokay]. This version "looks as if it was derived from a different whole. Could Stern have re-worked the whole stanza?" All the information and quotes here are from A. K. Waśkiewicz, 'Dodatek krytyczny,' pp. 272–3.

124 A. Stern, *Futuryzje*, Warszawa, 1919, p. 22 (all quotes from Stern's poems are based on their original edition).

Wiosna najgrubsza w pasie,  
W bluzce w kwiateczki.

Came, thickest in the waist,  
In a flowered blouse.

Zapach obory:  
Czy wiosna krowy pasie?

A shed's stink:  
Is spring grazing cows?]

Connecting these poems is a surprising concatenation – the end of ‘Uśmiech Primavery’ becomes the beginning of the “hay-kay” series. The relationship between these poems is not limited to a repetition of a few phrases. The iconoclastic, vitalistic ‘Uśmiech Primavery’ derided religious conventions, and similarly, *Ludzie chorzy wiosną* contravened cultural *decorum* (yet less provocatively). The textual spring stands in opposition to personifications of this season that have been established in European culture – it has nothing to do with the slender, delicate girl from numerous paintings and poems. The “lame dame” is wearing a banal flowered blouse (which, of course, does not make much sense), is probably pregnant (“thickest in the waist”), and might be grazing cows (and this “unpoetic” activity has its spring-related justification). This “hay-kay” has an ironic twist, the oneiric naturalistic situation seems to verge on nonsense, although it is not absurd. The literary joke is also played out on the aural plane, in paronomastic expressions “senna panna” (literally “sleepy maiden”) and “wonna donna” (literally “fragrant donna”) (here we also come across the rarely used figure of speech *parechesis*), which are woven with each other through internal rhymes. Verse clausulae are also rhymed (which is unknown in haiku).

The first poem of the cycle clearly demonstrates that in order to recognise “haiku-ness,” we need more than brevity or the withdrawal of the speaker – even in the most orthodox haiku formula (5 + 7 + 5 syllables). The poem in question focuses on the conceptist verbal and rhyming acrobatics instead of a clear depiction of what is experienced and universally accessible to experience. On the other hand, some connection of Stern’s poems with haiku verse is hinted at by the unique sensoriality of the concluding two triplets – the prominence of one sensorially perceived detail: an ordinary flowered blouse or the smell of a shed<sup>125</sup> (where the expression “fragrant donna” assumes additional meanings!). The singling out of these stimuli from the sensorial background and doubts as to the cognitive abilities of the ailing speaker preclude a deeper (literal) understanding of the miniature. This is further complicated by the use of personification. Likewise, personifications of the seasons, albeit devoid of ironic and oneiric undertones, were also known

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125 Here is a synaesthetic haiku by Bashō on a similarly “unpoetic” subject:  
in the cowshed,  
the dusky sound of mosquitoes:  
lingering summer heat  
(as quoted in *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 125).

in classical haiku verse. For example, a character from Bashō's poem seems to be a distant relative of Stern's Spring:

the man wearing  
a straw mat, who is he?  
blossoms of spring<sup>126</sup>

Let us return to the juxtaposition with 'Uśmiech Primavery.' There are very clear differences in image planes in the neighbouring spring-related poems. 'Uśmiech Primavery' offered a complex, subversive image evolving in the course of the poem's story. "Hay-kay" (especially the final two triplets of the cycle) turn out to be very enigmatic and focused on a single detail. They are sensorial, but not erotic. The versification and sensorial discipline can, indeed, be associated with the Oriental model. All the more so because the formal arrangement proposed by Stern also approaches *renga* (*haikai-no-renga*), linked verse in which subsequent authors contribute successive components of the composition, paying particular attention to ways of linking stanzas (sequences crafted by one author are also known).<sup>127</sup>

The second haiku cycle, comprising three stand-alone poems (there are hardly any similarities to *renga* here), titled simply "3 Hay-Kay," is preceded by 'Krawat śmierci. Sonet' [The Tie of Death. A Sonnet]. This is an Italian sonnet with the rhyme scheme of ABBA ABBA CDE CDE, written without division into stanzas:

Przed toaletą, wybijaną mieniącą się lawą,  
Od dawna już wpatrujesz się w swe odbicie w kryształe –  
Oddalasz się powoli, podobnie zbliżasz się; stale  
Widzisz twarz wciąż jedną: znużoną, smutną, zielonkawą.  
Narzucasz więc na siebie ciężkie i kosztowne szale,  
Zuchwale splatasz swe pomysły, szepcząc sobie: "Brawo!"  
Ale oto już wołasz z męką w głosie i z obawą:  
"Przyjdź Panie, na któregoś długo czekał i wytrwale."  
Lecz przerywasz sobie z uśmiechem: "Jednak, jednak zwę go –"  
Dobywasz z wąskiej skrytki wenecki kielich z trucizną  
I sztylet z cienką klingą z błękitnie ćmiącej się stali.  
Wkładasz na się krawat żalobny z purpurową pręgą,  
Jedwabny krawat, czarny, miękki, ze szkarłatną blizną  
I kreślisz wiersz, którego słowa mają smak koralu.<sup>128</sup>

[In front of the toilet gushing with shimmering lava,  
You have long been staring at your reflection in the crystal –  
Slowly moving away and drawing closer; Constantly  
Seeing the one and only face: weary, sad, greenish.

126 As quoted in *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 108.

127 See Part 1 of the book.

128 A. Stern, *Futuryzje*, p. 26.

So you throw heavy and pricey shawls over your shoulder,  
 Boldly blending your ideas, whispering, “Well done!”  
 But now you cry with anguish and fear:  
 “Come, Lord, for whom I have waited so long and patiently.”  
 Yet you interrupt yourself with a smile: “However, I call him differently–”  
 Take out a Venetian goblet with poison from a small cache  
 And a thin-bladed dagger of blue smoke-grey steel.  
 You put on a funeral tie with a purple stripe,  
 A silk tie, black, soft, with a scarlet scar  
 And write a poem of words that taste like beads.]

The juxtaposition of this intricate, symbolistically-tinged sonnet with “3 Hay Kay” is shocking. ‘Krawat’ [The Tie] is a description of death preparations of a dandy surrounded by exquisite works of art, splendidly dressed, bored, and preoccupied with internal divagations. In comparison with this text – and, more generally, with Polish poetry of the early interwar period – the short and sketchy “hay-kay” poems following the above sonnet, limited in each case to one image devoid of excessive aestheticization, seem stylistically incongruous. The first of these reads as follows:

‘Już’  
 Samuray dziś zmarł,  
 Nożem przodków rozpruł brzuch.  
 Śmierć – to piękny dar.<sup>129</sup>

[ALREADY  
 Samuray died today  
 He ripped open his stomach with his forefathers’ knife.  
 Death – it is a beautiful gift.]

Death is dealt out swiftly here, in a “manly” Japanese manner, in complete opposition to the long-drawn-out procedures of the pretentious Symbolist. And maybe “hay-kay” is a farewell letter of the dandy announced in the last line of the sonnet (as it happens, the Japanese composed death haiku in similar circumstances).<sup>130</sup> The text is concise, straightforward, devoid of additional stylistic ornaments, and expressive in terms of articulation and sound (alliterative accumulations of “r” and “ż”). Despite the fidelity to syllabic patterns, despite the Japanese subject, finally, despite the withdrawal of the speaker, it still is very much removed from classical

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129 A. Stern, *Futuryzje*, p. 27.

130 See *Japońskie wiersze śmierci* [Japanese Death Poems], transl. and with an introduction by M. Has, Kraków 2003; *Japońskie haiku śmierci*, introduction and drawings by N. Skupniewicz, Kraków, 2007; *Japanese Death Poems Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death*, compiled and with an introduction by Y. Hoffmann, Tokyo–Rutland, Vermont–Singapore, 1986. See also the section *Death* of Part 5 of this book.

haiku verses. This results from the lack of typical Japanese imagery, the absence of sensorial detail: the poem is a summary of an occurrence, not a sketch-picture appealing to the senses.

It is worthwhile comparing Stern's poems with Julien Vocance's cycle *Art Poétique* (1921) from around the same time:

Le poète japonais  
Essuie son couteau:  
Cette fois l'éloquence est morte.<sup>131</sup>

This triplet is followed by another vivid yet metaphoric and markedly autothematic text:

Rapide et musclé,  
Que le mot colle à ta pensée  
Comme au cou du buffle le jaguar.<sup>132</sup>

In Stern's work, the semantics is more complex, while the tenor of his cycle is less clear. In this context, let us have a look at the second triplet of *3 hay-kay*:

'Jasnowidzenie'	[CLAIRVOYANCE
Zawsze widzę cię	I always see you
Gdy mam zamknięte oczy.	When my eyes are closed.
Wszędzie widzę cię. <sup>133</sup>	I see you everywhere.]

More precise visualization of the indeterminate foregrounded speaker is problematic here. It is not known who the speaker is (is it a dying samurai remembering his beloved?). Finally, seeing with closed eyes would finally be extremely "unhaiku-like." Just like the following verbalization of other sensory stimuli (the third "hay-kay" from the series):

'Głosy z drugiej strony'	[VOICES FROM THE OTHER SIDE
Dzwoni dziwny prąd,	A strange current is ringing
Dzwoni dziwny prąd czarny.	A strange black current is ringing.
Wszystko słychać stąd?	Can everything be heard from here?
DALEJ NIE MOŻNA. <sup>134</sup>	CANNOT [GO] ANY FURTHER]

131 As quoted in J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 705. English translation: "The Japanese poet / Cleans his knife; / This time eloquence is dead."

132 As quoted in J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 705. English translation: "Swift and muscled, / May the word stick to your thought / Like to the buffalo's neck the jaguar."

133 A. Stern, *Futuryzje*, p. 27.

134 A. Stern, *Futuryzje*, p. 27.

The miniature is almost entirely dominated by a strong visual, auditory, and tactile cue (“current is ringing”). The sensorial scheme is again extremely vague, “blurred,” peculiar, and therefore more symbolist than haiku-like.<sup>135</sup> A similar provence is evident in the synaesthetic arrangement, which is enmeshed in rhetorical, “flourishing” repetition, vague and removed from the everyday experience of the world. We do not know what events are mentioned, what “the other side” from the title is (is it about the afterlife, as the first text of the cycle might suggest?), how we are to construe the “strange current?” The poem’s ending is intriguing, written in emphatic small capitals: “CANNOT [GO] ANY FURTHER.” This immediately suggests an association with haiku’s genre rules. It seems that the author speaks tongue in cheek: I would explain, reveal, clarify everything, unfortunately – I “cannot [go] any further,” the syllable limit has been reached. When we read this poem (or even the entire cycle) autothematically, we end up with a perverse and surprising message, entirely different from Vocance’s poetic credo quoted above.

Only two out of Stern’s six “hay-kay” approximate Japanese haiku in some way (specifically, the last two texts of *Ludzie chorzy wiosną*). Compared to the vast majority of poems exhibiting Young Poland’s fascination with the Orient, Futurist poems are, however, extremely concise, simple, focused on small sensations, and uniquely ironic. Seen in the perspective of classical haiku, Stern’s details are insufficiently specific, insufficiently ordinary, insufficiently (to a much lesser extent than in the poetry of Young Poland’s authors!) immersed in nature and its experience. In this context, textual events must be viewed as artificial, distant from sensorial mimesis and playful in an “un-haiku-like” way.

The origin of Stern’s experiments with the Japanese form is puzzling. Ewa Tomaszewska provides a hint here:

Anatol Stern’s futuristic *haikai* [...] from [...] his debut volume *Futuryzje*, which was published in the same year as *Oktostychy*, 1919, are, as it were, a poetic response to the elegant poetry of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz [...]. Adding piquancy to this situation is the fact that in Japan *haikai* verse was a form of protest against the refined, traditional *mijikauta* style.<sup>136</sup>

Indeed, this motivation is quite possible. Iwaszkiewicz’s *Uty* (i.e. 31-syllable *tanka*/ *mijikauta* poems)<sup>137</sup> from the volume *Oktostychy* [Octastichs] may have been

135 A. Stern, *Futuryzje*, p. 27.

136 E. Tomaszewska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie,’ pp. 14–5.

137 In all likelihood, Iwaszkiewicz uses the term *uta* (Polish plural *uty*) – instead of *tanka* or *mijikauta* – taking his cue from Remigiusz Kwiatkowski (R. Kwiatkowski, *Chiakunin-Izszu, czyli ze stu poetów po jednej pieśni* [Hyakunin Isshu, or A Hundrend Poets each with One Poem], Warszawa–Kraków, 1919, pp. 8–10). Designating “*tanka*” with the “*uta*” label is seen as an “unfair reduction of [...] the term.” (W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 4). See Part 1 of this book.

an interesting intertext, or even one of the pre-texts,<sup>138</sup> of Stern's poetry cycles. Especially as *Oktostychy* were certainly published prior to "hay-kay."<sup>139</sup> In addition to *Uty* and "hay-kay," both volumes also feature witty, acoustically rich poems on exotic (or even Oriental) themes, such as Iwaszkiewicz's octastich 'Indes galantes' immediately preceding *Uty* or 'Podróż ciekawa do Japonii. Sonet' [An Interesting Journey to Japan. A Sonnet] and 'Pejzaż maurytański' [Mauritanian Landscape] in Stern's *Futuryzje*.

At first glance, the elaborate, sophisticated, and acoustically vibrant Parnassian *Uty* seem to be the reverse of Stern's "hay-kay." However, their relationship is more complex. At least several similarities between those cycles can be pointed out:

- Both Stern and Iwaszkiewicz essentially follow the syllabic patterning of the Japanese genre (5 + 7 + 5 syllables in the case of Stern, 5 + 7 + 5 + 7 + 7 in Iwaszkiewicz's poems).<sup>140</sup>
- Both poets condense the phonostylistic layer, employing numerous, often deep, initial and intraverbal alliterations (for Iwaszkiewicz it is even an underlying principle of four out of five tanka,<sup>141</sup> in Stern's work it is a continuation of the first text, while in his remaining works the role and methods of creating phonostylistic effects are different).
- Both poets use final rhymes and assonances – counter to the principles of Japanese poetics (as if they wanted to smuggle elements established in their native literature to the Japanese compositional pattern).
- Both try to adapt their poems to genres known to them only at second-hand yet employing features of poetics well-established in Poland (symbolism, Parnassianism).
- In the cycles of both poets distinct stylistic ruptures can be traced.

Let us examine this issue in more depth. Iwaszkiewicz strictly adhered to the formal markers of *mijikauta* (alongside the syllabic patterning, he made use of

138 It seems that both authors must have drawn their knowledge of Japanese genres from sources other than the rather scant Polish literary-theoretical summaries and the relatively few (and often second-rate) translations.

139 In both volumes, 1919 is given as the date of publication. Waškiewicz, however, informs that the second section of *Futuryzje* (pages 13–28, containing both "hay-kay" cycles) was printed in 1920 (A. K. Waškiewicz, "Irrealna gwiazda." O poezji Anatola Sterna' [The Unreal Star. On the Poetry of Anatol Stern], *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1979, No. 4, pp. 165–6). Featured in *Oktostychy* (of which *Uty* are part), are poems from 1917–1918 ('Nota bibliograficzna' [Bibliographic Note], in J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Dziela* [Works], Vol. 1: *Wiersze* [Poems], Warszawa, 1958, p. 555). In all likelihood, Stern did not see them before the publication of Iwaszkiewicz's volume but could have become acquainted with the printed version of *Oktostychy* prior to the publication of his "hay-kay."

140 Occasionally, one-syllable deviations from the pattern occur in Iwaszkiewicz's poems.

141 See J. Kwiatkowski, *Poezja Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza* [The Poetry of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz], p. 220.

the division into the upper, *kami no ku*, and lower, *shimo no ku*, stanza),<sup>142</sup> and his miniatures should be considered much closer to Japanese tanka than the triplets in Kwiatkowski's translations of *Chiakunin-Izszu*, which distorted the form of the prototypes.<sup>143</sup> Also in line with the tradition of *mijikauta* is the relatively light, "courtly" subject matter (although this ancient thirty-one-syllable form, in use to this day, can accommodate almost any type of content).<sup>144</sup> The same is the case with dense, and elaborate irregular sound instrumentation. Its role was emphasized by Remigiusz Kwiatkowski in the introduction to his book of tanka translations.<sup>145</sup> He transcribed one of the Japanese poems as follows:

Ashibiki no  
yama dori-no-o-no  
szi dori-o-no  
naga-naga shi yo vo  
khi **dori** ka mo nen<sup>146</sup>

Such a dense network of assonances is not typical of all, or even most, 31-syllable verses rich in sound ornamentation.<sup>147</sup> It seems that Iwaszkiewicz was strongly influenced precisely by the information provided by Kwiatkowski, aiming to craft compositions comparable to the examples cited in *Chiakunin-Izszu*. (He might have also been inspired, at least to some extent, by the considerably more accomplished translations by Maria Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa).<sup>148</sup> As a result, the poet offered similarly intense sound effects, making use of various sound repetitions: initial

142 See M. Melanowicz, 'Tanka lub mijikauta,' in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, eds. G. Gazda, S. Tynecka-Makowska, Kraków, 2006, p. 744.

143 See J. Kwiatkowski, *Poezja Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza*, pp. 218–21.

144 See, for example, M. Melanowicz, 'Tanka lub mijikauta,' p. 745.

145 In this context, he also explained his versification choices: "Seeking to recreate the monotony and repetition underpinning uta verse, I used the triplet form in my translation, especially as this form, serving as a poetic miniature in European poetry, like no other artistic genre corresponds to the miniature form of uta perfected in the course of centuries in Japanese poetry" (R. Kwiatkowski, *Chiakunin-Izszu*, p. 9).

146 The poem by Kakinomoto-no-Hitomaro as quoted in R. Kwiatkowski, *Chiakunin-Izszu*, p. 8 (sections shown in bold reflect Kwiatkowski's underlining). English translation: "Long as the long tail/ of pheasants of the mountains/ foot-wearing hills:/ so long is the night before me/ when I must spend it alone;" as quoted in S. D. Carter, *Traditional Japanese Poetry: An Anthology*, Stanford, 1991, p. 206. See Kotański's Polish translation (where the author's name is spelt "Kakinomoto-no Hitomaro"), *Poezja starojapońska*, p. 92. See also the analysis by Jerzy Kwiatkowski (*Poezja Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza*, pp. 219–20), which, similarly to my study, focuses on phonostylistics (and includes the sound pattern provided by Kwiatkowski).

147 See M. Melanowicz, 'Tanka lub mijikauta,' p. 745. Sample transcriptions of tanka – M. Melanowicz, *Historia literatury japońskiej*, Warszawa, 2011, pp. 31, 151–3.

148 Especially interesting are semantic and phonostylistic (alliteration, lexical repetitions) affinities between the third of Iwaszkiewicz's *Uty* (cited below in the



and intraverbal (often augmented) alliterations, vowel harmony, exact and approximate rhymes (within verses and in their clausulae), lexical repetitions and lexical oddities defamiliarizing the text (archaic-sounding words, foreign proper names, for example, a pseudonym of a French Parnassian). Occasionally, phrases with such a sound structure cease to resemble Polish. It is worthwhile having a look – and listening to – all of Iwaszkiewicz's *Uty*:

- |                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Łąk <b>kampanule</b> –<br>Dzwonki – tulą swe pąki<br>Między ulów domki:                                                                                     | [1. Meadow campanulas<br>Bell flowers – snuggle their buds<br>Among beehive huts:                                                                                 |
| „Miodem wonne koronki” –<br>Mówi Sully Prudhomme.                                                                                                              | Honey-tangy laces<br>Says Sully Prudhomme.                                                                                                                        |
| 2. Pachną <b>dziewanny</b> ,<br>Bławatki <b>dzieciństwa snem</b> .<br><b>Dzieciństwem (psst!...) pstrem</b> .                                                  | 2. Mullein, bluebottles<br>Smell of childhood's dream<br>Of childhood (shh!...) splashy                                                                           |
| (W wodzie <b>dziewiczej pstrągi</b> )<br><b>Dziedzictwem</b> idą <b>swem</b> .                                                                                 | (In virgin water trout)<br>Honour their heritage.                                                                                                                 |
| 3. Rozkwitła <b>róża</b><br>Z <b>podróży</b> mnie <b>powita</b> ,<br>Ni to wód <b>kruża</b> .<br>Syta <b>podróży</b> ręka<br><b>Palce w róży</b> zanurzy.      | 3. A blooming rose<br>Will greet me from my journey,<br>Tis not a jug of water.<br>Journey's sated hand<br>Will dip its fingers in the rose.                      |
| 4. <b>Dzieciństwa świat</b> <b>zbladł</b> ,<br><b>Świat snień, dzień</b> lat przednocy.<br>Słucham <b>brzmięń ech</b> . <b>Gdzie</b><br>Omackiem, na los ręki, | 4. Childhood world has turned pale,<br>World of dreams, day of years of eventide.<br>I listen to the sounds of echoes. Where<br>At hand's random, the honest hand |

main text) and the following Japanese tanka by Mitsune translated by Stattler-Jędrzejewiczowa (*Z poezji japońskich*, p. 55):

Wśród bieli szronu, który skrywa Chryzantem śnieżne pęki, Gdzie szron, gdzie kiść prawdziwa?	[Amid the white of frost that hides Chrysanthemums' snowy bunches Where is the frost, where is the true bunch?]
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English translation: “Must it be that one, / The white chrysanthemum lying / Under the hazy frost, / Bewildered as in early fall, / That I might pick among them all?, as quoted in S. Bhattacharya, *A Hundred Autumn Leaves: The Ogura Hyakunin Isshu: Translated and Annotated*, n.p., n.d.

Ręka jej szuka chciwa.”  
 Kiści **cień** stwarza kraty  
 Na **wirydarza żwirze**.

Has been groping for it.  
 Cluster’s shadow makes bars  
 On cloister garth’s gravel.

5. Powiem, że u nas  
 (Gdzieś przelotnej sympatii  
 Na Honolulu)  
 Najpiękniejsze są kwiatki  
 Bławatki I kampanule.<sup>149</sup>

5. I will say that in our homeplace  
 (Short-lived fancy somewhere  
 In Honolulu)  
 Bluebottles and campanulas  
 Are the most beautiful]

Conspicuously standing out in this cycle filled with “sounds of echoes” is the last tanka. One can get the impression that the author no longer wanted to weave intricate auditory textures. The text is ludic, flippant, and a little crazy (“Short-lived fancy somewhere in Honolulu!”). “Campanulas” – featured in the first and last line of the poem – lend *Uty* a structural closure. Apart from that, however, the fifth poem of the cycle is something of a puzzle. While all the other poems are inter-related in various ways (as if we were dealing here with a moderately coherent *renga*<sup>150</sup> on the theme of flowers and childhood), the fifth song seems to break up this tentative unity.

The *Uty* sequence holds up a highly interesting mirror to Stern’s “hay-kay” (especially to the first cycle from *Futuryzje*). Perhaps this Futurist contrarily decided to use a different genre, formally rigorous, yet much less elaborate (as it might seem from the perspective of the Polish interwar literature). Thus, in this perspective, “hay-kay” is in opposition to *Uty* – this is how we could perceive these “rough-hewn” texts by Stern (the last two triplets of *Ludzie chorzy wiosną* and ‘Już’). But also, as I have shown: “hay-kay” poems are similar to *Uty*. Let us come back to Stern’s texts. The first one is enveloped in a very dense mesh of assonance:

**Ta senna panna**  
 Zwie się tak: primavera,  
**Ta wonna donna**.

[This sleepy virgin  
 Primavera is her name,  
 This lame dame.]

The poems that follow bring a complete change of soundscape and style. They still treat of flowers and fragrances, this time, however, not from the perspective of a delicate “primavera,” but rather a wholesome country girl. After four Parnassian stanzas, Iwaskiewicz produces a surprising semantic and stylistic volte-face. Stern’s volte-face is just as extreme and occurs after the initial triplet.

The 3 *hay-kay* cycle does not invite comparison with *Uty* as readily. First and foremost, we should take notice of the fracture between the dynamic and radical

149 As quoted in J. Iwaskiewicz, *Dziela*, Vol. 1, pp. 31–2.

150 See P. Michałowski, ‘Polskie imitacje haiku,’ p. 168.

first text (*Już*) and subsequent “hay-kay,” replete with repetition, synaesthetic, tinged with symbolism. This is the cycle’s endpoint:

A strange current is ringing  
 A strange black current is ringing.  
 Can everything be heard from here?

At this juncture, it is also worthwhile to examine Iwaszkiewicz’s miniatures simply from the perspective of haiku. Thus, for example, the upper stanza of the first of *Uty* – which could be treated as a *hokku* of the poet’s *renga* – could stand on its own as an excellent (yet somewhat pedantic and highly polished) haiku. It should be recalled that this is how the genre originated in the first place – *hokku* began to function independently of the linked verse that followed it. Also approximating haiku is the upper stanza of the third of *Uty*. Forms akin to haiku can also be found in other places of *Oktostychy*. In the cycle *Piosenki*<sup>151</sup> (Songs) we come across the following lines:

Młode ptaki czarne  
 Wśród czerwonych pąków  
 Wiją gniazda.<sup>152</sup>

[Young black birds  
 Are building nests  
 Among red buds.

Ktoś gra na gitarze.  
 Młodziutkich drzew baze  
 Brzęczą od pszczoł  
 Żłocistych<sup>153</sup>

Someone is playing the guitar.  
 Catkins of young trees  
 Are abuzz with golden  
 Bees.]

One poem from the cycle *Bilety tramwajowe* (Tram Tickets, from the volume *Księga dnia i księga nocy* [The Book of Day and the Book of Night], 1929) takes the following form:

‘Topola’

[POPLAR

Na smutnych drogach pod Ravną  
 Ostrożnie przystrzyżono pola,  
 I tylko sama nieodmienna,  
 Jak u nas smukli się topola<sup>154</sup>

On sad roads outside Ravenna  
 Fields have been carefully trimmed  
 Only a solitary, unchanging  
 poplar stands slender, like back at home]

151 Podraza-Kwiatkowska mentions *Piosenki* in the Japanese context (M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Inspiracje japońskie*, p. 80).

152 J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Dzieła*, Vol. 1, p. 33.

153 J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Dzieła*, p. 34.

154 J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Dzieła*, p. 161.

In *Kasydy* [Quasidas] (from the volume *Kasydy zakończone siedmioma wierszami* [Quasidas Concluding with Seven Poems], 1925), we find the following text:

Na niebieskim wysokim niebie dwa nieskończone różowe pasma.  
Dwa czarne odlatujące ptaki na ich tle,  
i cała w tym jesień.<sup>155</sup>

[On the high blue sky two infinite pink streaks.]  
[Two departing black birds in their background,]  
[and that's the whole autumn].

Iwazskiewicz's tanka were a deliberate reference to East-Asian poetics, a sort of apprenticeship-like exercise at perfecting the craft.<sup>156</sup> While evidently the poet was also approaching haiku, it seems that these oscillations were unintentional, somewhat accidental and occasional. Generally, seen in the perspective of haiku, Iwazskiewicz's poems turn out to be stylistically and visually overwrought, deeply immersed in the universe of culture, eclipsing (and sometimes excluding) direct, intense, and immediate sensory experience.

### B. *Japanese Miniatures by Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska (and Staff)?*

Unlike Stern's poetic output, the "haiku-ness" of Pawlikowska's verse has been emphasised on numerous occasions.<sup>157</sup> This question, however, has not yet been

155 J. Iwazskiewicz, *Wiersze zebrane*, Warszawa, 1968, p. 146. See also A. Kluba, *Poemat prozą w Polsce*, Warszawa-Toruń, 2014, p. 225.

156 I concur with Kwiatkowski's opinion that no other aims underlay these poems (see J. Kwiatkowski, *Poezja Jarosława Iwazskiewicza*, pp. 218–21). The scholar declared: "although Iwazskiewicz's *Uta* are not pastiches, and the poet was able to stamp his own style on them – this is more of a poetic play, not so much an attempt to express oneself but a magician's apprenticeship. The stylistic pattern was too alien and too rigid to suggest otherwise" (J. Kwiatkowski, *Poezja Jarosława Iwazskiewicza*, p. 221). See also M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, 'Inspiracje japońskie,' p. 79.

157 The proximity of Pawlikowska's poetry to haiku poetics (or more generally – to the poetics of Oriental miniature verse) has been treated in the following studies: J. Kwiatkowski, 'Wstęp' [Introduction], in M. Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, *Wybór poezji*, ed. J. Kwiatkowski, revised and supplemented M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, A. Lebkowska, Wrocław, 1998, p. XXXVIII–XXXIX; P. Michałowski, 'Barokowe korzenie haiku (ostatnia przygoda Stanisława Grochowiaka),' *Akcent*, 1993, No. 4, p. 9; P. Michałowski, 'Polskie imitacje haiku,' p. 166; P. Michałowski, 'Haiku,' pp. 77–9; A. Kluba, 'Poetyka a światopogląd,' pp. 151–2; E. Tomaszewska, 'Inspiracje japońskie,' pp. 15–16; M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, 'Inspiracje japońskie,' p. 80; M. Bieszczadowski, 'Poetyckie miniatury,' *Nowe Książki*, 1978, No. 23, p. 34. See also E. Balcerzan, 'Wiersz zbyt kunsztowny z wyrazów składanych dorywczo' [An Overwrought Poem with Words Arranged Ad Lib], *Polonistyka*, 1995, No. 6, pp. 388–94; A. Kamińska, *Od Leśmiana*, p. 57; A. Janta, 'Słowo wstępne,' p. XI.

treated “monographically” – usually the context of Japanese miniatures turned out to be merely an attractive comparative pendant to literary-theoretical studies of varying scope. Meanwhile, Jasnorzewska’s verse should be more broadly confronted with the achievements of Japanese verse (not only with haiku)<sup>158</sup> and with the haiku-inspired miniature verse of Western poets produced simultaneously with the poems of the Polish author.

Classical haiku poetry is deeply rooted in nature. In her numerous miniatures, Pawlikowska also makes reference to the natural world. It is worthwhile comparing both ways of viewing – and describing – nature, to reveal the cultural frame, into which the Polish poet sets images of the world and, finally, to determine the attitudes of the speaker.

Out of Pawlikowska’s poetry books, the one most frequently “suspected” of being “haiku-like” is *Pocałunki* [Kisses]. Let me start by analysing several miniatures from this publication:

‘Talerz z Kopenhagi’

[THE PLATE FROM COPENHAGEN]

Z okrągłego siwego morza  
wychodzi chłopiec nagi  
i podaje swą złotą nagość,  
jak na talerzu z Kopenhagi.

From the round grey sea  
a naked boy comes out  
and flaunts his golden nudity  
as if on the plate from Copenhagen]

from the volume *Pocałunki*, 1926, Pz 1, p. 173<sup>159</sup>

This poem is ascetic in imagery, and at the same time disturbingly convoluted ontologically and phraseologically (the boy on the plate seems to be going beyond his artificial microworld, going out of the artefact – this effect is akin to *mise en abyme*: the young man offers himself [as if] on a plate on which he was painted). The poem’s ekphrastic character (also occurring in many classical haiku) is evident

158 For an extensive treatment of Pawlikowska’s philosophical inspirations in the context of East-Asian thought (including Buddhist concepts), see A. Kluba, ‘Poetyka a światopogląd,’ pp. 140–54, 162–3. For the “Buddhist modality” of Jasnorzewska’s poetry, see A. Kluba, *Poetyka a światopogląd*, p. 149.

159 All quotes from Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska’s poems are based on the following edition: M. Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, *Poezje zebrane* [Collected Poems], Vol. 1–2, collected and ed. by A. Madyda, with an introduction by K. Ćwikliński, Toruń, 1997. I designate Volume 1 as Pz 1, and Volume 2 as Pz 2. [The Polish idiom “(wyłożyć/podać) jak na talerzu,” literally “(to lay something something out) as if on a plate,” means to (have something explained) “nice and clear,” “as clear as daylight,” “as plain as a pikestaff,” “in plain sight,” “in the open,” “in broad daylight.” Thus, a more creative translation would render the last line of the poem in question as follows: “as plain as a pikestaff from Copenhagen;” translator’s note].

here.<sup>160</sup> The plain sensorial patterning resembles those known from Japanese miniatures. The speaker consistently avoids revealing emotions, and the image remains crucial to the text. However, the strongly erotic representation of a beautiful young man rising from (painted) waves has little to do with the semantics of classical seventeen-syllable verses. Of vital importance is also the frame of presentation. In ekphrastic poems of Japanese masters we “entered” into the world represented in a work of art, often (I especially mean the perspective of the Western reader) with absolutely no awareness that the poem offers a description of an artefact. In Pawlikowska’s poem, nature is divested of power and terror. The sea is no longer an element – it has been cut down to the size of a painted plate.

A cultural frame is also plainly seen in the bipartite, successful multi-sensory poem ‘Grad’ [Hail]:

Chmury błyskawicą podpięte	[Clouds underhung with lightning
i grad lecący na głowę,	and hail flying overhead,
jak anielskie cukierki lodowe	like angelic ice candies
z wysokości tysiąca pięter.	from the thousandth floor.]
from the volume <i>Pocalunki</i> , 1926, Pz 1, p. 173	

The first part of the poem (and of the simile) nicely corresponds with the tradition of haiku’s sensorial images. The boudoir-theatrical “underhanging of clouds,” calling to mind curtains, is, however, a faint signal of the objectification of nature. The second part of the comparison transports the specific detail into the still very sensorial childlike fairy-tale reality. The “suchness” of the storm and hail is not central here. Even the impressive heights of clouds can somehow be reduced to the human scale. Nature is peculiarly humanized here (though not anthropomorphized), the world has been framed into culturally and morally familiar ideas.

Of course, Pawlikowska’s poetry occasionally brings images of menacing, untamed nature. However, man invariably remains its measure and, in such cases, nature described in a conceptist way is most often subject to anthropomorphization:

‘Huragan’	[HURRICANE
Niebo się gniewa,	The sky is angry
obłoki nadbiegają w tłumie	clouds surge in crowds!
Szczęśliwe drzewa!	Lucky trees!
Będą się mogły wyszumieć	They’ll get to sow their wild seeds]
from the volume <i>Pocalunki</i> , 1926, Pz 1, p. 166	

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160 See Part 7 of the book.

<p>‘Turkot świtu’          Firmament ostygł w swej grozie,          zszarzał i zbrzydł – – –          Na turkoczącym wozie          z daleka przyjeżdża          świt...</p>	<p>[THE RATTLE OF DAWN          The firmament has cooled in its horror,          Grew pale and ugly – – –          On a rattling cart          Coming from afar          Is dawn...]</p>
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from the volume *Surowy jedwab* [Raw Silk], 1932, Pz1, p. 368

Occasionally strong intertextual anthropomorphization occurs:

<p>‘Balet powojów’          Zachód dogasa...          Już się stroją,          Już się bielą          Powoje,          Balet z czasów Degasa...          Kręgi sukien,          Wstrzymany pęd –          Stoją nieruchome          Sur les pointes...</p>	<p>[BALLETS OF BINDWEEDS          The sunset is fading away...          They’re already preening,          They’re already white          Bindweeds          Degas-era ballet...          Circles of dresses,          Suspended rush –          They stand stock-still          Sur les pointes...]</p>
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from the collection *Balet powojów* [Ballet of Bindweeds], 1935, Pz 1, p. 447

Examples of the imagery that is simultaneously close to figure-ground alignments typical of haiku and radically different from them are also available in this poem:

<p>‘Obrazy księżycy’          – Kwiat z turkusy i miedzi,          – pazur, co zaczepki szuka,          – Żyd w lisiej czapie –          – złota czasza, z której srebro kapie,          – żółw, który drzemie –          – biała chmurka na niebie,          – wielki dukat,          którym nęci noc sprzedają ziemię.</p>	<p>[IMAGES OF THE MOON          – A flower of turquoise and copper,          – a claw spoiling for a fight,          – a Jew in a fox-fur hat          – a golden dome wherefrom silver drips,          – a dozing turtle          – a small white cloud in the sky,          – a big dukat          with which the night tempts venal earth.]</p>
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*Bluszcz*, 1931, No. 36; Pz 2, p. 231

Several images from this sequence are close to simple (and straightforwardly depicted) haiku images. However, the depiction of a cloud or a turtle is not the

point of this poem. Each element of the enumeration is an ingenious metaphor which hides a description of a specific quarter of the Moon. What classical haiku writers express both highly artistically and in simple terms, in Jasnorzewska's poetry becomes a game of seeking the best metaphorical substitutes for a natural image. As a matter of fact, the natural phenomenon... is not itself anymore: the speaker attempts to identify it with what has been familiarized in the human universe. This device was known to some Japanese haijins and, naturally, to Western haiku authors active at the time of Pawlikowska, but the Polish poet in a way took it to extremes (an extravaganza of highly diverse images evoking different moods). This extremeness becomes clearly detectable in the confrontation with haiku poems coming from different temporal and geographical universes (the first poem is a Japanese haiku composed before the crystallization of the genre by Bashō, while the second and third ones were written by Mexican poets active during the first decades of the twentieth century):

if you add  
a handle to the moon—  
a Chinese fan!  
Sōkan<sup>161</sup>

Pelícano  
Cafetera de porcelana  
Que va flotando por el agua  
C. Gutiérrez Cruz<sup>162</sup>

Es mar la noche negra;  
La nube es una concha;  
La luna es una perla  
J. J. Tablada<sup>163</sup>

Clear representations focusing on a single image can also be found in Pawlikowska's poetic output. However, these are usually considerably more verbose and more "exuberant" stylistically than the Japanese- and Spanish-language miniatures cited above. Let us have a look:

'Krokusy'	[CROCUSES
Narciarze, rozczęczeni jak falanga duchów,	Skiers, rainbowed like a phalanx of ghosts

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161 As quoted in S. Addiss, *The Art of Haiku*, p. 60.

162 As quoted in J. Johnson, *Haiku poetics*, p. 162, English translation, J. Johnson, *Haiku poetics*, p. 162: "Pelican / porcelain coffee pot / that floats along on the water."

163 As quoted in J. Johnson, *Haiku poetics*, p. 159, English translation, J. Johnson, *Haiku poetics*, p. 159: "The Moon:" "The is sea is a black night, / the cloud a shell / and the moon a pearl!"



Zjechawszy z gór w dolinę, stanęli bez ruchu.	Having skied down to the valley, stopped dead.
Na śniegi cień rzucając,	Casting shadow on the snow,
W stroju lekkim, kusym,	Skimpily, lightly dressed,
Patrzą ku słońcu, piękni – – –	They look towards the sun, all beautiful – – –
A to są krokusy.	Yet these are crocuses.]
from the volume <i>Śpiąca załoga</i> [Sleeping Crew], 1933, Pz 1, p. 421 <sup>164</sup>	

Pawlikowska can also use images of nature with a paradoxical effect:

‘Kurze łapki’	[CROW’S FEET
I już kurze łapki na skroni?	And crow’s feet already on your temple?
Ach, czas jak gdacząca kura	Ah, time like a cawing crow
o zabłoconych pazurach	with claws soiled with mud
przebiegł po białych płatkach okwitłej jabłoni!	ran over white petals of the blossoming apple tree!]
from the volume <i>Pocątunki</i> , 1926, Pz 1, p. 190	

Bird footprints on a flower carpet could be a pictorial focal point of a haiku poem (they could also bring to mind “bushy” shapes of the Japanese alphabet written on a sheet of paper). Note that birds living in a certain symbiotic relationship with humans – and leaving tangible traces of their presence in the human world – occasionally also become protagonists of Japanese haiku:

such a fine house—  
out back, sparrows delight  
in the millet field  
Bashō<sup>165</sup>

bush warbler—  
pooping on the rice cake  
at the edge of the veranda  
Bashō<sup>166</sup>

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164 In the original edition (*Pamiętnik Warszawski*, 1931, No. 10–12) the poem in question was titled *Z gór. III* [From the Mountains. III] (as quoted in Pz 1, p. 421).

165 English translation in *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 79.

166 English translation in *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 132.

However, the starting point of Pawlikowska's poem is not the scrutiny of the natural world nor any artefact, but a close observation of a human face. The "unpoetically" cawing crow with dirty feet (which for haijins would present no problem whatsoever) turns out to be entirely textual: it appears in the poem because of the idiomatic expression "crow's feet," used as a component of a simile whose main textual agent is time. Thus, everything is exactly the opposite of what Bashō would expect.

I am going to examine Pawlikowska's miniatures from yet another angle. Very often these texts are bipartite, not only in terms of imagery but with respect to the secondary status and parabolic character of the first presented image. In this context, it is worthwhile examining *Zmierzch na morzu* [Twilight at Sea] and *Wybrzeże* [The Coast]:

Wybrzeże coraz to bledsze  
w liliowej półżałobie  
i żaglowiec oparty na wietrze  
jak ja na myśli o tobie.

from the volume *Pocalunki*, 1926, Pz 1, p. 145

[The coast getting paler  
in lilac half- mourning  
and a sailing ship leaning against the wind  
like I am at the thought of you]

Meduzy rozrzucone niedbale,  
muszle, które piasek grzebie,  
i ryba opuszczona przez fale  
jak serce moje przez ciebie.

from the volume *Pocalunki*, 1926, Pz 1, p. 132

[Jellyfish scattered carelessly,  
shells buried by sand,  
and a fish abandoned by the waves  
like my heart by you.]

If stripped of the last verse, the poem *Zmierzch na morzu* would present an image similar to sensorial schemas of Japanese haikuists and – with congruity being not only compositional but also "iconographic" – to the paintings of Impressionists (who also drew heavily on Japanese art).<sup>167</sup> Here is the pale lilac coast, and a moving point against its background – a sailing ship. The poem's "haiku-ness" would not be undermined by the gentle metaphorization (half-mourning of the coast) and the subtle reference to colour symbolism (lilac is "fuzzy" purple, which in turn symbolizes, among other things, mourning – which perhaps explains the "lilac half-mourning"). The last verse entirely changes the poem's interpretation, transferring the visual concreteness to the sphere of the inner life. Coming to the fore are emotions of the speaker – regardless of the fact that from the perspective of the European tradition of personal lyric poetry this entity is exceptionally reticent and introverted. A concrete image from the sensorially experienced reality gives way to conceptist polysemy: the action of "leaning against" becomes ambiguous, the

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167 See Part 7 of this book.

wind and the coast assume a symbolic dimension. The second line can be described likewise, with the reservation that here we are dealing with the simultaneity of as many as four images – one “tender” scene and three “maritime” ones. By virtue of this combination, the situation of abandonment, constituting the poem’s finale, takes on tangible, sensorial concreteness.<sup>168</sup> This is another example of a somewhat ancillary role of a sensorial image – unknown in classical haiku – which becomes here a mere pretext for a reflection on the emotional situation of the speaker (in Pawlikowska’s poetry typically related to the disappointment in love).

Pawlikowska’s texts have been rather superficially likened to haiku, while a better frame of reference here is offered by Japanese tanka poems. Not infrequently her poems have a bipartite structure (much more frequently layered visually than haiku poems, which construct one image based on juxtaposition), are organized on the principle of simile and, as a matter of course, are more verbose (thirty-one syllables instead of seventeen). Pawlikowska’s verse becomes similar to numerous tanka also by virtue of its subject matter.<sup>169</sup> The following are some examples of Japanese 31-syllable poems:

On the autumn fields  
 The spears of grain are bending  
 In one direction  
 Towards my lord I’ll softly bend,  
 Let words sting as they may.  
 Princess Tajima<sup>170</sup>

At early dawn  
 a snipe preens its feathers  
 hundreds of times...  
 And the nights when you did not come

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168 The same is the case with the following poem that in addition to the sensorial description of nature offers a conceptist “fantasy” (lovers’ hair in the nest), which vividly transfers the overall image into the sphere of human emotions:

‘Rozbite gniazdo’	[A BROKEN NEST
Na ścieżce – gniazdo rozbite.	A broken nest on a track.
Skreć puchu, wełny i nitek,	A curl of down, wool, and threads,
Skorupka, piórko zielone	A tiny shell, a green feather
Żalodne wskazują losy...	Bespeak wretched fortune...
Znalazłam w nim też,	I also found in it
Splecione,	My hair
Moje i twoje włosy	Tangled with yours]

(from the volume *Śpiąca załoga*, 1933, Pz 1, p. 437). The poem *Brama* [The Gate] from *Balet powojów* (1935) also merits a similar analysis.

169 See subsection “Hay-hay” by Stern, “Tanka” by Iwaszkiewicz’.

170 The English translation quoted in Edwin A. Cranston, *A Waka Anthology Volume One: The Gem-Glistening Cup*, Stanford, 1993, p. 275.

are now as numerous...  
Ariwara-no Narihira<sup>171</sup>

The flowers withered,  
Their colour faded away,  
While meaninglessly  
I spent my days in the world  
And the long rains were falling.  
Ono no Komachi<sup>172</sup>

The similarities are even more evident in the following pair of texts:

‘Róża’

[A ROSE

W tym parku pobladłym, bez śmiechów i  
gości,  
przy róży rozkwitej stoję.  
Otośmy jedynymi świadkami piękności –  
ja jej, a ona mojej.

In this pallid park, with no laughing nor  
visitors,  
I stand by a flowering rose.  
Here we are: the only witnesses  
of each others’ beauty]

from the volume *Pocalunki*, 1926, Pz 1, p. 169

In lonely solitude I dwell,  
No human face I see;  
And so we two must sympathize,  
Oh mountain cherry tree;  
I have no friend but thee.<sup>173</sup>  
Abbot Gyōson (11th c.)

The poet naturally followed a direction similar to many of her Western contemporaries – the spirit of the times invited vividness and concision. However, she did not reach the regions that were at the time visited by Western haikuists (for whom, it should be added, Japanese seventeen-syllable verses circulating in the French, Spanish, Anglo-American literary worlds were undeniably an important – and clearly visible – signpost). Jasnorzewska did not achieve such brevity, did not propose highly condensed, “self-sufficient” imagery, such as that seen in the work of Paul Eluard or Guillermo de Torre (“Self-sufficiency” is understood here as the absence of a parabolic or symbolic

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171 English translation based on W. Kotański’s Polish rendering in *Poezja starojapońska*, p. 84.

172 English translation in *Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, ed. Donald Keene, New York, 1955, n.p.

173 English translation in *A Hundred Verses from Old Japan*, ed. and transl. William N. Porter, Oxford, 1909, n.p.

superstructure of an image, rather than the avoidance of conceptist mastery of verbal expression and subtle intertextual allusiveness, which often produces the modern epiphany quality).<sup>174</sup> We could speculate that such extreme “representational” forms – which from the perspective of contemporary, for example, Dadaist, experiments with abstract poetry were nevertheless highly conventional – would not have been sufficiently “artistic,” sufficiently finished, for the Polish poet. The following is an example of (conceptist) realizations of avant-garde haiku:

Le vent  
Hésitant  
Roule une cigarette d'air  
P. Eluard<sup>175</sup>

On the other hand, the two-part structure, multi-layered imagery, and parabolic or “simile-like” quality typical of Pawlikowska’s miniatures turn out to be relatively close to short poems by the Imagists<sup>176</sup> (which did not necessarily illustrate Pound’s concept of creating a poetic image, most likely unknown to Pawlikowska).<sup>177</sup> The following is a sample of poems by Richard Aldington:

The flower which the wind has shaken  
Is soon filled again with rain;  
So does my heart fill slowly with tears,  
Until you return<sup>178</sup>

‘October’

The beech-leaves are silver  
For lack of the tree’s blood.

At your kiss my lips  
Become like the autumn beech-leaves.<sup>179</sup>

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174 I discuss this in more detail in Part 5 of this book.

175 As quoted in P. Éluard, *Selected Poems*, transl. G. Bowen, London, 1988, p. 30. English translation in P. Éluard, *Selected Poems*, p. 31: “The wind, / Undecided, / Rolls a cigarette of air.”

176 See. J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 65.

177 In all likelihood, not a single Polish translation of Pound’s poetry was made during the interwar period. (L. Engelking, ‘Twórczość Ezry Pounda w Polsce’ [The Work of Ezra Pound in Poland], *Literatura na Świecie*, 1985, No. 1, pp. 228–32). I discuss the topic of Imagism at greater length in Part 3 of this book (chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey’).

178 As quoted in *Imagist Poetry: An Anthology*, eds. B. Blaisdell, R. Blaisdell, New York, 2011, p. 12.

179 As quoted in L. Riding and R. Graves, *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, New York, 1969, p. 208.

A great deal has been written on the Imagists', especially Pounds', deviations from haiku poetics,<sup>180</sup> resulting from, among other things, inadequate familiarity with the genre. It is not without reason that Jan Walsh Hokenson talks (overgeneralizing a bit) of the Imagist visual *complex* and the continental, avant-garde *simplex*.<sup>181</sup> This pictorial regularity is, however, the most important reason why it is worthwhile comparing Pawlikowska's texts with Imagist poems.

The poetic output of another well-known Imagist poet of the time, Amy Lowell, seems to me the most interesting Occidental comparative perspective with which to inspect those poems by Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska which are "suspected" of "haiku-ness."<sup>182</sup> While today Lowell's poems have been typically examined within the paradigm of queer studies or feminist criticism,<sup>183</sup> I insist that it is still helpful reading them also in the light of assumptions of Imagism and haiku. Concerned with emotions, the experience of nature and art (including the *ukiyo-e* ekphrases), Lowell's intimate poetry is highly personal and idiosyncratic,<sup>184</sup> and, in my view, within the legacy of Imagism exhibits the greatest transcultural similarity to the Japanese poetic miniature verse (haiku, tanka). As a matter of fact, this similarity had a fairly strong foundation – Lowell was relatively well, possibly better than any other Imagist poet, acquainted with Japanese literature and art.<sup>185</sup> The subject matter, type of sensitivity, and intense sensoriality make for puzzling analogies with Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska's poetry. Let us compare three poems:

180 See, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 62–84; E. Miner, 'Pound, Haiku...', pp. 570–84; A. Szuba, 'Haiku w Stanach Zjednoczonych,' p. 272. Szuba rightly sees the following statement by Flint as dismissing Imagism as a "transmitter" of haiku: "we all wrote dozens of the latter [haiku] as an amusement" (as quoted in Glenn Hughes, *Imagism and the Imagists: A Study in Modern Poetry*, London, 1972, p. 11.).

181 J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' p. 710.

182 The poet was associated with the Imagists, for some time she was the leading figure of the movement, which Pound bitingly renamed as "amygism" (See, for example, G. Gazda, 'Imażyzm' [Imagism], in G. Gazda, *Słownik europejskich kierunków i grup literackich* [Dictionary of European Literary Movements and Groups], Warszawa, 2000, p. 197; C. Healey, 'Some Imagist Essays: Amy Lowell,' *The New England Quarterly*, 1970, Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 134–8).

183 See, for example, *Amy Lowell, American Modern*, eds. A. Munich, M. Bradshaw, New Brunswick, 2004; S. Knewitz, 'Spoken Art: Amy Lowell's Dramatic Poetry and Early Twentieth-Century Expressive Culture,' *Current Objectives of Postgraduate American Studies*, 2008, Vol. 9, <http://copas.uni-regensburg.de/article/view/107/131>, accessed August 28, 2014.

184 See, for example, C. Rollyson, 'The Absence of Amy Lowell,' *New Criterion*, 2007, 1st September, pp. 77–80.

185 Amy's brother Percival Lowell spent ten years in Japan (he was a traveller, author of travel books). Correspondence with him was for the poet a source of information on Japanese culture. Lowell also received Far-Eastern artefacts from her brother (e.g. *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints) – based on J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 63–4.

'Westchnienia'

Morze jest dzisiaj smutne. Westchnienia się żalą  
przy brzegu porośniętym siwozłotą sierścią.  
Jak pierś wznosi się fala i ginie za falą.  
Morze wzdycha falami. Ziemia – moją pierśią.

M. Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, from the volume *Pocalunki*, 1926, Pz 1, 138

[SIGHS

The sea is sad today. Sighs lament  
by the shore overgrown with grey-gold fur.  
Like a breast, a wave rises and fades behind a wave.  
The sea sighs in waves. The Earth – in my breast.]

'The Fisherman's Wife'

When I am alone,  
The wind in the pine-trees  
Is like the shuffling of waves  
Upon the wooden side of a boat.

A. Lowell<sup>186</sup>

'Wind and Silver'

Greatly shining,  
The Autumn moon floats in the thin sky;  
And the fish-ponds shake their backs and flash their dragon scales  
As she passes over them.

A. Lowell<sup>187</sup>

Affectionate animalizations and personifications of nature strongly affect the response to these extremely sensorial poems. However, Pawlikowska does not seek to leave the reader alone with a masterful sensorial image and goes on to carefully profile the reader's response. Expressions such as "sad," "lament," and "sighs" allow no room for interpretation. It seems that the poet is unable to "abandon" poems at the stage of a sensorial image (as sensorial imagery is indeed merely a stage, a step leading to a culminating disclosure of the speaker's emotions).

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186 As quoted in A. Lowell, *Pictures of the Floating World*, Boston–New York, 1921, p. 8, online version: <https://archive.org/stream/picturesfloatin00lowegoog#page/n30/mode/1up>, accessed November 26, 2014. Polish translation by L. Engelking (quoted in L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir*, p. 153): "Żona rybaka // Kiedy jestem sama, / Podmuchi wiatru w gałęziach sosen / Wydają się falami, / Co ocierają się o burty łodzi."

187 As quoted in <http://terebeck.hu/english/haiku/lowell.html>, accessed November 2, 2014. Polish translation of the poem by Andrzej Szuba (as quoted in L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir*, p. 202): "Wiatr i srebro // Świecąc wspaniale / Jesienny księżyc płynie po pustawym niebie; / A stawy rybne otrząsają grzbiety i błyskają smoczymi łuskami, / Kiedy unosi się nad nimi."

By contrast, Lowell allows sensorial images to exist on their own. The first poem – a brilliant concretization of Pound’s postulate of super-position (placing one idea on top of another as well as the amplification and fusion of images)<sup>188</sup> – focuses on the image itself without offering a ready interpretation. In the light of the title and the ambiguous *shuffling*, the longing represented in this way, not complemented by an explicit plaint, becomes especially intense and acute. The second poem enters, in a way alien to haiku, the sphere of fantasy, but then comes to a halt, allowing the reader to perfectly (and literally) visualize the unusual scene whose description does not entirely discard sensorial mimesis.

As it turns out, Pawlikowska is much more strongly attached to Western image schemas, conceptism, and cultural background. This is seen most manifestly in yet another of her “aquatic” texts, wherein a picture of nature was built from metaphors, ingenious yet upsetting the sensorial clarity of the picture<sup>189</sup> and a mythological character (here, carrying strongly erotic connotations):

<p>Dal szcztokowana brązową ulewą, fale w baranich runach i łódź przerzucana na prawo i lewo przez grające mięśnie Neptuna.</p>	<p>[The distance brushed by a brown downpour waves in sheep’s fleece and a boat tossed from side to side by playing muscles of Neptune]</p>
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‘Morze w dzień pochmurny’ [The Sea on a Cloudy Day], from the volume *Suwory jedwab*, 1932, Pz 1, p. 382

Let us set Lowell’s and Pawlikowska’s miniatures side by side.

‘Autumn’  
All day I have watched the purple vine leaves  
Fall into water.  
And now in the moonlight they still fall,  
But each leaf is fringed with silver.  
A. Lowell<sup>190</sup>

188 I discuss this subject at greater length in the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

189 Metaphors – which, as it happens, are exquisitely vivid – accord the image additional motifs and senses (sheep’s wool, brushing).

190 As quoted in Lowell, *Pictures of the Floating World*, p. 9. The poem’s Polish translation by L. Engelking (as quoted in L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir*, p. 157): “Jesień // Przez cały dzień patrzyłam jak szkarłatne liście winogrodu / Opadają na wodę. / Teraz w blasku księżycy opadają dalej, / Lecz każdy liść jest lamowany srebrem.”



'Passing the Bamboo Fence'  
 What fell upon my open umbrella?  
 A plum-blossom?  
 A. Lowell<sup>191</sup>

'Magnolia'	[MAGNOLIA
Na liściu leży kwiat	A flower rests on a leaf
drzemiący,	dormant
żółtawobiały jak słoniowa kość.	yellowish-white like ivory.
Słodki, że aż nudzi.	Sweet to the point of boredom
Przedmiot pachnący –	A fragrant object –
złośliwie tajemniczy świat –	maliciously mysterious world –
dziwny gość	the strange visitor
wśród nas, ludzi. –	among us, humans. –]

M. Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, from the volume *Niebieskie migdały*, 1922, Pz 1, p. 41

All three poems bring forth concrete natural forms against a uniform background. One could hardly find representations that would be clearer from a purely "iconographic" perspective – and more dissimilar in terms of verbal expression. Jasnorzewska tries to "get" to her mute, fragrant protagonist in manifold ways – in her relatively short text (made up of 45 syllables) she animalizes and personifies it ("dormant," "maliciously mysterious"), makes it the basis of a precise comparison ("yellowish-white like ivory"), and examines by means of human sensations ("sweet to the point of boring"). The perspectives of "us, humans" and the "strange visitor" do not converge. The poet investigates the flower in the fashion of a diligent laboratory technician noting down all the properties of a studied object, rather than someone who understandingly and compassionately contemplates the world without any preconceptions.

Lowell also depicts her protagonist through percepts of the human sensorium. *Autumn* is a very straightforward description of visual experience. It covers a whole day and at least part of the night, and yet it seems to be suspended in the "now" extended in time. The picture changes but little, the leaves become more "jewellery-like." The situation is a little unreal, but still close to a straightforward contemplation and recording of sensations typical of haiku. Barbara Ungar reproves Lowell for her inability to show the "inner nature of things"<sup>192</sup> – yet how is such a parameter measured? Lowell's texts tend at times to be verbose, the image

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191 As quoted in A. Lowell, *Pictures of the Floating World*, p. 22. The poem's Polish translation by Engelking (as quoted in L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir*, p. 177): "Mijając ogrodzenie z bambusu // Co to upadło na moją otwartą parasolkę – / Kwiat śliwy?"

192 B. Ungar, *Haiku in English*, Stanford, California 1978, pp. 17–9.

sometimes becomes fragmented due to a large number of details, and yet the calm, contemplative and artistically intriguing gazing at the world remains a great asset of this poetry, one that stands out from differently composed miniatures of the Polish author.

The topoi of the second of Lowell's texts quoted here leave no doubt – the poem must be located in an Asian reality. The interrogative phrase calls to mind famous haiku misperceptions (“A fallen flower / Returning to the branch?”),<sup>193</sup> one may even wonder whether this is a translation of some obscure Asian poem, possibly penned by a woman.<sup>194</sup> The poet takes the liberty of conferring semantic open-endedness on her poem, leaving the reader one-on-one with a small, unexplained, multi-sensory experience (eliciting aural, visual and olfactory sensations). She does not comment nor explain, restricting herself to a mere act of recording.

At the opposite extreme of this mode of experiencing and describing nature is the exquisitely conceptist, elaborate, “historicizing” poem by Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska titled ‘Pokrzywa widziana z bliska’ [A Nettle Seen from Close-up]:

Z nasępionych krążganków,	[From gloomy cloisters,
Z galeryj obronnych,	From defensive galleries,
Skąd zieleń, ogniem prażąc,	Whence greenery, blazing with fire,
Wrogów upomina,	Reprimands enemies,
Wychylają się kwietne, półcalowe donny	Flowery half-inch donnas emerge
W mantylach fioletowych,	In purple mantlets,
W różowych dominach –	In pink dominos –
I namiętnością gorsząc	And shocking the austere fortress
Surową fortecę,	With their passion
Otwierają ramiona,	Open their arms
Tęskne i kobiece...	Longing, feminine...]

from the volume *Balet powojów*, 1935, Pz 1, p. 451

193 See remarks on haiku conceptism in Parts 1 and 5 of this study.

194 Both miniatures by Lowell cited here come from the volume *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919), which makes extensive reference to Japanese poetry and *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints. On the provenance of these “poems written in a quasi-Oriental idiom,” see A. Lowell, ‘Foreword,’ in A. Lowell, *Pictures of the Floating World*, p. VII. Interesting in this context is the collection of haiku verse composed by Japanese writers (from the eighteenth century until the present day), *Far Beyond the Field. Haiku by Japanese Women. An Anthology*, compiled and transl. M. Ueda, New York, 2003.

Finally, let us have a look at how Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska uses one of the most frequent motifs of classical haiku. The following are two Japanese “frog poems:”

coltsfoot leaves  
a noisy frog  
perched on them on the side

Issa<sup>195</sup>

resting his hands  
on the green plum, asleep...  
a frog

Issa<sup>196</sup>

Jasnorzewska describes a frog – or rather, to be precise, a toad – as follows:

‘Ropucha’  
Ropucha wyszła z trawy i siadła na ziemi,  
przeciągnawszy się z trudem przez zeschnięty patyk.  
Patrzy prosto przed siebie ślepiami złotemi,  
dyszcząca bryła ciała w jadowity batik.  
Musztardowa w kwadraty ciemniejsze i bledsze,  
z bryzgiem martwego złota na każdym kwadracie,  
siedzi, śni. Nagle skacze wysoko w powietrze  
jak wiedźma rozplaszczona na swojej łopacie.

from the volume *Niebieskie migdały*, 1922, Pz 1, p. 81

[THE TOAD

Having dragged himself over a dry stick, a toad  
came out of the grass and sat down on the ground.  
He looks ahead with his golden eyes,  
A panting lump of flesh in garish batik.

Mustard-coloured in darker and paler squares,  
with a splash of dead gold on each square  
He’s sitting, dreaming. Suddenly he jumps high in the air  
like a witch flattened on her shovel.]

Pawlikowska’s poem is visual par excellence and is suffused with a peculiar sense of humour at that. What is more, this text is “iconographically” and narratively

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195 English translation based on the Polish rendering in *Haiku*, [1983], p. 106.

196 English translation based on the Polish rendering in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 95.

related to the famous frog haiku by Bashō<sup>197</sup> (we also have here an abrupt transition from stillness to an unexpected action, which, however, is nothing unusual in the natural world).<sup>198</sup> Instead of a simple image, we are confronted with poetic *horror vacui* (numerous epithets related to the visual sphere). The final simile additionally “condenses” the text.

Finally, let us compare two poems on illness and death:

‘Tapicer’	[UPHOLSTERER
Nad łóżkiem samotnej kobiety,	Above a lonely woman’s bed
dla której nie ma już rady,	for whom there is no help anymore
księżyc, tapicer blady,	the Moon, a pale upholsterer,
rozwijają pełne wspomnień tapety...	rolls out wallpapers full of memories]
from the volume <i>Pocalunki</i> , 1926, Pz 1, p. 170	

ill on a journey:  
my dreams roam round  
over withered fields<sup>199</sup>

This combination also nicely shows the cultural entanglements of Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska’s conceptist metaphoric verse which anthropomorphizes nature. Seen in the perspective of Polish literature of the first decades of the twentieth century, this poetry is marked by brevity and suggestiveness, yet it pulls the reader into a sophisticated game, sensorial and intellectual alike. In comparison with classical haiku, the poet’s verses hold additional literary “attractions,” as if they did not stand up to scrutiny as simple sensorial snapshots. As a result, the author deemed it necessary, for example, to resort to extensive similes, semantic and visual conceptism, formal parallelism, visual “exuberance,” whereby the image is incorporated into a metaphoric or symbolic scheme, and to close the poem in question with a punch line evoking self-centred spaces of the speaker. Classical haiku remain much closer to concrete experience, one not obscured by verbal sophistication.

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At this juncture, one more comparative gloss is in order – namely one about the poetic output of Leopold Staff. From the perspective of references to haiku, the oeuvre of “the poet of three epochs”<sup>200</sup> also has to be divided into three parts. In

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197 The poem about the frog jumping to a pond is cited, in various translations, in the chapter *Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku*.

198 See the chapter *Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku*.

199 As quoted in D. L. Barnhill, *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 93.

200 I. Maciejewska, ‘O poezji Leopolda Staffa,’ in *Leopold Staff*, ed. I. Maciejewska, Warszawa, 1965, p. 7.

Staff's early books of poetry, there are hardly any poems that would in any way be congruent with Japanese miniature verses.<sup>201</sup>

Staff's interwar work, especially the volume *Wysokie drzewa* [Tall Trees, 1932], manifests the first signs of a fondness for the miniature form and haiku-like imagery. In the context of Pawlikowska's "frog" poem it is worthwhile recalling Staff's poem that compellingly corresponds with the most famous of Bashō's *hokku*:

'Nad stawem'	[BY THE POND
Cisza na wodzie nieruchomej	Over still water peace
Gładkim zwierciadłem błękitnieje.	Stands out so blue in its smooth mirror.
Staw jest od blasku niewidomy:	The pond is sightless from the glare:
Oślepl. I nic się już nie dzieje.	It turned blind. All action has ceased.
Nagle rozpęka wody szyba	Suddenly the water glass cracks
I w kropel wytrysk się przemienia.	And becomes a spurt of drops.
To wystrzeliła z głębi ryba:	A fish shot out from the depths:
Wykrzyknik własnego milczenia. <sup>202</sup>	Exclamation point of its own silence.]

The poem is deeply metaphorical and superbly conceptist (the visual and aural concept delivering a punch line). Unlike Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, Staff does not clothe nature in any cultural costume. Neither is the overall image a "springboard" for describing the speaker's emotions. The reader is free to contemplate both the image and, most importantly, the very language used to recount a simple, ordinary event. Meanwhile, we have moved into the domain of modern epiphany.

From the perspective of Polish literature of the first decades of the twentieth century, the poem quoted here turns out to be considerably close to haiku's directives of observing and describing the world. Similarly to the following text, which calms emotions and subtly lends a *boudoir* quality to nature:

'Ustronie'	[A SECLUDED SPOT
Zielone stawu szkło,	The green glass of a pond,
Zielony trawy plusz,	The green plush of grass,
Błękitu w głębi łą.	The backdrop of deep blue.
Spoczynek tu dla dusz,	Souls' resting place]
Gdzie cichnie wspomnień zło	Where the hurt of memories fades away
I milkną echa burz.	And storms' echoes die down.
Świat znika jak za mgłą...	The world vanishes as if in a fog...

201 One of the few exceptions is the poem 'Czucie niewinne' quoted in subsection 'Young-Poland Haiku?' in this part of the book.

202 From the volume *Barwa miodu* [Colour of Honey], 1936, as quoted in L. Staff, *Poezje zebrane*, Vol. 2, ed. L. Michalska, Warszawa, 1980, p. 689.

Istnieje tylko już  
Zielone stawu szkło,

There is only  
The green glass of a pond,

Zielony trawy plusz.<sup>203</sup>

The green plush of grass.]

### C. *Przyboś and Leśmian: A “Przybosian” and “Leśmianian” Model of Haiku?*

To conclude the discussion of the relationships between Polish poetry and haiku during the interwar period, a critical review should be undertaken of opinions about parallels between Japanese seventeen-syllable verses and the poetry of Julian Przyboś and Bolesław Leśmian.<sup>204</sup> I will not discuss these issues at length, but I would like to briefly justify why in this book I do not devote more attention to these two eminent poets.

Przyboś' postulate of “maximum image allusions in minimum words” seems to constitute a natural context for Poland's interest in haiku.<sup>205</sup> Piotr Michałowski writes that underlying haiku is “the idea that is analogous to the native precept of ‘as few words as possible.’”<sup>206</sup> According to Leszek Szaruga, the contemporary fascination with Japanese miniature verse can be linked to the experience of the avant-garde, as “the content and scope” of haiku is “as it were, a fulfilment of the intuitions inherent [...] in Przyboś' postulate of ‘minimum words.’”<sup>207</sup> Besides that, haiku has occasionally been discussed in the language of the Awangarda Krakowska group (“haiku pseudonymizes sensations”).<sup>208</sup> Finally, an anecdote, originally given by Andrzej Tchórzewski, has been frequently cited about Przyboś “reeling off from memory a handful of Japanese haiku, explaining their meaning and symbolism, repeating them in various sound configurations.”<sup>209</sup> It has been

203 From the volume *Wysokie drzewa*, 1932, as quoted in L. Staff, *Poezje zebrane*, p. 593.

204 In my opinion, the linking of the poetic output of Tytus Czyżewski with haiku is a misunderstanding (not meriting any further explanation) (E. Tomaszewska, *Inspiracje japońskie*, p. 15). Naturally, certain images abstracted from overall poetic compositions can be juxtaposed with haiku, yet Czyżewski's poetics precludes any deeper analogies.

205 J. Przyboś, ‘Sens poetycki,’ in J. Przyboś, *Sens poetycki*, Vol. 1, Kraków, 1967, p. 49 (the dictum from 1930, appearing in a statement of the artistic group “a. r.”).

206 P. Michałowski, *Haiku*, pp. 82–3.

207 L. Szaruga, ‘Haiku: granice literatury’ [*Haiku: Frontiers of Literature*], *Tytuł*, 1995, No. 3/4b, p. 334.

208 B. Maj, ‘Polskie haiku Grochowiaka’ [*Grochowiak's Polish Haiku*], *Tygodnik Kulturalny*, 1978, No. 43, p. 11.

209 As Andrzej Tchórzewski recalls: “I had the opportunity to talk with Julian Przyboś about Chinese and Japanese poetry [most probably the meeting took place in 1970, in Obory]. To my astonishment, Przyboś reeled off from memory several Japanese

forgotten, however, that the meeting during which Przyboś demonstrated his knowledge of Japanese poetry, something unusual in the realities of Polish life, did not take place until 1970 (incidentally, the year of Przyboś' death). Another biographical fact has occasionally been placed in the context of the poet's fascination with the Far East: giving his daughter the name Uta. Seemingly, however, this onomastic decision did not have especially deep Oriental roots whatsoever.<sup>210</sup>

Przyboś was indeed more familiar with East-Asian poetry than many contemporary Polish writers, however, most probably he did not come into contact with it until the post-war years. Perhaps the dense imagery of his late poems can be remotely associated with the influence of haiku and tanka. To all appearances, however, the similarities between avant-garde postulates formulated during the 1920s and 1930s and haiku poetics are utterly fortuitous. Let us consider once again the "meta-artistic" writings of the poet.

Some assumptions of Przyboś' theory of poetry correspond quite well with axioms of haiku. "The rigour of expression necessitates restraint in the expression of feelings."<sup>211</sup> "The art of writing is one of crossing out. Rather than emphasizing things, repetition diminishes and invalidates them."<sup>212</sup> "Expressive power is greater when it is – not unlike dynamite – concentrated in a small number of words. Hence

haiku, explaining their meaning and symbolism, repeating them in various sound configurations. Apparently, he learnt these poems from the Japanese at various writers' congresses. Tanka and haiku were for Przyboś as obvious poetic forms as the sonnet or ballad. Przyboś stunned me with his Japanese erudition and interest in Chinese poetry. And it was during these conversations that I realized how a poet's interest in some foreign culture often serves as a complement to his own experiences. Przyboś regarded the dissimilarity of the symbolism of Chinese verse as something obvious, just as he saw as natural, and perhaps banal, the method of a gradual introduction of new concepts by placing them in familiar contexts. In turn, the multi-layered and concise character of Japanese poetry, in a way realizing his favourite precept of "minimum words – maximum content," made him a dedicated enthusiast not only of the poetry but also of the language of Japan. It seems to me that Przyboś was enchanted by the same thing that captivated Pound when he wrote the preface to Fenollosa's essay *Chinese Written Character: the difference of writing methods, and of roles of the artist and the reader, with more active response on the part of the latter.* (A. Tchórzewski, 'Między pierwszym a drugim Poundem,' *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, pp. 52–3).

210 As Uta Przyboś (born in 1956) explains: "Daddy would call my mother Danuta, Uta. He once said: we will have a daughter named Uta. Apparently in Japanese it means song and poetry. There is also the beautiful Gothic sculpture of Princess Uta in the cathedral of Naumburg" (U. Przyboś, 'Znam swoją ciemną stronę' [I know my Dark Side], in conversation with I. Gierblińska, E. Hetmanowska, [dogadane.com.pl/notes/20](http://dogadane.com.pl/notes/20), accessed September 8, 2014).

211 J. Przyboś, 'Katarzyniarze i strofkarze' [Barrel Organ Players and Verse-Makers], *Linia*, 1931, No. 1, p. 14.

212 J. Przyboś, *Zapiski bez daty* [Undated Notes], Warszawa, 1970, p. 18.

the desire to limit words. To the smallest number of most powerful sentences. To a single sentence. To a single word. To silence?”<sup>213</sup>

“A perfect poem is a set of verses in which absolutely everything is necessary; so that if someone reordered two words in it, the whole poem would collapse.”<sup>214</sup> However, this is merely a selection of Przyboś’ theses taken out of context. Viewed in its entirety, the metaliterary reflections of Przyboś – focusing on metaphor and stylistic compression strongly de-automatizing perception (which in principle run counter to poetic moderation and asceticism),<sup>215</sup> and vastly distant from the extremity of simple sensorial mimesis – has nothing to do with the assumptions of haiku. Przyboś’ interwar (and, to a large extent, post-war) poetic output neatly reflects the author’s meta-artistic theses. And these could not but lead to the poetry that was not only distant from the style of Japanese miniature verse but, in fact, was indifferent or opposed to haiku. The following are two descriptions of a field at dusk, representative of the authors quoted here, poems by Przyboś and the Japanese haijin and painter Yosa Buson:

<p>Dzień na polach nie przestawał rżepolić. Na naciągniętych od zachodu promieniach czerwonych i sinych brząknął zmierzch –</p> <p>– zmierzch oddał odpolił.</p>	<p>[The day in the fields kept sawing away. At red and livid rays stretched from the sunset a dusk plunked –</p> <p>– dusk unfielded afariness.</p>
<p>Chmury zwiozły barwy zżęte na smugach, Kary koń z czoła kapnął gwiazdą.</p>	<p>Clouds brought in colours reaped from wisps, A black horse shook a star off its forehead.</p>
<p>Nagle, z ciemnej głuszy grubym wolem zadął sietniak:</p>	<p>Suddenly, out of dark backwoods a weakling blasted with its crop:</p>

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213 J. Przyboś, *Zapiski...*, p. 71.

214 J. Przyboś, *Zapiski...*, p. 158.

215 See, for example, M. Głowiński, ‘Przyboś: najwięcej słów’ [Przyboś: A Maximum of Words], *Teksty*, 1975, No. 1, pp. 39–52. Leszek Engelking sets Przyboś’ assumptions side by side with the poetic declarations of Pound, who claimed that “Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree.” (L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 121). But that’s another story, in practice one rather distant from haiku (see Part 3 of this book, chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’



zapiszczały bite w klarnet pyski bab,	peasant women's clarinet-beat gobs squeaked
huczał las, tłukł się długo po debrach, słabł.	the forest boomed, banged far across dells, sagged.
Do wsi włókł się wieczór, bielmooki żebrak.	The evening, a mope-eyed beggar, trudged into the village.
--- Kurzo-ślepe chłopki-komornice, starowiny, po kryjomu podchodziły pod nieboskłon zniżone po ugaj, zapadały pod brzemieniem łomu.	--- Bat-blind old tenant farmers' wives, secretly came to the horizon stooping for stick-gathering, went down under crowbar's burden.
Nad nimi bór, wyż i głąb, ni go sięgnąć, ni zerwać.	Above them the forest, high and deep, unreachable, unpickable.
Nad wsią – wieczór, bielmooki żebrak.	Above the village – evening, the mope-eyed beggar.
(Wpuścił dźwięcząc księżyc, złoty, w torbę z chmur.) J. Przyboś <sup>216</sup>	(Ringing, he let the golden moon, into a bag of clouds.)]

Rape blossoms  
and the moon in the east  
the sun in the west  
Buson<sup>217</sup>

In the context of the alleged links of Przyboś and Leśmian to haiku, the following observations made by Piotr Michałowski should be cited:

It seems that the most vital point of reference for the idea of haiku may be found in Leśmian's poetry, which, however, is very far removed from another determinant of the Japanese genre, namely the principle of brevity. In both cases, the main subject is precisely what happens during the speaker's encounter with nature: interaction, at times unification, and at other times identification, and sometimes even a reversal of roles and the perceptive perspective. In Leśmian's verse, nature can see, feel, cognize, and is possessed of consciousness. Similar animization and personification devices

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216 J. Przyboś, 'Oberek,' from the volume *W głąb las* [The Depths Forest], 1932; quoted in J. Przyboś, *Utworky poetyckie*, Vol. 1, ed. R. Skręt, Kraków, 1984, p. 104.

217 As quoted in A. Persinger, *Foxfire*, p. 208.

can be found in numerous haiku. The “livingness” of the landscape is frequently connected with the degradation of the speaker, with a humble embrace of a non-anthropocentric perspective.

Placed at the opposite egotistic extreme of modern poetry is Przyboś – the proud colonizer of the world, dynamizing reality with his perceptive activity. ... Leśmian expresses states of utter absorption in the world depicted and the loss of the speaker’s subjectivity in it, thus arriving at the great existential questions: “where am I?,” “who was I?.” For his part, Przyboś creates these transformations as rationalized sensory transgressions, introspecting the largely preexisting state; he is telling a fragmentary autobiographical story rather than constructing his own self-portrait.<sup>218</sup>

Michałowski never states that Przyboś and Leśmian wrote haiku. The eponymously termed haiku models he proposed: the metaphorical “Przybosian” one and the metonymic “Leśmianian” one,<sup>219</sup> do not seem to be compelling. The “ahaikuness” or even “anti-haiku-ness” of Przyboś’ poetry have already been mentioned here. In the case of Leśmian, the situation seems to be even clearer. Naturally, both classical haiku and Leśmian’s verse rely on recurrent references to the natural world. Leśmian’s “non-anthropocentric perspective” pointed out by Michałowski has little to do with haiku’s search for the “suchness” of phenomena. The deep ontological transformations of the world (and otherworld) depicted locate Leśmian’s poetry at the opposite extreme from haiku. The same is the case with his very deep transformations of poetic language. These issues are evident even in the poem which I consider to be one of the most haiku-like in Leśmian’s entire poetic output:

Śni się lasom – las,	[Forests dreaming of – a forest,
Śnią się deszcze.	Dreaming of rains.
Jawią się raz w raz	Vanished Mays
Znikłe Maje.	Appear on and off
I mijają znów,	Only to pass again,
I raz jeszcze...	And again...
A ja własnych snów	And I cannot recognise
Nie poznaję <sup>220</sup>	My own dreams]

It should be recalled that Leśmian – at least to a certain degree – became acquainted with Japanese poetry. I have already mentioned his review of *Ise*

218 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii’, pp. 134–5.

219 See P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii’, pp. 136–9.

220 B. Leśmian, \*\*\*, in B. Leśmian, *Poezje zebrane*, ed. A. Madyda, with an introduction by M. Jakitowicz, Toruń, 1995, p. 524 (from the volume *Dziejeba leśna* [Forest Happenings], 1938, originally published in *Bluszcz*, 1933, No. 49, titled *Na marginesie niebytu. I* [On the Margins of Non-being. I]).

*monogatari* – the canonical Japanese text from the Heian era, bringing together tanka poems and prose passages. Leśmian cites his own translations of relatively numerous verse fragments (based on the Russian translation by Nikolai Iosifovich Konrad). In his Polish renderings, he maintains the lineation, yet declares that... he made a prose translation:

We translated these poems in prose, and yet we are aware that a poem translated in prose is not poetry anymore. We can only guess at their musical appeal – their allusive charm, intimately related to the sudden and unexpected combination of words.<sup>221</sup>

Leśmian may have been prevented from “poeticizing” excerpts from *Ise monogatari* by his awareness that these poems were “based on sound effects foreign to European languages,”<sup>222</sup> and that these texts were inaccessible to him in the stylistic and semantic wholeness of the original. His gesture is akin to Staff deciding – not unlike Toussaint – on a paraphrase suffused, as subtly as possible, with characteristic features of the poet-translator’s style (this applies to the translations in *Fletnia chińska* and *La flûte de jade*).<sup>223</sup> This is proof of great respect for the poetry which the translators did not want to “rework” (like Remigiusz Kwiatkowski) into Western forms or into their own poems. Let us have a look at some examples.

In Leśmian’s review in question we find the following tanka from *Ise monogatari*:

O dymie – powstający  
 Na szczycie Asamy  
 W Sinano,  
 Czyż nie powinien się dziwić  
 Wędrowiec daleki, oglądając ciebie?<sup>224</sup>

Ku twoim – mój miły – stronom  
 Spoglądam – samotna.  
 Góro Ikomo!  
 Wy – obłoki – nie przesłaniajcie  
 Tej góry – choćby deszcz pada!<sup>225</sup>

As can be seen, no features of the above-quoted texts point to Leśmian’s poetry. It seems that the poet merely wanted to show – as transparently as possible, without

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221 B. Leśmian, ‘*Ise-Monogatari*’, p. 519.

222 B. Leśmian, ‘*Ise-Monogatari*’, p. 519.

223 See subsection ‘Knowledge of Haiku (Prior to 1939)’ in this part of the book.

224 B. Leśmian, ‘*Ise-Monogatari*’, p. 514. English translation: “Surely no one / Far or near / But marvels to see / The smoke rising from the peak / Of Asama in Shinano,” as quoted in *Tales of Ise: Lyrical Episodes from Tenth Century Japan*, translated with an introduction and notes by H.C. McCullough, Stanford, 1968, p. 74.

225 B. Leśmian, ‘*Ise-Monogatari*’, p. 517. English translation: “Though rain may fall, / I forbid you, clouds, / To veil Mount Ikoma, / For I live only / To gaze towards my beloved,” as quoted in *Tales of Ise*, p. 89.

any additional deformations – contours of an intriguing remote art (assuming that its full shape was inaccessible to European languages). The art that, it should be recalled, he considered – perhaps not rightly so – devoid of “deep feelings, fiery passions, surprising thoughts.”<sup>226</sup> And, after all, precisely these elements were of the greatest interest to Leśmian as far as writing was concerned, alongside various stylistic subtleties that were deeply ingrained in systems of Slavic languages.

### III. Before *Haiku-images*: Staff, Brzękowski, Koziół, Krynicki...

A serious interest in haiku can be observed in Poland from the mid-1970s onwards. 1975 saw the publication of a monographic issue of the *Poetry* magazine (No. 1), half of which was filled with haiku and literary- and cultural-theoretical texts on this art form, placing it in a broad aesthetic and philosophical context.<sup>227</sup> In 1976, an issue of the *Literatura na Świecie* journal (No. 10) was published, partly devoted to Japanese literature, including translations of Buson’s haiku by Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda. The first anthology of Polish translations of classical haiku, accompanied by a wealth of literary-critical commentary, saw print in 1983.<sup>228</sup> By all accounts, the most important poetic caesura in haiku’s history in Poland is the year 1978, which saw the publication of Stanisław Grochowiak’s volume *Haiku-images*.<sup>229</sup>

This most definitely does not mean that, prior to the second half of the 1970s, no haiku-like miniatures were composed in Poland. Once again, we must recall the work of Leopold Staff. The poet’s late verses stand out in his entire output as revolving most strongly around the poetics and worldview of classical Japanese haiku.<sup>230</sup> Cultural allusions still feature prominently here, yet without obscuring sensorial experiences in some stylistically ascetic poems de-emphasising the speaker’s emotions:

226 B. Leśmian, ‘*Ise-Monogatari*’, p. 512.

227 I discuss the content of this issue in detail in the chapter *Grochowiak’s Longest Journey*. In France a somewhat similar role was played by the issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* dedicated to haiku (published 55 years earlier, September 1, 1920) (see J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 104 and ff.). However, prior to 1920 the haiku genre was much better known in France than it was in Poland before 1975. See analyses in the first chapter of this part of the book.

228 *Haiku*, [1983]. In Aleksander Janta’s anthology *Godzina dzikiej kaczki* [The Hour of the Wild Duck], published 17 years earlier (1966) in Great Britain, haiku translations constituted only a small part of the book’s content, the critical scholarship was considerably less extensive and less perceptive, and the availability of this publication in Poland was very limited.

229 I discuss this at length in the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

230 A great deal has been written about “juvenile” transformations of the poetics of old Staff (See, for example, M. Wyka, *Leopold Staff*, Warszawa, 1985, pp. 82–108), yet they were not viewed from such a distant – geographically and culturally – perspective as the one that I offer in my inquiries.

'Wieczór'

[EVENING

Leżę w łodzi  
 W wieczornej ciszy.  
 Gwiazdy nade mną,  
 Gwiazdy pode mną  
 I gwiazdy we mnie<sup>231</sup>

I am lying in a boat  
 In the evening silence.  
 Stars above me  
 Stars below me  
 Stars in me]

'Tołstoj'

[TOLSTOY

Tołstoj uciekł od smutku,  
 Miał wszystko, więc nie miał nic.  
 Idę radośnie w skwarze dróg,  
 Właściciel swego cienia.<sup>232</sup>

Tolstoy escaped from sadness,  
 He had everything, so he had nothing.  
 I walk merrily in the heat of the road,  
 Owner of my own shadow.]

Occasionally, clear sense-images can be merely the first level of a poem, a basis for associations, a ground of reflection, and finally – a “springboard” for spectacular concepts functioning as punch lines. This is best seen in the juxtaposition of Staff’s miniatures with Bashō’s poems concerned with similar topics (the first of Bashō’s pieces might have been known to the Polish poet):

'Wiosna'

[SPRING

Pierwsze kwiaty mleczków,  
 Jak złote gwiazdki awansu,  
 Porosły na mogiłach  
 Tych, co spiesząc w zwycięstwo,  
 W śmierć zabiegli,  
 Na zawsze wolni,  
 Jedynie darni podlegli.<sup>233</sup>

The first dandelion flowers,  
 Like golden stars of promotion,  
 Have overgrown the graves  
 Of those who rushing into victory  
 Ran right up to Death,  
 Free forever,  
 Subject to turf only.]

Zioła latem wyrosłe,  
 Jedyny ślad po rycerzach...

[Summer herbs,  
 The only trace of knights...]

.....  
 Bashō<sup>234</sup>

.....

231 From the volume *Dziewięć muz* [Nine Muses], 1958, as quoted in L. Staff, *Poezje zebrane*, Vol. 2, ed. L. Michalska, Warszawa, 1980, p. 955.

232 L. Staff, *Poezje zebrane*, p. 915.

233 From the volume *Wiklina* [Wicker], as quoted in L. Staff, *Poezje zebrane*, p. 865.

234 As quoted in W. Sieroszewski, *Japonja w zarysie*, pp. 40–1. Other Polish translations of Bashō’s poem in question are cited in the chapter *Amongst Polish Translations of*

'Niebo w nocy'

[THE SKY AT NIGHT]

Noc czarna, srebrna noc.

Black night, silver night.

Świat nieskończony

The world infinite

W czasie i przestrzeni.

In time and space.

Pośrodku Droga Mleczna.

The Milky Way in between.

Któż po niej przechodzi?

Who is it staggering along it?

To przechodzi ludzkie pojęcie.<sup>235</sup>

It is mind staggering.]

stormy sea—  
 stretching out over Sado,  
 Heaven's River

Bashō<sup>236</sup>

From the perspective of the *Vorgeschichte* of Polish haiku, one should mention eclectic miniature verses of JAN BRZEKOWSKI included in the volume *18 coplas* (1959)<sup>237</sup> and the *Coplas* cycle from the volume *Spotkanie rzeczy ostatecznych* [The Meeting of Ultimate Things, 1970].<sup>238</sup> Brzękowski's supposed *coplas* are an intriguing, almost completely neglected episode of Polish poetry, testifying to the diversity of post-war, post-avant-garde experiments, bringing a surprising conglomeration of styles (despite textual simplicity and sketchiness),<sup>239</sup> approximations of forms that, as it would seem, had no right to co-exist.<sup>240</sup> The titles of the volume and the cycle suggest indebtedness to the Spanish form of *copla*, yet this intertextual relation is not realized consistently, nor does it explain the overall poetics of these compositions (poems and miniature poetic prose). Janusz Sławiński asserts that in *18 coplas* Brzękowski completely departed from the avant-garde "poeticity," thus returning to the "zero point"<sup>241</sup> of his writing. I insist that this poetry still shows the

*Haiku*; English translation: "summer grass: / all that remains / of warriors' dreams," quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 93.

235 From the volume *Wiklina*, quoted in L. Staff, *Poezje zebrane*, Vol. 2, p. 885.

236 As quoted in Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 97.

237 J. Brzękowski, *18 coplas*, Aix en Provence 1959.

238 J. Brzękowski, *Spotkanie rzeczy ostatecznych*, Warszawa, 1970, pp. 73–91.

239 J. Sławiński, *O poezji Jana Brzękowskiego* [On the Poetry of Jan Brzękowski], in J. Sławiński, *Prace wybrane* [Selected Works], Vol. 5: *Przypadki poezji*, p. 140 (comments on poems from *18 coplas*).

240 Written in Paris, these miniatures may offer a contribution to the discussion on revisions of the avant-garde, transculturalism, and the sensoriality of modern poetry (also in the perspective of relationships with avant-garde painting). Also noteworthy is the graphic layout of the volume from 1959 (designed by Franciszek Prochaska): eclectic and reconciling a variety of inspirations (constructivist and surreal, to name a few).

241 J. Sławiński, 'O poezji Jana Brzękowskiego,' pp. 139–40.

presence of the avant-garde tradition (e.g. at the level of sound instrumentation and imagery), that one can hear in it echoes of the theory of meta realism developed by the artist during the interwar period, although clearly observable here are also references to the tradition of fairy tale and epigram as well as affinities with haiku and tanka forms, which must have been well known to the poet living in France since 1928. Sławiński views *18 coplas* as a poetic sketchbook. Slightly dismissive of Brzękowski's miniatures, he states that these texts "are, as it were, preliminary notes to poems, sketches, formulas, and definitions, recorded in the simplest form, conveyed immediately – before they even became pseudonyms."<sup>242</sup> From the perspective of the Polish literature of the early 1960s (Sławiński's account was originally published in 1961), sketchiness was seen by and large as a stage in the development of the finished work. In places where haiku and tanka were known and practised for decades, roughly outlined poetic images must have been viewed differently.

From the perspective that is of interest to me, one needs to take note of the fact that a typical feature of Brzękowski's haiku-like miniatures is the tendency to push the limits of sensorial mimesis. Every now and then, expressive images keeping perfectly clear figure-ground alignments happen to transform sense experiences into intriguing – "iconographically" and stylistically ascetic – "surrealizing" visions (an analogy could be drawn here, for example, with the paintings of Giorgio de Chirico). Lucid, mimetic sensorial representations can be elements of metaphors. Clearly detectable in these eclectic compositions are also undertones of East-Asian miniature verses:

'Wiśnia'	[CHERRY
Czarna wiśnia	Black cherry
rzucona na płaskowyż zmierzchu	cast upon the plateau of dusk
w bezgraniczną przestrzeń	into boundless space
myśl o śmierci	the thought of death
zagubiona we śnie <sup>243</sup>	lost in a dream.]
'Przypomnienie'	[REMINDER
Czarna rękawiczka na	A black glove on
jasnej tafli lodu	a bright sheet of ice
przypomnienie wieczności	a reminder of eternity
ubrane odświętnie. <sup>244</sup>	in its Sunday best.]
'Mysikrólik'	[GOLDCREST
Mysikrólik	A goldcrest

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242 J. Sławiński, 'O poezji Jana Brzękowskiego,' p. 140.

243 J. Brzękowski, *18 coplas*, n.p. (alternatively, in J. Brzękowski, *Poezje*, with an introduction by Z. Bieńkowski, Warszawa, 1973, p. 130).

244 J. Brzękowski, *Spotkanie rzeczy*, p. 90.

przefrunął wśród zboża kołysząc się na kłosie wpadł w karuzelę myśli.	flew cross cornfields swaying on an ear of grain got caught up in a whirligig of thoughts.
Myślikrólik! <sup>245</sup>	Goldcrest!]
‘Lata’ Lata które przeszły kwiaty nadziei zanurzone w zmierzchu. <sup>246</sup>	[THE YEARS The years that passed flowers of hope immersed in twilight.]
‘Diadem’ Ten diadem jasnych włosów zanurzony w czarnej sukni	[A TIARA This tiara of fair hair immersed in a black dress
aluzja młodości na przedpołu śmierci. <sup>247</sup>	a hint of youth on the approaches to death]
‘Małgorzata’	[MAŁGORZATA
Fale zboża kołysze Upał – rozrzucone w nim maki i bławaty	Heat is swaying the waves of Corn – poppies and bluebottles scattered in it
Kwiat ciszy We włosy wpięty Małgorzaty. <sup>248</sup>	The flower of silence Stuck in Małgorzata’s hair.]

In the context of the early history of haiku, one should also mention the miniatures by Urszula Kozioł dating from the 1960s. Poems that are of interest to me here have highly interesting sources of inspiration. As the poet says:

My student years [...] were an unlucky time [for poetry], as the linguist Stalin reigned supreme at the time. Excellent texts were relegated to the sidelines, for example, ones by Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska. I remember a very thin volume of her poems produced by Słonimski. It saw print in the 1950s. I was already writing short “flash”

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245 J. Brzękowski, *18 coplas*, n.p. (alternatively in J. Brzękowski, *Poezje*, p. 122).

246 J. Brzękowski, *18 coplas*, n.p. (alternatively in J. Brzękowski, *Poezje*, p. 119).

247 J. Brzękowski, *18 coplas*, n.p. (alternatively in J. Brzękowski, *Poezje*, p. 126).

248 J. Brzękowski, *18 coplas*, n.p. (alternatively in J. Brzękowski, *Wybór poezji*, Warszawa, 1966, p. 125).



poems, drawing on old Japanese and Chinese poetry partially translated by Staff, and suddenly I saw that Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska had written something similar. I was terrified that I was almost producing plagiarisms (laughing). It was only later that I realized that this fascination with the Orient was integral to her epoch. Afterwards, I discovered the unfinished, broken-off, faded notes of Sappho. They brought to mind museum sculptures with broken-off hands or heads. The fragmentariness of an object, word or poem enchanted me so much from then onwards I would often write these short broken-off stories. We invite someone to reflect and empathically engage in a topic set up in one or several lines. Such as: “my lips hurt from not being kissed.” If the reader is moved by it, he/she can independently develop a whole story. I called these poems “Pips of Rain.” Later on, this seemed to me too... contrived and I decided against a common title. [...] Now I call these “snippets.”<sup>249</sup>

Between 1963 (the volume *W rytmie korzeni* [The Rhythm of Roots]) and 1998 (the volume *W płynnym stanie* [In Fluid State]), Koziół published seven poetry cycles bearing the title *Pestki deszczu* [Pips of Rain].<sup>250</sup> Especially noteworthy in the context of the early history of haiku in Poland are poems from the collections *W rytmie korzeni*<sup>251</sup> and *Smuga i promień* [A Smoketrail and a Beam], (1965). Let us have a closer look at several miniatures from these early volumes:

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- 249 “Wiersz to jest obejrzenie się wstecz” [A Poem is Looking Back] (Agnieszka Kołodyńska in conversation with Urszula Koziół), *Gazeta Wyborcza*, September 5, 2008, p. 18. Koziół refers therein to Julia Hartwig’s *Błyski* [Flashes] (primarily in connection with the excellent title). I do not analyse *Błyski* in the context of haiku – this is because apart from its brevity and the record of a moment (often an “intellectual moment”) Hartwig’s poems do not have much in common with the East-Asian form.
- 250 On haiku in Koziół’s poetry, see M. Mikołajczak, *Podjąć przerwany dialog. O poezji Urszuli Koziół* [To Pick up the Broken-off Dialogue. On the Poetry of Urszula Koziół], Kraków, 2000, pp. 235–8. Mikołajczak analyses from this perspective specifically the above-mentioned cycles, focusing, among other topics, on versification issues and attempts to verify the unity of the speaking subject and the object of the description, or even *satori*. I deem these lines of inquiry to be rather risky. For an account of *Pestki deszczu* in the context of Przyboś’ *międzysłowie* (inter-word), see M. Mikołajczak, *Podjąć przerwany...*, pp. 114–7.
- 251 The phrase *Pestki deszczu* is present there in two ways. It is the title of the last Part 5 of the volume and at the same time the title of the cycle of six short poems (three of which are triplets) belonging to Part 5 of the book (*Pestki deszczu*I). While closest to haiku are the texts from the six-poem sequence, other poems from this collection also take the form of miniatures focusing on the experience of nature.

Otwórzmy okno	[Let us open the window
zaprosimy pestki deszczu	Let us invite pips of rain
w słoneczną dynię twojego pokoju <sup>252</sup>	into the sunny pumpkin of your room]

The poem manifestly approximates the haiku prototype. Naturally, it is separated from classical exemplars of the genre by the strongly metaphorical deformation of reality, which, however, does not upset its sensorial image derived from everyday sense experience (a bright, warm, safe room and the pip-rain outside). The “pumpkin of your room” and the multi-sensory, almost oxymoronic “pips of rain” allow for a wealth of interpretations, as is the case with the roughly sketched lyrical situation (the unspecified: “we”). Sensorial mimesis is thus preserved.<sup>253</sup> Departing farther from sensorial mimesis is one of the exquisitely condensed poem ‘Pestki deszczu II’ (Pips of Rain II):

Nasze okno	[Our window
obsiadły złote mszyce śmiechu <sup>254</sup>	swarming with golden aphids of laughter]

The following miniature interestingly reverses the principles of haiku:

Gdy spojrzenie twe	[When your look
Spocznie na moich wargach	Rests on my lips
Wtedy wiem co czują kwiaty <sup>255</sup>	I know what flowers feel]

“Feeling into” non-human beings has an utterly non-contemplative motivation here. Naturally, symbolic connotations of flowers are also meaningful. Needless to say, at the centre of the image are human emotions.

Some texts distinctly approach haiku sensitivity, yet they are verbose and linguistically conceptist to a much larger extent than classical poems of Japanese haijins:

‘Zielony deszcz’	[GREEN RAIN
Drobny liść się zwilżył	A small leaf got moist
rześkim głosem wilgi	with a crisp voice of the oriole
i deszcz modrzewiowy	and the larch rain
w modrzewiach deszczowych	in rain larches

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252 From the volume *W rytmie korzeni*, 1963, Part V: *Pestki deszczu*, the sequence *Pestki deszczu I*; in U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010* [Fugue 1955–2010], Wrocław, 2011, p. 68.

253 I discuss this at greater length in Part 5 of this book.

254 From the volume *Smuga i promień*, 1965, the cycle *Pestki deszczu II*; as quoted in U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 77.

255 From the volume *W rytmie korzeni* (1963), Part V: *Pestki deszczu*, the cycle *Pestki deszczu I*, as quoted in U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 68.

Pleciesz pajęczynę spotkania ze szczęściem	You spin the web of a meeting with happiness
A przecież to tylko modrzewie i wilga <sup>256</sup>	Yet these are only the larches and the oriole]
‘Małże’ Cień agrestowych skrzydeł ważki	[CLAMS [The shadow of gooseberry wings of the dragonfly
Tańczy na liściach nenufaru Gdy w tatarakach rechot żab	Dances on a water lily’s leaves As frogs croak in sweet rushes
Znów tęsknię do mulistych stawów Odkąd ujrzałam w twoim domu Skorupkę małży <sup>257</sup>	Since I saw a clam shell In your house I’ve been missing muddy ponds again]

In the early poetic output of Koziół, the following extremely multi-sensory and verbally compressed miniature from *Smuga i promień* (1965) seems to be most akin to haiku:

... akacja ciemność od zapachu taj <sup>e</sup> <sup>258</sup>	[...oh acacia darkness melts from the scent]
-------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------

Not all poems from *Pestki deszczu* bear a resemblance to haiku. The third and fourth cycle (the volumes *Lista obecności* [Attendance Register], 1967, and *W rytmie słońca* [The Rhythm of the Sun], 1974) are much closer to the tradition of epigram and the strongly metaphorical poetic miniature. Coming closer to haiku are the following poems from the volumes *Żalnik* [Book of Sorrows, 1989], *Wielka pauza* [The Great Pause, 1996] and *W płynnym stanie* (1998): ‘Pestki deszczu V,’ ‘VI’ and ‘VII.’ In her later books of poetry, Koziół abandons the title ‘Pestki deszczu,’ while publishing new poetic miniatures in cycles such as *Wrywki* [Snippets] and *Gamy* [Scales]. For all that, the largest number of texts oscillating around the haiku prototype can be found in ‘Pestki deszczu,’ while from more recent poems, ‘Wrywki 4’ (from the volume *Supliki* [Supplications], 2005) come within haiku’s orbit. Koziół’s selected poems, which, however, do not belong to the

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256 From the volume *W rytmie korzeni* (1963), p. V: *Pestki deszczu* (the poem does not belong to the *Pestki deszczu I* cycle), quoted in U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 58.

257 U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 64 (the text does not belong to the cycle *Pestki deszczu I*).

258 From *Pestki deszczu II*, volume *Smuga i promień*, 1965, as quoted in U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 77. I discuss this poem in the second chapter of Part V of this book (subsection *Verbal and Visual Concepts*).

Vorgeschichte of Polish haiku, are analysed in Part 5 of this monograph ('Originals or Imitations? On the "Perfectly Genuine" Polish Haiku).

RYSZARD KRYNICKI began writing verse inspired by the haiku he read through German translations<sup>259</sup> already in the 1960s.<sup>260</sup> In the mid-1970s, he "would read haiku avidly, and tried to translate some of them ... for his own use."<sup>261</sup> The poet has consistently – albeit not too intensely (especially from the perspective of the "quantitative increase" of his original verses) – pursued this poetry writing and translation activity to this day. His early miniatures, however, are not particularly close to the Western prototype of the genre. In the volume *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów* [Haiku. Haiku of the Masters], Krynicki placed these poems (alongside later texts) in the part titled *Prawie haiku* [Almost Haiku]. In this case, the adverb "almost" denotes a rather considerable distance. The poet writes that his early poems "consciously did not wish"<sup>262</sup> to be haiku. The Japanese inspiration, however, could have contributed to the condensation and the somewhat subdued tone of Krynicki's miniatures. In my opinion, among his early verses the closest to haiku is the poem 'Obłoki' [Clouds], dating from 1973:

Obłoki płyną nad nami – i jawnie, i po  
kryjomu,  
i nie dziwią się niczemu, nikomu.<sup>263</sup>

Clouds float above us – both openly and  
secretly,  
and do not wonder at anything, anyone.]

I analyse selected later poems by Krynicki (ones closer to the prototype of the Japanese genre) in Part 5 of the book ('Originals or Imitations? On the "Perfectly Genuine" Polish Haiku'),<sup>264</sup> while his translations are discussed in the chapter 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'

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259 Information from the meeting with haiku translators: Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda and Ryszard Krynicki, Warszawa, October 8, 2014.

260 See R. Krynicki, 'Zamiast posłowania' [In Place of an Afterword], in R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, Kraków, 2014, p. 121.

261 R. Krynicki, *Haiku*, p. 122.

262 R. Krynicki, *Haiku*, p.122.

263 From the volume *Nasze życie rośnie* [Our Life Grows], 1978, as quoted in R. Krynicki, *Wiersze wybrane*, Kraków, 2009, p. 154. Alina Świeściak sees in this text a redundancy with respect to the "neutrality" of nature, one running counter to Asian thought (and ways of expressing it in haiku) (A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki Ryszarda Krynickiego*, Kraków, 2004, p. 174). Świeściak fails to notice, however, that classical haiku frequently employed animization.

264 See also A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poezji*, pp. 163–179, for more on haiku in Krynicki's poetry. However, the author analyses as haiku (insisting that these are texts whose "deep structure adheres to all the vital characteristics of the deep structure of this form" – A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poezji*, p. 163) quite numerous miniature verses, which in my view are far removed from the Western prototype of the genre (not

Careful reading of Polish poetry collections and literary magazines from the 1960s and 1970s would probably bring up more texts that can be compared with haiku verse (which at the time was almost absent from mainstream culture). At this juncture, I just wish to point out that prior to the haiku eruption of the 1980s and 1990s the local literary background was by no means a “haiku wasteland.” As Leszek Engelking asserts,<sup>265</sup> the first Polish “classic” haiku are his two poems published in 1977 in the *Okolice* magazine (No. 3).<sup>266</sup> In the light of my studies of the Polish *Vorgeschichte* of the genre, this temporal caesura can be shifted backwards: some (few) early texts by Koziół and, for instance, the poem by Czesław Miłosz ‘Pory roku’ ([The Seasons], 1971)<sup>267</sup> turn out to be very close to haiku’s defining characteristics.

The aesthetics akin to Japanese miniature verse made its way to the poetic production of Polish authors in various ways. In the works of some (Koziół, Krynicki) it put down roots for whole decades. In one of the following sections (‘Originals

fulfilling fundamental sensorial requirements). In addition, I find Świeściak’s comments on koans not entirely valid (A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poezji*, pp. 169–170), but consider her comparisons with the poetry of Miłosz to be accurate: “to Miłosz, this genre is only a stage in his search for a ‘more spacious form,’ whereas to Krynicki – it is probably the finish line of his pursuit of the Whole. Krynicki is interested in the fragment expressing the Whole, Miłosz is aware that the reconstruction of the Whole is not possible, so we are left with the fragment” (A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poezji*, p. 165). The following note is in order here: despite everything, Miłosz constantly “chased after” the Whole (see the chapter ‘Poetry of Mindfulness – Czesław Miłosz and Haiku’). The links between Krynicki’s poetry and Zen Buddhism, as well as haiku and koan forms (I consider the latter intuition to be unfounded) are also mentioned, in rather general terms, by Bożena Tokarz – B. Tokarz, *Poetyka Nowej Fali*, Katowice, 1990, pp. 61–3. The “transnational, transgenerational and transtemporal confraternity of poets” (Issa, Miłosz, Krynicki), focused, among other things, around haiku, is discussed by Aleksander Fiut (A. Fiut, ‘Krynicki: między tekstami’ [Krynicki: between Texts], *Kwartalnik Artystyczny*, 2014, No. 4, pp. 152–4).

265 L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 121, footnote 3.

266 These are the following texts:

sen przebudzenie	[sleep wakefulness
leżą przy mnie o świcie	lying next to me at dawn
liście konwalii	leaves of lily of the valley]

and

noc tak męcząca	[night so tiring
z boku na bok i nagle	from side to side and suddenly
wrony o świcie	crows at dawn]

(*Okolice*, 1977, No. 3, p. 16).

Engelking’s poems are accompanied by his Polish translations of two haiku, one by Bashō, the other by Ryōkan (L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 15).

267 For more on this topic, see the chapter ‘Poetry of Mindfulness – Czesław Miłosz and Haiku.’

or Imitations? On the “Perfectly Genuine” Polish Haiku’) I will submit to scrutiny precisely these texts, alongside dozens of others.

#### IV. Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku

“Translation is an amazingly capacious deposit that holds and preserves the whole gamut of cultural phenomena, waiting for discovery and in-depth study.”<sup>268</sup> In this part of the book, I focus on translations of Japanese haiku (the examples provided are predominantly Polish- and, in some cases, English-language renderings of the verse by the most frequently translated haikin, Matsuo Bashō).<sup>269</sup> My main interest lies not so much in the reproduction of poetics as in the style of the translations themselves. This is a vital starting point for further inquiries on original Polish haiku, whose authors, as a rule, became acquainted with Japanese miniature verse through translations. This is also an interesting lesson on the Polish literature of the last several decades. To me, these miniature seedlings replanted to the Polish soil by translators are literary samples providing a test-bed for the examination of selected developments taking place in Polish poetry during the twentieth century.

The East-Asian genre is well-suited to comprehensive literary studies: it comprises texts that are extremely economical stylistically, avoid strong metaphorization, and conceal the speaker. At the same time, these poems pose numerous challenges to translators: they are equivocal at the very linguistic level (omission of subjects of sentences, absence of a clear distinction between singular and plural forms, and the use of homophones),<sup>270</sup> often intertextual, and deeply rooted in the culture of East Asia.<sup>271</sup> The translator’s range of choices and responsibility are exceptionally

268 T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja. Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatologii*, Kraków, 2010, p. 68.

269 I concentrate on Polish translations that are of a somewhat autonomous nature, ones that are not mere poetic exemplifications presented in scholarly, popular-science or fiction publications. I want to avoid analysing random translations that were part of a rendering of a longer text in which for some reason a haiku poem was cited.

270 I discuss this in more detail in Part 1 of the book ‘subsection ‘Language (and Poetry)’.

271 For obstacles encountered by haiku translators, see, for example, A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Od tłumaczkii,’ *Literatura na Świecie*, 2002, No. 1/2/3, p. 284; D. Keene, *Landscapes and Portraits. Appreciations of Japanese Culture*, n.p., n.d., pp. 14–5; E. Miner, ‘Pound, Haiku...’, pp. 99–100; T. Saito, W. R. Nelson, ‘Preface,’ in *1020 Haiku in Translation. The Heart of Bashō, Buson and Issa*, North Charleston, South Carolina, 2006, pp. V–VIII; R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 2: *From Issa up to the Present*, Tokyo 1984, pp. 349–50; K. Sugawara, *Devising Context: R. H. Blyth’s Translation of Haiku*, in *Identity and Alterity in Literature, 18th–20th c.*, Vol. 3: *Translation and Intercultural Relations. Proceedings*, eds. A. Tampaki, S. Athini, Athens, 2001, pp. 227–38; see also E. Miner, *Comparative Poetics. An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1990, pp. 94–5. An excellent lesson on Japanese linguistic and stylistic paradoxes is provided by Jane Reverehold’s commentary in

vast, and at the same time different than in the case of translations from European languages.<sup>272</sup>

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M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, transl., annotated, and with an introduction by J. Reichhold, Tokyo–New York–London, 2008, pp. 235–394.

- 272 The specificity of Japanese and Polish languages as seen in the perspective of poetry translations and poetry writing itself has already been discussed on numerous occasions in Poland, yet in most cases, this was done in rather general terms. Andrzej Tchórzewski stated that “agglutinative languages such as Japanese, polysynthetic ones (e.g. Chukchi), and inflectional ones (Polish, Arabic) – are better suited to haiku than analytical ones” (A. Tchórzewski, ‘Tyle zasad, ile sylab, więcej zasad niż sylab’ [As Many Rules as Syllables, More Rules than Syllables], in A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*, Warszawa, 1999, p. 43). In his study published in 1966, Jan Miś writes: “The structure of Western European languages hinders the translation of Japanese poetry on account of an abundance of redundant vocabulary – articles, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions, etc. These are so-called analytical languages, ones that have already abandoned former grammatical inflectional systems. Therefore, translation from Japanese into such a language can result in a caricature if one tries to preserve the condensed style of the original, or, alternatively, requires periphrases that metamorphose into traditional forms of the European poem, becoming a remote copy of the poetic form as it is understood and practised by the Japanese. Contrary to Western European languages, Slavic languages have retained their old structure and are much better suited to reproducing the forms of Japanese poetry. Polish dispenses with articles and does not use pronouns with verbs, because the grammatical person is marked by an appropriate suffix. Moreover, it has few compound tenses. Japanese does not even have personal endings, yet it makes no use of pronouns. Potentially helpful in translations from Japanese is also the highly flexible syntax of Polish, which often permits the preservation of the word order of the original.” (J. Miś, ‘Słowo wstępne’ [Foreword], in A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczki*, p. II). The conclusions drawn by Miś and Tchórzewski are premised on certain simplifications and translational misunderstandings, as empirically evidenced by, for example, numerous masterful English translations of haiku (on haiku’s metrical pattern and its reproductions in English – see, for example, K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku*, pp. xvi–xvii, 39–40; J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, p. 77). Indeed, a predicate can be placed in Polish at the end of the sentence. Often, however, this pattern will sound artificial or even archaic, in no way mirroring the natural sentence structure of Japanese (where the predicate invariably occurs at the end; interestingly, in haiku the predicate often does not appear at all). Furthermore, the articles (in Germanic or Romance languages) do not have to disturb the perception of a haiku poem in any way, especially as these texts are small in size, and some articles (which, for instance, are necessary in official texts) in poetry translations can be omitted. One should agree, however, that in Polish it is relatively easy, as Wiesław Kotański argues, to fit the contents of a haiku into 17 syllables while preserving “the order of images parallel to the original” (W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 13. See also remarks on difficulties of translating haiku into Polish: T. Sekiguchi, ‘“Forsycja” i “czeremcha,” “magnolia” i “miłorząb” – o potrzebie opisywania “mojego” świata w języku polskim’ [“Forsythia” and “Bird Cherry,” “Magnolia,” and “Ginkgo” – on the

As proof of the intrinsic complexity of haiku, let us cite two translations of the same poem by Bashō, published by the translator Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda next to each other as equally legitimate readings of the miniature:<sup>273</sup>

Jesienny zmierzch  
na suchej gałęzi drzewa  
posepny usiadł kruk

[Autumn dusk  
on a dry branch of a tree  
a sombre raven settled]

Jesienny zmierzch  
z krukami obsiada suche  
gałęzie drzew

[Autumn dusk  
settles with ravens on dry  
tree branches]

The procedure of juxtaposing translations with their originals, followed by a discussion of the artistic and philological quality of translations, would not be of much use in the case of the texts examined in this chapter. Polish translators usually know classical haiku poems only at second-hand. Relatively few translate directly from the originals (these are mainly Japanologists: Mikołaj Melanowicz, Wiesław Kotański, and Żuławska-Umeda), while the majority relies on a plethora of earlier translations into European languages, which per se are results of various translational stylistic and semantic choices. Typically, English translations are used,<sup>274</sup> along with some French,<sup>275</sup> German, Russian, and Czech ones.<sup>276</sup>

Need to Describe “My” World in Polish], in *Wrocławska dyskusja o języku polskim jako obcym. Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji stowarzyszenia “Bristol”* [Wrocław Discussion about Polish as a Foreign Language. Proceedings of the International Conference of the “Bristol” Association], ed. A. Dąbrowska, Wrocław, 2004, p. 40 and ff.).

- 273 *Haiku*, [2006], p. 188. Żuławska provides these translations with a commentary, wherein she also stressed visual complexities of this haiku: “Bashō left two illustrations of this haiku. The first one depicts a solitary crow on a dry branch, the other – a flock of crows getting ready to sleep at sunset” (*Haiku*, [2006]). For more on the poem in question (which does not conform to the 5 + 7 + 5 pattern; hence, probably, the deviations from the syllable count pattern in Umeda’s translations), see also M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 50. For the practice of attaching illustrations to haiku poems, see Part 7 of the book.
- 274 This is the case with translations by Czesław Miłosz (which I discuss in more detail in the chapter ‘Poetry of Mindfulness: Czesław Miłosz and Haiku,’ subsection ‘Miłosz the Translator’) and Ewa Tomaszewska (see *100 klasycznych haiku*, ed. Y. Miura, transl. E. Tomaszewska, Kraków, 2010; discussed in Part 7 of this book).
- 275 For example, Alexander Janta relied on French translations by Georges Bonneau, which, however, he complemented with English-language versions produced by Harold G. Henderson (A. Janta, ‘Przedmowa tłumacza,’ in A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczki*, p. xiii).
- 276 Ryszard Krynicki relied on German, English, Czech, and Russian renderings of haiku (R. Krynicki, *Zamiast postłowa*, pp. 122–3). On shocking translational



Naturally, it would be helpful to know which elements of a translated text are additions, alterations, distortions, and stylistic turnarounds effected by Polish translators. The thing is that in many instances the basis for a given translation often cannot be clearly identified – after all, there is no shortage of English or French translations of haiku. The fact that the translator consults the original does not make analysis any easier. On the contrary, to a scholar not fluent in Japanese doubts only pile up. Finally, sometimes dissimilarities occurring between compared translations make one wonder if we are actually dealing with translations of the same poem at all. These questions are valid inasmuch as Japanese poets would readily resort to similar motifs, ideas and devices.<sup>277</sup> This is not helped by the “lack of titles, poem’s shortness, and their great number in the oeuvre of each poet.”<sup>278</sup> That is why I decided to restrict myself to discussing translations of well-known poems of the most famous haijin.

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The following are three translations – produced at different times by different authors – of one of the most famous texts of Japanese poetry, defined as a literary reflection of satori, enlightenment “prepared” by meditative stillness, and triggered by a sudden small occurrence.<sup>279</sup> At this stage, I do not give translators’ names and dates of translations, merely designating respective poems with the letters A, B, and C:

A

Stara sadzawka,  
Żaba – skok –  
Plusk.

[Old pool,  
A frog – a jump –  
plash!]

B

Staw zadumany –  
Stary. – – Skok małej żabki. – –  
Woda ożyła!

[Pensive pond –  
Old. – – Little frog’s jump. – –  
The water came alive!]

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misunderstandings occurring in early Polish renditions of Japanese poetry, see R. Krynicki, ‘Z czego śmieje się Japończyk,’ pp. 119–28.

277 See, for example, D. Keene, *Japanese Literature. An Introduction for Western Readers*, New York, n.d., pp. 15–6.

278 W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 13.

279 D. Keene, *Japanese Literature*, pp. 39–40; D. T. Suzuki, ‘Zen and Haiku,’ in D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, New York, 1959, pp. 215–67; R. Aitken, *A Zen Wave. Bashō’s Haiku and Zen*, foreword by W. S. Merwin, Washington D.C., 2003, pp. 3–7. The differences between Polish translations of this haiku have also been discussed by Adam Dziadek (A. Dziadek, ‘Haiku,’ *Zeszyty Literackie*, 1994, No. 2, p. 143). For English translations, see, for example, K. Sugawara, *Devising Context*, p. 227 and ff.

## C

Stara sadzawka  
skacze żaba – i oto  
plusnęła? woda?

[Old pool  
the frog jumps – and now  
splashed? water?]

Three renditions of one and the same poem. If we were to define the style of Bashō's haiku judging from the above translations, we would arrive at descriptions surprisingly divergent in many places.

Here is the most dynamic, concise, nominal text A. It might seem that this is an East-Asian version of the avant-garde postulate of "maximum content – minimum words."<sup>280</sup> One, however, that resigns from metaphorization, elaborate sound patterns and polysemy. The very essence of a micro-event. The reader gets the impression of the poetry that is consummately modern, invigorating and at the same time eschews verbose "artness" (artificiality, lexical oddities), is stylistically transparent (which, of course, is an illusion) and extremely objective.

Translation B is radically different from the first text. The translator almost achieved the impossible: while rigorously preserving the 5 + 7 + 5 syllable pattern, he/she composed a poem that comes across as long-winded, even diffuse. This is a composition with relatively numerous epithets (not one, as in text A, but as many as three), based on contrasts (the "old," "pensive" pond vs. "żabka," the diminutive form of "frog," additionally qualified as "small"), metaphorical (clearly personified brooding pond, whose "water came alive"). The translator managed to evoke – and in some measure also overcome – the mood of mystery and understatement. Clearly detectable here are echoes of symbolist "musicality."<sup>281</sup> Interestingly enough, the modern use of reduplicated, line-breaking dashes fosters textual diffuseness, lengthening the poem visually and acoustically (after all, dashes enforce silence).

And finally, text C – one that is the most difficult to describe, and somewhat unremarkable in comparison with the distinct style of translations A and B. This version indeed seems to be – similarly to how Japanese seventeen-syllable verse is widely perceived – stylistically transparent, expressed naturally, plainly, without any extra ornaments. The only oddity can be found in the third verse, where the simplicity and self-evidence of perception are undermined by question marks. One could presume that this serves as evidence of the syntactic and semantic ambiguity of the original.<sup>282</sup> This version also conforms to the syllable pattern of haiku. The

280 See also the subsection 'Before "Haiku- images:" Staff, Brzękowski, Koziol, Krynicki'

281 See, for example, M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, 'O muzycznej i niemuzycznej koncepcji poezji' [On the Musical and Non-musical Conception of Poetry], in M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Somnabulicy – dekadenci – herosi* [Sleepwalkers – Decadents – Heroes], Kraków-Wrocław, 1985, pp. 431–2; B. Śniecikowska, "Nuz w uhu", pp. 53–80.

282 See Part 1 of this book.

ordinariness of this “poem without properties” does not make it easy to establish its date. However, the deliberate adoption of stylistic “dullness,” alongside the confusing vagueness and “open-endedness” of the last line suggest that this work is very distant from the early interest in this genre in Poland.

Let us put our textual cards on the table. The first rendition quoted above comes from the volume of translations by Czesław Miłosz.<sup>283</sup> The second one was authored by the interwar Orientalist Bogdan Richter.<sup>284</sup> The third rendering is the work of the contemporary haiku student and translator, Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda.<sup>285</sup> Each of these translations bears the stamp of its time, and, at least to some extent, presents an authorial version of Bashō’s poem.

In all likelihood Miłosz relied on one or several of the following English translations (which in the case of Bashō’s “frog” haiku are plentiful):<sup>286</sup>

old pond  
frog leaping  
splash  
transl. C. Corman

The old pond,  
A frog jumps in:  
Plop!  
transl. A. Watts

Old pond  
and a frog-jump-in  
water-sound  
transl. H. G. Henderson

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283 Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, Kraków 1992, p. 44. I discuss Miłosz’s translations from this anthology at greater length in the chapter ‘Poetry of Mindfulness – Czesław Miłosz and Haiku.’

284 *Wielka literatura powszechna*, Vol. 5: *Antologia*, p. 1, Warszawa, n.d., p. 27.

285 *Haiku*, [1983], p. 38.

286 The following translations (and dozens of other) can be found, for example, on this webpage: <http://www.bopsecrets.org/gateway/passages/Bashō-frog.htm> (accessed February 26, 2016) and in the book by H. Sato, *One Hundred Frogs*, New York, 1995 (a selection of over 100 translations of Bashō’s “frog” haiku, as well as parodies and travesties of this poem). See also A. Kwiatkowska, ‘Let a Hundred Frogs Jump in,’ in Suzanne Fagel, Jaap Goedegebuure et al. (eds.), *Stylistics across Disciplines. Conference Proceedings*, Leiden, 2012; and *Selected Hokku by Bashō with Multiple Translations*, <http://www.uwosh.edu/facstaff/barnhill//es-244-Bashō/hokku.pdf>, accessed March 25, 2014. See also Japanese variations of Bashō’s “frog” haiku (translations of Sengai Gibon’s verse), – ‘Haiku mistrzów,’ transl. R. Krynicki, *Kwartalnik Artystyczny*, 2014, No. 4, p. 136.

pond  
frog  
plop!

transl. J. Kirkup

It goes without saying that the very choice of the English translation as a source text is not accidental. Donald Keene and Reginald Horace Blyth, authors of fundamental, canonical studies on Japan, translate Bashō's poem in a considerably more linear and less dynamic fashion:

The ancient pond  
A frog leaps in  
The sound of water.

transl. D. Keene<sup>287</sup>

The old pond;  
A frog jumps in –  
The sound of the water.

transl. R. H. Blyth<sup>288</sup>

Miłosz decides on a text that is condensed, least wordy, “cleansed” (to a certain degree even contrary to the “letter” of the original, of which the Polish translator might have been aware).<sup>289</sup> In a single and ambiguous word: modern.<sup>290</sup>

For his part, Richter, tried, perhaps too hard, to make “his” Bashō attractive. He tapped into the style of the Young Poland period, one that probably was closest to him and his times, compellingly using typography (incidentally, the Futurist Stanisław Młodożeniec employed similar procedures in texts somewhat similar in style).<sup>291</sup> He composed a poem which is short and diffuse at the same time, graphically suggesting that the poem's perception (and interpretation) should be significantly extended in time. The very first glance is enough to see that this is the oldest of the translations cited.

287 As quoted in D. Keene, *Japanese Literature*, p. 39.

288 R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 2, p. 349. See also similar books: R. Aitken, *A Zen Wave*, p. 3; M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 59.

289 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ pp. 17–8.

290 Miłosz stated: “there is a reason why haiku came to us at just the right moment. The reason being successive modernist revolutions in poetic technique, starting from French symbolism. Their effect is, for example, [...] the aversion to longer poems, which only exceptionally are not seen as verbosity or even rhetoric. To our sensibility, the fewer words, the better [...]. And at such a juncture we come across poetry, which for centuries had been practising mental shortcuts, using words as an imperfect record of wordless meditation on life and the world” (Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 9).

291 See B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu”?, p. 112 and ff.

The case of Żuławska-Umeda is interesting insofar as the translation given here is the translator's second (published) attempt at Bashō's poems. The text discussed here appeared in an anthology published in 2006. Over twenty years earlier,<sup>292</sup> in the volume *Haiku* (ground-breaking from the Polish perspective, written in fine literary style and replete with excellent literary-critical commentary), Żuławska translated this poem as follows:

Tu staw wiekowy skacze żaba – i oto woda zagrała <sup>293</sup>	[An old pond here a frog jumps – and the water started playing]
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Dating from different epochs, these translations differ from each other mainly in the style and semantics of the last verse. In the 1983 anthology, the text is still smooth, closed, and quiet. However, it is apparent that here as well the translator hesitated, unsure how to convey semantic nuances of the miniature. She subjected the utterance to barely noticeable metaphorization and defamiliarization – in this translation “the water started playing.” In her later translation, Umeda decides on a different solution, eschewing metaphorization, leaving a surprisingly indicated (two question marks) ambiguity: was it water that splashed or the frog,<sup>294</sup> what actually happened by the pond in question? The ambivalence of the 2006 text seems to be close to the syntactic, and thus interpretative, ambiguities of classical haiku. The use of question marks to suggest this leaves a lot to be desired in terms of literary quality. I am not in a position to discuss with the translator her rendition's correspondence with the original, yet I think that such signalling of internal semantic ambivalence, disturbing the very act of reading the text, hinders contemplative reading. That said, it also undermines the stereotypical model of haiku's perception – and that, in turn, is hard to overestimate.

While analysing the works of Żuławska-Umeda, it is worth paying attention to the question of the syllabic count of haiku. The 5 + 7 + 5 pattern is the immutable, natural as it were, the rhythm of Japanese poetry.<sup>295</sup> Western translators and followers of Oriental masters often dispense with this external criterion (which in Japanese poetry, is linked to additional conventions that are extremely difficult to render within a different linguistic universe, such as using the cutting syllable, *kireji*).<sup>296</sup> They view it as an unnecessary impediment, not rooted in the tradition of

292 While the book was published in 1983, the translator informs that she completed these translations in 1978 (*Haiku*, [1983], p. 264).

293 *Haiku*, [1983], p. 38.

294 For the ambiguity of this text, see R. Aitken, *A Zen Wave*, pp. 3–7; see also <http://www.bopsecrets.org/gateway/passages/Bashō-frog.htm>, accessed February 26, 2016.

295 See, for example, M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1: *Od VI do połowy XIX wieku*, Warszawa, 1994, p. 29.

296 See Part 1 of the book.

“target” literatures. Early haiku translators were the first ones to reject the syllabic patterning of haiku. Aleksander Janta described his translations (from 1936–1938) as follows:

The efforts, contained in this collection [*Godzina dzikiej kaczk*], at producing the most faithful translation possible, do not insist on preserving also the rhythmic properties of the Japanese poem. This would amount to undertaking acrobatic tasks that have nothing to do with poetry.<sup>297</sup>

Many years later, Czesław Miłosz would assert: “forcibly pressing airy content in narrow confines would be like harnessing a butterfly to a plough.”<sup>298</sup> Despite that the poet realized that imitating the syllable pattern of haiku would not be too much of an inconvenience for him, “[as] these are, as it were, parts of the Polish eleven-syllable (5 plus 6) and thirteen-syllable (7 plus 6) poem.”<sup>299</sup> However, it should be stressed here that the pattern typical for haiku (juxtaposition of five- and seven-syllable units; very short lines) is not well-established in Polish poetry.<sup>300</sup>

At the beginning of her translation activity, Żuławska-Umeda decided to remain faithful to the “letter,” or rather syllables, of the original.<sup>301</sup> Her first anthology, *Haiku*,<sup>302</sup> brings texts that orthodoxly reproduce the syllabic pattern of the genre, which is also preserved in translations published in *Poezja starojapońska*<sup>303</sup> and, to

297 A. Janta, ‘Przedmowa tłumacza,’ p. XI.

298 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 18.

299 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ Writing about the butterfly and the imagined plough, Miłosz failed to notice, however, that classical haiku poems were not merely an “unpolished” illumination. To Japanese haijins, the composition of seventeen-syllable verses was rather demanding intellectual work. Despite everything, the “pressing” of sense into the syllabic framework (even one deeply ingrained in the native culture) was also part of it. See also Part 1 of this book.

300 See L. Pyszczółowska, *Wiersz polski* [The Polish Poem], Wrocław 2001.

301 She writes: “One could, of course, relinquish formal faithfulness in favour of content, but then a different kind of poetry comes into being” (A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Od tłumacza,’ in *Haiku*, [1983], p. 11). A similar approach was adopted by Professors-Japanologists: Mikołaj Melanowicz and Wiesław Kotański. The latter sees the preservation of syllabic patterning and image sequence as constitutive of a good haiku, stating: “it seems that when the form is lost, one also loses the poeticality of the translation” (W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 13). Kotański and Melanowicz, however, did not undertake such extensive translation work on haiku as Żuławska (a relatively extensive selection of haiku in Kotański’s translation, consisting of 53 texts, can be found in his article ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ pp. 7, 14–20; see also, for example, M. Melanowicz, ‘Haikai,’ in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, p. 285; M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, Vol. 1, pp. 370, 373–4). On versification choices in English haiku translations, see R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 2, pp. 349–50.

302 *Haiku*, [1983].

303 *Poezja starojapońska*, pp. 118–9.

a great degree, in the volume of *haibun*<sup>304</sup> verse “*Z podróźnej sakwy*” z dodaniem “*Dziennika podróży do Sarashina*.”<sup>305</sup> In her second anthology (published, it should be recalled, twenty-three years after the first collection)<sup>306</sup> significant deviations from the 5 + 7 + 5 pattern occur. With time, the translator-cum-haiku scholar started to see the syllabic criterion as optional. During a poetry meeting in October 2014,<sup>307</sup> she went as far as to assert that the 5 + 7 + 5 syllable structure can sometimes be too extensive for haiku in the Polish language. A reading of some translations (some of which I analyse below) may confirm this initially shocking opinion.

Interestingly enough, the formal constraint did not seem to cramp Umeda’s style. As it turns out, her haiku translations exhibit only limited cultural and stylistic influences foreign to the culture of *haijins* (which no doubt must also be a result of the translator’s thorough Oriental education). The selection from 1983 is definitely a “piece of good literature.” These poems can be read and savoured regardless of how much we know about East-Asian cultural contexts or genre entanglements. They are concise, only subtly metaphorical, and do not impose the style of the translator or the epoch on classical forms of Japanese poetry. Nothing strikes as artificial, nothing comes across as contrived, as forcibly pressed into narrow confines. Only occasionally can one question the felicity of certain lexical additions, arguably dictated by the need to conform to the syllable pattern. Let us have a look at the translations discussed above. Wouldn’t the text from 1983 benefit if one removed the word “tu” (here) from its incipit? By the way, I wonder if in her later translation “staw” (pond) became “sadzawka” (pool) precisely because of the syllabic rigour. Nevertheless, while adhering to the syllabic pattern, Umeda can (re)create poems of high literary quality (occasionally semantic correspondence with the original is dubious – which will be discussed below). This is clearly evident in comparison with some other contemporary translations upholding the syllabic criteria. Translations made by Professor Kotański – verbose (!), making excessive use of exclamation marks or suspension points, with questionable lexical choices (“the splash sound!”) are conspicuously lacking in poetic refinement:

O, patrz! Stary staw!  
Żaby do niego skaczą!

[Oh look! Old pond!  
Frogs are jumping to it!

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304 I discuss the genre *haibun* at greater length in Parts 1 and 7 of this book.

305 M. Bashō, “*Z podróźnej sakwy*” z dodaniem “*Dziennika podróży do Sarashina*” [Knapsack Notebook with Sarashina Journal], transl. and introduction by A. Żuławska-Umeda, Warszawa, 1994.

306 *Haiku*, [2006].

307 The meeting of Żuławska-Umeda and Ryszard Krynicki was entitled *Haiku. Sztuka przekładu japońskiej poezji* [Haiku. The Art of Translating Japanese Poetry] (8 October, 2014, “Poddasze Kultury,” Warszawa, the event was organized by the *Kultura Liberalna* magazine and the a5 publishing house.

Dźwięczny plusk wody!<sup>308</sup>

The resonant splash of water!]

Stary staw drzemie...

[The old pond is dozing...

Nagły skok żaby w wodę –  
odgłos chlupnięcia.<sup>309</sup>

Sudden jump of a frog into water –  
the splash sound.]

As a matter of form, below I present several other translations of the famous seventeen-syllable poem – both early and recent ones. 1927 saw the publication of a book by Stefan Łubieński,<sup>310</sup> *Między Wschodem a Zachodem* [Between the East and the West]. In his publication, Łubieński sought to introduce readers to the culture and mores of Japan, for example initiating them to the compositional secrets of haiku. He also provided transcriptions of several poems alongside his own literal translations from Japanese. The following is the text that has been under scrutiny here:

Stary (cichy) staw...  
(wtem) żaby skok  
(i) wody plusk...<sup>311</sup>

[Old (quiet) pond...  
(asudden), leap of a frog  
(and) a splash of water...

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308 V. Hilska, *Dzieje i kultura narodu japońskiego. Krótki zarys*, transl. S. Gawłowski, ed. W. Kotański, haiku translations by W. Kotański, Warszawa, 1957, p. 281; rpt. in W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 14.

309 W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 14. The above text is a later translation, in Kotański's opinion better than the previous version. Kotański commented on his first rendering (quoted above) as follows: "I will not dwell today on the clumsiness of phrases 'do niego' [into it], 'dźwięczny plusk' [the resonant splash]; in the new version I add "drzemie" [is dozing] because to us the "old pond" is not an adequate vision" (W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec'). However, Kotański's second translation also seems to be inept, wordy, and semantically too "telling." Kotański's lexical faithfulness to the original sometimes results in rather humorous combinations – for instance, the subject of Bashō's haiku below appears to the Polish reader not as a travel-weary, perseverant wanderer, but as an old-fashioned stay-at-home:

Rok dobiegł kresu...

[The year came to its end...

Ja wciąż w podróznym czepcu,

I am still in my travel coif,

Łapcie na nogach"

Wearing slippers...]

(as quoted in W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 16).

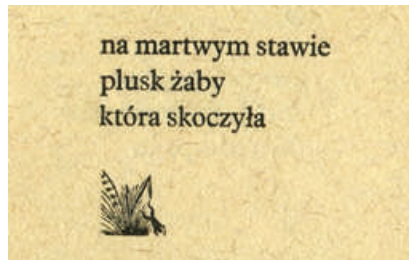
310 A Pole who spent six years in Japan (where with his wife he ran a carpet-weaving workshop), learnt the Japanese language and subsequently put down his observations about Japanese culture and customs – see W. Sieroszewski, [Przedmowa], in S. Łubieński, *Między Wschodem a Zachodem*, foreword by W. Sieroszewski, Kraków, 1927, pp. 5–7.

311 S. Łubieński, *Między Wschodem a Zachodem*, p. 43.



Lubiński did not have great translational or literary-theoretical ambitions.<sup>312</sup> He did not even attempt to give the reader a finished work. The words added in brackets clarify the text and make it more consistent. Despite that, we get a plain, clear poem. Paradoxically, from today's perspective, this translation seems to be finished (one would only need to delete the opening and closing brackets). The translation does not suggest any metaphorical message or semantic ambivalence. Yet it successfully conveys – vital, as students of Bashō's writings stress, to the revelatory experience of a micro-event<sup>313</sup> – the contrast between the long-lasting, contemplative motionlessness (adjectives are reduced to the static description of the pond, whose gentle placidity is thrown into relief by the extended initial alliteration: “**stary**” – “**staw**” (“old” – “pond”) and sudden dynamic action (sound- and movement-imitating lexems “**plusk**,” splash, and “**skok**,” jump, acoustically similar, inversely placed in clausulae).

The delicate, subtly defamiliarizing imagery (“martwy staw,” dead pond) appears already in the 1930s translation by Aleksander Janta (the poem is accompanied by a decorative miniature illustration that also serves as a typographic vignette separating successive poems):<sup>314</sup>



Finally, two more, recently published translational incarnations of the famous frog:

Staw, bardzo stary,  
żaba, co właśnie skacze,  
pluśnięcie wody.  
transl. R. Krynicki<sup>315</sup>

[A pond, very old,  
a jumping frog,  
splash of water.]

312 The brief chapter on the Japanese art of writing is one of the shortest in the book and is supplemented with ones on theatre, religion, customs, etc.

313 See, for example, D. T. Suzuki, ‘Zen and Haiku,’ in D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, New York, 1959, pp. 238–43.

314 A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczkę*, p. 27. Rpt in *Poezja starojapońska*, p. 117; *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 23.

315 R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, p. 51.

W starym stawie  
 Skok i plusk  
 Znika żaba  
 transl. P. Madej<sup>316</sup>

[In an old pond  
 A jump and splash  
 A frog disappears]

Krynicky creates a poem that is “parenthetical,” “explanatory:” first he writes down a noun, which then he, somewhat parenthetically, clarifies. One can get the impression that the translator stops halfway between the extremely dynamic model akin to Miłosz’s rendition (which we would obtain by omitting parentheses) and the storyteller’s diffusiveness, which may be encouraged – after all! – by orthodox faithfulness to the syllabic principles of the form. Madej, in turn, seeks to achieve maximum condensation, which is already evident in his syllable patterning (4 + 3 + 4). The poem arrests the reader’s attention with a certain grammatical and logical incoherence (a jump “in an old pond”). The translator also shifts the centre of gravity of the text and rearranges the ordering of scenes<sup>317</sup> (which from the point of view of Kotański, a Japanologist, is something unacceptable).<sup>318</sup> This is the only Polish translation of the canonical poem I know of that does not conclude with the sound of water (in the original there is no onomatopoeic splash or plop, but literally the “sound of water”).<sup>319</sup>

The analysis of a variety of translational “incarnations” of one and the same poem demonstrates that a Polish reader not versed in Japanese well enough to undertake detailed philological inquiries will never be sure what Bashō actually wrote in his famous seventeen-syllable composition. Translations of the haiku about a jumping frog are quite a spectacular case, even in the Polish reality which is relatively poor in translations of East-Asian poetry. Interesting translational dissimilarities can, however, also be traced in several other translations of Bashō’s haiku.

The following are two contemporary translations, devoid of unnecessary ornamentation, produced by Japanologists from Warszawa:

jaka cisza!  
 skałę przenika  
 głos cykady  
 transl. N. Dzierżawska<sup>320</sup>

[how quiet!  
 the rock is penetrated  
 by the sound of a cicada]

316 M. Bashō, *140 haiku*, selected and transl. by P. Madej, Kraków, 2008, p. 53.

317 See A. Kwiatkowska, *Let a Hundred*; M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*.

318 See footnote 272.

319 *Mizu no oto* (“the sound of water”) – in A. Kwiatkowska, *Let a Hundred*.

320 N. Dzierżawska, “Synestezja w poezji Matsuo Bashō,” Master’s Thesis written under the supervision of M. Melanowicz at the Department of Japanese and Korean Studies of the University of Warszawa, Warszawa, 2008, pp. 56, 73.

Cisza dokoła!  
 Jedynie głos cykad  
 przenika skały  
 transl. M. Melanowicz<sup>321</sup>

[Silence all around!  
 Only the sound of a cicada  
 penetrates the rocks.]

The clarity of sensorial imagery is compelling here – the foregrounded sensorial element, the sound of a cicada, is so distinct in ubiquitous silence that it seems to pierce through the rock. Melanowicz remains faithful to the syllabic pattern of haiku, which might explain the presence of the word “only,” reinforcing the utterance semantically while weakening it stylistically.<sup>322</sup> In the shorter, more economical translation by Dzierżawska, the cicada sound is clearer.<sup>323</sup>

Other translators decided to assault the reader’s sensorium. They also moved the scene to a familiar reality (replacing the exotic insect with a cricket or grasshopper):

tak cicho że aż świerszcze  
 prześwidrowują  
 skałę  
 transl. A. Janta<sup>324</sup>

[so quiet that crickets  
 bore through  
 the rock]

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321 M. Melanowicz, *Haikai*, p. 285.

322 Kotański comments on Melanowicz’s translation as follows: “to my sense, this scene is too static: ‘jedynie’ [only] weakens the overall impression, “przenika” [penetrates] is hardly dynamic, and combined with the plural form of the complement “skały” [rocks] shifts the emphasis to the rocks, which are rather a prop extraneous to the drilling action of the sound” (W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 15). Instead, he put forward the following version of the text

Cisza... i nagle	[Silence... and suddenly
Coś się w głąb skały wwierca:	Something drills into the rock:
To głos cykady...	It’s the voice of a cicada...].

323 In a similar vein, one could analyse another pair of translations: renderings, respectively, by Andrzej Krajewski-Bola (M. Bashō, *Haiku*, translated by A. Krajewski-Bola, *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 5) and Ewa Tomaszewska (produced via English, as quoted in *100 klasycznych haiku*, p. 27):

Spokój.	[Quiet.
Głosy cykad	Voices of cicadas
drążą skałę. bore	the rock.]

Pogodnie i cicho	[Sunny and quiet
Jedynie głos cykady	Only the voice of a cicada
Wnika w głąb skały.	Penetrates deep into the rock.]

324 A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczk*, p. 30.

Jaka cisza –  
 Terkotanie konika polnego  
 Świdruje skałę.  
 transl. Cz. Miłosz<sup>325</sup>

[How quiet –  
 Grasshopper’s chattering  
 Drills the rock.]

Instead of the mild “przenikanie” (penetration), we have the onomatopoeic “świdrowanie” (boring, drilling)<sup>326</sup> and, in Miłosz’s rendition, additionally (!) “terkotanie” (chattering). The quiet sensorial image from the translations of Melanowicz and Dzierżawska has changed beyond recognition. The sound became strident, unpleasant, irritating. It almost seems that Miłosz’s translation is onomatopoeically overloaded (“chattering drills”). Janta, in turn, resorts to sound instrumentation, masterfully imitating the quiet, yet persistently regular sounds produced by insects (“że aż świerszcze prześwidrowują” [that crickets bore through]).

Ryszard Krynicki keeps the cicadas, yet enriches the haiku’s phonostylistic effects with an onomatopoeic paronomasia in the last verse (without resigning from the sound-imitating verb in the second line):

Wokoło cisza:  
 litą skałę przewierca  
 cykanie cykad  
 transl. R. Krynicki<sup>327</sup>

[Silence all around:  
 solid rock is drilled  
 by the chirping of cicadas]

It is doubtful whether “cykanie” (chirping) (“cyk” – name of a soft steady sound)<sup>328</sup> ties in well with the intense and aggressive “przewiercanie” (drilling). However, the need for saturating the text with sound effects is remarkably strong. The translations by Janta, Miłosz, and Krynicki turn out to be more acoustically marked than the Japanese original.<sup>329</sup>

325 Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, p. 30.

326 “Świdrowanie” is also the word of choice for Leszek Engelking (“dokoła cisza / i nagle głos cykady / świdruje skałę” [silence all around / and suddenly the voice of a cicada / drills the rock] – L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*, p. 10). Wiesław Kotański and Piotr Madej decide on the verb “wwiercać się” (drill through into) (Madej’s translation: “Głuchosc / Wwierca się w skały / Głosem cykady” [Quietude / drilling into rocks / with the sound of a cicada] – M. Bashō, *140 haiku*, p. 35; for Kotański’s translation, see footnote 322).

327 R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, p. 52.

328 M. Bańko, *Współczesny polski onomatopeikon. Ikoniczność w języku* [Modern Polish Onomatopoeikon. Iconicity in Language], Warszawa, 2008, p. 167. Mirosław Bańko discussed here two kinds of sounds – those produced by the human civilization (a clock, watch) and natural ones (insects).

329 For the poem’s transcription, see *Haiku*, [2006], p. 131.

In this context, the translations by Żuławska- Umeda come as an utter surprise:

Wokół tak cicho – Stapia się z litą skałą Wołanie cykad <sup>330</sup>	[So still around – Fusing with solid rock The call of cicadas]
Cisza lita skała nabrzmiała wołaniem cykad <sup>331</sup>	[Quiet solid rock replete with the calling of cicadas]

Semantic differences are enormous. Definitely “przenikanie” (penetrating), “świdrowanie” (drilling), “wwiercanie się” (boring through into) are unlike “stapianie się” (fusing) with the rock. Moreover, the rock becomes more specific than in most of the translations cited (it is “solid” – was it a mere lexical addition dictated by syllabic requirements adopted by the translator?). In turn, the cicadas are subtly personified: not only do they produce a sound, but they also call. Żuławska’s most recent translation brings yet another poem. “Solid rock replete with the calling of cicadas” – this is a fine sensorial image, yet strongly metaphorized. Both the cicadas and the rock become mysterious, liable to metamorphoses, unusual. Is this what Master Bashō really had in mind?<sup>332</sup> The reader gets confused in the stylistic and semantic twists and turns of these translations.

The search for a single translation “front” in other literatures is likewise doomed to failure. Amongst English translations we also come across substantial semantic discrepancies. I will restrict myself here to only a handful of examples (the last one is a likely source of Miłosz’s translation):

silence:  
rocks penetrated by  
the cicadas’ buzz<sup>333</sup>

Such stillness –  
The cries of the cicadas  
Sink into the rocks.<sup>334</sup>

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330 *Haiku*, [1983], p. 132.

331 *Haiku*, [2006], p. 131.

332 For a polemic with Żuławska-Umeda’s translation choices, see M. P. Markowski, ‘Estetyka zdarzenia’ [The Aesthetics of an Occurrence], *Literatura na Świecie*, 2002, No. 1/2/3, pp. 358–67.

333 H. Minoru, *Exploring Bashō’s World of Poetic Expression: Soundscape Haiku*, transl. Ch. Crowley, in *Matsuo Bashō’s Poetic Spaces*, ed. E. Kerkham, New York, 2006, p. 164. A similar rendition: “Quietness... / The cicadas’ voice / penetrates the rock” (M. Ueda, *Zeami*, p. 44).

334 D. Keene, *Japanese Literature*, p. 40. A similar translation: “Lonely stillness – / a single cicada’s cry / sinking into stone” (*The Poetry of Zen*, transl. and eds. S. Hamill, J. P. Seaton, Boston–London, 2007, p. 137).

How quiet it is!  
 Piercing into the rocks  
 The cicada's voice<sup>335</sup>

mountain temple  
 deeply staining the rock  
 cicada's voice<sup>336</sup>

loneliness  
 seeping into the rock  
 cicada's voice<sup>337</sup>

So still:  
 into rock it pierces –  
 the locust-shrill<sup>338</sup>

These renditions differ in numerous respects. What appears interesting are the combinations of verbs used by translators: “penetrate,” “sink,” “pierce,” “stain,” “seep”.

Finally, let us have a look at Bashō's death haiku, the last poem penned by the master.<sup>339</sup> The overwhelming majority of its renderings, produced at different times (cited in chronological order) by translators with varying credentials in the field of Oriental studies, demonstrate significant similarities in semantics<sup>340</sup> and in manners of constructing a depiction:

w podróży chory  
 a nad zwiędłymi polami  
 jeszcze marzenia  
 transl. A. Janta<sup>341</sup>

[ill on a journey  
 and over the withered fields  
 still dreams]

335 Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, p. 32. A similar translation: “such stillness / piercing the rock / a cicada's voice” (M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 138).

336 M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 139.

337 M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p.139.

338 H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, p. 39.

339 For the circumstances surrounding its creation, see *Japanese Death Poems*, p. 144. Jane Reichhold gives yet another, later, as she suggests, poem by Bashō, which, however, is a reworking of his earlier text (see M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, pp. 231, 394).

340 All the English translations I know are similar in spirit (and semantically as well). See, for example, *Anthology of Japanese Literature from the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, compiled and ed. D. Keene, New York, n.d., p. 385; Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, p. 47; M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 231; J. Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki. His Life and Works*, Boston–Worcester, 2002, p. 72; H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku*, p. 29; see also the English translations quoted in the chapter ‘Poetry of Mindfulness - Czesław Miłosz and Haiku.’

341 A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczk*, p. 31.

Zasłabłem w drodze – marzenia moje błądzą gdzieś po pustkowiach transl. W. Kotański <sup>342</sup>	[I grew weak on a journey – my dreams roam about] cross the wilds]
Schorzały w drodze lecz moje sny po zwiędłych łąkach tańczą transl. M. Melanowicz <sup>343</sup>	[Taken sick on a journey yet my dreams dance across withered meadows]
Chorując w podróży – Nad suchym wrzosowiskiem Wędrują sny. transl. Cz. Miłosz <sup>344</sup>	[Sick while travelling Over a dry moor Dreams wander about.]
w podróży niemoc lecz sny moje wędrują po pustych polach transl. L. Engelking <sup>345</sup>	[infirm on a journey yet my dreams wander about empty fields]
jestem chorym w podróży moje sny idą przez wysuszone pola translator unknown <sup>346</sup>	[I am a sick man travelling my dreams walk across dried fields]
Chory w podróży Moje sny błąkają się Nad suchym bagnem transl. P. Madej <sup>347</sup>	[Ill on a journey My dreams are roaming Over a dry swamp]
Chory, w podróży. Bez celu błąka się sen po pustych polach – transl. R. Krynicki <sup>348</sup>	[Ill, travelling. A dream is wandering aimlessly cross empty fields –]

“Zwiędłe pola” (withered fields), “suche wrzosowisko” (a dry moor), “pustkowie” (the wilds), “zwiędłe łąki” (withered meadows), “puste pola” (empty fields), or

342 W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 15.

343 M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, p. 370.

344 Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, p. 44.

345 L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*, p. 27.

346 *Japońskie haiku śmierci*, p. 61 (translator’s name not provided).

347 M. Bashō, *140 haiku*, p. 12.

348 R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, p. 59.

even “suche bagno” (a dry swamp) are similar, bleak landscapes. The opposition “sny” – “marzenia” can be explained by the ambiguity of the English “dream” and French “rêve,” which the Polish translators confronted in their translation sources. Comparing very unfavourably with other translations is Melanowicz’s archaizing rendition, far removed from the verbal simplicity of the original – archaic-sounding words like “schorzwały,” “tańczącą” are aesthetically displeasing. These lexical choices might have been dictated by the versification arithmetic – the intention to preserve the Oriental syllable pattern. The grammatical incorrectness (“Jestem chorym”) and artificiality (“dried fields”) of the utterance make the translation published in the anthology *Japońskie haiku śmierci* [Japanese Death Haiku] rather unappealing. Further differences occur in the description of the illness – “zasłabnięcie” (growing weak), “niemoc” (infirmity) are milder terms than the unspecified “choroba” (illness). Despite that, the translations cited must be viewed as similar. Each evokes a similar image – one of a traveller who is unwell, probably his body is unable to continue wandering, unlike his dreams, which are free from the limitations of matter.<sup>349</sup>

In this context, the translations by Ewa Tomaszewska and Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda are astounding:

Choruję w drodze – Nad puste wrzosowiska Przychodzą widma. transl. E. Tomaszewska <sup>350</sup>	[I am ill travelling Over an empty moor Phantoms are coming.]
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Chory w podróży śnie, że polem wymarłym biegam bez końca transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda <sup>351</sup>	[Ill on a journey I dream I am running endlessly across a desolate field]
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A sick man plagued by phantoms is a completely different image than the series of analogous scenes presented above – one that in addition carries different cultural connotations. We are given here a representation, well known from numerous texts of European culture, of a seriously ill man haunted by ghosts, which, perhaps, hold him accountable for his worldly actions or call him to the afterlife. In the light of the numerous Polish and countless English translations – and linguistic analyses

349 See, for example, J. Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki*, p. 72.

350 *100 klasycznych haiku*, p. 58. This is a translation of the English-language version of Bashō’s poem: “When I’m sick on a journey / Phantoms move about / Over the desolate moor” (*Classic Haiku: A Master’s Selection*, selected and transl. Y. Miura, Boston, 2001, p. 93).

351 *Haiku*, [1983], p. 246.



of the Japanese original<sup>352</sup> – it should be concluded that the translator simply made a mistake (following Yuzuru Miura, whose rendition of this haiku she translated).

And finally, let us discuss the rendering by Żuławska-Umeda, published in 1983 and reissued, in a virtually unchanged form, in 2002 and 2006<sup>353</sup> (even though the translator reworked many other texts). That we are dealing here with the same poems by the haiku master is beyond doubt. Żuławska writes: “This is Bashō’s last poem. With no ornamentation nor coquetry, it strikes the reader with its stern elegance and intensity.”<sup>354</sup> This translation is the most intriguing, puzzling, and ambiguous. The desolate field and the endless running across it – this is a highly suggestive, bizarre and moving image. The problem is that it is so far removed from all other translations.<sup>355</sup>

We are dealing here with a death poem, the last words of the outstanding poet, who combined literary work with spiritual search. All this strongly affects the reader’s imagination. From the various translation versions, the reader must choose his/her “own” poetic testament left by Bashō. Aware of its “singularity,” for years I have viewed as “my own” Żuławska’s rendition of the last haiku by the master.

At first glance, haiku may come across as the simplest poetry in the world. The above-discussed challenges of translating – and reading – Matsuo Bashō’s classic texts are proof that, in the case of Oriental seventeen-syllable verse, one cannot talk of obvious, categorically successful or failed translation solutions. Inherent in Japanese haiku are considerable semantic ambiguities. The reader of its translations must accept an additional multiplication of uncertainty. A comparison of various translations somehow brings us closer to the originals at the same time revealing the complexities of native literature of the last century.

Haiku translations in a natural manner convey – at least to a large extent – what East-Asian artists wished to express in them.<sup>356</sup> But they also convey a lot

352 See, for example, the literal translation of the text: M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 394.

353 A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Od tłumaczki,’ p. 283; *Haiku*, [2006], p. 222. The version published in *Literatura na świecie* differs from the other two only in the absence of a comma.

354 *Haiku*, [1983], p. 246. The comment in the 2006 anthology reads as follows: “This is Bashō’s last stanza – with no ornaments or aesthetic camouflage, showing the drama of illness and vulnerability” (*Haiku*, [2006], p. 222).

355 Dziadek defines translations of Żuławska-Umeda as “philological translations from the originals” (A. Dziadek, ‘Haiku,’ p. 143). If the philological translation is understood here as literal, literally close to the original, one cannot share the scholar’s opinion. See also M. P. Markowski, ‘Estetyka zdarzenia,’ pp. 358–67.

356 Undeniably, some aspects of the message escape our notice – I have in mind, amongst other things, intertextual references or allusions to Eastern customs and mores. A great deal of information is conveyed, for example, through visual and acoustic allusions that are inaccessible to Western readers. I discuss this in more detail in Part 1 of this book.

more information – about translators themselves, about their time, about motivations behind their stylistic choices.<sup>357</sup> And, finally, about their readers choosing “their own” haiku from a range of translation offers.

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357 As Tomasz Bilczewski writes: “A text transferred to another culture is, to a greater or lesser extent, a response to the processes taking place within it. Thus, it becomes a perfectly valuable link of comparative analysis, which, crossing language and cultural boundaries, examines mechanisms of this textual acculturation, relating them to the initial context underlying this process” (T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja*, p. 69).

## Part 3 Polemic Extremes of “Haiku”

The formulas constituting the keystone of the next part of this study are “polemicity” and extremity, understood in various ways. The following chapters include analyses of texts (referred to as haiku by their authors) not only entering into dialogues with Japanese verse, but also peculiarly mutually polemical, located at opposite extremes – chronologically,<sup>1</sup> stylistically and, at least in part, ideologically – of Polish references to the Japanese genre. I have in mind here “haiku-esque” extremes<sup>2</sup> of Stanisław Grochowiak and Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz,<sup>3</sup> authors distinguished by highly expressive and radically divergent poetics. In their poetry, the speaker shuns emotional exhibitionism – both of them exhibit traces of the aesthetics of the ugly (in Polish scholarship referred to as *turpizm*). Their poetic production labelled as haiku (although essentially distant from the prototype of the form)<sup>4</sup> is also somewhat inherently extreme (comprising texts that are surprisingly different stylistically). Finally, the literary oeuvre of Grochowiak and Brzóska are widely publicized phenomena of media culture, however different their media exposure (conditioned by, among other things, time of creation) and media hypostases of their “haikuing” may have been.

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- 1 Interestingly enough, only eight years separate the publication of *Haiku-images* from the beginning of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s “haiku-related” activity.
  - 2 I write about other extremes of Polish references to haiku in Part 6 of this monograph (*A “Haiku” Miscellany*). Here, I am concerned with more systematic undertakings, involving a larger body of texts, and, finally, polemical towards the Japanese form and each other.
  - 3 The poet’s name (actually his pen name and surname) has been spelt variously: “Brzóska-Brzósiewicz” is the version approved by the author that has been consistently used in recent years. Throughout the 1990s, the artist’s name was typically spelt as “Brzoskiewicz.” His nom de plume has sometimes been put in inverted commas, while in some cases it is not hyphenated with the surname.
  - 4 See Part 1 (chapter Prototype – Invariant – Stereotype. Haiku in the West).

## I. Grochowiak’s Longest Journey

*Dmuchawiec*

*Krąg światła*

*Wydobył dmuchawca cień na twoim suficie*

*Pomyślałem: dokąd umykasz moje  
ciemne życie.*

*S. Grochowiak*

*[Dandelion*

*A circle of light*

*Brought out a dandelion’s shade on your  
ceiling*

*I thought: where have you been running  
away my dark life?]*

### 1. The Strange Epilogue<sup>6</sup>

*Haiku-images*, the “posthumous child”<sup>7</sup> of Stanisław Grochowiak, is the most acclaimed episode in the history of Polish haiku to date and at the same time one of its turning points: the publication, the first Polish poetry book bearing “haiku” in its title, was widely commented on and read (and saw two editions in 1978,<sup>8</sup> the second one with an excellent graphic design by Jan Bokiewicz).<sup>9</sup> For years, Piotr Michałowski has claimed that in the history of haiku in Poland, Grochowiak’s volume is “the most significant literary fact,”<sup>10</sup> “the most important document of a

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- 5 *Poezja* 1977, No. 2, p. 13. A poem by Stanisław Grochowiak designated in *Poezja* as belonging to the upcoming volume *Haiku-image* [sic, B.Ś.] prepared by PIW (Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy); finally, however, the poem was not included in the volume in question. See footnote 12 in this part of the book.
  - 6 The phrase “volume-epilogue” was used to refer to Grochowiak’s *Haiku-images* in the book by Anna R. Burzyńska, *Małe dramaty. Teatralność liryki Stanisława Grochowiaka* [Small Dramas. Theatricality of the Poetry of Stanisław Grochowiak], Kraków, 2012, p. 169.
  - 7 The expression used by Beata Mytych-Forajter – B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne... Rzecz o *Haiku-images*,’ in B. Mytych-Forajter, *Czule punkty Grochowiaka. Szkice i interpretacje*, Katowice 2010, p. 88 (see the earlier version of this text in *Miniatura i mikrologia literacka*, Vol. 1, ed. A. Nawarecki, Katowice 2000. Below I refer to the publication from 2010).
  - 8 The first edition (both published by PIW) numbered 9000 + 290 copies, the second one 1000 + 290 copies. Readers’ keen interest was definitely sparked by the circumstances surrounding the publication (the posthumous volume of the prematurely deceased acclaimed artist) as well as, I suppose, the intriguing title itself.
  - 9 For more on Bokiewicz’s project, see Part 7 of this monograph. The book’s first edition has no illustrations, while the dust jacket designed by Henryk Tomaszewski is noteworthy (stylized as a cover of a school notebook, reminiscent of graph paper, with the author’s handwritten name and surname along with the circled handwritten title).
  - 10 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin 1999, p. 87. See also P. Michałowski, ‘Barokowe korzenie haiku (ostatnia przyczoda Stanisława Grochowiaka),’ *Akcent*, 1993, No. 4, p. 10 (reprinted in “*W ciemną mą ojczyznę.*” *Stanisław Grochowiak znany i nieznan*, ed. S. Sterna-Wachowiak, Poznań, 1996, pp. 135–6). Considerations of Grochowiak included in *Miniatura poetycka* from 1999 are a revised version of an essay published by *Akcent* (throughout this book in most cases I have referenced the most recent publication).

struggle with foreignness and an attempt to build an intercultural bridge.”<sup>11</sup> *Haiku-images* holds a special place in this book as well, even if not only for strictly chronological reasons. Grochowiak's texts demand a reading that takes into account both the processes of assimilation and transformation of the Japanese genre and the accumulating body of voices of critics and scholars.

The “extremeness” that I have diagnosed here arises first and foremost from the very poetics of this volume which seduces the reader with its compressed sensoriality. Grochowiak tested the limits of verbosity here, “censored” his own technique, and in numerous ways tried out the usefulness of literary imports. This is an exceptionally rich book (also in terms of quantity – it brings together over 100 miniature poems),<sup>12</sup> permitting a surprising number of legitimate reading trajectories.<sup>13</sup>

At first sight, the collection's composition (authored by Grochowiak himself)<sup>14</sup> seems exceptionally precise – we are given here three cycles: *Haiku-images*, *Haiku-animaux*, *Haiku dla Kingi* (Haiku for Kinga) (the first of which, being the most extensive, is further subdivided into five parts), preceded by a longer poetic introduction [Bóg błogosławi małomównym...] [God blesses the taciturn...].<sup>15</sup> Each

- 11 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii nowoczesnej,’ in P. Michałowski, *Głosy, formy, światy. Warianty poezji nowoczesnej*, Kraków, 2008, p. 129.
- 12 During the last years of his poetic activity, Grochowiak created more several-line miniatures akin to poems from *Haiku-images* than we find in the poetry book from 1978 (see S. Grochowiak, *Wiersze nieznanne i rozproszone* [Unknown and Scattered Poems], selected, with an introduction and commentary by J. Łukasiewicz, Wrocław, 1996, pp. 230–2, 255, 257, 265, 300–5). Curiously, the 1977 issue of *Poezja* dedicated to Grochowiak brought eight poems from, as it was claimed, the upcoming volume prepared by PIW and designated as *Haiku-images* (*Poezja*, 1977, No. 2, pp. 13–4; poems: ‘Dmuchawiec’ [Dandelion], ‘Zatracenie’ [Perdition], ‘Sen’ [Dream], [Nie rozprzestrzeniaj nieba...] [Do not Spread the Sky...], [Głaz z osłupienia zaniemówił...] [The boulder was Speechless with Stupefaction]), ‘Kolory’ [Colours], ‘Sierociniec’ [Orphanage], ‘Pończochy’ [Stockings]. None of these texts found their way to the book (however, they were published in the volume *Wiersze nieznanne i rozproszone*). See also the chapter's motto and the footnote to the motto in this chapter.
- 13 This is conspicuously evident in literary-theoretical descriptions of *Haiku-images*. Mytych-Forajter reads the volume through plays, diminutives, childlikeness, fabulosity (themes that indeed are present in *Haiku-images*, but in my opinion are not among the volume's dominants), while Michałowski does so through the prism of baroque, contrasts, and the dialogue with the Orient. See B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii.’
- 14 J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Haiku Grochowiaka’ [Grochowiak's Haiku], *Twórczość*, 1979, No. 12, p. 125. One can doubt, however, whether prior to his death, the author managed to give his book the complete composition he intended. See the first footnote to the motto and footnote 12 in this chapter.
- 15 In the *Haiku-images* sequence, parts 1, 3 and 5 consist of twenty poems each, while parts 2 and 4 are made up of 10 texts, *Haiku-animaux* numbers 20 poems (22, if one considers the tripartite *Zen* as three separate poems); *Haiku dla Kingi* numbers five poems.

separate unit (except for *Haiku dla Kingi*) ends with a poem, or poems, with “Zen” in the title. Numerical precision only to a limited extent translates into a movement of meaning and changes of poetics within the book.<sup>16</sup> From the perspective of haiku research, *Haiku-animaux* seems to be the most interesting part – by depicting animals, it reaches, somewhat programmatically, towards nature and is “pulled” onto the plane of verifiable sense experience, at the same time very consistently seeing cultural ways out of simple sensory “verifiability.” The eponymous cycle, however, is the most imaginary,<sup>17</sup> oneiric, most distinctly akin to Grochowiak’s singular style. *Haiku dla Kingi* (comprising only five miniatures) is subdued in tone, the most mimetic of all, and embeds the clearest affirmativeness<sup>18</sup> (the perspective of “dziadek herbacyan” [tea grandfather]<sup>19</sup> – ‘Dziadek,’ HdK I<sup>20</sup>).

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- 16 The (dis)order of a poetic diary is treated by Michałowski, who cites the intuitions of Julian Kornhauser: Michałowski (*Haiku*, pp. 92–3). Mytych-Forajter, on the other hand, is looking for an overriding order in the volume, “a route to follow,” yet the path she delineated (marked?) does not seem especially clear (B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘*Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne*,’ pp. 91–2).
- 17 See B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘*Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne*,’ p. 91. Jacek Łukasiewicz concludes that this part is *par excellence* pictorial (“haiku-pictures” – J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Wstęp,’ in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, Wrocław, 2000, p. XLI), in my view, however, the other cycles are on a par with the eponymous one in this respect. Perhaps a more appropriate title of the book’s first cycle would be *Haiku-imagines* (yet it would produce further terminological confusion: vide Imagism and Imaginism, the currents that have been confused in the Polish reception of Imagism already since the 1930s).
- 18 See A. Skrendo, ‘Poezja afirmacji – Stanisław Grochowiak’ [Poetry of Affirmation – Stanisław Grochowiak], in A. Skrendo, *Poezja modernizmu. Interpretacje* [Modernist Poetry. Interpretations], Kraków, 2005, pp. 270–1.
- 19 Kinga is the poet’s granddaughter, born six months prior to his death. During his last years, Grochowiak also wrote for children (see, for example, two poetry books: S. Grochowiak, *To było gdzieś* [This Happened Somewhere], illustrated by M. Sołtyk, Warszawa, 1973; S. Grochowiak, *Biały bażant* [White Pheasant], illustrated by M. Sołtyk, Warszawa, 1978; a book of autotelic and fantastic stories: S. Grochowiak, *Żyjátko, Biedajstwo i Ci inni. Zabawa literacka przeznaczona w zasadzie dla dzieci* [Animalcule, Poorling, and Those Others. A Literary Game Basically Intended for Children], illustrated by M. Sołtyk, Warszawa, 2009; see also B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘*Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne*,’ p. 91).
- 20 Unless otherwise stated, I quote all the poems from *Haiku-images* based on the second edition of the book from 1978. Instead of a simple numerical location (page number), I use markings indicating a position of a given poem in the book’s layout (which is of no small importance in my analyses): H-i – the cycle *Haiku-images*, with Arabic numerals 1–5 indicating the number of the cycle’s part, and Roman numerals indicating a poem number; H-a – *Haiku-animaux*, Roman numerals indicate a poem number; HdK – *Haiku dla Kingi*, Roman numerals indicate a poem number.

There is a strong temptation to treat *Haiku-images* as the product of Grochowiak's late output, as proof of his emotional calming, inner integration, and reconciliation with the world in the face of death.<sup>21</sup> Grochowiak died at the age of 42. This is not a powerful counter-argument – how does one measure the weight of experience? (By the way, the poet was already a grandfather). Jacek Łukasiewicz gives us an intimate glimpse into Grochowiak's last months (notes from October 1975, the poet died less than a year later):

Staszek [a diminutive of Stanisław] looks bad, which given this condition of his liver is no surprise. Every hour or so, he has a shot of rye vodka [...]. He's still reeling from his departure from *Poezja*. He accepted the position at *Miesięcznik Literacki* as a humiliating sinecure. He plans to start a film unit [...]. It would consist of musicians [...], painters [...]. Staszek also wants to show Wojtczak his four already finished films. *Partita* is to go to Cannes, the other ones are great too... He works like crazy. Screenplays, poems. The collection *Bilard* [Snooker] at Czytelnik, *Haiku* at PIW. And a great poem about Ahasuerus, a sort of new *Król Duch* [King Spirit, a poem by Juliusz Słowacki] – I've read the initial and final parts. He has a piano in his room, his painting hangs in the kitchen: an oil, still life. He also paints tempera. He predicts Ahasuerus will take him a few years. "Maybe it will work," he says. And another shot of vodka – he drinks in small sips.<sup>22</sup>

Nothing is obvious. It seems that *Haiku-images* in every respect is a book of surprises and contradictions. Grochowiak accustomed his readers to verbosity, to his distinctive, lyrical prolixity, often with highly fragmented metre, to surrealizing grotesqueness and baroque antitheses. It might seem that the author's death finally set the seal on the labels of nominalism,<sup>23</sup> expressionism and, despite all the reservations, *turpizm* (interest in ugliness and decay) that would be attached to his fundamentally finished poetic oeuvre. The "volume-epilogue," however, is

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- 21 See A. Wójtowicz, 'Stanisława Grochowiaka poetycka introdukcja i "coda"' [Stanisław Grochowiak's Poetic Introduction and "Coda"], in "*W ciemną mą ojczyznę*," p. 161. On the miniature as "a form of mature poetry, written towards the end of life, or still at the height of the author's creative powers, ... [whose] choice as the manner of expression results from the abandonment or modification of the earlier artistic path, see P. Michałowski, 'Miniatura poetycka,' *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1994, No. 2, p. 134; see also P. Michałowski, 'Funkcje miniatur,' [Functions of Miniatures], in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin, 1999, p. 182 and ff.).
- 22 J. Petelenz-Łukasiewicz, 'Ten chłopiec niezwykły – po latach' [This Remarkable Boy – Years Later], in *Dusza czyścowa. Wspomnienia o Stanisławie Grochowiaku* [The Soul in Purgatory. Reminiscences of Stanisław Grochowiak], ed. A. Romaniuk, Warszawa, 2010, p. 68. See also J. Łukasiewicz, *Haiku Grochowiaka*, p. 125; P. Kuncewicz, 'Stanisław Grochowiak,' in *Dusza czyścowa*, p. 107; M. Sołtyk-Koc, 'Jakbym znalazł drzewo' [If I Found a Tree], in *Dusza czyścowa*, p. 249 and ff.
- 23 K. Wyka, *Barok, groteska i inni poeci* [Baroque, Grotesque and Other Poets], in K. Wyka, *Rzecz wyobraźni* [The Stuff of Imagination], Warszawa, 1977, p. 188.

not a straightforward closure of an extensive and, paradoxically, syncretically homogeneous poetic oeuvre.<sup>24</sup> As far as one can see (and hear), this volume turns upside down the already well-ordered universe of assessments of Grochowiak.<sup>25</sup> It was promptly noticed that on closer inspection this book neatly fits into the artist’s previous poetic dictions. Once again (though from a different angle) the author shows his mastery of syncretism: the juggling with poetics, pictorial and syntactic baroque, the ever-present dreaminess. “Despite the new form, we still unmistakably hear the same voice of the poet.”<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, it is still worthwhile giving credence to our first readerly intuitions. Hidden behind

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- 24 “Those who during those years viewed him as a *passéist* or a television speaker, or still as a ‘turpist’ keen on expressionist contrasts and drastic effects – must have been surprised. Nothing falls into place here. We are dealing here with hermetic poems, stamped with a seal which needs to be TENDERLY (‘tenderness’ being the fundamental category in Grochowiak’s aesthetics) chipped away at. [...] *Haiku-images* [...] is possessed of silence and a different type of forcefulness than the one occurring in the remaining part of Grochowiak’s late verse. There are no drastic effects here that marked *Menuet z pogrzebaczem* [A Minuet with a Poker], *Rozbieranie do nnu* [Undressing for Sleep], or *Polowanie na cietrzewie* [The Hunt for Black Grouse]. These were superseded by mild, conventional effects, yet ones, as it happens, that accord with the principles of haiku – confirmed by direct experience, taken not from literature, but from life and the experience of nature. There is no stylization akin to the one occurring in *Rok polski* [The Polish Year] or *Proza na dzień św. Medarda* [Prose for St. Medard’s Day] or in other poems, where the thick old-Polishness sounds familiar and bawdy. Haiku stylization is much more subtle than that and in no way weakens the triplets. If it is an element of joyful play, then it is one that superfluously flows from the work of an artist-craftsman, the calligrapher taking delight in his art.” (J. Łukasiewicz, *Haiku Grochowiaka*, p. 125; emphasis in original). See also J. Kwiatkowski, ‘Synkretyczny indywidualista’ [The Syncretic Individualist], in J. Kwiatkowski, *Klucze do wyobraźni* [Keys to Imagination], Warszawa, 1964, p. 208.
- 25 The publication of the extensive volume *Wiersze nieznane i rozproszone* can be considered another breakthrough in “grochowiakology” – see, for example, ‘Grochowiak w olśniewającej pełni’ [Grochowiak in Dazzling Fullness], *Twórczość*, 1997, No. 5, p. 97; M. Nawrocki, “*Tego się nauczą każdy, kto dotyka próżni:*” *rzecz o poezji Stanisława Grochowiaka* [“Let Anyone who Touches the Void Learn it:” a Note on the Poetry of Stanisław Grochowiak], Kraków, 2007, pp. 14–5.
- 26 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 91. Michał Nawrocki went as far as to declare: “based on this volume, one could possibly reconstruct earlier achievements of the author” (M. Nawrocki, “*Tego się nauczą każdy, kto dotyka próżni,*” p. 23). This is unlikely – and definitely unverifiable. Resorting to the expressive, continually rehashed formulas of Jan Błoński, one could again speak of “an exotic dish, concocted from contradictory and most improbable ingredients,” “seasoned with God knows what,” “original poetic odds and ends” (J. Błoński, ‘Fetyszysta brzydoty’ [The Fetishist of Ugliness], in J. Błoński, *Zmiana warty* [The Changing of the Guard], Warszawa, 1961, p. 73.



*Haiku-images* is the unknown Grochowiak – intriguingly subdued, less interested in inner landscapes,<sup>27</sup> enticing the reader with the sensorial compression of micro-stories. Finally, there is also the prefiguration of “what will always remain a prefiguration.”<sup>28</sup> It is hard to tell what kind of poet Grochowiak would be after *Haiku-images*. I intend to carefully check what kind of poet Grochowiak is and is not in his posthumous poetry collection.

Featured prominently in Grochowiak's most light-hearted book<sup>29</sup> is the surprisingly meandering and dark initial poem.<sup>30</sup> The volume begins with a triplet separated by interline spacing (which irresistibly evokes associations with the haiku form):

Bóg błogosławi małomównym	[God blesses the taciturn
Ale święci są tylko cisi	But only the quiet are holy
Zbawieni – co nie poruszają wargami	The saved – ones who not do move their lips]

The dialogue of cultures begins already here.<sup>31</sup> If we agree that we are dealing with a gradual description of spiritual development,<sup>32</sup> the following sequence will

27 On Grochowiak's predilection for inner landscape, see J. Kwiatkowski, *Groza i groteska* [Horror and Grotesque], in J. Kwiatkowski, *Klucze do wyobraźni*, p. 204.

28 M. Nawrocki, “Tego się naucz każdy, kto dotykasz próżni,” p. 23.

29 Without a doubt, the most light-hearted of all the volumes written for adult readers.

30 See the following analyses: P. Michałowski, *Haiku*, pp. 91–2; B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ pp. 87–91; A. Krawczyk, ‘“Widzialny porządek” czy “ukryty wymiar?” *Haiku-images* Stanisława Grochowiaka,’ *Postscriptum Polonistyczne*, 2012, No. 1, p. 205 and ff., [http://sjikp.us.edu.pl/ps/pdf/ps2012\\_1.pdf](http://sjikp.us.edu.pl/ps/pdf/ps2012_1.pdf), accessed May 28, 2013; B. Stawiczak (S. Barańczak), ‘Bóg błogosławi małomównym?’ [Does God Bless the Taciturn?], *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1978, No. 43, p. 6. For that matter, Stanisław Barańczak notes that this is the only non-haiku poem in *Haiku-images*. Treating all the other poems as haiku is controversial. However, in 1978, the book's reception – especially given the comparative perspective – was different. As late as the beginning of the twenty-first century, it was claimed that the volume “has the structure of haiku” (E. Dąbrowska, *Teksty w ruchu. Powroty baroku w polskiej poezji współczesnej* [Texts in Motion. Returns of Baroque in Polish Contemporary Poetry], Opole, 2001, p. 207).

31 It is worth reading my analysis of this text from the perspective of partly parallel investigations by Beata Mytych-Forajter (‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ pp. 89–90).

32 See P. Michałowski, *Haiku*, p. 91. Bożena Kowszewicz reads the poem's “reticence” completely differently, recalling the context of sixteenth-century Netherlands, Bruegel's symbolism and painterly double entendres. (B. Kowszewicz, ‘*Idę gorący po tłach pokostniałych* – czyli malarstwo w poezji Stanisława Grochowiaka,’ [Fervid, I Walk on Ossified Backgrounds – or the Art of Painting in the Poetry of Stanisław Grochowiak], *Poezja*, 1986, No. 10/11, p. 54).

come into being: the taciturn – the quiet – the silent. The triplet distinctly echoes with the Sermon on the Mount (“Blessed are the meek” – Matthew 5: 5), there is also a subtle hint of another intertext: the first phrases of one of the fundamental treatises of Daoism, *Dao De Jing*.<sup>33</sup> Thus salvation (the term characteristic of Christianity) would await those who are silent – at least ones who do not speak about the inexpressible (as Laozi instructs). This is immediately followed by an enumeration of things that are most adept at silence: a rock, water (which, however, “swallowed the corpse”), fish (with “shut pupils”). No sign of man. There are only entities man should attentively listen to if he wishes to follow Daoist and Zen precepts, leaving his verbose ego at the threshold of the encounter. Or perhaps – only (?) symbolic beings, key emblems of Christianity (rock, water, fish)? Everything is ambiguous, cultural threads are tangled up, and no simple answers are available.

No answers are brought by subsequent sections of the poem, concluding with an ekphrasis of Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s *The Peasant Wedding* and the confession “dzieckiem tam jestem” (I am a child there) (yet not a clever boy, but “a child blinded by the hat,” sucking at “the finger of praise and talkativeness!”).<sup>34</sup> Cultural ambivalence, the search for impossible silence, an attitude of a child – we take these refigurements with us as we continue our reading.

## 2. The Refining of Poetry: Grochowiak’s Self-censorship?

*Haiku-images* creates the impression of poetry that is literally refined – polished, purified, subjected to a sort of self-censorship. It is worth examining it against the background of the artist’s earlier poetic efforts. Writing about Grochowiak’s debut *Ballada rycerska* [Knights’ Ballad], Jerzy Kwiatkowski states:

Rather than synthesis, he is more passionate about antitheses. Yet ... he is even more passionate about life: its sensoriality, power, and exuberance. He is enchanted with it. Let us even say: he is somewhat poisoned with it – with ugliness, disgust, and death.<sup>35</sup>

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33 In Sven Fagerberg’s text published in *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1 – and therefore certainly known to Grochowiak (see footnote 88) – the fragment in question is described as a proverb associated with Zen. It was translated into Polish as follows: “ten, kto mówi, nie wie, ten, kto wie, nie mówi” [He who speaks does not know, he who knows does not speak.] (S. Fagerberg, *Iluminacja* [Illumination], transl. A. Krajewski-Bola, *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 29). For other Polish translations, see, for example, Lao-Tsy, *Tao-te-king, czyli księga drogi i cnoty*, transl. T. Żbikowski, in *Taoizm*, selected by W. Jaworski, ed. M. Dziwisz, Kraków, 1988, p. 49; Lao-Tsy, *Tao te king*, transl. P. Madej, Kraków, 2008, p. 4.

34 See an excellent analysis of Grochowiak’s ekphrasis, B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ p. 87 and ff.

35 J. Kwiatkowski, ‘Ciemne wiersze Grochowiaka,’ [Grochowiak’s Dark Poems], in J. Kwiatkowski, *Klucze do wyobraźni*, pp. 195–6.

Grochowiak's posthumous volume seems to be approaching a certain synthesis – stylistic, but also emotional and philosophical one. Towards the end of his journey, the poet does not seem poisoned by any manifestation of life – or death. He is fascinated, attracted to the world, but also tired. In most of these poems, he eschews the “dress-ups” typical of his earlier volumes:<sup>36</sup> he does not seek masks, and rarely dramatizes. The only stylistically rigorous mini-cycle (H-i 5, XVI–XIX) begins with the incipit (repeated in the following three poems) “Chyba jestem bardzo zmęczony” (I think I am very tired)<sup>37</sup> and ends (again – four times) with the phrase: “Nie mam nic lepszego do usprawiedliwienia.” (I have no better excuse). It is no coincidence that the cycle concludes with the poem ‘Pisarstwo’ [Writing] dealing with exhaustion with “the work on thousands of letters” leading to “the erection of immense bridges between a sign and a sign.” A sign (Japanese?) – not necessarily a letter. This description looks like an original recipe for “haiku-ing:” “abysmal bridges” can refer to ellipses, asyndetons, and, finally, to semantic abysses from many poems of the volume.

### A. Towards Zen?

As Stanisław Barańczak writes about *Haiku-images*:

the poet creates a world whose predominant feature is coherence, order, and internal interdependence of all components. Alongside the haiku genre, the poet also adopted all of its conceptual underpinnings: Buddhism [here: Zen Buddhism].<sup>38</sup>

This is a considerable generalization, as Grochowiak repeatedly demonstrates that these Zen “underpinnings” (not so obvious in the context of haiku)<sup>39</sup> simply cannot be easily adopted.

36 J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Wstęp,’ in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, pp. XXI–XXII.

37 Tired of, respectively: “work at the forge,” “work as an ox-driver,” “work at the pagoda,” “work on thousands of letters.” The proof of – and remedy for – the fatigue is to be (respectively): theft of jewellery, catching May bugs, building birdhouses, and finally – as discussed below – “erecting abysmal bridges between a sign and a sign.” Some (Bronisław Maj, Michałowski – see P. Michałowski, *Haiku*, p. 93) see in this mini-cycle echoes of the Japanese *renga* form – this is quite a remote association (as a rule, *renga* were not based on deep lexical and syntactic parallelisms or repetitions), while it is a total misunderstanding to search for *makurakotoba* here (spelt by the author as “mahutura kotoba”) – A. Winowiecka, ‘W kręgu secesji (O niektórych motywach w poezji Stanisława Grochowiaka),’ [The Sphere of Art Nouveau (Some Motifs in the Poetry of Stanisław Grochowiak)], *Poezja*, 1980, No. 5, p. 107. Another possibility of linking the *renga* form with *Haiku-images* is discussed in subsection 4.D.1. “Trihaiku-ness” – Grochowiak's *Renga*?

38 B. Stawiczak (S. Barańczak), “Bóg błogosławi małowóнным?”, p. 6.

39 See Part 1 of the book (chapter 1).

This is nicely illustrated by the second, dispersed, micro-cycle of the volume – eight triplets, each with “Zen” in the title, that do not make up a gradational arrangement.<sup>40</sup> A comparison of the first and last poems of the cycle seems to be telling:

Zen (H-i 1, XX)

Zen – mysia dziupla w samym sobie

Zen – altana eremity po wielkim pożarze

Zen – łono matki zamknięte przede mną jak małża

[Zen – a mouse hole in myself

Zen – a hermit’s gazebo after a big fire

Zen – a mother’s womb shut before me like a clam]

Zen (H-a XX)

1

O Zen – w Kraju Rozkoszy przechadzają się powabne Jednorożce

O Zen – w Dolinie Placzu Koczkodan duma w obfitym płaszczu żałoby

O Zen – pod Namiotem Sztuki Uchatki skaczą przez płonące koło

[Oh Zen – alluring Unicorns stroll in the Land of Delight

Oh Zen – in the Valley of Tears a guenon muses in the rich cloak of mourning

Oh Zen – in the Tent of Art Sea Lions leap through a blazing circle]

2

O Zen – wszystkie nasze zasługi kreślą Bracia Pomniejsi

Wąż Latimeria Ryjówka – Wścibinos stodoły

Grzechy niesiemy tak samotnie że nawet laska z rąk odpada

[Oh Zen – all our merits are written down by the Lesser Brothers

A Snake, a Latimeria, a Shrew – a barn Snooper

We carry sins in such loneliness that even a cane falls from our hands]

3

O Zen – nie zadławiaj w nas węża i lisa

O Zen – uratuj w nas delikatną naturalność szakala

Pomówiliśmy zwierzęta o nas samych – a one nas nie odepchnęły

[Oh Zen – do not suppress the snake and the fox in us

Oh Zen – save the delicate naturalness of the jackal in us

We accused animals of ourselves – and they did not reject us]

Three evocative images of an unattainable safe refuge from the first poem give way to a surprising request made to... impersonal or even anti-personal Zen. A request that a man – lonely, weighed down by sins (a concept that is foreign to Zen) – could find in himself the “delicate nature” of an animal. Nothing is obvious here, especially as in the first of the quoted triplets from *Haiku-animaux*, nature in a completely “un-Zen-like” manner was filtered through a cultural fairy tale. Dispiritedness and lassitude go hand in hand with a tender gaze (the humorous

40 See P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku’, p. 93.

haiku-like “barn Snooper”) and the hope of finding that which is simple, natural, positively animal. This vision is not about unity of experiences, a community of feelings of the observer and the observed.<sup>41</sup> “We accused animals of ourselves,” that is, we anthropomorphized them, we did not accept the world of nature in its “suchness.”<sup>42</sup> But maybe there is still a chance to achieve a Zen-like fullness of experience and emptiness of mind? Numerous poems from the volume can be read as a record of artistic and spiritual inquiries of this kind.

The speaker does not abandon the Christian God,<sup>43</sup> seeking him in the baroque paradoxes<sup>44</sup> (‘Transcendencja’ [Transcendence], H-i 3, XIII), in the bitter discourse of antitheses<sup>45</sup> (‘Bogoszukańcy’ [God-deceivers], H-i 5, IX), in a symbol (‘Ryba’ [Fish], H-a XVIII). ‘Nabożeństwo’ [Devotion] (H-i 1, X) can be interpreted as a significant encounter of “Zen-ness” and Christianity:

Tabernakula w kościołach są otwarte  
 Nie uczynili tego grabieżcy  
 Jedynie mgły z pola zakradły się do aksamitnych wnętrz

[Tabernacles are open in churches  
 These were not plunderers who did it  
 Merely mists stole up from the field into the velvet interior]

41 Direct encounters with animals are, nevertheless, highly valued in *Haiku-images* – this is evidenced by the following poems, ‘Sezam’ [Sesame] (H-i 3, X; emphasis added.) and ‘Waga’ [Scales] (H-a IX; emphasis added.). It is worth noting the emotions attributed to animals here (in classical haiku these were never negative feelings):

Na drodze z lasu napadły na nas jerzyki  
 Nietoperz kiedyś szukał drogi do mej twarzy  
 Chowam w sobie ciepło rozwścieczonych zwierząt jak klejnot honoru

[Swifts attacked us on the road from the forest  
 Once a bat sought a way to my face  
 I keep this warmth of ENRAGED animals inside me like a gem of honour]

WŚCIEKŁOŚĆ mysikrólika  
 CZUŁOŚĆ sępa  
 To się wyrówna wygładzi języczkiem kaczki na stawie.

[The RAGE of the goldcrest  
 TENDERNESS of the vulture]  
 This will be levelled smoothed out with the tongue of a duck in the pond.]

See also B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Pamięci nosorożca. *Elegia oborska*,’ [(In Memory of a Rhino. *The Obory Elegy*), in B. Mytych-Forajter, *Czułe punkty Grochowiaka*, p. 128; as well as the subsection ‘Snippets of Everyday Life – Brzóska’s Haiku?’ in this part of the book.

42 See the analysis of *Zen – piąte* (Zen – The Fifth) (H-i 5, XX) below in this chapter.

43 See, for example, B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Gdzieżeś, Boże? Oho, hoooo!’, [Where Art Thou, God? Oh, My My!] in B. Mytych-Forajter, *Czułe punkty Grochowiaka*, pp. 111–2.

44 See J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Haiku Grochowiaka,’ p. 126.

45 See E. Dąbrowska, *Teksty w ruchu*, p. 209.

The Christian God has peacefully dissolved in nature. Without struggle and torment, without contradictions and strife. What is left is only the beautiful multi-sensory image of mists floating into velvet spaces of the sacred. Natural, sensorial worship.

### B. *Two Concisions*

Concision, often described as the length of a single breath,<sup>46</sup> is a necessary condition of haiku. We will not be able to read any of *Haiku-images* in one breath – one breath is typically just enough to read a single verse (which can have as many as twenty syllables). The triplet form, evoking a strong association with the Japanese form, is deceptive: these poems are two or even three times longer than classical haiku. Only at the early stage of the adoption of the genre in Poland, could one speak of Grochowiak’s “mastery put to an absolute test of form”<sup>47</sup> and “condensed three-line form”<sup>48</sup> of the poems. To this day, however, literary scholars have been at odds over the quantitative aspect of miniature verse. Beata Mytych-Forajter argues: “Piotr Michałowski [...] is wrong [...] to write that ‘in his premonition of death, Grochowiak rejected verbosity in favour of haiku.’ Grochowiak wrote wordy haiku, his verses are bursting with unchecked verbosity.”<sup>49</sup> Researchers can be easily reconciled. From the perspective of his earlier work, Grochowiak greatly pared down his verbosity. The consistent use of the three-verse form marks a significant shift in poetics of the artist who had never been a miniaturist before (even ‘Epigramat’ [Epigram] from the volume of *Agresty* [Gooseberries] is technically not an epigram!). Yet, when compared to classical seventeen-syllable verse, the poems from his posthumous collection are significantly verbose and “frolicsome.”<sup>50</sup> However, even a relaxed straitjacket of the miniature seeking affinities with haiku imposes multilevel compression. Grochowiak decided to consistently enclose his poetic microworlds in three verses<sup>51</sup> – extended yet limited.

In the case of the genre tested in the volume, the strictly quantitative limits are bound up with the worldview that is manifested to a limited extent. This limitation

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46 See, for example, K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku. Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English, with Selected Examples*, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1957, p. 41; J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1974, p. 76.

47 M. Bieszczadowski, ‘Poetyckie miniatury,’ [Verse Miniatures], *Nowe Książki*, 1978, No. 23, p. 34.

48 B. Maj, ‘Polskie haiku Grochowiaka,’ *Tygodnik Kulturalny*, 1978, No. 43, p. 11.

49 B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ p. 93 (the quote inside Mytych-Forajter’s text: P. Michałowski, ‘Miniatura poetycka,’ *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1994, No. 2, p. 134).

50 B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ p. 93.

51 Except for the four-verse ‘Dziadek’ (HdK I).

takes the form of another kind of concision, one that is somewhat qualitative: the de-emphasis of the speaker's emotions and at the same time abstention from fictitiousness,<sup>52</sup> disposition towards the outside world, meditative non-intellectuality. In his work up to that point, Grochowiak avoided first-person lyric poetry,<sup>53</sup> resigned from the confessional lyric mode, eagerly choosing idiosyncratic forms of *liryka maski* and *liryka roli*.<sup>54</sup> Here he actually breaks away from all these conventions. This is also largely due to the rejection of numerous "sharp" poetic tools developed by the author.<sup>55</sup>

### C. A Reshuffle of Poetics

Hardly any text by Grochowiak manages without the aesthetic of the ugly (*turpizm*) and grotesque. In the description of *Haiku-images*, however, these concepts turn out to be surprisingly redundant, useful mostly to name that which is missing.<sup>56</sup> What immediately strikes the reader of this volume is the lowering of the voice,

52 I have in mind honesty with oneself and one's experience (I discuss this in more detail in Part 1 of the book). Personal experience as a foundation of haiku is treated, for example, in the article by Wiesław Kotański (without doubt, known to Grochowiak – see footnote 88 in this part of the book), 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec haiku' (*Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 9).

53 See, for example, K. Kuczyńska-Koschany, 'O "Zaklinaniu"' [On 'Casting Spells'], in K. Kuczyńska-Koschany, *Interlinie w ciemności. Jednak interpretacja* [Interline Spacing in the Dark. Interpretation, After All], Kraków, 2012, p. 86.

54 *Liryka maski* (literally the lyric of the masque) and *liryka roli* (the lyric of the role) are categories of Polish descriptive poetics denoting distance between the speaker and the author. "Grochowiak did not talk about himself explicitly, and instead always theatricalized his feelings. He would create a quasi-theatrical situation. It could be based on someone else's literary work or style. He 'entered' into them and changed them with his presence. He did so as a distinct subject, equipped with his own diction .... If ... one could talk about *liryka roli*, it is only in the sense that the poet resembled the type of actor who does not 'personate' the character played but imposes his personality upon it" (J. Łukasiewicz, 'Wstęp,' in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, pp. LI–LII).

55 J. Łukasiewicz, *Haiku Grochowiaka*, p. 125.

56 Ewa Tomaszewska's claim that *Haiku-images* was written in "the baroque-turpist language so characteristic of Stanisław Grochowiak's poetry" is something of a misunderstanding (E. Tomaszewska, 'Inspiracje japońskie w kulturze i sztuce europejskiej,' in *Antologia polskiego haiku*, ed. E. Tomaszewska, Warszawa, 2001, p. 20). In the collection comprising over one hundred miniatures, I found only two distinctly turpist poems: 'Gwałt' [Rape] (H-i 5, IV) and 'Nieostrożność' [Carelessness] (H-i 5, VI). For the traces of "Boschian imagery" in this volume, see A. Krawczyk, 'Widzialny porządek,' p. 206.). In order to find out exactly what *Haiku-images* lacked, it is worthwhile studying the text by Jacek Łukasiewicz, 'Groteski i stylizacje w wierszach Grochowiaka,' [Grotesques and Stylizations in Grochowiak's Poems], in 'W ciemną mą ojczyznę,' pp. 9–30.

the softening of the image (absence of “shocking descriptions”),<sup>57</sup> calmness. This “quietness” allows us to discern other echoes, views, touches. I consider ‘Umarli’ [The Dead] to be one of the poems crucial to the assessment of the whole volume (H-i 3, I):

Umarli mają wysokie czoła i spokój wiedzy  
 Potem dzieje się coś okropnego  
 Ale osy uwiły sobie gniazda w ciałach moich dziadków

[The dead have high foreheads and the peace of knowledge  
 Then something awful happens  
 But wasps made nests in the bodies of my grandparents]

It is symptomatic that body decay is not described in any way here, and is merely suggested by the casual phrase “something awful” – an empty (pictorially) space between two sensorial representations: human and non-human. The reader can easily fill this space with the memory of the former Grochowiak.<sup>58</sup> The poet might have counted on his readers’ memory, and the text itself is simply devoid of decay, rotting, flesh. Death was coherently, “non-turpistically” (yet not without some difficulty as, after all, decay is “something awful”) assimilated into an organic vision of the world. The artist neatly aligned here with haiku taboo,<sup>59</sup> perhaps inspired by the following two haiku by Matsuo Bashō published in *Poezja* (1975, No. 1):<sup>60</sup>

Jakież straszny los! Pod hełmem zabitego śpiewa cykada.	[So pitiful – Under the helmet a cricket]
O, letnia trawo. Tylu wojowników ostatni ślad.	[Summer grass: all that remains of warriors’ dreams]

57 A. Krawczyk, ‘Widzialny porządek,’ p. 205. The scholar cites examples of a “hushed” discussion of death (A. Krawczyk, ‘Widzialny porządek’).

58 For example, such as this one:

Pójdiesz Pleśniowy	[You’ll go mouldy
Legniesz Ciekliwy	You’ll lie down gloppy
Nakarmisz osty	You’ll feed thistles
Najesz pokrzywy	You’ll fatten on nettles]

(the poem *Zwątpienie* [Doubt] from the volume *Rozbieranie do snu*, 1959, as quoted in S. Grochowiak, *Wybórpoezji*, p. 76).

59 Avoidance of drastic descriptions; death is hinted at, but not shown “in action.” See Part 1 of this study (Chapter 1).

60 *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, pp. 36, 35, transl. A. Krajewski-Bola. English translations as quoted in *Bashō’s Haiku*, pp. 99 and 93.



It is no use attempting to find in Grochowiak's *Haiku-images* pokers, washtubs, rags, and pieces of junk. For the first time, the artist turns almost exclusively to "higher" or "cleaner" planes of reality (even more consistently than Japanese haijins who eagerly depicted most ordinary things in their poems).<sup>61</sup> Poetic props, however, are not stylistically and semantically neutral. We come across quite a number of words de-automatizing the reader's experience, very rarely occurring in colloquial Polish ("palisade," "rosin," "feather-winged," "guillotine," "torturer," "damsel," "sedan chair," and others).

In *Haiku-images*, Grochowiak sounds markedly different – not only in terms of lexical choices but also on the plane of versification and its typography. Long sentences occur here, for the most part not broken up by enjambments, just as there is no trace of the numerical organization exploited in earlier volumes.<sup>62</sup> In addition, tight triplets do not resemble unstable constructions of free verse that the poet had used so frequently. We will not find here changes in "intonation, cadences, varieties of quasi-stanzas."<sup>63</sup> Nor does versification become a "jumping-off point" for stylization.<sup>64</sup> *Haiku-images* "is built on the syntactic-intonational principle, with each verse usually being equal to the sentence-image."<sup>65</sup> These miniatures lack rhymes and distinct internal rhythmicization. The reliance on a poem

- 61 An interesting context may be provided here by the recollection of Maria Sołtyk (who had an intimate relationship with the poet) from her stay at Obory in the spring of 1971: "This time we occupied a common room on the ground floor, where a double-leaf door opened straight onto a park. It was amazing. Staszek drew a view from our window. The drawing features trees, bushes... and a power pole. This is important as Staszek reproached me for idolizing the beauty of a lilac bush, chestnut branch, dandelions flowering in the grass, instead of depicting [Sołtyk is a painter] that which is part of this world and at the same disrupts this world, claiming such a picture is not true. He maintained that if we want to show the present day, we should show not only that which delights us, but also that which irritates us" (M. Sołtyk-Koc, 'Jakbym znalazł drzewo,' p. 239). In *Haiku-images*, Grochowiak takes the liberty of aestheticizing, classicalizing, and of being somewhat "out of touch" with everyday reality.
- 62 "Grochowiak's poem was based from the beginning on metrical systems, with a clear tonic (accentual) structure. Of particular importance to him is intonation which makes the contour of this poem unmistakably distinguishable, and its imitation by others immediately becomes a signal of dependence." (J. Łukasiewicz, 'Wstęp,' in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, p. LVII). On syllabic and accentual syllabic metre in Grochowiak's work, see J. Kwiatkowski, *Groza i groteska*, p. 198.
- 63 J. Łukasiewicz, 'Wstęp,' in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, p. LI.
- 64 For Grochowiak's metrical stylization, see S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, p. XXII; J. Kwiatkowski, 'Groza i groteska,' pp. 198–9. In *Haiku-images* "the rhythmicization of verses makes itself felt very discreetly, so that they approach the free verse model" – B. Stawiczak (S. Barańczak), 'Bóg błogosławi małymównym?,' p. 6.
- 65 J. Łukasiewicz, 'Haiku Grochowiaka,' p. 125.

with end-stopped lines (a variant of free verse)<sup>66</sup> seems to suggest a longing for a language that forgets versificational palimpsests, in a way going back to the beginnings of an artistic utterance (associations with medieval versification), to that which is uncomplicated, original, close to a natural – but not colloquial – speech pattern. *Haiku-images* is a poetry of beautiful sentences: long ones, often complex and based on syntactic parallels (as opposed to classical haiku), arranged in subdued asyndetons. The poet proves that strong juxtapositions (ones looking for affinities with haiku) in no way preclude such syntactic systems.<sup>67</sup>

*Haiku-images* also abandons paronomasia which Grochowiak extensively used earlier.<sup>68</sup> Occasionally, skilful accumulations of alliteration and onomatopoeia occur here, which in terms of sound and articulation highlight the sensoriality of this poetry. However, this is merely limited to sporadic, intricate embellishments:

‘Żegluga’ (H-i 3, XIX, emphasis added)

Okresy **oddechu** są subtelniejsze **od** słowa  
To zefir **przecież** napina **żagle** i **cieszy** żeglarza  
Wielki **smutek** **martwoty** **na** **morzu** **Nie** ratują **nawet** wyspy

[SEAFARING

Breath-lengths are subtler than words  
It is the zephyr that stretches the sails and gladdens the sailor  
Even islands cannot redeem the great sadness of dead sea]

‘Chrabąszcze’ (H-i 5, XVIII, emphasis added)

Chyba jestem bardzo zmęczony **pracą** **poganiacza** **wołów**  
**Skoro** **łowię** **chrabąszcze** **do** **szeleszczących** **szkatuł**  
**Nie** mam **nic** lepszego **do** usprawiedliwienia

[MAYBUGS

I think I am very tired of working as an ox-driver  
Since I catch beetles to rustling caskets  
I have no better excuse]

The poetics of this collection can thus be treated as indicative of classicization,<sup>69</sup> the stylistic calming and smoothing of poems, manifestly tying in with the search

66 See A. Okopień-Sławińska, ‘Wiersz wolny’ [Free Verse], in *Słownik terminów literackich*, ed. J. Sławiński, Wrocław, 2000, p. 621.

67 Contrary to what Jeffrey Johnson (and others) claim – see J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics in Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Poetry*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–Toronto–Plymouth, 2011, pp. 82–3.

68 Most prominent in the cycle *Rok polski* from the volume *Bilard* (1975). See, for example, J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Wstęp,’ in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, p. XXXIX.

69 “Insofar as the predominant feature of Grochowiak’s grotesque poems is protest, wherever classicizing stylization occurs in them, acceptance prevails” (J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Groteski i stylizacje,’ p. 24). Given the “suspension in monumental

for the SUBLIME. I consider haiku to be a genre particularly suited to evoking the latter category<sup>70</sup> and this Occidental variation on East-Asian miniatures also turns out to be an excellent vehicle for it. Numerous poems from the volume walk a fine line between mimesis and anti-mimesis,<sup>71</sup> emanating with rapture, enthusiasm, and amazement,<sup>72</sup> recording – and at the same time creating in language – small epiphanies.<sup>73</sup> The presentation of highly expressive sensorial images, not eclipsed by the speaker's emotional “exhibitionism,” paves the way for compassion, which is crucial to the perception of this category.<sup>74</sup> Finally, an important role is played by “figures of the discourse of the sublime:”<sup>75</sup> asyndeton, ellipsis, and paradox.<sup>76</sup>

In classical haiku, as in Polish *Haiku-images*, the sublime is accompanied by TENDERNESS (in Western literature this is quite an infrequent combination). Tenderness was always present in Grochowiak's verse,<sup>77</sup> but here it is especially conspicuous. *Haiku-images* is an explosion of sensorial tenderness,<sup>78</sup> which I consider to be one of the crucial haikems in the comparative study of Western

pathos” – of which Grochowiak was accused by some critics – “resorting to the Oriental poetic genre seems, despite appearances, a logical and legitimate act of self-defence. Apparently, Grochowiak was looking for a form and genre that would be possessed of two qualities: classical precision and rigour – as well as a revitalization of imagination, ... and renewal of the capacity for poetic discovery.” (B. Stawiczak [S. Barańczak], *Bóg błogosławi małowównym?*, p. 6).

- 70 For other genres “particularly suited to evoking the sublime,” see J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości w dziele literackim*, Kraków, 2000, p. 36. The sublime in the context of haiku (and Grochowiak) is mentioned by Mytych-Forajter (*Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne*, p. 94). See also Part I of the monograph.
- 71 J. Płuciennik, *Figury niewyobrażalnego. Notatki z poetyki wzniosłości w literaturze polskiej* [Figures of the Unimaginable. Notes on the Poetics of the Sublime in Polish Literature], Kraków, 2002, pp. 16–7.
- 72 Emotions associated with the experience of the sublime – J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, pp. 162–6.
- 73 On the modern epiphanic quality of haiku (I find that in the case of Grochowiak's *Haiku-images* this is a significant category as well) – see esp. Part 5 of the book.
- 74 See J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, p. 180. Which is even more pronounced in classical haiku derived from Zen and Daoism.
- 75 J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, p. 186.
- 76 J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości*, pp. 186, 190–1.
- 77 See, for example, J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Haiku Grochowiaka,’ pp. 125, 127; B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Trzy czułości’ [Three Kinds of Tenderness], esp. pp. 27–8, 32, 36; J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Grochowiak i obrazy’ [Grochowiak and Images], Wrocław, 2002, p. 79; A. Skrendo, ‘Poezja afirmacji,’ p. 277; B. Kowszewicz, ‘Idę gorący po tłach pokostniałych,’ p. 41 and ff.
- 78 Not mawkishness or “dignified” tenderness (ethical one, attained with difficulty) – B. Mytych-Forajter, *Trzy czułości*, pp. 29–32, 38–42.

literature. It is also a vital transcultural<sup>79</sup> key to haiku, even if it involves contact with an artefact, not with nature:<sup>80</sup>

‘Miniatura z psalterza’ (H-a XIII)  
 Moi przyjaciele antylopy Garna  
 A zwłaszcza pobrzękliwe koziołki z rogami jak oprawa liry  
 Defilujcie do tronu króla Dawida – brykając

[A MINIATURE FROM A PSALTER  
 My friends of the blackbuck  
 Especially the jangly kids with horns like lyre’s yoke  
 Parade to King David’s throne – bucking]

Finally, vital to the description of *Haiku-images* is the concept of SENSORIAL MIMESIS,<sup>81</sup> referring to such a construction of the world depicted which allows the reader to recognise the poem’s sensorial events in their own experience. Occasionally, the lyrical situation becomes variously deformed stylistically and semantically, yet imagery turns out to be essentially clear sensorially and to a large extent semantically. Even in cases when Grochowiak hides sensorial experience in the “vase of the soul” (H-i, 1, III), the sensorial exterior is preserved to a considerable extent. I believe that the poet retained sensorial mimesis for example in the following exquisitely and strongly metaphorized miniature:

‘Godzinki’ (H-i 3, V)  
 Jesienne dzwony są z zamszu Dzwonnicy  
 W białych rękawiczkach pociągają za bawelnę  
 Serca dzwonów kapią ciężkimi łzami stearyny

[CANONICAL HOURS  
 Autumn bells are made of the Belfry’s suede  
 Pulling on cotton in white gloves  
 Bells’ tongues are dripping with heavy tears of stearin]

Needless to say, this type of mimesis cannot be identified in all the texts of the volume. It is absent from the relatively numerous surrealizing, oneiric poems,<sup>82</sup> which practically makes it impossible to analyse them in the context of haiku:

‘Balon’ (H-i 4, II)  
 Osadzona w koszu balonu nagle uleciała na skrzydłach wachlarza

79 For more on the topic of transculturality, see ‘Introduction.’

80 As it happens, these situations are not unknown in classical haiku.

81 I treat this subject in more detail in Parts 1 and 5; see also B. Śniecikowska, ‘Mimetyzm sensualny haiku,’ [www.sensuanosc.bn.org.pl/mimetyzm-sensorialny-haiku-986/](http://www.sensuanosc.bn.org.pl/mimetyzm-sensorialny-haiku-986/), accessed June 24, 2016.

82 In *Haiku-images*, deformations of the world depicted primarily lie in its surrealization or visual and metaphorical incongruity that is not easily explainable.

Potem pajęczyna ją porwała  
Nad malachitowe żagle korwet w kielichu zatoki

[BALLOON

Planted in a balloon basket, it suddenly flew away on a fan's wings  
Then a cobweb carried it off  
Above malachite sails of corvettes in the goblet of the bay]

'Szczęście' (H-i 2, II)

Ledwo dotknąłem pyszczka sarny ucałowała mnie  
Wbiłem lewkonię w łakę mojej duszy  
Ustawiłem wiatrak z liści Dym z kominów Osady moich snów

[HAPPINESS

I barely touched the roe's mouth when she kissed me  
I stuck a gillyflower in the meadow of my soul  
I set up a windmill of leaves Smoke from the chimneys Residues of my dreams]

Finally, we come to the BAROQUE, which Grochowiak valued so greatly. Michałowski begins his analyses of *Haiku-images* by pointing out analogies (starting from chronological affinities) between Western seventeenth-century poetry and haiku. As he writes, "One of the cardinal principles of European conceptism – 'CONCORDS DISCORDIA' – is at the same time the idea behind Japanese miniature verse, although it is codified in different terminology and realized completely differently."<sup>83</sup> However, the discrepancy between haiku and the baroque is so huge that building intercultural bridges here seems to have little validity.

Especially as conceptism and the principle of contradiction are by no means the underpinning of Japanese miniatures.<sup>84</sup> This does not mean, however, that in *Haiku-images* Grochowiak does not draw upon baroque poetics (he makes use of antithesis, paradoxes, accumulation of metaphors, etc.).<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, "baroquization" is much more subtle here than in the author's earlier poetry books. In the context of this poetry, we could perhaps talk of the commonly understood "baroqueness:" these poems are semantically convoluted, verbose (from the perspective of East-Asian intertexts), yet still stylistically rich.

Thus, we find in *Haiku-images* tenderness and the sublime, an attempt at stylistic asceticism and wordiness. However, the central key opening the door to transcultural experience is the sensorial imagery itself. Its analyses must be preceded by a reflection on the form of a *haiku-image*.

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83 P. Michałowski, 'Haiku,' p. 88; emphasis in original. See also J. Gielo, 'Haiku-images Stanisława Grochowiaka,' *Poezja*, 1979, No. 7, p. 85.

84 Juxtapositions of images and phenomena could sometimes be refreshing and subtly surprising, but this is still far removed from deep baroque antitheses. For more on this topic, see Part I.

85 E. Dąbrowska, *Teksty w ruchu*, pp. 208–9.

### 3. What Is a *Haiku-image*?

In order to write poems marked by such poetics, metaphors, and imagery as the ones found in *Haiku-images*, a command of haiku is not necessary at all. These texts tap into a wide variety of literary repositories (poetics of surrealism, tradition of epigram, baroque stylistics, etc.), and the thematization of the Orient, which was highlighted by critics, is in fact negligible here.<sup>86</sup> For Grochowiak, contact with the Japanese form was, however, an indispensable trigger, a catalyst for consistent “miniaturizing” – enclosed in a bloated, yet finished size of a triplet.

The poet’s acquaintance with the haiku was probably very highly limited. Just as there is no indication of “Grochowiak’s long-standing fascination with East-Asian philosophy and literature.”<sup>87</sup> As the editor of the *Poezja* magazine,<sup>88</sup> he must have known the magazine’s first 1975 issue that in large part was devoted to haiku. However, he may have missed the earlier, rather vague traces of interest in this form in Poland<sup>89</sup> (probably excepting the translation of the text by Alan W. Watts published in 1973 in *Twórczość*).<sup>90</sup> In turn, echoes of European continental fascination with haiku<sup>91</sup> reached Grochowiak in a highly distorted form. In his television interview, the poet commented on haiku as follows (in the context of his upcoming poetry book): “This is a Japanese form, completely unknown in Europe, except for France. The poem sometimes resembles prose, and sometimes it evinces diction

86 “Eucalyptuses, tigers, and pagodas” (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 89) are much more infrequent here than local motifs. The most salient Oriental cue is Zen Buddhism explicitly mentioned in prominent places. There are also motifs of East-Asian art (dragonfly, moth) rooted in Western culture (e.g. via nineteenth-twentieth-century Western painting inspired by Japanese visual arts – see Part 7).

87 A. Wójtowicz, ‘Stanisława Grochowiaka poetycka introdukcja’ [Stanisław Grochowiak’s Poetic Introduction], p. 160. For books read by Grochowiak, see, for example, J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Wstęp,’ in S. Grochowiak, *Wiersze nieznanne*, p. 7.

88 Between 1972 and 1975 Grochowiak served as Associate Editor of the magazine (as mentioned in J. Petelenz-Łukasiewicz, ‘Ten chłopiec niezwykły - po latach,’ p. 82, footnote 150).

89 See Part 2, chapters 2 and 3.

90 A. W. Watts, *Zen w sztuce*, transl. A. Hoffman, *Twórczość*, 1973, No. 4, pp. 34–53 (a dozen or so years later the text by Watts was published in a new translation in the collection *Buddyzm*, selected and edited by J. Sieradzan, W. Jaworski, M. Dziwisz, Kraków, 1987, pp. 176–86, no translator). This is a landmark in *Vorgeschichte* of haiku in Poland. Alan Wilson Watts writes on haiku poetry (A. W. Watts, *Zen w sztuce*, pp. 39–45) and the related visual arts (*sumi-e: haiga* and *zenga* styles – A. W. Watts, *Zen w sztuce*, p. 39); and even goes as far as to fault one of Bashō’s poems for verbosity – A. W. Watts, *Zen w sztuce*, p. 41).

91 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*; J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre. Fellow-Traveler of Modernism,’ in *Modernism*, Vol. 2, eds. A. Eysteinson, V. Liska, Amsterdam–Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 693–714. For more on this subject, see Part 2.

akin to Romantic poets."<sup>92</sup> We do not know enough about what French haiku poets Grochowiak might have read in order to draw such surprising conclusions. What is even more astonishing is that he did not mention Imagism as a European link to haiku. Perhaps he treated it as a phenomenon belonging exclusively to American culture. He must have associated haiku with Imagism, as evidenced at least by the title of the volume (clues helpful in the search for these connections were provided by the special haiku issue of *Poezja*, which will soon be discussed below). It should be remembered that the reception of Imagism,<sup>93</sup> and especially the work of Ezra Pound, was much broader in Poland than the knowledge of Japanese haiku.<sup>94</sup> However, in the years preceding the publication of *Haiku-images*, translations of

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- 92 Record of a fragment of Marina Niecikowska's interview with Grochowiak, as quoted in J. Gielo, 'Haiku-images,' p. 84. The French interest in haiku already in the second half of the twentieth century is mentioned by Mikołaj Bieszczadowski in his review of Grochowiak's volume (M. Bieszczadowski, 'Poetyckie miniatury,' *Nowe Książki*, 1978, No. 23, p. 34). Apparently, Polish poets and critics had some inkling of early European *Vorgeschichte* of the genre, but presumably had quite a vague idea of it. For Western European and American roads to haiku, see Part 2 of this monograph (chapter 1).
- 93 Similarly to, for example, Grzegorz Gazda (*Słownik europejskich kierunków i grup literackich*, Warszawa, 2000, pp. 194–8) or Bogdan Baran (*Postmodernizm i końce wieku* [Postmodernism and the Ends of the Century], Kraków, 2003, p. 41) in the Polish version of this study I decided to use the polonized version of the movement's name, *imażyzm*. For various spellings (*imażyzm/Imagism/Imagisme*), see L. Engelking, *Postówie* [Afterword], in L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir. Antologia anglo-amerykańskiego imagizmu*, Warszawa, 2016, p. 485.
- 94 For the description and bibliographic listing of post-war translations and discussions of Pound's work, see L. Engelking, 'Twórczość Ezry Pounda w Polsce,' *Literatura na Świecie*, 1985, No. 1, pp. 227–64 (in the interwar period Pound most probably was not translated into Polish at all, just as there was no in-depth literary-theoretical reflection on this poetry – as quoted in *Literatura na Świecie*, 1985, pp. 228–32; writing about the time of the Awangarda Krakowska group (The Cracow avant-garde), Julian Przyboś states: "Neither Peiper nor I knew Pound and Eliot at the time" – J. Przyboś, 'Sens poetycki [Poetic Sense],' in J. Przyboś, *Sens poetycki* [Poetic Sense], Vol. 1, Kraków, 1967, p. 49); See also Ł. Wróbel, *Słowa i obrazy* [Words and Images], <http://kulturaliberalna.pl/2012/09/25/wrobel-slowa-i-obrazy-o-poezji-ezry-pounda/>, accessed May 14, 2013. The reception of Imagism in Poland was – until the 1980s – practically limited to the work of Pound and William Carlos Williams, who was loosely associated with the movement. A relatively representative selection of translations of Imagist poetry – also markedly inspired by East-Asian verse – came as late as with the issue of *Literatura na Świecie*, 1985, No. 1 (*Poezje Imagistów* [Poetry of by the Imagists], transl. L. Engelking, A. Szuba, pp. 124–42), and, a dozen or so years later, with the anthology "*petals on a wet black bough.*" *Poezja imagistyczna angielskiego modernizmu*, transl. and with an introduction by S. Wąciór, Lublin, 2002. An extensive selection of translations of this poetry was made available only in Leszek Engelking and Andrzej Szuba's anthology, *Obraz i wir*.

Pound’s poems – including miniatures – appeared,<sup>95</sup> but were not accompanied by an in-depth consideration of the specificity of Pound’s links to the Orient. Perhaps the widest description can be found in an article published in 1974 in *Poezja*, still on the wave of the interest in Pound after his death, by Andrzej Szuba ‘De mortuis nil nisi bene.’<sup>96</sup> Grochowiak is likely to have known this text as well.<sup>97</sup> Szuba writes here, among other things, on Japanese haiku (quoting Bashō), on affinities between haiku and ink painting, and finally on haiku’s influence on Imagism.<sup>98</sup>

In order to recreate Grochowiak’s genological awareness of haiku, however, in the first place, we should carefully read the first issue of *Poezja* from 1975 – this is where we should look for the main source of inspiration that resulted in *Haiku-images*.<sup>99</sup> Alongside the erudite sketch by Wiesław Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec haiku’ [Japanese seventeen-syllable Poem Haiku], an extensive selection of Japanese haiku in Polish translations (running up to over 130 texts, taking into account different versions of the same poem)<sup>100</sup> and Sven Fagerberg’s study *Iluminacja* [Illumination],<sup>101</sup> deftly demonstrating the

95 See E. Pound, *Lustra*, transl. J. Niemojowski, *Poezja*, 1970, No. 3, pp. 66–77 (including ‘Wachlarz dla Jej Cesarskiej Mości’ [Fan-Piece for Her Imperial Lord], ‘Alba,’ ‘Wrzós’ [Heather]); *Kierunki*, 1975, No. 35, p. 8 (including ‘Alba,’ transl. A. Bartkiewicz); *Twórczość*, 1973, No. 4, pp. 5–8, transl. J. M. Rymkiewicz (*Ryba i cień* [Fish and Shadow]); *Odra*, 1975, No. 7/8, pp. 63–5, transl. P. Kajewski (including *Liu Ch’è*). Translations of Pound’s verses inspired by East-Asian poetry can also be found in the earlier selection *Maska i pieśń*. However, this book was published in Munich and probably had very limited influence in Poland (E. Pound, *Maska i pieśń. Antologia poezji* [Mask and Song, A Poetry Anthology], transl. J. Niemojowski, Monachium, 1960). See also L. Engelking, *Twórczość Ezry Pounda w Polsce*, p. 252.

96 A. Szuba, ‘De mortuis nil nisi bene,’ *Poezja*, 1974, No. 2, pp. 38–44 (see esp. pp. 41–4).  
97 See footnote 88 in this part of the book.

98 Both Pound (‘In the Station of the Metro’) and Bashō are quoted only in English.

99 This is confirmed by the poet’s friend and expert on his work, Jacek Łukasiewicz – J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Haiku Grochowiaka,’ p. 125; J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Wstęp,’ in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, p. XL. See also P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 87.

100 Most of which are listed in Kotański’s article. No less interesting and valuable is the collection *Z polskich tłumaczeń haiku* [Selected Polish Translations of Haiku], comprising 32 haiku and one *senryū* (collected by S. Bañcer based on the bibliography by K. Seyfried, transl. S. Łubieński, B. Richter, A. Janta, M. Melanowicz, W. Kotański – *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, pp. 22–7), along with a publication of 41 haiku by Bashō translated by Andrzej Krajewski-Bola (*Poezja*, 1975, pp. 35–7).

101 Let us recall several important – from the perspective of research on Grochowiak – quotes from Fagerberg. A comment about Zen: “the variety of sensations is replaced by their intensity. For example, the capacity to enjoy nature increases thanks to Zen, as by its nature the latter does not signify asceticism or the eradication of the sensorial. When desires and needs are suppressed, one thinks less of oneself, one’s own self” (S. Fagerberg, ‘Iluminacja,’ pp. 30–1). “satori – of central importance in Zen – lies beyond morality or rather within it, as Zen is so simple” (S. Fagerberg, *Iluminacja*, p. 32). Haiku is a “direct application of what we said about satori”



inexpressibility of Zen, one can find there two articles far removed from the standards of scientific or popular-science reliability. Grochowiak had no easy way of verifying the information provided in those texts. In Andrzej Tchórzewski's text 'Między pierwszym a drugim Poundem' there is no mention whatsoever of haiku,<sup>102</sup> however, the very analysis of works of the American poet in the special haiku-centred issue of the magazine is a signal for connecting various phenomena. On the other hand, Stanisław Piskor and Włodzimierz Paźniewski write:

To read haiku is like reading a table of contents in a poetry book as if one were dealing only with titles of poems that have not yet been written, or with random phrases found by accident on a scrap of a damaged manuscript. These poems shock with asceticism to explode with the excess of imagination, but they are also an attempt to reconcile opposites. The structure relies on contrast. If the first image features a feather carried away by the wind, the second one inevitably shows a falling stone. The juxtaposition of opposing images generates tension, just like connecting the ends of two electric wires produces a quick flash. The last verse restores the temporarily broken harmony.<sup>103</sup>

As can be seen, the beginnings of Polish literary reflection on haiku are marked by the emergence of stereotypes that were to linger on for decades.<sup>104</sup> Authors write about the incoherence or even randomness of textual units, which, however, is in surprising contradiction to the thesis about a distinct tripartite structure of poems and their (Hegelian in spirit?) final synthesis. Treating contrast as the underpinning of haiku composition is also a significant oversimplification. This is an attempt to fit a rather unfamiliar foreign form into a solid Occidental framework. Interestingly enough, the information about Pound and Imagism provided by Piskor and Paźniewski is far from accurate ("the first haiku outside the East-Asian cultural sphere").<sup>105</sup> Finally, the text brings an observation, with far-reaching literary and

(S. Fagerberg, 'Iluminacja') "In Haiku a few simple things are mentioned, like grass, frogs, birds, and accorded acute sharpness. At the same time, the unity, totality of the entire world is suggested" (S. Fagerberg, 'Iluminacja').

102 In turn, the account of the East-Asian fascinations of European artists contains misrepresentations (for example, Leopold Staff's poetry book *Fletnia chińska*, which Tchórzewski roundly criticizes, is incorrectly renamed as *Lutnia chińska* [Chinese Lute]) and methodological oversimplifications (glorification of Soviet literary studies, analysis along Marxist lines) – A. Tchórzewski, 'Między pierwszym a drugim Poundem,' *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, pp. 48–54; esp. pp. 50, 54.

103 S. Piskor, W. Paźniewski, 'W poszukiwaniu siebie' [In Search of Oneself], *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 39.

104 See Part 1 of this book (the chapter 'Prototype – Invariant – Stereotype. Haiku in the West').

105 S. Piskor, W. Paźniewski, 'W poszukiwaniu siebie,' p. 40. Earlier European "haikuing" is treated extensively in J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*; J. W. Hokenson, 'Haiku as a Western Genre,' pp. 693–714; see also Part 2 of this book.

literary-theoretical consequences, about an Imagist (here: Imaginist)<sup>106</sup> “European variant of the genre – haiku-image.”<sup>107</sup> In the haiku issue of *Poezja*, Pound’s miniatures were headlined as “haiku-image” (hyphenated again). Grochowiak chose this phrase for the title of his poetry volume. Subsequently, it would be picked up by numerous reviewers and students of his work.<sup>108</sup>

There is every reason to believe that the *haiku-image* genre was invented not by Pound, but by... Polish literary critics and theorists.<sup>109</sup> And by Grochowiak himself.

106 In literary-theoretical 1970s texts that are of interest to me, Imagism (*imażyzm*) is called Imaginism (*imaginizm*). This is the case in the article by Tchórzewski, the sketch by Pisko and Paźniewski, but also in the above-noted Szuba’s text on Pound or the review of *Haiku-images* by Barańczak (hiding under the pseudonym “Barbara Stawiczak” – *Bóg błogosławi małomównym?*). Interestingly enough, the names of both poetry movements are still confused (see A. Dworniczak, ‘Poeta wobec formy’ [The Poet and the Form], in A. Dworniczak, *Stanisław Grochowiak*, Poznań, 2000, p. 149; A. Krawczyk, ‘Widzialny porządek,’ p. 201; A. Grodecka, *Wiersze o obrazach. Studium z dziejów ekfrazy* [Poems about Images. A Contribution to the History of Ekphrasis], Poznań, 2009, p. 225). In a study by Artur Hutnikiewicz both movements merge into *imażinizm* (Imaginisme). (A. Hutnikiewicz, *Od czystej formy do literatury faktu. Główne teorie i programy literackie XX stulecia* [From Pure Form to Non-Fiction. Major 20th-century Theories and Literary Programmes], Warszawa, 1997 [1st ed. 1965], pp. 120–6). *Imaginizm* (Imaginism), as opposed to *imażyzm* (Imagism) appeared already in the first Polish text about Pound, the article by Stanisław Helsztyński, ‘Ezra Pound i T. S. Eliot’ [Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot], *Wiadomości Literackie*, 1931, No. 10, p. 2 (see L. Engelking, *Twórczość Ezry Pounda w Polsce*, p. 231). See also footnote 17 in this part of the book.

107 S. Piskor, W. Paźniewski, *W poszukiwaniu siebie*, p. 40 (see it also for *nō-image*). Szuba mentioned “haiku-image” and “no-image” (his articles from the 1970s transliterate *nō* as *no*) in his text written one year earlier, yet without specifying them as genres. (A. Szuba, ‘De mortuis,’ p. 43). See also L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie pod bananowcem,’ in *Droga na Wschód. Polskie inspiracje orientalne. Materiały z forum dyskusyjnego*, ed. and introduction by D. Kalinowski, Słupsk, 2000, p. 127. Sources of misunderstandings should be traced to a fragment of Pound’s text concerning the one-image composition of *nō* and the possibility of creating a long Vorticist poem (E. Pound, ‘Wortycyzm (fragment),’ *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 1, p. 189, footnote 9; E. Miner, ‘Pound, haiku i obraz poetycki,’ *Literatura na Świecie*, 1985, No. 1, p. 106) (See the English version of Miner’s text, E. Miner, ‘Pound, Haiku, and the Image,’ *Hudson Review* 9 (1956–57), pp. 570–84). As it happens, conceiving *nō* dramas as consisting of a single image raises many doubts – see, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 78; L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 127.

108 Already in the earliest reviews, Grochowiak’s poetry collection was placed in the context of Pound’s “new variant [...] of the [haiku] genre: haiku-images” as “the first volume of haiku-images in Polish poetry” (J. Gielo, “Haiku-images,” pp. 84–5).

109 For that matter, similarly to *nō-image*. Engelking writes that “haiku-image: is “a rather rarely used term” (L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 127). It looks like outside Polish literary studies it is not used at all.

In Pound's writings and English-language studies of his work,<sup>110</sup> we find absolutely no trace of such genre enunciations. While the poet may have talked about haiku and "image" (both of which often coexist in Pound's work), he did not purport to introduce a new genre name, but to describe the essence of Imagist and Vorticist poetry and to capture the essence of its imagery. Moreover, Pound's poetic output features few miniatures that could be treated as *haiku-images*.

However, the examination of Grochowiak's volume through the prism of Pound's<sup>111</sup> Imagism (and Vorticism, which is not easily separable from it)<sup>112</sup> – even if this prism is somewhat accidentally suggested by the poet in the title of his book<sup>113</sup> – seems quite promising.

Both Pound and Grochowiak knew haiku only at second-hand, and this fascination set off literary intuitions conducive to artistically vital self-limitations. They

110 As well as in texts analysing Pound's poetry in the context of haiku: Y. Hakutani, 'Ezra Pound, Imagism, and Japanese Poetics,' in Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, New York, 2009, pp. 69–88; J. Johnson, 'Haiku in Imagism,' in J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 74–84.

111 Selected verse (or poetic fragments) of other Imagists can also be considered as close to haiku. For example, this is the case with Amy Lowell's work – East-Asian (haiku) parallels in her oeuvre I consider to be more distinct than in the case of Pound (I do not share Barbara Ungar's critical opinions: B. Ungar, *Haiku in English*, Stanford, California, 1978, p. 17 and ff.). I place the following poems by Lowell in the context of haiku: 'Circumstance,' 'Desolation,' 'Yoshiwara Lament,' 'Illusion,' 'A Year Passes,' 'A Lover,' 'To a Husband,' 'The Fisherman's Wife,' 'The Pond,' 'Autumn,' 'Near Kyoto,' 'Autumn Haze,' 'Peace,' 'Nuit blanche,' 'Poetry,' 'From a Window,' 'Time,' 'Outside a Gate,' 'Passing the Bamboo Fence,' 'Road to the Yoshiwara,' 'Proportion,' 'Twenty-Four Hokku on a Modern Theme,' 'Wind and Silver.' One should also mention the following poems by Richard Aldington (e.g. 'The River,' 'New Love,' 'Like a dark princess whose beauty...,' 'Images,' 'Evening,' 'Living Sepulchres,' 'Sunsets'), John Gould Fletcher ('Irradiations,' 'Moods'), T. E. Hulme ('Autumn,' 'Above the Dock,' 'Images'), William Carlos Williams ('The Red Wheelbarrow,' 'Young Woman at a Window,' 'The Locust Tree in Flower,' 'Between Walls'). In comparative analyses presented in this chapter, for the most part I restrict myself to Pound's poetry (I discuss my reasons in detail here). The work of Lowell and Aldington is treated in Part 2 of the monograph (section 3.B). See also J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 64 and ff.; J. Giroux, *The Haiku Form*, p. 17 and ff.; *Poezje Imagistów*, pp. 136, 138–9. All the titles of poems which have been listed in this footnote are available in their Polish translations in the anthology by Engelking and Szuba, *Obraz i wir*.

112 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 76–177; (Johnson writes about Pound's "juxtapositionality" disguised as Imagism, Vorticism, and ideogrammic method); G. Gazda, 'Wortycyzm' [Vorticism], in G. Gazda, *Słownik europejskich kierunków*, p. 661.

113 In all likelihood, the title of the posthumously published book was Grochowiak's choice. Perhaps, however, originally the book might have been titled *Haiku-image* (see the footnote to the motto and footnote 12 in this part of the book).

both set great store by the problem of imagery in lyric poetry. Pound’s texts were probably among the sources of inspiration for Grochowiak.<sup>114</sup> *Haiku-images* is a personal variation on haiku and what the poet saw as *haiku-image*. As Leszek Engelking states: “when ... we look at the poems from Grochowiak’s volume *Haiku-images*, we find no resemblance to Pound’s works from his Imagist period.”<sup>115</sup> According to Engelking, neither are they similar to classical haiku.<sup>116</sup> Fair enough, there are no simple analogies here. I insist, however, that it is worthwhile looking at *Haiku-images* more attentively both through the prism of haiku and Imagism.

The largest (though consisting merely of five poems) group of translations of Pound’s orientalizing miniatures was published in the special haiku issue of *Poezja* from 1975. This, it seems, is a vital part of the Occidental prelude to Grochowiak’s *Haiku-images* (in the comparative analysis of Grochowiak’s late poems these works by Pound are of least interest to me; consequently, in the main text I exceptionally provide Polish versions – translations cited in *Poezja*):<sup>117</sup>

‘Na stacji metra’  
Te twarze w tłumie jak widziadła,  
Płatki na mokrej, czarnej gałęzi.<sup>118</sup>

‘Alba’  
Chłodna jak blade liście  
wilgotnej konwalii  
Leżała przy mnie o świcie.<sup>119</sup>

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114 The poetics of *Haiku-images* might have been vitally influenced by the selection of Richard Brautigan’s poems published in *Poetry* (1975, No. 1, pp. 46–7) under the headline *Haiku dzisiejsze* [Today’s Haiku]. The size of two of the four texts greatly exceeds haiku’s syllabic count (the three-line pattern is not kept either), while the semantics and stylistics only remotely reflect the poetics of Japanese miniatures.

115 L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 127.

116 However, Engelking takes note of the triplet form (resulting from Western conventions), antithetical structure, and the focus on detail (L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 127).

117 All texts translated by Andrzej Szuba as quoted in *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, pp. 45–6. For rules governing the quotation of foreign-language texts and transcription of Japanese names, surnames and nicknames, see the footnote to the motto in the Introduction.

118 Original version: “In a Station of the Metro // The apparition of these faces in the crowd; / Petals on a wet, black bough” (as quoted in “*petals on a wet black bough*,” p. 110). Engelking’s translation that is closer to the original is quoted in Part 5 (chapter ‘Intertextuality’). Sławomir Wąciór translated this poem differently (in my opinion less successfully): “Na stacji metra // Iluzoryczność tamtych twarzy w tłumie / Płatki kwiatów na mokrej, czarnej gałęzi” (as quoted in “*petals on a wet black bough*,” p. 110).

119 Original version: “Alba // As cool as the pale wet leaves / of lily-of-the-valley / She lay beside me in the dawn” (as quoted in Y. Hakutani, ‘Ezra Pound, Yone Noguchi,

'Ts'ai Chi'h'

Płatki padają do fontanny,  
Pomarańczowe liście róż –  
Ochra przyłgnęła do kamienia.<sup>120</sup>

'L'art 1910'

Zielony arsenik rozbabrany na białym jak jajo obrusie  
Rozgniecione truskawki! Dalej, napaśmy widokiem oczy!<sup>121</sup>

'Wiersz z wachlarzem dla Jej Cesarskiego Pana'

Wachlarz z białego jedwabiu  
jasny jak szron na źdźbłe trawy,  
Ciebie też odsunięto.<sup>122</sup>

Pound's poems published in *Poezja* were evidently close to the poetics of Japanese seventeen-syllable verse,<sup>123</sup> at the same time creatively combining Oriental poetic guidelines with Western themes<sup>124</sup> (indebtedness to the haiku of Arakida Moritaki,<sup>125</sup> paraphrases of Chinese poems,<sup>126</sup> the tradition of *alba*, ekphrasis of Western art<sup>127</sup>).

and Imagism,' in *Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism. New Readings*, ed. Y. Hakutani, London, 2001, p. 73).

- 120 Original version: "Ts'ai Chi'h // The petals fall in the fountain, / The orange-coloured rose-leaves, / Their ochre clings to the stone" (as quoted in "*petals on a wet black bough*," p. 114). Wąciór's translation, see *Poezja*, 1975, p. 115.
- 121 Original version: "L'Art 1910 // Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth, // Crushed strawberries! Come, let us feast our eyes" (as quoted in *The Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. I. B. Nadel, Cambridge–New York, 1999, p. 226).
- 122 Original version: "Fan-piece, for Her Imperial Lord // O fan of white silk, / clear as frost on the grass-blade, / You also are laid aside" (as quoted in "*petals on a wet black bough*," p. 108, for Wąciór's translation, see *Poezja*, 1975, p. 109).
- 123 By contrast, the poems analysed in the Japanese context by Earl Miner are clearly more distant from haiku (see E. Miner, 'Pound, Haiku,' pp. 57–84).
- 124 Certain affinities with haiku are also in evidence in longer texts (from *Cathayu* or *Cantos*) – see, for example, Y. Hakutani, 'Ezra Pound,' p. 86; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 79 and ff.
- 125 See, for example, E. Pound, 'Wortycyzm,' pp. 183–4, English version E. Pound, 'Vorticism,' originally in *The Fortnightly Review* (New Series), 96 (1914), No. 573, pp. 461–71. J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 75–7.
- 126 Compared to Chinese prototypes, Pound's texts exhibit significant pictorial ("haiku-esque") compression. See L. Engelking, 'Ezra Pound: Liu Ch'e,' in *Zaczynając od Baudelaire'a. Interpretacje* [Starting with Baudelaire. Interpretations], eds. A. Kowalczykova, T. Marciszuk, Warszawa, 1999, pp. 74–9; I. Łabędzka, *Chiny Ezry Pounda* [Ezra Pound's China], Poznań, 1998, pp. 45–8.
- 127 'L'art 1910' can be viewed as a description of a Fauvist painting (this interpretation being validated by the date in the poem's title; the text may also have been inspired

However, before we undertake our analyses, a certain literary-theoretical inaccuracy must be pointed out. It concerns Pound’s *super-position*<sup>128</sup> (translated into Polish as *technika nałożenia*<sup>129</sup> or, rather infelicitously, as *nakładanie się*<sup>130</sup>). Polish scholars write exclusively about the super-position of images,<sup>131</sup> while Pound talked about the super-imposition of... ideas, leading to the construction of a one-image poem.<sup>132</sup> If we take a closer look at texts such as ‘Ts’ai Chi’h,’ ‘Fan-piece’ or ‘Alba,’ we will, indeed, see one predominant sensory image. Interestingly enough, as it is often the case with Pound (e.g. in his flagship poem ‘In a Station of the Metro,’ which the author provided with a comment specifically on the super-position of ideas), we are indeed dealing with a juxtaposition of images. However, these representations can be deemed as mutually intensifying, merging, as it were, into a single image-impression<sup>133</sup> – one not stratified, yet being the result of the imposition of two scenes. The poems printed in *Poezja* are a good illustration of Pound’s theory: they combine images in a coherent, subtle and semantically clear way, sometimes adding an extra level on top of a sensorially vivid image of the non-human world.

One more comment is in order here. Earl Miner faults Pound with reducing his understanding of the poetic image to the level of visibility.<sup>134</sup> The texts cited in *Poezja* demonstrate that despite his limited acquaintance with haiku and theoretical enunciations about visual images,<sup>135</sup> Pound plainly strove for pictorial multisensoriality.

Against this background, Grochowiak’s poems come across as unusually verbose and polysemous.<sup>136</sup> However, there are two additional points of reference: classical

by the 1910 London exhibition, *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, presenting the works of Henri Matisse and others – see *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, p. 226). Edward Balcerzan goes as far as to define this poem as a haiku (E. Balcerzan, *Włodzimierz Majakowski*, Warszawa, 1984, p. 25).

128 Y. Hakutani, ‘Ezra Pound,’ p. 70 and ff.; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 74 and ff.

129 I. Łabędzka, *Chiny*, p. 44.

130 E. Miner, ‘Pound, Haiku,’ passim.

131 See P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 102.

132 “The ‘one image poem’ is a form of super-position, that is to say, it is one idea set on top of another.” (E. Pound, ‘Vorticism,’ p. 467. See also E. Miner, ‘Pound, Haiku,’ p. 575).

133 See Y. Hakutani, ‘Ezra Pound,’ p. 83; D. Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent. Modernism in Music, Literature and Other Arts*, Chicago–London, 2000, p. 66; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 75, 79.

134 E. Miner, ‘Pound, Haiku,’ p. 102.

135 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 83.

136 Actually, this is not so much about polysemy but about the blending of numerous semantic fields within a single text.

haiku and Grochowiak's work prior to *Haiku-images*. Another question arises: did the avowedly Poundian form of *haiku-image* assume a real, recognizable form through Grochowiak's writing?

#### 4. Imagery

The most important key to Grochowiak's collection *Haiku-images* – especially when seen from a transcultural perspective – is imagery.<sup>137</sup> The notion of an “image” primarily carries ocularcentric connotations, but I am more concerned here with broadly understood sensorial representations which literally visualize the world depicted in poems,<sup>138</sup> and tend to be associated with mental imaging (not only visual).<sup>139</sup> Palpability, sensorial concreteness, and “verifiability” were the distinguishing features of Grochowiak's poetry from the very beginning. While Grochowiak was given to weaving things into complex, oneiric constructions, the nominalization<sup>140</sup> that was diagnosed in his poetry by Kazimierz Wyka, which purportedly loses sight of an object, raises considerable doubts. The “intense” presence of things was not merely a pretext for “baroquizing” metaphors. Even if as a result of nominalization, a text moves away from an object, the concrete that is firmly engrained in it cannot be easily erased from the poem and from the reader's mind, in which, by way of the poet's technical mastery, they become deeply embedded.

“Haiku-esque” images (frequently figures derived from the natural world and shown against some ground) were also present in Grochowiak's poetic work since his debut.<sup>141</sup> However, they were merely fragments of much longer multi-layered structures. For example, in the poem ‘Chmura’ [Cloud] from the poet's debut collection *Ballada rycerska* (1956) we read as follows:

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137 The above-discussed “sensorial cases” of poems from *Haiku-images* do not exhaust the range of possibilities realized in this volume.

138 This conceptualization is close to the second meaning of the term “image” as posited by Janusz Sławiński (J. Sławiński, ‘Obraz’ [Image], in *Słownik terminów literackich*, p. 349).

139 See Part 1 of this book, chapter ‘Prototype – Invariant – Stereotype. Haiku in the West.’

140 “In the sheer multitude of terms, metaphors, and comparisons that were meant to describe the real object, the latter was altogether lost. The only thing that was left were poetic nominalia. Typically based on the principle of antithesis and dissonance as the main features of baroque” (K. Wyka, ‘Barok, groteska i inni poeci,’ p. 188).

141 See, for example, a consideration of “haikuidality” of Czesław Miłosz' imagery in the following part of this book (chapter ‘Poetry of Mindfulness – Czesław Miłosz and Haiku’).

Leciała chmura przez zielone łąki, Puszysta chmura przez pagórki bieglą, Wczujcie się w obraz – biel i zieleń łąki.	[A cloud was drifting across green meadows, A fleecy cloud ran across hills, Get the feel of this image – the meadow’s white and green. Immense purity of the morning sky.]
Ogromna czystość porannego nieba. <sup>142</sup>	

Transfixed by this image (as advised in the third verse), we observe exclusively a cloud against the sky and meadow. Yet this serves as a visual prelude to a further seven stanzas about Villon’s wanderings and affairs of the heart. Similarly, in ‘Jesień II’ [Autumn II] from the debut collection, the speaker, enjoining the reader to be visually attentive and clearly metaphorizing (yet without losing sensorial mimesis), calls up a clear, “haiku-esque” image of nature:

Popatrz, popatrz! Małą dróżką do nas człapie: We śnie pogrążony jeż. Idzie, ugryzł kęs księżycy. Ciemno, chłodno, chorowicie.	[Look, look! Shuffling towards us along a small path: A sleeping hedgehog. Here he goes and takes a bite out of the moon. It’s a dark, cold, sickly day.] <sup>143</sup>
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The following are exquisitely synaesthetic, sensorially expressive opening verses of ‘Agresty’ [Gooseberries] (from the volume *Agresty*, 1963):

Wśród czarnych krzewów  
Błasanych i z drutu,  
Co mają nazwę chrzęstką: agresty –  
Światło księżycy jest tą zimną wodą, aż zęby cierpną, a mózg jest kulisty.<sup>144</sup>

[Among black bushes  
Of tin and wire,  
Bearing a harshly name: gooseberries –  
The moonlight is that cold water, making teeth chatter, and the brain is spherical.]

Evidently, from the very beginning, Grochowiak evinced considerable stylistic

142 As quoted in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, p. 17.

143 As quoted in J. Kwiatkowski, ‘Ciemne wiersze,’ pp. 189–190.

144 As quoted in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, p. 77.



potential as a haikuist. In addition, similarly to many Japanese haikins,<sup>145</sup> he was always drawn to painting.<sup>146</sup> As he writes:

A painter creates in a manner similar to a chemist. [...] My God, he is free to invent new paints, mix up the soil, water down ashes, fix moulds! The poet may seek out the most singular words, but they too were once commonplace, banal, someone else's. He carves them out not from nature but from history [...]. Cross my heart, I admit it with all self-cruelty: truth be told, I would only like to be a painter. [...] To paint the whole coldness and roughness of an iron pot, to struggle with some dirty rag – passionately, doggedly like a dog.<sup>147</sup>

Grochowiak truly struggled with objects, conveyed their coldness, roughness, density – carved them out from experienced reality, with the difference that he worked in words.<sup>148</sup> This is not merely a fascination with painted canvases transposed to poetry, but an attempt to fashion verbal equivalents of Matter Painting, assemblage, and installation. Like many contemporary visual artists, Grochowiak was by no means an “ocularcentrist.” In *Haiku-images*, he clearly changed his poetic tone, turned away from *turpizm*, intuitively capturing (but sometimes moving beyond)

145 Some of them were painters themselves (as in the case of Yosa Buson, *haiga* was also practised by Bashō). Naturally, there are marked differences stemming from varying cultural backgrounds and changes in visual arts (the twentieth century, for example, saw the emergence of Matter Painting which fascinated Grochowiak). For more on this topic, see Part 7 of the book.

146 For the relationship between Grochowiak's work and visual arts, see, for example, J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Współczesne pokrewieństwa’ [Modern Kinships], in J. Łukasiewicz, *Grochowiak i obrazy*, pp. 43–62; A. Ławniczak, ‘Ut pictura poesis erit,’ in “*W ciemną mą ojczyznę*,” pp. 85–107; A. Dziadek, *Obrazy i wiersze. Z zagadnień interferencji sztuk w polskiej poezji współczesnej* [Pictures and Poems. Problems of the Interference between Arts in Contemporary Polish Poetry], Katowice, 2004, p. 118 and ff., 131–2; P. Łuszczkiewicz, *Książę erotyku. O poezji miłosnej Stanisława Grochowiaka* [The Prince of the Love Poem. On Stanisław Grochowiak's Love Poetry], Warszawa, 1995, p. 31 and ff.; A. Winowiecka, *W kręgu secesji*, pp. 97–107; B. Kowszewicz, “*Idę gorący po tłach pokostniałych*,” pp. 39–55; J. Kram, ‘Dzieła plastyczne – inspiracje w poezji współczesnej’ (Herbert – Grochowiak – Szymborska) [Works of Visual Arts – Inspirations in Contemporary Poetry (Herbert – Grochowiak – Szymborska)], *Polonistyka*, 1986, No. 3, pp. 182–92; U. Makowska, ‘Sztuki plastyczne w poezji Stanisława Grochowiaka’ [Visual Arts in the Poetry of Stanisław Grochowiak], *Poezja*, 1977, No. 2, pp. 65–76; J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Wstęp,’ in S. Grochowiak, *W wybór poezji*, p. LIII.

147 S. Grochowiak, ‘Szmaty’ [Rags], *Współczesność*, 1960, No. 12, p. 5; as quoted in J. Łukasiewicz, *Grochowiak i obrazy*, pp. 7–8.

148 Grochowiak's works in visual arts are markedly overshadowed by literature – see, for example, B. Kowszewicz, ‘*Idę gorący po tłach pokostniałych*,’ p. 55; see also reproductions of Grochowiak's artworks in special issues of *Poezja* devoted to his oeuvre – *Poezja*, 1986, No. 10/11, pp. 4, 8, 14, 25, 30, 32, 45, 47, 51, 122, 139, 141–2, 146, 170, 173, 176–7, 200, third page of the cover; *Poezja*, 1977, No. 2, pp. 9, 15, 29, 33, 64, 91, third page of the cover.

haiku decorums and taboos.<sup>149</sup> Nevertheless, he was invariably trying to tenderly and passionately confront the multisensory concrete.

Writing about *Haiku-images*, Barańczak noted: “as a rule, the governing principle here is to subordinate juxtaposed images to a certain common metaphorical denominator.”<sup>150</sup> The volume in question abounds with exceptions to this rule. From the perspective of my investigations, it is more important and somewhat closer to my initial intentions to look for common sensorial “flashes” connecting images. This is a good starting point for analysing the complex metaphorical structures in *Haiku-images* and for asking questions about the inter- and trans-cultural nature of the last book of the eminent poet.

### A. *The Visual Node*

Worthy of the comparatist’s special attention are poems summoning up a single sensorial image along with miniatures that do not necessarily consist of one image but are possessed of a distinct visual centre (which, in Poundian spirit, I consider as a variant of the one-image composition).<sup>151</sup> The *Haiku-images* collection does not bring too many of these, and on top of that, each text raises different stylistic, conceptual and symbolic questions.

The first three-line poem in the volume is ‘Czapla’ [Heron] (H-i 1, I):<sup>152</sup>

Wywiodłeś mnie w las błękitny i zarazem zbutwiały  
 Tu i ówdzie opary dźwigały żółty smród siarki  
 Tylko w głębi czerwona czapla trzymała w dziobie list na siedem pieczęci

[You led me into a forest blue and rotten  
 Here and there the vapours carried a yellow stench of sulphur  
 Only the red heron in the depths held a letter with seven seals in its beak]

If this poem ended after the phrase “red heron,” it could be seen as a Europeanized (verbose and particoloured),<sup>153</sup> symbolically

149 See Part 1 of this monograph.

150 B. Stawiczak (S. Barańczak), ‘Bóg błogosławi małomównym?’, p. 6.

151 These are also texts that can be analysed in the context of visual arts.

152 Due to the editorial ambiguity mentioned below (footnote 157), the version from the first edition is given here, further validated by the Biblioteka Narodowa edition (in Grochowiak’s *Wybór poezji*).

153 Typically, classical haiku avoid names of colours, unlike Grochowiak and Pound, who make frequent use of them. For colours in the poetry of Grochowiak, see M. Nawrocki, ‘Tego się naucz każdy, kto dotykasz próżni,’ p. 183 and ff.; P. Łuszczkiewicz, *Księżę erotyku*, pp. 32–5 (Piotr Łuszczkiewicz primarily takes into account love poems, and his observations have only limited application in explanation of the significance of colours in *Haiku-images*. See also B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ p. 105; J. Gielo, ‘*Haiku-images*,’ p. 85.

“musical,”<sup>154</sup> disturbing (who led the speaker into this strange forest?) equivalent of a synaesthetic haiku. This is a single sensorial image, elaborated by succeeding verses. The forest is blue (is this an aerial view?) and at the same time rotten. The vapours obscure the landscape: an indefinite surface can be seen, standing out from which is a red point – the heron (popular motif of East-Asian art).<sup>155</sup> Thus, just like in haiku, the poem brings a background derived from the world of nature (shown here with the sfumato effect) along with a distinct, also natural detail. However, the image is not enough. The heron holds a “letter with seven seals.” Now the sulphur from the end of the second verse<sup>156</sup> assumes special significance (diabolic force?). Apocalyptic connotations obscure the previous sensorial imagery, the lyrical “you” acquires a supernatural dimension (God? Satan?).<sup>157</sup>

“Grochowiak was adept at interweaving trivial things [...] with serious ones.”<sup>158</sup> Well-established reading habits would lead one to see the forest and heron as an insignificant decoration while treating seriously the religious and cultural connotations. It would constitute an exact reversal of the haiku order. The poet himself does not reveal anything conclusively. However, his poem makes it clear that, for a European artist aware of cultural intricacies, it is difficult to restrict himself to the “orientalizing” exteriority. The author enriches the compellingly and creatively reproduced East-Asian imagery (Occidental echoes of Symbolism) with a strong religious and cultural tinge, completely transforming the modality of the seemingly kitschy poem.<sup>159</sup>

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154 See also M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, ‘O muzycznej i niemuzycznej koncepcji poezji,’ in M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Somnabulicy – dekadenci – herosi*, Kraków–Wrocław, 1985, pp. 427–42; B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu”? *Koncepcje dźwięku w poezji polskiego futuryzmu*, Wrocław, 2008, p. 51 and ff.

155 See B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ p. 105. Michałowski sees in the red heron an equivalent of the Lamb from the Book of Revelation (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 95).

156 Up to this point, it could have been seen as a multisensory complement to the image.

157 The poem’s interpretation is further complicated by editorial ambiguity. In the first edition of the collection in question, the poem’s opening phrase was “wywiodleś” (“you led,” with the masculine form of “you”), in the second one “wywiodłaś” (with “you” in the feminine form). This is probably the result of an editorial error but is very much in line with cultural (and interpretative) ambiguities of *Haiku-images*. The poem’s “you” can be interpreted as God, Satan or a seductress. However, pointing to Zen philosophy as a possible addressee of the utterance seems unjustified to me (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 95). This interpretation might stem from... an error in citing the poem – in Michałowski’s book instead of “mnie” (me) we come across “nas” (us) (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 93).

158 B. Kowszewicz, ‘Idę gorący po tłach pokostniałych,’ p. 39.

159 It is hard to agree with Michałowski’s following pronouncement: “The image itself, clearly defined in each and every visual detail, no longer requires interpretation and was merely ‘exhibited’ as if in a gallery” (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 95). Mytych-Forajter, in turn, asserts that the *Haiku-images* sequence opens in

The poem ‘Początek’ [Beginning] constitutes another component of the intercultural dialogue (it opens the “bestial” *Haiku-animaux*):

Spotkałem na ścieżce druku Zaleszczotka-Psotnika  
Przetaczał szczypcami litery  
Jak wszyscy – najbardziej się trudził z kanciastym ideogramem 开

[On a printpath I came across a Book Scorpion-Mischief  
It rolled letters with its pincers  
Like everyone else – struggling the most with the angular ideogram 开]

At first glance, the poem perfectly fulfils the criteria of haiku poetics (and Zen aesthetics). The speaker takes a close and tender look at a busy little creature. On the “printpath,” shared by the insect and man, only the animal is visible. This arachnid – probably a book scorpion, *Chelifer cancroides* – somewhat straddles two worlds: nature and culture (it is often found in old book collections).<sup>160</sup> Grochowiak resorts to a non-aggressive metaphor: the book scorpion is not rolling minute plant litter or paper, but characters of a foreign writing system.<sup>161</sup> The poem thus deceptively departs from haiku mimesis, becoming a kind of an intercultural (transcultural?) diagnosis. The creature’s struggle with the “angular ideogram” resembles the situation of those who try to “dig into” realities of a remote culture. But maybe also those who live in it on a daily basis (it struggled “like everyone else”). The subtly sketched out playfulness (“Book Scorpion-Mischief”) can be linked to haiku. Yet despite everything, the speaker – hidden behind a semi-mimetic situation – is moving mainly along the “printpaths,” unable to enter the non-intellectual, contemplative, “true-life” situation of haiku.

And here is ‘Zen II’ (H-i 2, X):

Zen – ręka dziecka wsunięta w garść mężczyzny  
Droga jest piaszczysta i pełna delikatnego igliwia  
Już zachód warzy dla nas jaśminową herbatę

[Zen – a child’s hand tucked into a man’s fist

a “fairy-tale-surreal” way (with ‘Czapla’) (B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ p. 105). This diagnosis is not exhaustive either.

160 Analysing this text, Mytych-Forajter mentions Grochowiak’s childhood memory of “thick Bible pages with pictures and book scorpions scurrying on initials.” (S. Grochowiak, *Prozy* [Prose Pieces], selected and edited by J. Łukasiewicz, Warszawa, 1996, p. 412; as quoted in B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ p. 99, footnote 23).

161 The ideogram occurring in the text means “to open” or “equal” (the character used in the collection does permit unambiguous reading, but the first lection corresponds well with the poem’s title). One might also wonder whether this sign is a deceptively orientalized letter “a” (which also ties in well with the possible “opening”).

The road is sandy, a bed of conifer needles  
 The sunset is brewing jasmine tea for us]

The poem features a single image expanded upon in several successive verses. The multi-sensory description allows the reader to get into the spirit of the depicted situation, to be transported to the road covered with conifer needles. It is difficult, however, to remain there – or to remain only there. The “haiku-ness” is disturbed by the very reference to Zen, suggesting the possibility (necessity?) of a parabolic reading of the image, as well as the orientalizing anthropomorphization of the sunset (and maybe also of the West, as the Polish word “zachód” means both “sunset” and “West”).<sup>162</sup>

Let us have a look at one of the last texts of the volume, ‘Wnuczę’ [Grandchild] (HdK II):

Po bardzo śnieżnym pochyle (o głos się prosi Owernia)  
 Zeszła kozica z kozłatkem  
 Wiesz teraz dlaczego mam takie mokre oczy  
 [A chamois with a kid went  
 Down a very snowy slope (Auvergne asks for permission to speak)  
 Now you know why my eyes are so wet]

One can get the impression that this is a haiku (the image of a chamois with her kid on a snowy slope) that had been extended with parenthesis as well as the title and the last verse elucidating the speaker's situation. The emotion and tenderness evoked by this scene, calls up associations with another haiku by Kobayashi Issa:

Helpless against this  
 autumn wind, the firefly  
 must crawl from my hand  
 the orphan child  
 summons his mother  
 clapping<sup>163</sup>

The layout of Grochowiak's poem is at the same time straightforward and, compared to classical seventeen-syllable poems, multi-dimensional. The animal image gives way to an indefinite relationship between the speaker and his listener and the titular grandson (is this the same person?). An additional plane is constructed by the parenthetically included Auvergne, mentioned probably for the sake of its mountainous and upland landscape, but also simply, intriguing acoustically (voiced sounds), sounding like the name of a mysterious fairy-tale land. The “foundational”

162 See A. Wójtowicz, *Stanisława Grochowiaka poetycka introdukcja*, p. 161.

163 As quoted, respectively, in K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life*, p. 74, and <http://haikuguy.com/issa/search.php?keywords=cherry+blossom>, accessed November 15, 2019.

description of the chamois and its kid – the sensorial centre of the poem, which, however, is merely a germ<sup>164</sup> of a poem – clearly lacks the epiphanic flash, linguistic and visual anchoring.<sup>165</sup> The latter is provided by all the “additions” deepening, expanding and somewhat gradating the poem.

At the opposite extreme of the scale established by *Haiku-images*, one could place the poem ‘Konający’ [The Dying One] (H-i 4, VII):

Miasto krzyczy  
Rozpaczliwa syrena karetki pogotowia  
Dziewczynka w zielonym berecie wrzuca list do wuja w miejscowości  
Greenwich

[The city is screaming  
A desperate ambulance siren  
A girl in a green beret throws a letter to her uncle in Greenwich]

Michałowski sees here causal relations (the letter informs the family about an illness) and affinities with cinematic montage.<sup>166</sup> However, he does not seem to notice the multisensory quality of stimuli depicted in successive lines, forming a single (!) sensorial image. The first two expressive lines create a sound background for the visual element that evokes radically different connotations. The girl’s green beret is the only colour element, a blotch of colour in the “desperate” soundscape. In terms of composition, the scene is somewhat akin to multi-sensory haiku:

a cuckoo cries  
and the lake waters  
slightly cloud over  
Jōsō<sup>167</sup>

The sharp contrast between the idyllic image of a child dropping a letter into a post-box (inevitably calling up associations with Tuwim’s character Grześ from the poem ‘O Grzesiu kłamczuchu i jego cioci’ [Grześ the Fibber and Auntie]; Greenwich as the addressee’s place of residence introduces an additional, distant, “clean” plane – interestingly, just like the greenness of the only colour element of the composition) and the siren of the ambulance transporting a dying patient can be treated as another trace of the modernized baroque quality of Grochowiak’s poetry. Also in evidence here is the acceptance of the “suchness” of the world, taking notice of all phenomena, finally, the consent to life and death. While this death is perceived dramatically, “desperately” (and thus in an “un-haiku-like”

164 Julian Tuwim used the word “rodnik” [radix], which signified the idea of a poem.

165 For more on modern epiphany and haiku, see Part 5 of this book. See also P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii.’

166 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ pp. 102–3.

167 English translation as quoted in S. Addiss, *The Art of Haiku*, p. 142.

manner), it is not shown directly in action (as in haiku), but in a broader perspective, somehow offset by a small, undisturbed event. Consequently, we have here one coherent image, which in my interpretation is not kept together by cause and effect but is distinctly united sensorially.

An entirely different representation of death is offered by the poem 'Szekspir' [Shakespeare] (H-a VI):

Zaskroniec żywojad pożera starannie żabkę  
 Wychylona z paszczy wymachuje nostalgicznie łapkami  
 Kogo tak żegna ze swego balkonu już półtrupia Julia?  
 [The grass snake-viviphagist carefully devours the frog  
 Which protruding from its mouth waves its paws nostalgically  
 Who is saying goodbye from her balcony is it the half-dead Julieta?]

The poem shows the world of nature, and yet we are also in a theatre. A Shakespearean one at that.<sup>168</sup> The murder shown here, which in nature is a daily occurrence, is an extreme limit situation, one that typically goes unnoticed. The speaker's attentiveness, the picking out and highlighting of an event lends (restores?) weight to the observed occurrence. Yet the theatricalization makes nature unreal, and as a result, the scene is no longer a "repulsive concrete detail."<sup>169</sup> (Despite this, as a record of dying it distinctly flouts haiku taboos). The victim was subjected to intertextually profiled personification, while the description itself turns out to be shockingly pedantic ("carefully devours," "nostalgically waves"). The scene is crisp and concise: we can only see the grass snake and its prey, the excess of detail does not disrupt the idyllic-macabre vision (what imagination it takes and how far one has to depart from a simple contemplation of nature to see this incident in such a way!).

'Szekspir' is one of the most interesting texts immanently demonstrating a contrast of cultures. It shows how difficult it is to arrive at an open mind focused on the external world – the gaze is sharpened and deformed by accumulated cultural influences. The intertextuality of Japanese miniatures never transformed sensorial images to such a large extent. What is more, Grochowiak does not want to filter out the ordinary, the everyday cruelty. He sees no need for this sort of selection, the world is also like this, nature does not have to incline one towards cheerful affirmation of life. On the other hand, there is no protest, no defiance or revolt. Indeed, "We accused animals of ourselves – and they didn't reject us" (*Zen*, H-a XX).

And here is a different type of diction in 'Kogut' [The Rooster] (H-a IV):

Kogut wypiał na czerwono ten pełen dżdżu poranek

168 For Shakespearean motifs in Grochowiak's poetry, see J. Łukasiewicz, 'Wstęp,' in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, pp. XXIII–XXXIV; A. R. Burzyńska, *Male dramaty*, pp. 135–67.

169 J. Kwiatkowski, 'Groza i groteska,' p. 203.

Przewracam cię w stogu siana jak zapaśnika  
Moja ty mokrowłosa kukuryko

[The rooster crowed this drizzly morning red  
I turn you over in a haystack like a wrestler  
My sweet wet-haired cock-a-doodle-doo]

The neologically nominalized, acoustically expressive “cock-a-doodle-doo” in the final line complements the text semantically, unifying auditory, visual, and tactile sensations. On its own, the synaesthetic first verse could make a great haiku. Here, however, it merely serves as a background of a love scene.<sup>170</sup> *Kogut* is an example of a linkage of immanent references to Japanese poetics and a familiar, rustic, erotic backdrop. Grochowiak does not look for internal landscapes,<sup>171</sup> the scene’s eroticism has little to do with the “sharpened,” gruesome visions<sup>172</sup> and “kitchen, coffin, bizarre”<sup>173</sup> love poems known from his earlier volumes. At the same time, it is a poem with intriguing stylistic “jumping-off points:” the “wrestler” is out of place in the description of an idyllic love scene, the “cock-a-doodle-doo” is puzzling – is it a pet name (?) of the lover (screaming with pleasure?). Most importantly, however, Grochowiak does not abandon the fundamental haiku directive – absorption in the concrete experiential reality.<sup>174</sup>

The poems discussed so far follow, to a certain extent, haiku’s patterns of sensorial imagery, retain considerable stylistic simplicity (observable for example in comparison with Grochowiak’s earlier works) and at the same time in various ways transcend the East-Asian poetics. The major violation of haiku rules is the suspension of the ontological status of the depicted scenes between the mimetically reproduced reality and abstract spaces of culture (cultures). Haiku mimesis is “distorted” by the foregrounded layering and ruptures: symbolic, religious, stylistic, intertextual. However, one can always identify sensorial mimesis.<sup>175</sup>

170 The first 5-syllable unit of classical haiku often constituted a sensorial background against which a scene’s protagonist appeared later; however, it was never so visually elaborate (and by no means could be so, as it numbered only five syllables). For more on the composition of classical haiku, see Part I of the book.

171 See footnote 27 in this part of the book.

172 See P. Łuszczkiewicz, *Książę erotyku*, p. 23 and ff.

173 K. Kuczyńska-Koschany, ‘O “Zaklinaniu,”’ p. 85.

174 In this context, it is not surprising that absent from this volume is the exquisite poem based on an overarching metaphor (again, with a bird playing one of the main roles), intensely erotic and at the same time vague (with no versification rigour):

Haiko...	[My Haika...
Mój ptaszku	My birdie
Moja gałązko różana	My rose branch
Całuję Cię	I am kissing you
W najbardziej kaleczącej	In the most hurting
Kolce	Thorns].

175 See esp. Parts 1 and 5 of this book.



Violations of “haiku-ness” in the above-discussed poems were so conspicuous, and the dialogue with the Japanese model so balanced and immanent (these are somehow active attempts to understand someone else's reasons) largely on account of the clear sensorial imagery parallel with haiku imagery. It is specifically through these similarities that *Haiku-images* could become “a methodology of conscious transculturality,”<sup>176</sup> highlighting, on the one hand, approximations in perception and presentation of reality, and, on the other, various fissures, transgressions, and borderlines.<sup>177</sup> This is clearly seen in comparison with the remaining differently constructed texts in the collection in question.<sup>178</sup>

Grochowiak's poems are not as “crisp” as classical haiku and are a far cry from the visual and conceptual clarity of Pound's orientaling miniatures. Imagism, which is referred to by the volume's title, can be used quite deceptively. Engelking is right – Grochowiak's imagery is not too close to Pound's one. However, one can detect certain proximity – vital to my research (albeit probably intuitive or even accidental) – between Pound's and Grochowiak's understanding of the role of an image in a poem.

As Pound writes in 1914: “THE IMAGE IS NOT an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing.”<sup>179</sup> A year earlier, in the famous essay “A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste” he proclaims: “An ‘Image’ is that which presents an emotional and intellectual complex in an instant of time.”<sup>180</sup> Grochowiak put forward his own version of the single-image formula, whereby an elaborate image – to a certain extent similarly to Pound – is a vortex, a bundle, a cluster focusing variegated connotations and interpretations. In poems with a distinct image centre, sensorial and conceptual “vortices” turn out to diverge

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176 To quote the well-known formula of Michał Głowiński (see M. Głowiński, ‘Powieść jako metodologia powieści’ [The Novel as the Methodology of the Novel], in M. Głowiński, *Porządek, chaos, znaczenie. Szkice o powieści współczesnej* [Order, Chaos, Meaning. Sketches on the Modern Novel], Warszawa, 1968, pp. 90–136; reprinted in M. Głowiński, *Intertekstualność, groteska, parabola. Szkice ogólne i interpretacje. Prace wybrane* [Intertextuality, Grotesque, Parable. General Sketches and Interpretations. Selected Works], Vol. 5, ed. R. Nycz, Kraków, 2000, pp. 122–54).

177 “The distance separating our reality and the world of Bashō's student is unbridgeable. Grochowiak's haiku shorten this distance, moving, so to speak, two sparking poles of a galvanic cell closer to each other. In this approximation and contrast, both worlds appear in a new light, revealing new ground.” (B. Maj, ‘Polskie haiku Grochowiaka’, p. 11).

178 See esp. section 5 in this chapter.

179 E. Pound, ‘Vorticism,’ p. 469.

180 E. Pound, ‘A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste,’ *Poetry*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (March 1913), pp. 200–206.

from the subtle asceticism of Japanese images, but also from the verbosity and multi-image composition of the vast majority of Grochowiak’s poetry to this date.<sup>181</sup>

In a similar vein, one could describe texts wherein two images intensify each other, as in Pound’s poem ‘In a Station of the Metro.’ Instead of a one-image centre, we arrive at a two-centre, tight-knit node, a sort of coherent “cut-in shot” of two superposed parallel scenes. This kind of highly symbiotic co-occurrence of images is exemplified by Grochowiak’s poem ‘Październik’ [October] (H-i 3, XII):

O jak mnie oczarował październik w deszczu  
Ze skrzydeł wiatraków kapąła woda butwienia  
Dzieci chorowały i książkami baśni opędzały się przed śmiercią

[Oh, how charmed I was by October in the rain  
Water of rot was dripping from windmills’ sails  
The children were sick and drove away death with books of fairy-tales]

“October in the Rain” is a wordy *kigo* holding the poem together. The multi-sensory image of windmills with “water of rot” dripping from their sails fits well within the poetics of haiku imagery. On the other hand, the description of children warding off death with “sails” of opened books, evinces strong visual kinship with the representation of windmills. These images intertwine and augment each other – this is a Poundian way of effecting a modern epiphany. ‘Październik’ deftly captures the stark beauty of transitoriness, solitude, and uniqueness of the ordinary (*aware*, *wabi*, *sabi*), qualities that were prized by haijins.<sup>182</sup> As it turns out, the poem comes surprisingly close to Japanese aesthetics, and at the same time is very European in the mode of expressing emotions (“How charmed I was”) and, despite everything, in imagery (associations with contemplative landscape painting of the Dutch masters, featuring windmills or intimate scenes, are inevitable).<sup>183</sup>

### B. *The Obscuring of Images*

Grochowiak also mastered the art of obscuring images. His one-image poems do not necessarily expose their sensoriality. Neither is the single image pattern automatically a guarantor of deep analogies with haiku. This is nicely illustrated by the poem ‘Szal’ [Scarf] (H-i 5, XIV):

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181 Grochowiak comes closer to Pound’s visual *complex* than to the continental *simplex* which is more in the “spirit of haiku” (see J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre,’ p. 710). From this perspective, in his “haikuing” Grochowiak is very “Poundian.” See also Part 2 of this monograph.

182 See Part 1 of the book.

183 In this poem by Grochowiak, however, there is no need to look for symbolic references, unlike in interpretations of Dutch painting, which without such references are deficient.

Biały szal na cierniach głogu  
 Zdjąć go – a więc rozszarpać  
 Zostawić na chwilę łakomstwa równie bezradnym złodziejom?

[The white scarf on hawthorns  
 Should I take it off, thus tearing it apart  
 Or leave it for a moment of gluttony to equally helpless thieves?]

The first verse comes close to Japonizing imagery – it features a shape prominent against a natural background; the whiteness of the scarf and dark branches of hawthorn may additionally evoke associations with ink painting. While complementing a micro-scene with non-visual reflection is by no means at odds with haiku poetics, the opposite is the case with Grochowiak's verbosity, inclination to digress, compulsion to name things as precisely as possible ("helpless," "gluttony," "tear apart"), and finally – a penchant for sharp (baroque?) contrasts (nature–culture, delicacy–brutality). The poem in question holds one image, but it is not image-centred. And, as such, it is nowhere near the haiku prototype.

Images sometimes tend to be obscured in other ways, when the poet creates not only visual vortices but also intertextual ones. In this context, the poem 'Pająk' [The Spider] should be recalled (H-a VII):

Po winorośli – nocą – wspinają się pająki  
 Nuże podaj rękę druhu popatrzymy w okno  
 Gospodarz czy śpi – gospodyni czy młoda

[Spiders climb the vine at night  
 Come on, give me your hand, comrade, we'll look at the window  
 Is the host asleep – is the housewife young]

The first verse could come from a classical haiku, just as it could be represented in *sumi-e*.<sup>184</sup> Japanese miniatures often set out to comply with Zen's espousal of "feeling with" nature, blending with an object of observation. The deep anthropomorphization of the spider is an exactly opposite procedure. Spiders were accorded features of voyeurs, which were further underlined by picaresque stylization<sup>185</sup> ("Come on, give me your hand"). The crude dialogue can be associated with numerous texts of Western literature (*Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, Shakespeare's comedies, Fielding's novels, etc.).<sup>186</sup> The poem may also distantly

184 *Sumi-e* painting is discussed in more detail in Part 7 of this book.

185 Apparently, the scholars who see *Haiku-images* as a volume free from stylization are wrong. See A. Krawczyk, "Widzialny porządek," p. 205).

186 A similar stylization drawing the reader's attention away from visual details is found in Urszula Kozioł's "haikuizing" poem:

w moim pokoju – zapewne spłoszony wichurą –  
 zagościł drobny żuczek z zamaszystym wąsem  
 musiałam wyprosić go za okno:  
 »nie mogę z panem dzielić ni stołu ni łóża«

evoke genre scenes from *senryū*<sup>187</sup> or *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints.<sup>188</sup> Tracking down numerous intertextual traces, we pass over the animalist image from the first verse. Few commonalities with haiku are found here, notwithstanding the fact that the poem’s focus is a small event, a playfully and affectionately captured scene from the natural world. The thing is that this scene is very opaque in its mode of expression, clothed in picaresque “pantaloons,” superbly familiar.

### C. Images Facing Each Other

While marked opposition or even conflict of images is quite a rare occurrence in *Haiku-images*, it is crucially important from the perspective of comparative studies. Let us have a look at the poem ‘Ważka’ [A Dragonfly] (H-a II):

Ważka w opisanu ucznia Bashō  
 Jest skrzydlatym strąkiem papryki  
 U nas oczyma ogromnymi jak żarna rzucone w trzciny

[Described by Bashō’s student, a dragonfly  
 Is a winged pod of pepper  
 Here, its eyes as huge as a quern tossed into reeds]

Grochowiak does not settle for straightforward transplantation of a foreign concept<sup>189</sup> – as a counterbalance, he offers a locally-specific image, heightened by sound effects (alliteration, vowel harmony), “heavy” (in terms of semantics), symbolic, yet fitting well with haiku’s sensorial schemes (a quern among reeds: figure–background). This vision, perhaps supported by a specific sense-experience,<sup>190</sup> becomes a pretext for an image-based cultural polemic. The light, “winged” concept of the Japanese is counterposed with what is heavy and made of stone. Big eyes-querns sound familiar, (pre)Slavic, but also – via the idiom – link to scare and fear. The search for a picture corresponding to a foreign concept, combined with the speaker’s emotional calm is a real test of transculturality. The manifold

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[A small beetle with a sweeping moustache – probably frightened by a gale – /visited my room /I had to show him the window: /“I can’t share the table or bed with you, sir”](from the sequence *Pestki deszczu VI*, in *Wielka pauza*, 1996; as quoted in U. Kozioł, *Fuga 1955–2010*, Wrocław, 2011, p. 396). The links between Kozioł’s poetry and haiku are discussed in more detail in Parts 2 and 5 of this book.

187 See Part 1 of this book.

188 See Part 7.

189 Grochowiak’s poem originated from this anecdote: one of Bashō’s students suggested a reverse arrangement (pull the wings from a dragonfly, and you get a pepper pod). The master did not approve of the poem (death of an insect!), then turned this process around without changing the essence of the concept.

190 See B. Mytych-Forajter, ‘Widmo dzieciństwa naprzeciw śmierci jest tak nikczemne,’ pp. 98–9.

dissimilarity of representations makes us aware of the great difficulty in achieving a mutual understanding.<sup>191</sup>

Grochowiak's 'Ważka' can be interpreted as a wider cultural diagnosis. A more precise diagnosis is provided in 'Zen – piąte' [Zen, 5] (H-i 5, XX):

Zen – lampo w której uwiązł motyl nocy  
 Trzepoce się a ja bez rąk  
 Jedynie wielkie obrzmiałe powieki poruszają się wolno  
 [Oh Zen – a lamp where a butterfly of the night got trapped  
 Fluttering about, and I have no arms  
 Only large swollen eyelids move slowly]

We are dealing here with two concurrent – helplessly separated – images. The poem is also the reverse of the two-plane, though not stratified, affirmative 'Wnuczę' (HdK II).<sup>192</sup> Here is a moth dying in a lampshade and a man's face with only heavy eyelids visible. This is followed by two types of movement: an uncontrolled, desperate flutter "for life" contrasted with steady, slow movements. Zen Buddhism, metaphorically identified with the deadly lamp, is extremely ambivalent for the speaker (and viewer):<sup>193</sup> the moth dies in "Zen's light" (is this

191 By way of comparison, considerably more subtle are some solutions by, for instance, Amy Lowell, delicately suggesting intercultural dialogues (dialogues quiet to the point of being barely audible):

'Circumstance'

Upon the maple leaves

The dew shines red,

But on the lotus blossom

It has the pale transparency of tears" (as quoted in S. Wąciór, *Modernist Mutations – The Morphology of the Imagist Poem: Context – Text – Intertext*, Lublin, 2003, p. 240).

Polish translation: "Zależnie od okoliczności // Na liściach klonu / Rosa połyskuje czerwawo, / Ale na kwiecie lotosu / Ma bladą przejrzystość łez" (transl. L. Engelking, as quoted in L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir*, p. 145).

192 Another highly interesting intertext here is also a poem by Adam Zagajewski, 'Moths' (*Ćmy*) (quoted in Czesław Miłosz (ed.), *A Book of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry*, Orlando, 1996, translated from the Polish by Renata Gorczynski, Benjamin Ivry, C. K. Williams, p. 19.).

Moths watched us through  
 the window. Seated at the table,  
 we were skewered by their lambent gazes,  
 harder than their shattering wings.

You'll always be outside, past the pane.

And we'll be here within,

more and more in. Moths watched us

through the window, in August.

193 Interestingly, in Grochowiak's verse, demons are described in terms similar to Zen and Dao (existing between emptiness and fullness, having no beginning and no end).

a warning to those who are headed for unknown light?). It is beyond good and evil, it is an acceptance of the world in its non-moral “suchness.” This attitude cannot be easily attained by a Westerner directly confronted with suffering (even one so commonplace). Similarly, dramatic depictions are nowhere to be found in Japanese haiku,<sup>194</sup> yet this scene is even further removed from Grochowiak’s *turpizm*. The subject is helpless, not united with the object, not resigned to the situation. “Swollen eyelids move slowly” (which inevitably evokes associations with Grochowiak’s illness).<sup>195</sup> Alternatively, the observer does not act, does not undertake any rescue, does not interfere, as if he accepted the Daoist (and Zen) principle of acting by non-acting.<sup>196</sup>

#### D. *Parallel Verses*

Numerous poems in *Haiku-images* are devoid of a visual centre, neither are they bicentric sensorial nodes. Instead, these are multiple-image units structured according to a variety of principles – clusters of scenes which are intriguingly related, yet do not constitute one “vortex.”

##### D.1. “Tri-haiku-ness:” *Grochowiak’s Renga*

A significant part of Grochowiak’s collection is made up of miniatures that could be “cut into” three stand-alone poems. Each of those newly independent verses would be relatively close to haiku. Brought together in one composition, these verses clearly “sense” each other and are linked on various – often strictly sensorial – levels. Such arrangements can be considered Grochowiak’s unique equivalents of the *renga* linked verse:<sup>197</sup> here are “linked verses” on a set topic,<sup>198</sup> oscillating around a similar mood or impression. No direct connection occurs here; sometimes, however, “unlikely” seams conceal modern epiphanies.

In *Haiku-images* we read the following in ‘Pszczola’ [A Bee] (H-i 1, VII):

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194 Let us recall this poem:

soon to die,  
yet no sign of it:  
a cicada’s cry

Bashō (as quoted in D. L. Barnhill, *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 114, Polish translation: *Poezja*, 1975, No 1, p. 37). For more on this topic, see Parts 1 and 5 of this book.

195 See J. Petelenz-Łukasiewicz, ‘Ów chłopiec niezwykły,’ in *Dusza czyścowa*, p. 27.

196 See Part I of the book.

197 Maj and Michałowski view this differently – see P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 93. See also footnote 35 in this part of the book.

198 For more on *renga*, see Part 1 of the book. In Japan linked poems would be written by one poet as well – see M. Melanowicz, ‘*Renga*,’ in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, eds. G. Gazda, S. Tynecka-Makowska, Kraków, 2006, p. 633.

Pasieki na wrzosach dają miód ciemny jak kalafonia  
 Pszczoły zbierają na twych warkoczach garnuszki poranku  
 Pszczoła zagubiona w bezkwieciu zimy pije śnieg

[Apiaries amid heathers give honey dark as rosin  
 Bees collect pots of the morning from your braids  
 A bee lost in flowerless winter drinks snow]

These three markedly sensorial, symbolistically vague scenes correspond with each other in some way, although they are not linked together by haiku's unity of time and place.<sup>199</sup> The first image foregrounds an apiary in a heath, with honey and rosin adding to the poem's multisensory quality. In the last verse, the image of a solitary insect amongst immense whiteness could just as well be depicted "in a Japanese manner." The middle verse brings oneiric, metaphorical vision giving the impression of freshness, brightness, and sweetness. This meaning-laden dark (like rosin?) poem is brightened by flashes of approximate senses, intertwining senses related to the words "bee," "honey," "pot," and "flower." Elsewhere, in 'Znowu' [Again] (H-i 2, IV) Grochowiak writes:

Słodka jest miłość dojrzałej męskości  
 Paź królowej zasypał całą kotlinę pyłem ze skrzydeł  
 Pod lasem zbierano siano jeszcze wilgotne od drzemki ślimaków

[Sweet is the love of mature manhood  
 The swallowtail bestrewed the whole valley with his wings' dust  
 Hay, still wet from snails' naps, was collected near the forest.]

This composition could be described as a juxtaposition of subtly symbolist haiku (the second and third verses), preceded by a suggestive, vague introduction (the first verse). Of key importance here is the "sweet maturity" introduced in the first line. The idyllic, "abundant" images again seem to "sense" each other, although they were not joined together via solid semantic bridges. The oscillation between coherence and the layered structure compels one to continue re-reading the poems, search for overlooked connections, and savour sensorial images themselves.

Another sensorial "flash" between scenes is clearly visible in the poem entitled precisely 'Błysk' [Flash] (H-i 1, XVII):

O słoneczny brzeżku spoza gradowej chmury  
 O jesienna drogo wśród srebrnych brzeźniaków  
 O gilotyno całowana przez emerytowanego oprawcę

[Oh, the sunny lining from beyond the hail cloud  
 Oh, the autumn road among silver birch groves  
 Oh, the guillotine kissed by a retired torturer]

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199 For the atemporality in *Haiku-images*, see A. Dworniczak, *Poeta wobec formy*, p. 153.

The first two verses are very much in keeping with the poetics of the Japanese form. A detail from the natural world is set off against a monochromatic background. Nothing disturbs the reader’s reception – neither the accumulation of visual elements nor the speaker’s emotions – yet the anaphoricity, as well as the strong, rhetorical invocatory quality, move the text away from haiku, giving prominence to its tripartite structure and “Occidentality.” The last verse brings a radical change of diction alongside a hint as to what additional common denominator can be found linking these three seemingly unrelated scenes (the link is much less obvious than in Pound’s ‘In a Station of the Metro’). As Michałowski writes:

the punch line [actually the third image] calls for the re-reading and reinterpretation of the preceding scenes: the “autumn road” is a popular cognomen of old age, while the “silver birch groves” belong in equal measure to the landscape and the symbolism of death, both in terms of colour (“silver” is an emblem of death, both in coffin decoration and in the poetry of Czechowicz), and the type of wood from which grave crosses are made.<sup>200</sup>

The verses of the poem in question also exhibit visual kinship. In the first one, the glow is shown against a background of a big patch of darkness, in the second one, the autumn road manifestly stands out from silvery birches, in the third one, we have a bright, shiny element again: this time it is a man-made object carrying connotations of an altogether different type. The text was divided into three monochromatic images employing only light (the eponymous flash) and shadow. The semantic and sensorial linkage between them is somewhat tenuous, unexpected yet clear.

Now let us have a look at ‘Zima’ [Winter] (H-a XVI):

Strzała mrozu wyskoczyła wysoko ponad choinę  
Gile połknęły rajskie jabłuszka i milczą  
Lubię zimę kiedy cmentarz przeobraża w masyw płaskowyżu

[An arrow of frost darted high above pine branches  
Bullfinches swallowed paradise apples and are quiet  
I like winter when it transforms the cemetery into a massive plateau]

These three ascetic images calling to mind the Japanese *sabi* (mood of sadness, solitariness)<sup>201</sup> paintings are held together by the season referenced in the title. Imagery also seems to have a Japanese quality: despondent birds on a branch (calling to mind Yosa Buson’s famous painting of *Ravens* – see fig. 9), a snow-covered plateau of a cemetery, a soaring hardy winter tree. These might be three components of the same landscape or three scenes taken from different space-times.

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200 See P. Michałowski, ‘Barokowe korzenie haiku,’ p. 18. For the symbolism of silver in Grochowiak’s work, see P. Łuszczkiewicz, *Książę erotyki*, p. 34.

201 See Part 1 of the book.



The relationships between images occasionally are significantly relaxed, as in 'Zwierzyniec' [A Menagerie] (H-i 3, II)

Siwiejący bocian – nie biały lecz siwy  
 Niska granatowa chmura – nie burzowa lecz pełna zmęczenia  
 Tygrys przyjął twoją pieszczotę z mylącym pomrukiem ulgi

[A greying stork – not white but grey  
 A low blue cloud – not stormy but full of exhaustion  
 The tiger accepted your caress with the baffling growl of relief]

Grochowiak did not equip these images with a sensorial background just as he did not embed them in any specific reality. The first two seem structurally and semantically akin. As a matter of fact, the whole text does not go beyond the level of an autotelic reflection on the choice of proper epithets. Neutral terms ("white stork," "storm cloud") turn out to be insufficient. Phrases such as "greying stork" (ageing or sad) or "cloud full of exhaustion" evoke entirely different connotations (it might also be noted that in the case of the adjective "stormy" associations are not easy to come by).<sup>202</sup> The poem can be read as a very subtle protest against the strict rules of the genre. While personification of natural beings was not unknown in classical haiku, mysterious anthropomorphization was out of the question. The last verse – vague, disturbing, and at the same time the most sensorial – completely departs from the clarity of haiku, forcing us to look for the semantic key in regions completely different from Japanese haiku. There is no more room for sensorial "flashes" here.

### D.2 "Three Incipits"

Not infrequently, the three images found in a poem seem to be three randomly juxtaposed incipits of different texts – as if Grochowiak gave too much credence to the quasi-haiku recipes put forward by Piskor and Paźniewski, who compared the perception of haiku to reading "a table of contents in a poetry book, [...] titles of poems that have not yet been written, [...] random phrases found by accident on a scrap of a damaged manuscript."<sup>203</sup> Some images do not communicate, "do not see each other," at best reluctantly revealing a few similar senses. The examination of texts of this kind in the light of inter- and transculturality (with respect to classical haiku and to Imagism) turns out to be much more difficult than the analysis of the above-discussed poems.

Ryszard Matuszewski writes about Grochowiak:

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202 See the analysis of Grochowiak's 'Dialog' [Dialogue], where "even the clouds seem to freeze because they are defined by an adjective which may just as well refer to a frozen human body (they are, as one might recall, *blue*)," A. Skrendo, 'Poezja afirmacji,' p. 277.

203 S. Piskor, W. Paźniewski, 'W poszukiwaniu siebie,' p. 39.

[he] always made the most of the expressive qualities of words and images, exhibiting a degree of nonchalance about their semantic precision. He always attacked with an image, its vivid expression, whereas the conceptual import of a text was not easy for him to bring out. Grochowiak readily exercised his poetic right to understatement and in general no one blamed him for this. So he actually was always an Imagist at heart, and in his haiku nothing changed in this respect. Most of them are suggestive, vivid fantasies, with occasionally subtly symbolic undertones.<sup>204</sup>

Contrary to Matuszewski, I assert that the absence of a clear connection between images in a poem in principle precludes placing texts in the perspective of Imagism and its search for coherent image vortices. We can hardly “get the feel of an image” (as Grochowiak would prescribe at the beginning of his poetic activity),<sup>205</sup> when each and every verse breaks away from the sensorial and semantic universe we have just entered.

Let us have a look at the miniatures themselves. Occasionally three verses (usually verbless) seem to be nuclei of three unrelated haiku or, alternatively, a beginning of a longer poem which will later gather and connect loose motifs. Sometimes some scenes are vaguely linked by scraps of narration. Most often, prominence is given to the poetics of symbolism (mysteriousness, understatement) and oneiric imagery, fashioned from semantic gaps between verses-images, and from the very internal structure of utterances:

‘Pies’ (H-i 1, XIII)

Delikatny ból żeglarza w bocianim gnieździe  
Mokasynowy taniec Eskimosa z córką w igloo  
Raniony pies który z trawy wyluskuje potrzebne mu zioła

[A DOG

Dull pain of a sailor in a stork’s nest  
Moccasin dance of an Eskimo with his daughter in an igloo  
A wounded dog picking medicinal herbs from the grass]

‘Woda’ (H-i 2, VII)

Mędrzec z wielkim owocem kądzieli  
Szyba w ramie nieznanego okna  
Balkon oderwany od willi i lecący na przestrzał przez morza

[WATER

A wise man with a great distaff fruit  
A pane in the frame of an unknown window

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204 R. Matuszewski, review: S. Grochowiak, ‘Haiku-images,’ *Polonistyka*, 1979, No. 2, p. 144. See also S. Grochowiak, ‘Jedno “spojrzenie” [One Glimpse],’ *Poezja*, 1986, No. 10/11, p. 61; B. Kowczewicz, ‘Idę gorący po tłach pokostniałych,’ p. 39.

205 See the beginning of section 4 (discussion of the poem ‘Chmura’).

A balcony broken off from a villa and flying across the sea]

'Zwierzyniec' (H-i 3, II)

Czy biegacze dobiegną do kałuży błota

Czy dym z jedliny utworzy chmurę z piorunem

Czy już połknęłaś i strawiłaś diament który ci ofiarowałem do pocięcia lustra

[Will the racers run into a mud puddle?

Will the smoke from fir branches form a cloud with lightning

Have you swallowed and digested the diamond I gave you to cut the mirror]

## 5. The Reverse of Visuality

### A. Narrativeness

While narrativeness does not have to exclude imagery altogether, typically it significantly complicates sensorial systems ('Poranek' [Morning], H-i 2, V; 'Sad' [Orchard], H-i 1, XII). When substantially expanded, it tends to considerably move poems away from haiku poetics. Now and then, in Grochowiak's volume, one finds poems focused exclusively on action,<sup>206</sup> with distinctly symbolic or historiosophical overtones. Then visuality recedes far into the background, and hardly any traces of the sensoriality akin to Japanese seventeen-syllable poems can be found. Haiku-centred analyses are no longer justified:

'Historia' (H-i 3, XVIII)

Korzenie rozsadziły ziemię i wytrysło źródło

Był bój o fontannę i studnię

Niebo sprowadziło powódź

[HISTORY

Roots broke up the soil and a spring gushed out

A battle for a fountain and a well was waged

The sky brought a flood]

'Zen – czwarte' (H-i 4, X)

Zen – miasto które zburzyli barbarzyńcy

Potem zajęli się nim ludzie rokoka

Mieli za wąskie palce – wznieśli misterne płacze altówek

[ZEN, 4

Zen – a city ruined by barbarians

Then rococo men took care of it

Their fingers were too thin – they raised intricate cries of violas]

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206 P. Michałowski, 'Haiku,' pp. 100–3.

‘Lisy’ (H-a XV)

Lisy niosą zarazę do wsi

Zarażeni siadają do stołu wigilijnego

Przy dzieleniu opłatka najstarszy kąsa pierwszy

[FOXES

Foxes carry the plague to the village

The infected sit down at the Christmas Eve table

At the sharing of the wafer, the oldest is the first to bite]

‘Wypadek’ (H-i 4, VI)

Archanioł wpadł pierwszy do ścieku

Dobytano go ostrożnie – narzędziami dentysty

I sznurem od gwizdka generała policji

[AN ACCIDENT

The archangel was the first to fall into the sewer

He was extracted carefully – with dental instruments

And a police general’s whistle string]

## B. Gnomicity

*Haiku-images* also brings poems resembling aphorisms or epigrams.<sup>207</sup> For the most part, they are devoid of clear sensorial systems<sup>208</sup> and are not concerned with presenting fragments of reality. Apart from their relative concision and the speaker’s aloofness, they have nothing in common with haiku:

*Sokrates* (H-i 3, XV)

Świat jest bliski zniszczenia – pytanie

Świat jest bliski zniszczenia – odpowiedź

A przecież Sokrates mlaskał pijąc cykutę

[SOCRATES

The world is close to destruction – the question

The world is close to destruction – the answer

After all Socrates slurped while drinking hemlock]

207 “The uncovered rhetoric, supported by images merely for the purpose of exemplification, makes Grochowiak’s haiku resemble the maxim, parable, proverb.” (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 104). See also Part 6 of the book.

208 Except for the poem ‘Pogarda’ [Contempt] (H-i 3, XIV) which illustrates a maxim with an image:

Nie wolno mi pogardzać człowiekiem bez duszy

Perłopław leży na piasku bez owocu morza

Ominął cierpienie – ma więc poznać okrucieństwo mej stopy?

[I cannot hold in contempt a man without a soul

A pearl oyster lies on sand without sea’s food

It avoided suffering – should it know the cruelty of my foot?].

'Teatr' (H-a V)

Od dawna uważnie patrzymy sobie w oczy  
 Wilk owca i ja  
 Kto poruszy się pierwszy – podniesie żelazną kurtynę

[THEATRE

We've been looking into each other's eyes intently for a long time  
 A wolf, a sheep and me  
 Whoever moves first, will raise the iron curtain]

'Wskazania' (H-i 5, VII)

Dół – zasypać  
 Rygiel – odsunąć  
 Życ – pójść po laskę do szatni Zapłacić gromnicą

[INSTRUCTIONS

Fill up a hole  
 Unbolt the door  
 Live – pick up the walking stick from the cloakroom Pay with a blessed thunder  
 candle]

'Lew' (H-a XI)

Lew u dzieci natury jest tyle bogiem  
 Ile u mieszczan mosiężną kołatką  
 Och jak ci burzuje lubią potrząsać

[LION

For children of nature the lion is god insofar  
 As it is a brass door knocker for townspeople  
 Oh, how these bourgeois love striking it]

## 6. Struggles of the Modernist

Anna Nasiłowska views Grochowiak as a “postmodernist avant la lettre, at least in Poland.”<sup>209</sup> As she writes: “In his poetry, the whole has already fallen apart, what is left are various rather unaesthetic fragments: impulses of rapture, revulsion, outrage, protest.”<sup>210</sup>

Nevertheless, *Haiku-images* is clearly an attempt to put the whole back together. This can be seen in the book's highly complex, linear composition, governed by

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209 A. Nasiłowska, 'Ciemne i jasne wiersze Grochowiaka' [Grochowiak's Dark and Bright Poems], in *Sporne postaci polskiej literatury współczesnej: następne pokolenie* [Contentious Figures of Contemporary Polish Literature: the Next Generation], eds. A. Brodzka, L. Burska, Warszawa, 1995, p. 27.

210 A. Nasiłowska, 'Ciemne i jasne...'

complicated numerical relations.<sup>211</sup> The poet in a way conducts, seemingly very methodically (the precise arrangement, “zens” concluding separate units), philosophical and stylistic tests. By no means is he consumed by a naive vision of redemption through strangeness (for example promising *satori*).<sup>212</sup> The sensoriality and methods of its linguistic articulation can be kept, not without difficulty, “within tight reins of the Orient” (H-i, 3, VII). This is evident in the analyses of numerous “vortex-like” (section “The Visual Node”) or “tri-haiku” (section “‘Tri-haiku-ness:’ Grochowiak’s Renga’) image patterns. Grochowiak quietly, judiciously tests the frontiers. While closely following his own cultural directives, he checks where haiku-inspired brevity – and attempts to embrace East-Asian spirituality – can lead a European poem.

The poet approached the task of artistic exploration of novelty – and tailoring his own tradition to it – very seriously. (Sometimes, however, he let himself be carried away by the “swift horse of Europe,” H-i 3, VII, “easing up on” his peculiarly self-censoring experiment.) In numerous poems, the world depicted is not obscured by the representing world<sup>213</sup> (but it is primarily the latter that creates the modern epiphany). In the volume in question, Grochowiak dispensed with many of his poetic tools, blunting the edges of stylistic devices, at least partly eschewing excursions to the affective interior. He rarely made use of stylizations. After all, modernist art “devotes its ‘little technical expertise’ [...] to present the fact that the unrepresentable exists.”<sup>214</sup> *Haiku-images* is not a proof of facile cultural eclecticism, but an attempt to reach points of possible commonalities – and to point out spaces that cannot be bridged in any way. Finally, it is an attempt at a difficult synthesis, also philosophical.<sup>215</sup> A synthesis that includes the acceptance of otherness, and even approval of twofold division where commonality is not possible (spectacularly illustrated by the above-discussed ‘Zen – piąte,’ H-i 5, XX). Finally, *Haiku-images* is also an emotional synthesis – calming down, tiredness, an affirmative (and at the same time resigned) acceptance of the world.

The volume-epilogue is a book with a rather elitist strain, one that is far from “vulgarizing” the language, and invokes models known only by the few. A book

211 Michałowski writes about “the impression of harmony characteristic of old poetry books (like *Il Canzoniere* by Petrarch), which [however] is nowhere to be found in subject matter and poetics” (P. Michałowski, *Haiku*, p. 92).

212 See, for example, J. Łukasiewicz, ‘Wstęp,’ in S. Grochowiak, *Wybór poezji*, pp. XL–XLI.

213 To travesty (and reverse semantically) the formula used by Łuszczkiewicz (*Książę erotyku*, p. 120).

214 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester, 1984, p. 78.

215 “There is no ... refuge in imitation or a complete return to one’s own tradition; there is only synthesis” (P. Michałowski, *Haiku*, p. 91).

where Grochowiak's "thick lustre"<sup>216</sup> shines with exceptional brightness. The volume surely is not devoid of artistic (and philosophical) shortcomings, featuring combinations so hermetic that they are almost uninterpretable. Of course, Grochowiak remained the great "heterogenist." Some of his poems are linked to haiku via a metatextual cue (the book's title) and the three-verse structure. Yet in this furthest literary journey the poet most passionately, most seriously reconciled himself to the human sensorium and the most widely conceived universe of culture. And also to the very universe of nature. An animal, object, and plant are exquisitely sensorially described, but they are also often a starting point for cultural transgressions of haiku poetics. Sometimes they acquire symbolic, oneiric, metaphorical meanings which ostensibly were left out from this collection. Finally, *Haiku-images* not infrequently transcends haiku taboos, especially ones related to depicting death. However, the concrete detail is invariably visible, tangible, experienced.

Did Grochowiak put forward "his own modification of the [haiku] genre,"<sup>217</sup> as Michałowski once claimed? The poems from his posthumous volume cannot be defined as haiku – even as a heavily modified form of the Japanese form. These texts are far removed from the Occidental (and even more so from the Oriental) prototype of the genre. However, all their departures, approximations and oscillations turn out to be highly interesting. Comparative analyses are permitted primarily by the construction of the speaker (who does not seek refuge in the interior of tangled feelings, at best displaying... tenderness) and visual paths. The adherence to typical sensorial schemes of haiku substantially determines the clarity of references to the Japanese genre – to a much larger extent than the syllable (or even verse) pattern, the focus on natural elements, the thematization of the Far East, and the postulate of the unity of the subject and object (which is difficult to implement and measure). It seems that without a distinct sensorial image or series of images one cannot talk about any connection with the Japanese model. The bigger the departure from the one-image vortex, the further we get from haiku and any discernible poetic polemic with this form and its philosophical background. The abandonment of crisp imagery very often reveals (or even triggers) ambiguities, the obscurity of metaphors, and enigmatic senses, which were typical of Grochowiak's earlier poetry.

Let us go back again to strictly genological issues. Admittedly Grochowiak indeed created – on the basis of a few mistranslated buzzwords and the catchy name – the *haiku-image* form. This is a personal variation on the haiku form and

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216 To quote Marian Grześczak's formula (M. Grześczak, 'Grochowiak w olśniewającej pełni,' p. 97).

217 The phrase from Michałowski's article 'Barokowe korzenie haiku' [Baroque Roots of Haiku], in *Akcent* (p. 10) and in the volume *W ciemną mą ojczyznę* (p. 137). Alternatively, in *Miniatura poetycka* the phrase "specific model" of the genre appears (p. 86).

Imagism, a consistently employed technique of piling up of elaborate polysemous images,<sup>218</sup> gradually constructed or juxtaposed.<sup>219</sup> I examined it carefully in the sections on image vortices (‘The Visual Node’), conflicting images (‘Images Facing Each Other’), and parallel verses (‘Parallel Verses’). (I do not label as *haiku-images* the gnomic texts and ones focusing only on narrativeness). Through Grochowiak’s work, compositions of this kind became known in Polish literary and literary-theoretical circles specifically as *haiku-images*.<sup>220</sup>

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218 Obviously, Grochowiak did not come up with a sure-fire recipe for an orientalizing poem. In a Przybosiian vein, one could say that in order to recreate such poetics, one would have to rewrite the text.

219 Haiku and juxtaposition are discussed at great length in J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 76–9. One may get the impression that for Johnson every juxtaposition occurring in a modern poem is proof of its proximity to haiku poetry.

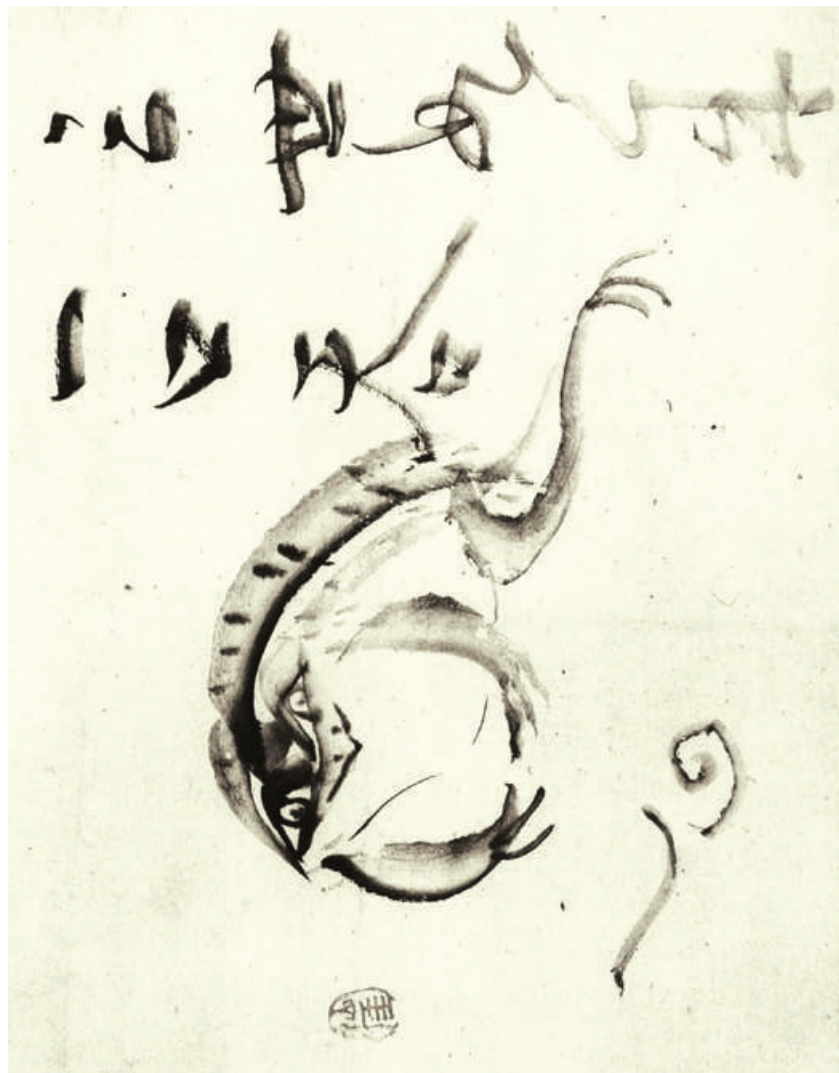
220 However, the literary “progeny” of *Haiku-images* does not seem particularly numerous. Without doubt, Tadeusz Wyrwa-Krzyżański could be seen here as Grochowiak’s direct heir. His collection *Haiku. Cegiełki* [Haiku. Contributions] (afterword by J. Kasper, L. Żuliński, Piła, 2008) is clearly inspired by the poetics of *Haiku-images*. In the sequence *Michalinki* [Little Michelles] (pp. 49–56, quotes from pp. 50, 49) one finds tenderness and imagery similar to ones in *Haiku dla Kingi*:

‘Nagroda’	[A REWARD
Jedną, wyciągniętą ku mnie rączką,	With one little hand extended towards me,
podnosi sufit – nie chcę, to ona	she is raising the ceiling – I don’t want to, she
pogrzechocze	will rattle
berłem słońca	the sun’s sceptre]

‘Urodziny’	[BIRTHDAY
To nic na mojej ręce, to wszystko, to	That nothing on my hand, that’s all, that’s
Michalinka; nie może, a podniosła	Little Michelle; she cannot, yet she raised
Wszystkie sufity i ściany.	All ceilings and walls.]

See also W. Jaworski, *Czerwony motocykl* [Red Motorbike], Warszawa, 1980 (esp. p. 53); K. Agams, *Chorał kniei* [Chorale of the Forest], Kraków, 1996 (esp. p. 29).





**Illustration 5.** Sengai Gibon, *Frog and Snail*, ink on paper, ca. 1800 (as quoted in G. C. Calza, *Japan Style*, Phaidon, London–New York, 2007).



**Illustration 6.** Stills from *Brzóska Poetry Film*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLjHTqGxeYY>, accessed May 15, 2015



**Illustration 7.** Stills from *Brzóska Poetry Film*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLjHTqGxeYY>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzWFZZsQ7c4>, accessed May 15, 2015



**Illustration 8a, b.** Covers of the two-volume edition of *Haiku* by Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz (Narodowe Centrum Kultury, Warszawa, 2012)

## II. Haiku-Blague or “Freestyle Haiku?” The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz

Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz for years, “with painstaking consistency,”<sup>221</sup> has written, recited, performed (paratheatrical experiments), sung, and discussed his own poetry, which he invariably categorizes as haiku. I consider his work to be one of the two extremities or culminations in the history of Polish fascination with haiku (At the opposite end of the scale is Grochowiak’s *Haiku-images*). Brzósiewicz’s multi-media activity is a vital, if not a bit distorting, mirror of modern day’s interest in cultural foreignness.

The career of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, “the haikuist” (*haikowiec*),<sup>222</sup> began in 1986, during the activity (1986–92) of the poetry group *Złali Mi Się Do Środka* [They Wetted Inside Me] associated with the Polish avant-garde group *Totart* and publishing in the influential literary magazine *bruLion*. The young Brzóska-Brzósiewicz published two volumes: *Haiku* (1992) and *Złote myśli psa* [Pearls of Wisdom of a Dog], (1994). Over the following few years (1992–1999) he recited “two haiku and one stupid joke” on a television programme *Lalamido* (Polish public TV channel TVP2), and his poems would appear on the *Teleexpress Junior* programme (1999–2000, TVP1). However, the most interesting of Brzósiewicz’s television episodes is probably *Brzóska Show* (1994–1996, TVP2), featuring, amongst other things, a film version of Brzósiewicz’s poetic miniatures (*Haiku. Brzóska Poetry Film*): short animated and live-action films preceded by a recital of a poem by the poet in very strong make-up.<sup>223</sup> The manner of recital (e.g. chanting “in Japanese,” emphatic shouting, etc.), “dress-ups” and the grotesqueness of his films, extremely illustrative in comparison to poems, served to heighten the impression of absurdity.

Brzóska-Brzósiewicz did not neglect more traditional media. Between 2003 and 2008 *Haiku Brzóska* [Brzóska’s Haiku] were published on the *Przekrój* magazine’s back page dedicated to miscellany humour.<sup>224</sup> In 2006, Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, in collaboration with Stanisław Soyka, Marcel Adamowicz, and

221 S. Soyka, [Wstęp], in D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku*, Vol. 1, Warszawa, 2012, p. 7.

222 Brzóska considers the term “haikowiec” the most felicitous Polish appellation of a haiku poet. (<http://www.polskieradio.pl/7/15/Artykul/766678,Soyka-o-fascynacji-najkrotszapoezja-swiata>, accessed August 23, 2013).

223 Episodes of *Brzóska Show* can be found on YouTube. For other visual incarnations of haiku, see Part 7 of the book.

224 Interestingly, Brzóska was recognized as one of the “best 12 authors of the magazine in the years 1945–2005” alongside Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, Jerzy Szaniawski, Ludwik Jerzy Kern, Zbigniew Lengren, and Sławomir Mrożek (<http://instytutksiazki.pl/wydarzenia,aktualnosc,20962,happening-dariusza-brzoski-brzoskiewicz.html>, accessed November 19, 2013).

Wojciech Chołaściński, recorded the bilingual (Polish-Japanese) album *Haiku fristajl*.<sup>225</sup> From 2003 onwards, Brzósiewicz’s poems have been presented by various radio stations, also with the instrumental accompaniment by Stanisław Soyka (the *Haiku Klasik Poetry* project),<sup>226</sup> they have also been the subject of radio discussions and analyses.<sup>227</sup> On 15 March 2013, the Klancyk Theatre (“Klancyk! z Brzóska”) staged the show *Haiku Improwizowane* [Improvised Haiku], based on texts by Brzóska-Brzósiewicz. The artist promotes his work through meetings with readers, happenings,<sup>228</sup> haiku workshops or concerts of the duo Brzóska de Paulus (Brzóska-Brzósiewicz and Paweł Paulus Mazur).<sup>229</sup> Finally,

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225 Brzóska (D. Brzósiewicz), Emce Kwadrat (M. Adamowicz), Sójka (S. Soyka), Samplaire (W. Chołaściński), *Haiku fristajl*, Polskie Radio 2006 (the album was made between 2000 and 2005). Marcel Adamowicz was the one singing in Japanese. In 2005, Polish Prime Minister Marek Belka presented the album to Japan’s Imperial Couple; reportedly the record met with interest of the donees (<http://www.polskieradio.pl/10/501/Artykul/832413,BrzoskaBrzoskiewicz-poeta-haiku>, accessed August 23, 2013). Music videos for the songs ‘James Bąd’ and ‘Kaziu na wakacjach’ are available on YouTube.

226 Radiostacja (2003–2005), Polskie Radio BIS (2006), Polskie Radio Pogram 3 (2008), Polskie Radio Program I (2013). The broadcasts were typically scheduled for the summer months, which probably was dictated by a conviction that these short poems performed with instrumental accompaniment were a lightweight holiday entertainment.

227 For example, in 2013: in Polskie Radio Program I (*Kultura w Radiowej Jedynce* – M. Mikołajczuk and D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, S. Soyka, B. Śniecikowska, 20 January, 2013 – <http://www.polskieradio.pl/7/15/Artykul/766678,Soyka-o-fascynacji-najkrotszapoezja-swiata>) and on Polskie Radio Program IV (*Kontrkultura* – the programme *O haiku w Czwórcę*, D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, P. Paulus Mazur, April 21, 2013, <http://www.polskieradio.pl/10/501/Artykul/832413,BrzoskaBrzoskiewicz-poeta-haiku>, accessed August 23, 2013).

228 “Haiku dla Warszawy – zmierzch” [Haiku for Warszawa – Dawn], Warszawa, June 12, 2008 (<http://instytutksiazki.pl/wydarzenia,aktualnosci,20962,happening-dariusza-brzoski-brzoskiewicza.html>, accessed November 19, 2013); the earlier incarnation of this happening was an installation in Park Świętokrzyski in Warszawa (July 2–5, 2006).

229 *Haiku Brzóska Show* is a “combination of Brzóska’s haiku reading, a concert of the Brzóska de Paulus band, a vernissage of Paweł Paulus Mazur’s graphic art, along with a screening of films and TV sketches and nonsense humour episodes of the ‘Brzóska Show’” (<http://www.nck.pl/artykuly/100640.html>, accessed August 28, 2013). Brzóska and Mazur’s shows took place, to name a few venues, in Warszawa (*Haiku Brzóska Show*, March 22, 2013, Klub Komediiowy Chłodna), Sopot (September 1, 2011, Spatif; December 11, 2011, Zatoka Sztuki), at OFF Festival in Katowice (2011); at the “Salon Ciekawej Książki” in Łódź (December 9, 2013). On September 23, 2011 a meeting took place at Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Łaźnia (Centre for Contemporary Art) in Gdańsk, “Mistycy – literaci – wariaci”

Brzósiewicz’s poetry has appeared in extensive editions, in elegant hardcovers. 2008 saw the publication of the volume *Haiku Brzóska*<sup>230</sup> (367 pages published under the imprint of “nie pytaj” [do not ask]), four years later the Polish National Centre for Culture (NCK, Narodowe Centrum Kultury) issued, as part of the series “Ojczysty – dodaj do ulubionych,” two volumes of Brzósiewicz’s *Haiku* (totalling 718 pages).<sup>231</sup>

Brzósiewicz’s work during the time of “bruLion” and just after its discontinuation provoked frequent and varied controversy. Today it seems to have undergone a perceptive “settling down,” as evidenced by the considerably more favourable (but also more superficial) opinions of critics, and finally, by the very publication, on coated paper (!), of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s collected works<sup>232</sup> by the National Centre for Culture.

Over the course of almost thirty years, the artist’s poetics underwent steady evolution. The “turpist” depictions of the commonplace (having little in common with *bruLion*’s O’Harism) from his debut volume were very quickly

[Mystics – Literati – Madmen]. In 2013 Brzósiewicz ran haiku workshops at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (see <http://www.polskieradio.pl/10/501/Artykul/832413,BrzoskaBrzoskiewicz-poeta-haiku>, accessed August 23, 2013).

- 230 D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku*, introduction by M. Świetlicki, Gdańsk, 2007. The volume has a tastefully designed cover with a red dot in the middle (misleadingly suggesting Japanese motifs).
- 231 D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku*, vols. 1–2, introductions by K. Dudek, S. Soyka, M. Świetlicki, Warszawa, 2012. One has to appreciate the excellent cover design (which I discuss at the end of the chapter) and the fine (plain) typography. However, the opinions offered in the introduction by the NCK Director Krzysztof Dudek are shocking (especially in view of the name of the series and the dignity of the institution issuing and promoting the publication). Dudek wrongly claims that Brzósiewicz’s poems were included in the “anthology of Polish haiku published in 2001 under the editorship of Czesław Miłosz” (K. Dudek, [Introduction], in D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku*, Vol. 1, p. 6). Naturally, what Dudek had in mind was *Antologia polskiego haiku* edited by Ewa Tomaszewska (Warszawa, 2001), while the collection of haiku translations by Miłosz (*Cz. Miłosz, Haiku*, Kraków, 1992) has nothing to do with Brzósiewicz’s poetry. Inspired by Dudek, numerous websites devoted to promoting culture have repeated this error. Equally puzzling is the treatment of Brzósiewicz’s poetry in Dudek’s introduction (discussed in further detail in the main text). What is more, some poems are duplicated across the volumes, while the absence of a table of contents and index is a major drawback.
- 232 This is how the two-volume *Haiku* could be treated, this intuition being confirmed by the author himself (<http://www.polskieradio.pl/10/501/Artykul/832413,BrzoskaBrzoskiewicz-poeta-haiku>, accessed August 23, 2013).

extended with various types of linguistic acrobatics, and finally, the poet almost completely abandoned gloomy genre scenes for aphorisms distorting verbal clichés, "flash-like" historical and historiographical diagnoses as well as low-key poetic tableaux.<sup>233</sup>

An avalanche of new poems and media actions followed. Critics found it hard to keep up with the artist's activity, or perhaps simply lost interest in his multi-media work. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile presenting here a handful of comments made over the last twenty years by researchers and reviewers.

In 1996, Jarosław Klejnocki and Jerzy Sosnowski defined Brzósiewicz's achievements as "minimalist postlinguistic poetry," "nihilistic play along the lines of Neo-Dada."<sup>234</sup> In *Parnas bis* (1995) we read that Brzósiewicz "writes very short absurd haiku or banalist aphorisms ... [and] is referred to [by] more ambitious critics as a symbol of *bruLion*'s downfall."<sup>235</sup> As Zbigniew Bieńkowski asserted (in 1993): "There are poetry books, say the volumes by Filas<sup>236</sup> or Brzósiewicz, that are very easy to sling mud at. Stupid haiku vogue. ... A dead end."<sup>237</sup> Marek Zaleski declared in the same debate: "'Dariusz 'Brzóska' Brzósiewicz's horseplay is to me a poor imitation of Jacek Kleyff's linguistic and social caricatures from the time of the Salon Niezależnych group."<sup>238</sup> Another participant in the discussion, Grażyna Borkowska, stated, "In the case of Dariusz Brzósiewicz, provided we take more or less seriously everything he has written,<sup>239</sup> the tradition closest to him will be the poetry of Miron Białoszewski."<sup>240</sup> In turn, Ewa Tomaszewska, the

233 "bruLion poets are blind and deaf to nature" (a comment by Grażyna Borkowska – 'Nowi poeci ojczyzny' [New Poets of the Homeland]. A conversation between M. Zaleski, Z. Bieńkowski, and G. Borkowska, *Res Publica Nowa*, 1993, No. 6, p. 14).

234 J. Klejnocki, J. Sosnowski, *Chwilowe zawieszenie broni. O twórczości tzw. pokolenia "bruLionu" (1986–1996)*. (*Pierwsza monografia literatury 30-latków*) [Temporary Ceasefire. The Work of the so-called "bruLion" Generation (1986–1996). (The First Monograph on the Literature of 30-somethings)], Warszawa, 1996, pp. 97, 73–4.

235 *Parnas bis. Słownik literatury polskiej urodzonej po 1960 roku* [Parnas Encore. Dictionary of the Polish Literature Born after 1960], eds. K. Varga, P. Dunin-Wąsowicz, Warszawa, 1995, p. 16.

236 Probably he had in mind this volume published as part of *bruLion*'s "biblioteka" series: P. Filas, *Grapefruity w naszych domach* [Grapefruits in our Homes], Kraków–Warszawa, 1992. While some of Filas' miniatures can be read in the context of haiku, these poems are informed by an entirely different modality than Brzósiewicz's works – these are lyrical, metaphorical texts, far removed from haiku's record of reality (it is hard to say why it would be easy to "sling mud at" them). The poetic prose contained in the volume seems to be closer to haiku sensibility.

237 'Nowi poeci ojczyzny,' p. 16.

238 'Nowi poeci ojczyzny,' p. 16.

239 This tactic was rarely present in Brzóska's early work.

240 'Nowi poeci ojczyzny,' p. 14.



editor of *Antologia polskiego haiku* [Anthology of Polish Haiku], sees Brzósiewicz (as recently as 2001) “as the most original haiku writer of the young generation”<sup>241</sup> (this opinion has often been attributed to... Miłosz).<sup>242</sup> Finally, as Marcin Świetlicki asserts:

Any halfwit could write three lines following the principles of this old Eastern poetic art. And various halfwits have indeed tried, usually to little effect. Because sticking to rules is no big deal. The trick is to stick to the rules and create something new and unique on this basis. Only Brzóska has succeeded in doing exactly that. But why? Precisely because he has a sense of humour, imagination, expressive style and many other advantages. Because when you have genuine talent, you will never waste it. God did a good job of figuring it out.

In three lines

you can encompass the universe with its surroundings.

And Brzóska can do it.<sup>243</sup>

Similar compliments are lavished – yet without Świetlicki’s grace – by today’s culture columnists. Brzósiewicz is thus the “master of Polish haiku,”<sup>244</sup> combining “with extraordinary grace and sensitivity” “structure, language, content.”<sup>245</sup> This brief survey of “brzósology” can be rounded off with the words of Krzysztof Dudek, Director of the National Centre for Culture, from his introduction to the two-volume edition of *Haiku*: “the innovative style of Brzóska’s haiku, evoking multi-layered associations, fully captures [...] the melody, colour and uniqueness of the Polish language. This is how the Japanese poetic convention helps us savour the beauty of the Polish language!”<sup>246</sup>

241 E. Tomaszewska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie w kulturze i sztuce europejskiej,’ in *Antologia polskiego haiku*, p. 26.

242 See footnote 231 in this part of the book.

243 M. Świetlicki, [Wstęp], in Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku*, p. 5. Reprinted in the two-volume 2012 edition of *Haiku* (pp. 9–10 in both volumes).

244 F. Memches, ‘Zen i sztuka przyrządzania bigosu’ [Zen and the Art of Making Bigos], *Rzeczpospolita*, (the “Plus Minus” supplement), February 1, 2013, <http://www.rp.pl/artukul/976469.html?print=tak&p=0>, accessed August 23, 2013. According to Filip Memches, Brzóska-Brzósiewicz has been worthy of the highest honours since over 25 years.

245 O. Koehler, ‘Mistrz małych historii. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz to istny człowiek-orkiestra’ [Master of Little Stories. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz is a True All-rounder], <http://wnas.pl/artykuly/1035-mistrz-malych-historii-brzoska-brzoskiewicz-to-istnyczlowiek-orkiestra>, published February 13, 2013, accessed August 22, 2013.

246 K. Dudek, [Wstęp], p. 6.

That is how Brzósiewicz’s poetic conventions finally ended up being infantilised. Has Brzóska imperceptibly become a classic?<sup>247</sup> It seems that today nobody is eager to “tinker” (to use a Brzóskaian turn of phrase) with this poetry, the author tours Poland with concerts, reads his haiku on the radio, gives interviews – as an idolized legend of the counterculture. At the same time, Brzósiewicz’s poetry itself is actually an unfamiliar territory; ephemeral, polyphonic discussion on these poems should prompt their meticulous analysis. Especially as no researcher or critic has ever been seriously interested in the “haiku-ness” of this poetry. After all, the “Japanese poetic convention” is a highly characteristic intertext here.

Let us start by stating the obvious. Brzósiewicz’s poems are highly concise, mostly consisting of four lines<sup>248</sup> and just a dozen or so syllables.<sup>249</sup> The syllable count approximates the size of classical haiku (and of a single verse in miniatures in Grochowiak’s *Haiku-images*). The speaker consistently refrains from emotional exhibitionism. Is this where the similarities end?

### 1. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s Haiku (!)

I will start from the end, from Brzóska’s (predominantly) most recent poems, which indeed come close to haiku. Completely overlooked by critics, these texts are surprising in the light of the poet’s earlier works, especially those popularized in the media. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz can and increasingly wants to write in the following way:

‘Szedłem’	[I WALKED
Szedłem	I walked
Do ciebie	To you
Po ciepłych	Across warm
Jagodowych polach	Blueberry fields]
H 1, 108 <sup>250</sup>	

247 O. Koehler, ‘Mistrz małych historii.’ Wojciech Kuczok claims: “The poets and performers of the legendary group Złali mi się do środka have become classics of the avant-garde, also the literary one, so they deserve special celebration” (<http://2012.off-festival.pl/pl/2011/news,zapraszamy-do-kawiarni-literackiej,225.html>, accessed November 25, 2013).

248 In the two-volume *Haiku*, all poems were written in this way, even if in their original editions their lineation was different (three or five lines).

249 The shortest texts number nine syllables, the longest run to around 40.

250 As quoted in D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku*, vols. 1–2. The acronym “H 1” refers to Volume 1, while “H 2” to Volume 2, the digits following the acronym indicate page numbers. The second volume contains poems written between the second half of the 1980s and the early years of the twenty-first century (while Brzóska points to 2003 and to the beginning of his collaboration with *Przekrój*, the volume also includes

‘Atlantyk w Masiewie’ Błękitne Falujące Niebo Jak czysty Atlantyk Nad nami H 1, 336	[THE ATLANTIC IN MASIEWO Blue Rolling sky Like clean Atlantic Above us]
‘Lato’ Cień Wygodnie Położył się Na ławce H 2, 187	[SUMMER A shadow Cosily Lay down On the bench]
‘Kamień’ Przez chwilę Byłem kamieniem Obmywanym Przez fale H 1, 71	[STONE For a while I was a stone Washed By waves]
‘Kapie słońce’ Kapie Słońce Z dębowych liści Prosto Na środek polany H 1, 73	[THE SUN IS DRIPPING The sun is dripping From oak leaves Right through Onto the centre of a clearing]
‘Zapach burzy’ Zapach burzy Niebo się kotłuje W stawie Pełne kwiatów lipy H 2, 108 <sup>251</sup>	[A SMELL OF STORM A smell of storm The sky is swaying In a pond Full of linden flowers]

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texts published in *Przekrój* in 2004 and 2005), the first one collects Brzóska’s most recent output from the last seven years preceding the publication (<http://www.polskieradio.pl/10/501/Artykul/832413,BrzoskaBrzoskiewicz-poeta-haiku>, accessed August 23, 2013).

251 The poem became the basis for one of the songs on the album *Haiku fristajl*, where it was surprisingly contaminated with the poem *Kazik* (the whole verbal-musical

These texts are very close to the Occidental prototype of the genre:<sup>252</sup> concise, following simple sensorial schemes, recording reality non-discursively, mimetically and tenderly, finally, sparingly using stylistic devices. What is more, now and again we come across “poems-candies,” images so sweet, so beautiful that, in the light of the poet’s work popularized in the media, one is inclined to suspect parodistic intentions (however, hints of parody are too infrequent to support such a diagnosis):

‘Wileńskie’	[THE VILNIUS REGION
Pachnące pączki	Sweet-smelling doughnuts
Złotych stogów siana	Of golden haystacks
Po zielonym dywanie	The blue Vilya winds its way
Wije się błękitna Wilja	Across a green carpet]
H 1, 141	

‘Niebo’	[THE SKY
Kremowo-błękitne niebo	The creamy blue sky
Układa się do snu	Lies down to sleep
Na błękitno-białej wacie	On a blue and white cotton wool
Wieczornej mgły	Of evening mist]
H 1, 110	

Some of these lyrical poems (rarely can one safely refer to Brzósiewicz’s poems using this term) in fact resemble Zen poetry, in other cases, they seem close to koans:<sup>253</sup>

‘Słońce’	[THE SUN
Chwytać słońce	To catch the sun
Pod wiatr	Against the wind
Jego	Of its
Promieni	Rays]
H 2, 198	

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composition was entitled *Kaziu na wakacjach* [Kaziu on Holiday], music video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJ1b2SS8wkk>, accessed August 23, 2013).

252 For the Western prototype of the genre, see Part 1 of the book.

253 One can examine from this perspective a significant part of Brzóska’s poetry from recent years, but also some texts from the 1990s (which, however, more often turn out to be semantically ambiguous). See, for example, Paul Reps, ed., *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings*, Garden City, NY, 1989); *The Kōan. Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, eds. S. Heine, D. S. Wright, Oxford, 2000.

‘Płonie’	[IT BURNS
Wiatr	The wind
Nie płonie	Does not burn
Choćby	No matter
Bardzo chciał	How much it would like to]
H 2, 254	

‘Masiewo 4’	[MASIEWO 4
Wszystko	Everything
W chwilę	Turns
Się	Into
Obraca	A moment]
H 1, 263	

‘Skupienie’	[CONCENTRATION
Czysta	Clean
Biel	Whiteness
Kościastych	Of bony
Myśli	Thoughts]
H 2, 282	

‘Nigdy’	[NEVER
Nigdy nie zrozumie	I will never understand
Co to	What
Jest	A lake
Jezioro	Is]
H 2, 113	

‘Całość’	[A WHOLE
Wszystkość	Everythingness
Nicość	Nothingness
Jednoczesność	Simultaneity]
H 1, 111	

The texts cited so far show the unknown Brzóska: meditative, reflective, concerned with the mysterious depth (*yūgen*)<sup>254</sup> of the world. Often, however, even in the poems which in many respects are close to the haiku prototype, the linguistic support shows through, heavily, parodically (?) deranging the contemplative aura of the scene (echoes of idiomatic expressions, intrusive single-rhyme scheme, polysemy, etc.):

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254 See Part 1 of the book.

'Zmierzch'	[THE DUSK
Zmierzch	The dusk
Zachodzi	Sets
Dolinę	The valley
Od wschodu	In the east]
H 1, 158	
'Zapach wanilii'	[SCENT OF VANILLA
Skaczą polne koniki	Grasshoppers are leaping
Pośród motyli	Among butterflies
Zapach wanilii	The scent of vanilla
Wylewa się z konwalii	Flows out of the lily of the valley]
H 1, 68	
'Wie'	[IT KNOWS
Z kamieniem	You won't talk
Nie pogadasz	To a stone
A swoje	Yet it knows
Wie	What it knows]
H 2, 283	
'Oświecone'	[ILLUMINATED
Pod Słońcem	Under the sun
Wszystko	Everything
Jest	Is
Oświecone	Illuminated]
H 2, 338	

The contemplation transported into urban space finally becomes ambivalent (the monotonous counting of cars, attending to the sounds of civilization):

'Fale'	[WAVES
Szumia	Waves
Fale	Of cars
Samochodów	Are swooshing]
H 1, 75	
Jadą samochody	[Cars passing
Przez skrzyżowanie	A crossroads
7, 9, 7, 11, 8, 7, 7, 6, 9, 11, 14, 11, 8	7, 9, 7, 11, 8, 7, 7, 6, 9, 11, 14, 11, 8
6, 6, 3, 6, 7, 6, 8, 3, 11, 14	6, 6, 3, 6, 7, 6, 8, 3, 11, 14]
H 2, 109	

## 2. Brzóska’s Haiku: Snatches of Everyday Life?

From the perspective that is of interest to me, the most interesting are those poems by Brzóska-Brzósiewicz whose connections with haiku are the most ambiguous. I have in mind here the texts presenting snatches (considering the style of these miniatures, one is tempted to say: shreds) of everyday reality.<sup>255</sup> These poems are most closely tied with Brzósiewicz’s poetics and have gained considerable exposure in the media<sup>256</sup> (I will also analyse extra-literary contexts of the poems’ presentation). A significant part of them are micro-images drawn from the natural world. Let us start from these:

‘Kozioł’

[BILLY GOAT

Pędził kozioł  
Po łące  
Trawy narozwalał  
Motyla potrącił  
H 2, 30

A billy goat was rushing  
Across a meadow  
Trampled the grass  
Ran down a butterfly]

‘Osa’

[WASP

Na przystanku  
Osa hula  
Loda zjeść nie dała  
Staruszkę pogoniła  
H 2, 28

At the bus stop  
A wasp is raging  
Would not let an ice-cream be eaten  
Chased away an old lady]

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255 Brzóska’s texts could be compared with some miniatures by Piotr Sommer, which, however, are not termed “haiku” by the author (as quoted in P. Sommer, *Wiersze ze słów* [Poems from Words], Wrocław, 2009, pp. 17, 32, 24, 8):

‘A to co znowu’

[WHAT’S ALL THIS

Płaskie płyty sterczą z trawy  
za murem.

Flat slabs stick out from the grass  
behind a wall.]

‘Ptak’

[BIRD

Zobaczyć wreszcie, co jest po drugiej stronie  
Wału Miedzeszyńskiego!

To see at last the other side of  
Wał Miedzeszyński Street!]

‘Pewniki’

CERTAINTIES

Klony kładą gałęzie na ziemi.

Maples lay their branches on the  
ground.

Chyba coś się stało.

Something must have happened.]

‘Jesionolistny, dobry do włożenia’

[ASH-LEAVED, GOOD TO CLIMB

Przy moim domu, który się spalił,  
był taki jeden, który wycięto.

By my house that burned down  
there was one that was cut down.].

256 They are the basis for songs, films, recitations and music videos. Brzóska likes to transfer to other media also his gnomic poems (see the following section) (statistically, however, considering the total number of texts in the poet’s entire output, snatches of everyday life are more frequently “clothed” in intermedia costumes).

The first of these poems seems to be visually related to haiku: it depicts an animal running across a meadow, a clear-cut shape against a monochrome background. We see nothing more, nothing obscures the scene. However, this is far removed from the compositions of Japanese haikins. In the above-quoted “animal” texts by Brzóska one will hardly find any special tenderness in looking at the world. Phrases like “trampled,” and “ran down” are not favourable conditions for creating a contemplative vision (stylistics and semantics), while manifestly demonstrating that nature is not home exclusively to gentle creatures. The running-down of a butterfly is the final confirmation of the grotesque (foreign to haiku). The expressive quality of the image is heightened by phonostylistics (intra-word alliterations based on phones and phone groups: /w/ spelt “1”, and /r/, /ot/).

One could describe the poem ‘Osa’ [Wasp] in a similar vein. The very choice of this generally disliked insect is a challenge for a “haikuist.” Masters of the genre, however, have enough tenderness even for a rat living in excrements:

quenching its thirst  
with bitter ice—  
a sewer rat  
Bashō<sup>257</sup>

Brzóska is absolutely uninterested in fellow-feeling with an animal. This micro-scene throws into relief other aspects of human-animal coexistence. Grotesqueness – vivid, yet subtly delineated – once again relies on semantic and stylistic shades of words (“is raging,” “chased away”) and once again is emphasized by sound. “A wasp is raging” (“Osa hula”), the crucial verse de-automatizing reception, is a combination unknown in everyday speech, personifying the insect, and at the same time unusual phonotactically (higher occurrence of vowels than consonants), as if adopted from another language.<sup>258</sup>

On the album *Haiku fristajl*, both poems (in Polish- and Japanese-language versions) were used to create a single musically appealing composition streaked with a fairly psychedelic flavour. The music perfectly harmonizes with the semantic and stylistic ambivalence of the poetic layer. The listener eagerly succumbs to this vision – and sound – not sure, however, to what extent it can be associated with the art of Japanese miniature.

Something similar happens here:

‘Szeleszczą świerszcze’  
Biegną  
Pośród deszczu

[CRICKETS ARE CRINKLING  
Crickets  
Are running

257 As quoted in Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō*, Stanford, California, 1998, p. 63.

258 Tuwim’s famous phrase “mali hulali po polu i pili kakao” [The little ones were raging across the field and drinking cocoa] has a similar effect.



Świerszcze  
I szeleszczą jeszcze  
H 2, 248

Through rain  
Crinkling on top of that]

The vision of chirping insects running in the rain perfectly captures the Japanese injunction to create crisp, momentary multi-sensory images. Is this, however, a serious haiku or merely a literary prank disguised as one? The uncomplicated rhyme (unknown in Japanese seventeen-syllable poems) and aural and articulatory acrobatics running through almost the entire text (alliterations based on the /c/, /ʃ/, /f/sounds) cast doubt on the purity of the poet’s intentions. It is likewise hard to detect any sensitivity in seeing (and listening to) the world. Let us recall this poem by Onitsura:

No place  
to throw out the bathwater—  
sound of insects  
Onitsura<sup>259</sup>

Brzóska’s quatrain is, therefore, a playful exercise rather than proof of the contemplative observation of nature.

The following are several more texts that seem to neatly accord with numerous (also sensorial) assumptions of the haiku:

‘Mróweczka’  
Biegnie mrówka  
Po piaseczku  
A potem  
Po igiełczkach  
H 1, 348

[A LITTLE ANT  
A little ant is running  
On grains of sand  
And then  
On little needles]

‘Biedronki’  
Biegają  
Po łączce  
Biedronki  
Za rączkę  
H 1, 152

[LADYBIRDS  
Ladybirds  
Are running  
Across a little meadow  
By the little hand]

‘Żuczki’  
Biegną polem  
Żuczki dwa

[LITTLE BEETLES  
Two little beetles  
Running cross the field

---

259 F. Bowers, *The Classic Tradition of Haiku*, p. 38.

Bo droga  
Jest za bardzo rozmięknęta  
H 1, 63

Because the road  
Is too sodden]

Diminutives, “banalisms,” “infantilisms,” rhymes combining words whose import runs counter to haiku’s “piousness of humourists”<sup>260</sup> (“a little meadow” – “small hand,” “two” – “sodden”) – all this totally contradicts the haiku modality:<sup>261</sup> the alleged tenderness turns out to be sarcastic, there is hardly any trace of the sublime typically emanating from haiku.<sup>262</sup> Rather than invoking sensorial contact with nature, Brzóska-Brzósiewicz refers to an entirely different life – and readily – experience.

Alternatively, the scene depicted in ‘O przeżartych łabędziach’ [On Overfed Swans] H 2, 168), transforms the stock landscape typical of East-Asian art and numerous Western representations:

Gdzieś tam lecą  
Dwa łabędzie  
Szyjami machają  
Już im się niedobrze robi jak w nie ciągle starym chlebem rzucają

[Somewhere out there  
Two swans are flying  
Flapping their necks  
They got sick of stale bread thrown at them]

Brzóska-Brzósiewicz lowers the scene’s tone. However, through colloquialisms, avoidance of sensorial qualities (“Somewhere out there” instead of, for instance, the sky at sunset), and the surprising “entering” into the emotions of birds he manages to avoid kitsch. Instead of evidence of transculturality (bringing out proximities in what is distant), we get crude, raucous humour.

There is also the problem of haiku compassion. In this context, one must inspect with suspicion the poem by Brzóska-Brzósiewicz that is probably the best known, ‘Sarenka’ ([Roe Deer] H 2, 15):

Sarenka na mrozie nie może  
Czeka na ciepły oddech

[The roe deer out in the cold cannot  
It waits for a warm breath

260 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ in Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, p. 11.

261 For the use of the concept of modality in literary studies, see W. Bolecki, ‘Modalność. Literaturoznawstwo i kognitywizm (rekonesans)’ [Modality. Literary and Cognitive Studies (A Reconnaissance)], in W. Bolecki, *Modalności modernizmu. Studia, analizy, interpretacje*, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 169–200, esp. pp. 180–199. See also Part 1 of the book (chapter ‘Prototype, Invariant, Stereotype: Haiku in the West’).

262 See Part 1, as well as chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

Leśniczy ją głaszczę po udzie  
Niech się naję do syta

The forester strokes its thigh  
Let it eat its fill.]

The text seems suffused with compassion, and yet somehow, we do not take this emotion at face value. Understatements and certain lexical clumsiness (the phrase “deer cannot,” alluding to the colloquial phrase “I cannot stand it anymore”) calls for suspicion. An animal (a female) turns out to be dependent on a human being, which (a male) “strokes its thigh” – is it really a pure, empathic relationship? The ambiguity attracts our attention all the more because we do not get much more material to analyse. Components of the scene are completely abstracted from the background – there is no way to experience the sensorial totality of the scene.

The poem was presented on the programme *Brzóska Show*,<sup>263</sup> and subsequently fragments of ‘Sarenka’ became lyrics of a song from the album *Haiku fristajl* (which for 21 weeks remained on the chart of Polish Radio Program III).<sup>264</sup> On *Brzóska Show*, recital of poems (by the poet himself dressed up as a dangerous Oriental hunter with a quiver, the opposite of an empathic forester) is preceded by an animation showing a roe deer with long eyelashes and a heart on its rump, wagging its tail. Then in this less than two-minute-long piece we see a video with plain, cheerful background music, featuring Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, this time as a kind-heartedly smiling moustachioed forester (“local” one – protruding from under his cap is long blond hair), who walks up to the deer standing by a hay rack and strokes its thigh (close-up on the hand, followed by the sparkling eye of the animal). The gesture can be seen as indecent. The scene is then given (another) ironic, parodistic twist: the forester takes the deer under his arm and walks away into the woods. The roe deer turns out to be... stuffed. On the *Haiku fristajl* album, Brzóska’s text – in two language versions – is accompanied by excellent music ringing with psychedelic overtones. This is all very far removed from affirmative sensorial schemas of classical haiku.

‘Cielaczek’ ([The Little Calf], H 2, 13) can be analysed in a similar vein:

Brudne nogi cielaka wygięły się w pół  
Kobiecina doi cielaczka dziś trzeci raz

[The calf’s soiled legs have doubled up  
Poor woman milks the calf for the third time  
today

Nie ciągnij kobiecino tak mocno to boli

Do not pull so hard, woman, the calf is in  
great

Cielaczka

Pain]

The picture of the distressed animal milked by a rather unmodern “poor woman” seems suspiciously close to the grotesque. The reader’s familiarity with Brzóska’s

263 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLjHTqGxeYY>, accessed July 5, 2014.

264 Based on [http://lp3.polskieradio.pl/utwor/artykul1446,691\\_sarenka.aspx](http://lp3.polskieradio.pl/utwor/artykul1446,691_sarenka.aspx), accessed January 25, 2014.

other “micro-scenes” calls for even greater vigilance. This becomes all the more evident when we realize that, after all, calves cannot be milked. We are left with uncertainty, ambiguity, understatement – heightening this impression is the last, broken-off verse disturbingly opening with an enjambment.

During Brzóska Show, the artist moved further towards the grotesque and absurd, ludically extending stylistic and semantic fissures occurring in the text. The programme would open with Brzóska, dressed up as a geisha, reciting a poem. Obviously, the parodied Japaneseness has nothing to do with the poem’s poetics and semantics. The film that follows shows a lean, hunchbacked cardboard calf milked by a woman wrapped in a headscarf; wooden pails are shown to hold... milk in plastic bags. So – it is not about compassion, but about joke-playing, the grotesque and absurd.

The differences between the modality of classical haiku and the depiction of nature in Brzóska’s poetry is best illustrated by the following juxtaposition:

‘Mały Staś’	[LITTLE STAŚ
Leć muszko do mamy	Fly to mummy, little fly
Szybko	Hurry up
Bo biegnie mały Staś ze sprayem	‘Cause little Staś comes running with a spray
Trujący biedne dzieci	Poisoning poor children]
H 2, 86 <sup>265</sup>	

O little sparrows!  
Mind your place! Be careful there!  
Lord Horse passes through!  
Issa<sup>266</sup>

‘Kwiatek’	[LITTLE FLOWER
Kwiatek nóżkę zламаł	The little flower broke its leg
Jak się liście trwożą	The leaves took such fright
Ogrodnik się schyla	The gardener leans over
I nóżkę wyleczy	He’ll heal the little leg]
H 2, 131	

One surviving pink,  
under shady trees called  
Mother Trees, helpless!  
Issa<sup>267</sup>

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265 *Haiku*, [2006], p. 110.

266 K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life*, p. 28.

267 K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life*, p. 51.

Finally, the reverse of haiku’s view of nature. Amazed, delighted, moved, classic haijins lavished attention on the natural world. They contented themselves with qualifying sparrows, fish, and frogs with adjectives “joyful,” “solitary,” “small,” “noisy” (while not necessarily foregoing anthropomorphization). They would never invoke ill will, wickedness or calculation on the part of animals. In Brzósiewicz’s poems, however, animals are assigned negative traits. Here are some examples of the artist’s grotesque visions:

‘Akwarium’  
Walczy skalar  
Z mieczykiem  
Jęzor pokazuje  
Starą dafnię pluje  
H 2, 21

[AQUARIUM  
An angelfish is fighting  
With a green swordtail  
Sticking out its tongue  
Spitting up old daphnia]

‘Na podwórku’  
Krzyczy stara kura  
Kaczka gęsi kopie  
geese Oj tu dzisiaj bałagan  
Jak koguta zabili  
H 2, 16

[IN THE BACKYARD  
An old hen’s screaming  
A duck’s kicking  
Oh, what a mess here today  
Now that they’ve killed the rooster]

‘Na fermie’  
Chwycił kurczak  
Kaczuszkę  
I przydusza ją  
Nóżką  
H 1, 208

[AT THE POULTRY FARM  
A chicken grabbed  
A duckling  
And pins it down  
With his little leg]

‘Drobiny’  
Drobie im  
Drobiny  
A wściekle kury  
I tak dziobią tę kulawą  
H 2, 117

[CRUMBLES  
I am crumbling  
Crumbles for them  
And yet these mad hens  
Keep pecking the lame one]

Brzóska’s performances are comic to some degree, but they are also tinged with a sense of horror. The (under)world of livestock animals – typically depicted in poetry through the prism of sympathy and empathy as an idyll and fairy-tale – turns out to be a revolting theatre, where one can view and hear linguistically intensified scenes akin to those known from the world of humans (yet stripped of man-made façades). Also absent here are the consistently expressive “jumping-off

points” for the senses – the reader has no way (and probably no desire) of more “embodied” entering into the world depicted.

Let us see what changes in Brzóska’s poetry when the author introduces humans to his texts:

‘Kazik’	[KAZIK
Ryba oczko puszczą	A fish is giving him a wink
Rośliny się chwieją	Plants are swaying
Oj popędził Kazik	Oh, Kazik rushed off like mad
Tą motorówką	On this motorboat]
H 2, 17	

A fish among swaying reeds is an image carrying strong East-Asian connotations (haiku, *sumi-e* painting, *ukiyo-e* woodblock print). Here, however, the anthropomorphized fish colloquially gives a sly “wink,” to quickly disappear from the reader’s view. The cause of the commotion in the natural world turns out to be trivial: civilization. We skim the surface of reality, just like Kazik’s poetic motorboat skims the surface of the water. The text is unpleasant to the ear due to its ludic and colloquial nature (vocabulary, phraseology, exclamation point, word order). The author winks at the reader: here is our folksy rough-hewn “haiku.”<sup>268</sup> The only trace of haiku left here is present in imagery: a “micro-scene” from everyday life.

And here is ‘Łąki łąn’ [Meadow Grass]:

Łąki łąn	[Someone flattened
Ułożył ktoś na łące	meadow grass
Czy było tu dziś UFO?	Has a UFO visited here today?
Czy pił tu dziś brat Bronki?	Or was it Bronka’s brother drinking here?]
H 2, 242	

‘Łąki łąn’ can be seen as a plain, monochrome image akin, for example, to the following composition by Bashō:

early autumn—  
the ocean and the rice fields  
all one green<sup>269</sup>

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268 Also known in the music version (the album *Haiku fristajl*), the animated version (“Brzóska Show,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkUHO0S7bAo>, accessed July 5, 2014) and as a music video (*Kaziu na wakacjach*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJ1b2SS8wkk>, accessed August 23, 2013).

269 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 80.

However, the logical (tautology) and stylistic specificity of the Polish text cannot be overlooked. The seriousness of artistic creation is undermined by the very confusion of meanings<sup>270</sup> and sounds (homophony, alliteration, polyptoton) and, most importantly, by the semantics of final verses. The image of nature is merely a pretext for playing with absurdity, variations on everyday life and, perversely, folksiness (the character’s name).

The following are two episodes of Brzóska’s suspense game:

‘Trzecia B’	[CLASS 3B
Jedzie tramwaj po torach	A tram goes along the tracks
O wczesnej godzinie	At an early hour
Wszyscy myślą że pusty	Everyone thinks it is empty
A tam cała trzecia b do kina jedzie	Except that 3B is going to the
H 2, 167	cinema]

‘Fuj’	[YUCK
Fuj Fuj	Yuck yuck
Myszka brudna wala się po pokoju	A dirty mouse kicks about the room
Nie dość, że brudna	Not only is it dirty
To jeszcze z niej ktoś cały kabelek wyciągnął	But someone pulled a cable from it]
H 2, 39	

The image of a solitary tram on the tracks could well be a continuation of East-Asian poetics and the same is the case with the scene featuring a mouse on the floor (after all, Bashō depicted a sewer rat). However, Brzóska is not interested in the imagery itself. In the poems’ endings, he is toying with – of crucial importance here – suspense, absurdity, nonsense.

As we have seen, Brzósiewicz tends to situate his poem’s action in interiors. Let us have a look at another domestic scene in ‘Rdza’ [Rust] (H 2, 135):

Coś tam	[Something
Z kranu kapie	Is dripping from the tap
Chyba już	I think
Rdzy nie ma	The rust is already gone]

Dripping water – even if it is tap water – serves as a pictorial foundation of haiku. However, the author does not focus on experience itself (the non-sensorial “something”), nor does he point the reader’s attention to sound (contrary to what

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270 The capitalized phrase “Łąki Łan” of the first line calls to mind the Polish pop band of that name.

Białoszewski did in his “tap” miniature).<sup>271</sup> What we are left with is the provocatively banal, linguistically slipshod utterance.

And here are a few more poetic notes from domestic life:

‘Matka’	[THE MOTHER
Matka przeżarta	The mother is full
Dziecko przekarmione	The overfed child
Leży	Is lying
Na tapczanie	On the divan bed]
H 2, 115	
‘Matka 2’	[THE MOTHER 2
Na podwórku dzieci	The children run around
Biegają jak w szale	Like crazy in the backyard
Matka jakby mogła	If she could
Toby je załukła	The mother would beat them to death]
H 2, 127	
‘Roboty telewizyjne’	[TV SLAVES
Siedzi rodzina	A family is sitting
Przed telewizorem	In front of the TV
Oczy pieką i szczypią	Eyes are burning and stinging
Od tej roboty	From slaving away]
H 2, 23	

The limited number of characters, the clear-cut trajector – except that all this is seasoned with a bland flavour of everyday life. The artist brings out several elements from the amorphous background, but even these are not described in more detail. We get information related to sense experiences – percepts of poems’ characters (overeating, moving “like crazy,” with smarting eyes) – yet this data does not translate in any way into a comprehensive sensorial perception of the texts. The speaker (not interested in uniting with the characters) only seemingly hides behind the depiction. The language and profiling reveal his totally non-contemplative attitude to the depicted reality.

On several occasions, I have mentioned the comic and grotesque in Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s poetry. One should also take notice of the fact that in his scenes of everyday life humour sometimes is not only sardonic and grotesque but also benevolent and compassionate:

‘Śmieją się’	[ARE LAUGHING
Śmieją się staruszki	Old ladies are laughing

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271 See the chapter ‘Haiku? *Senryū?* *Mironu?* Miron Białoszewski and Haiku.’



Z reklamy  
 Pasty  
 Do zębów  
 H 2, 34

At a  
 Toothpaste  
 Ad]

'Komórka'  
 Dzwonił dziadzio na komórkę  
 I tak się z babcią pokłócił  
 Że musi teraz biedaczyna  
 Trzy renty z rzędu na poczcie zostawić

[A MOBILE  
 Grandpa rang on his mobile  
 And had such a quarrel with grandma  
 That now, poor thing, he has  
 To leave his next three pensions at the post  
 office.]

H 2, 46

Finally, it should be emphasized that Brzóska is eager to turn from mimesis to the absurd, nonsense, and even oneirism, which are alien to haiku.

'Prima Aprilis'  
 Roman zrobił żonie na prima aprilis  
 Taki dowcip  
 Że wrócił do domu o pięć lat  
 wcześniej  
 Niż myślała  
 H 2, 33

[APRIL FOOL'S DAY  
 Roman played this April Fool's Day prank  
 On his wife:  
 He returned home five years  
 earlier  
 Than she expected]

'Sen'  
 Patrzy tyranozaurus  
 Na kierowcę MPK  
 I nic  
 Nie mówi  
 H 2, 77

[A DREAM  
 A Tyrannosaurus looks at  
 A public transport driver  
 And says  
 Nothing]

'Krosta Krystyny'  
 Krosta Krystyny  
 Była tak wielka  
 Że zamiast ją porządnie wycisnąć  
 To wołała Józka rzucić  
 H 2, 43

[CHRISTINE'S PIMPLE  
 Christine's pimple  
 Was so big  
 That instead of giving it a good popping  
 She decided to dump Joe

Brzósiewicz engagingly plays out haiku-related ambivalence. He simulates haiku modality (tenderness, compassion), bringing to the fore the acutely banal, ordinary (and even abject) everyday reality – as well as the corresponding language. A vital role is played by the semantic vagueness of an utterance, while of paramount importance here, as in haiku, is the moment’s attention, the taking notice of tiny “flash-like” pieces of existence. The speaker does not philosophize or explicitly interpret reality. It is not the epiphanic quality of experience that is at stake here. Rather than capturing the “suchness” of the world – which in any case has tenuous sensorial anchoring – for the most part, we are confronted with cacophonous blunt “nonsensism,” shocking with sadness or dread.

It would also be worthwhile examining Brzóska’s snatches of reality through the prism of colour. In the poems discussed in the first section, colours were designated directly or (as in haiku) could be reconstructed from references to the natural world. Here, however, the colour scheme is implied by the poems’ general mood: the world is actually colourless and amorphous. This is obviously at odds with the essence of classical haiku that was so sensitive to colours of nature.

The differences between Japanese miniature poems and Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s textual snippets of reality are clear and meaningful. The latter’s texts show the familiar reverse of haiku, contorting the contemplative, “Zen-spirited” perception of everyday life. They also lack the characteristic seriousness, the haiku-like earnestness that was the distinguishing feature of subtly comic poems of East-Asian masters. However, it is worthwhile taking notice of positive aspects of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s comic effects, the liberating force of the grotesque that deforms the surrounding world – and the language. Thus, perhaps Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s small images could, after all, be considered a local version of an affirmative view of reality? This perspective cannot be completely denied, as such impressions “show through” the poet’s relatively numerous scenes from everyday life. However, some of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s works discussed here are much closer to satirical seventeen-syllable *senryū* (which, it might also be noted, employ very colloquial language, sometimes even slang):<sup>272</sup>

NO TRESPASSING –  
thanks to the sign, you find  
a shortcut<sup>273</sup>

how beautiful  
she looks – a bride  
with nothing on<sup>274</sup>

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272 One could also trace here affinities with *zappai* and the Danrin school of haiku. For more on *senryū*, *zappai* and schools of haiku, see Part 1 of the book.

273 As quoted in *Light Verse from the Floating World*, p. 261.

274 With no clothes but also with no dowry. *Light Verse*, p. 24.

“Is this the child  
 who used to be a little child  
 of your child?”<sup>275</sup>

weeping, their eyes  
 glance over the mementos  
 to be given out<sup>276</sup>

when he hears a snore  
 the masseur lets his hands  
 fall asleep too<sup>277</sup>

“All is void,” he says  
 sets out on a side  
 from the funeral site<sup>278</sup>

### 3. “Haiku:” Ferment in Language

Literary games, in fact concerned exclusively with linguistic (and semantic) acrobatics, are a very distinct tendency in the poetry of Brzóska. The poet is interested in exploring the possibilities of the Polish language rather than in undertaking any search for planes of mediation – or open conflict – between ascetic, contemplative classical haiku and the cultural tradition of Europe. However, the following description is a complete misunderstanding:

in his writing, the Polish language resounds in its fullness. In everyday life, mumbling our words, dropping word endings, stressing wrong syllables or adopting words taken directly from English, we forget how our language can ring with pleasing sounds. To metaphorize a little, Brzóska strikes the subtle chords of the Polish language, looks for the rhythm incarnated in the very structure of the word – and fashions a melody from these words.<sup>279</sup>

In melodies fashioned by Brzóska, the elements that are linguistically careless, colloquial, and convoluted sound the most interesting – though not necessarily the most beautiful. I treat this section as a gloss to the reflection on the “polemicity” of Brzóska’s haiku,<sup>280</sup> one that lays bare the inherent extremity of the artist’s poetics. The name of the Japanese genre here is only a fashionable umbrella term, from

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275 *Light Verse*, p. 162.

276 *Light Verse*, p. 250.

277 *Light Verse*, p. 92.

278 *Light Verse*, p. 22.

279 O. Koehler, ‘Mistrz małych historii.’

280 The texts presented here are actually quasi-haiku and could as well be included in Part 6 of the book.

which aphorisms, epigrams, and absurd mini-narratives pop out. Brzósiewicz avoids grappling with the foreign literary form and explores the acceptability of Oriental genre rules only to a limited extent. But then again, he juggles the existing conventions of European literature, derived mainly from the avant-garde tradition (yet without a theoretical and ideological avant-garde background). In this sphere, the poet does not see any possibility of a serious dialogue of cultures – or in any case, is not seriously interested in it. As he openly declares:

‘Mistyky’	[THE MYSTIC
Jak	The misty
Mi styka	Mystique
To tylko	Of a stick]
Do pierwszego	
H 2, 271	

‘Mistrz Zen’	[ZEN MASTER
Zen	Zen
To jedno	Is one thing
A Zenek	Zeno
To drugie <sup>281</sup>	Is another
H 2, 270	

On closer inspection, some images or mini-narratives seemingly focused on the description of nature also turn out to be exclusively stories of language, quite well grounded in local historical poetics (the following example resembles the Futurist phonostylistic acrobatics of Stanisław Młodożeniec).<sup>282</sup>

‘Łania’	[A DOE
Złakniona łania	A woeful doe
Z lasu się wylania	Emerges from a meadow
Łaknąc łyka	And to the stream below
Wody ze strumienia	Tiptoes with a bellow]
H 1, 94	

However, Brzósiewicz sees no reason to change the genre label of his miniatures. He discards his last link with haiku – the focus on scenes from everyday life;

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281 This is the only text by Brzóska-Brzósiewicz known to me where explicit intercultural expressions are found (in the neighbouring poem ‘Mistyky’ [The Mystic] the intercultural polemicity is markedly less obvious). In its earlier version, the text was entitled ‘Zen’ (*Przekrój*, 2005, No. 12, p. 92).

282 See B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu”, pp. 419–1.

instead, we get only scenes from the life of the language, which were almost absent from the above-discussed incarnations of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s miniatures.

The poet often turns to paronomastic devices, indulging in puns and false etymologies. He is keen on distorting proverbs, idioms, proper names, and terms. Rather than seeking subtle intertextual allusions, as masters of classical haiku would, he strives for unsophisticated comic effects. It should be added that intertextual allusions are Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s element, but he uses them for sheer (and not particularly subtle) play with words and sounds, occasionally also supporting in this way pithy, ludic historiosophical diagnoses. The poet is also passionate about banal or absurd epigrams and aphorisms. (His literary games are a vast domain of nonsense humour). While one could attempt to describe in detail Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s various linguistic and narrative concepts, from the perspective of my research this would in fact be pointless. The vast diversity of the poet’s activities is illustrated by the following colourful patchwork of quasi- or even anti-haiku poems:

‘Początki’  
Początki  
Polski  
Ciągłe są  
Do Poznania  
H 2, 324

[THE ORIGINS  
The origins  
Of Poland  
Still need  
A polish]

‘Mini’  
Straszy w mini  
Starsza pani  
I udaje  
Stringa<sup>283</sup>

[MINI  
A skinny matron  
In a mini  
Scares away  
The patrons]

‘James Bąd’  
James Bąd  
To twarda sztuka  
Nawet jak miał granat w bucie  
To mu tylko dziurę w skarpecie  
wyrwało  
H 2, 68

[JAMES BLOND  
James Blond  
He’s a tough cookie  
A grenade in his shoe  
Just tore a hole in his  
sock]

‘Mickiewicz’  
Franek tak się kolegował  
Z tym Mickiewiczem  
Że go w końcu z roboty

[MICKIEWICZ  
Franky got so chummy with  
That Mickiewicz  
That finally his boss]

wyrzucili I od dziadów wyzwali H 2, 100	Sacked him And took the mickey of out him]
Cyborg ma dziś Chorą nogę Poda nogę? Nie? To szkoda H 2, 159	[The cyborg has a sore Leg today Is he going to give a legshake? He won't? That's a pity
‘Wincenty Kadłubek’ Wincenty Zgrywał przed żoną Takiego kadłubka Że nawet śmieci nie musiał z chaty wynosić H 2, 212	[WINCENTY KADŁUBEK <sup>284</sup> Wincenty Acted such a cripple To his wife That he even did not have to Take out the garbage]
‘Afryka’ Szamie Szaman Smaczną Szamkę H 1, 169	[AFRICA A spirit-raiser Spirits away High-spirited Spirits
‘Kłopot’ Cięży Ciotce Cięża Córki H 1, 51	[TROUBLE The daughter's bun in the oven Is a tough pill to swallow For the mother
‘Mówi ojciec do syna’ Na tobie To tak można polegać Że jakby cię Zawisza zobaczył Toby mu się czarno przed oczyrna zrobiło H 2, 44	[FATHER SAYS TO HIS SON You're such a tonic To me Father says To his son Drinking gin]

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284 [Wincenty Kadłubek, Polish chronicler, in colloquial Polish the word *kadłubek* refers to a limbless person. Translator's note.]

‘Niemiecka Wola 1944’	[THE GERMAN WILL <sup>285</sup> OF 1944
Niemcy	In Wola
Na Woli	The Germans
Dali	Ran wild
Do woli	At will
H 2, 11	
Chociaż w ciełe	[There may be a healthy spirit
Zdrowy duch	In his body
Nogi śmierdzą mu	But his legs
Za dwóch <sup>286</sup>	Stink like hell
‘Grzechu’	TWO SINS
Łokciem	You cannot kill
Grzechu	Two sins
Nie	With a
Wygonisz	Round hole
H 2, 245	
‘Żubr’	[THE BISON
Żubr	The bison
Muchy	Wouldn’t
Nie	Bite
Kąsa	A fly]
H 2, 298	
‘Komornik Śląski’	[SILESIAN DEBT COLLECTOR
Czy to Mieszko	Does he live here
Czy tu nie Mieszko	like a king or Prince Mieszko
A jak Mieszko	And if he does
To tylko do pierwszego	It is only till the end of the month]
H 2, 271	
‘Ziarno’	[A GRAIN
Lis kurze	A fox

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285 [The title alludes to the so-called Wola Massacre, the systematic slaughter of the civilian population of the Warszawa suburb of Wola. Wola in Polish also means “will.” Translator’s note.]

286 *Przekrój*, 2004, No. 48, p. 100.

Ziarna Nigdy Nie wydziobie H 2, 253	Will not pick out Another hen’s Grain]
‘Los’ Murzyn zrobił swoje Cygana powiesili A kowal miał potem Czarną wnuczkę H 2, 36	[FATE The Moor has done his duty The Gypsy was hung Afterwards the blacksmith Had a black granddaughter.]
‘Ręka’ Ręka rękę myje Nogi już nie widzi Nie mówiąc o uszach I zębach H 2, 90	[ONE HAND One hand washes the other Yet skips the leg Not to mention the ears And teeth]
‘Polskie mrzonki’ Jakby Polacy Nie mieli mrzonek To by im został Tylko korzonek H 1, 209	POLISH PIPE DREAMS If the Poles Did not have pipe dreams They’d be left With pipes

While it is impossible to link Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s above-mentioned absurdisms with haiku tradition, they demonstrate how the poet stretches the limits of this genre label, which he often uses – albeit not necessarily for any polemical purposes – to refer to works that neatly fit into Western genre and literary-historical paradigms (epigram, aphorism, sententia and the above-noted avant-garde tradition). It is worthwhile recalling here again short illogical Zen koans. For numerous reasons, Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s poems can be placed at the opposite end of these “enlightening,” enigmatic texts. However, one should take notice of the subtle affinity between the workings of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s miniatures and those of koans. What is at stake here is the nonsense of reasoning and the very unpredictability of the teacher/author’s actions, which liberate from the strictures of habit and logic. Probably the aim of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s haiku may not be *satori*, but also (though not equally) precious laughter.

#### 4. HiQ

Is it possible to summarize Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s work in any way? The “non-chalance” of form, eclecticism, play with conventions, irony, affiliation with mass



culture, and the “emphasis on the conventional and ludic nature of art forms”<sup>287</sup> so clearly visible in inter-medial transitions. To put it briefly, and as ambiguously as possible: postmodernism. However, are we dealing here with the eponymous “haiku-blaque” – the mocking, selective use of foreign artistic conventions? The tripartite structure of this chapter serves to reflect the variety of the poet’s procedures. In his oeuvre, “blaguing,” comic, nonsense anti-haiku exist side by side with scenes from everyday life that on various levels can be linked to Oriental poetics (Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s singular *haiku fristyle*). Finally, we find here “genuine” haiku embedded in nature and possessed of Zen overtones.

Connections with Japanese poetics can only be identified in those texts that preserve at least some vestiges of Japonizing imagery. Such poems allow the reader to observe how, through Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s act of writing, haiku is transformed into anti-haiku.

The covers of the two-volume *Haiku* were decorated with a drawing of two humbly looking down hybrids – birds with sheep’s heads (?) and fancy soaring Japanese hairstyles. Inscribed on the trunk of one creature is the capital letter “H” (in Polish pronounced “haa”), while the other one features a “Q” (in Polish pronounced “koo”), with ‘i’ (in Polish “and,” pronounced “ee”) in between. Thus, we are dealing with a tongue-in-cheek HAIKU, and in addition “HQ” also signifies high quality.<sup>288</sup> Despite all the controversies, I think this is a great way to graphically summarize the poetic output of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.

### III. Grochowiak – Brzóska

Grochowiak’s and Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s poems discussed so far do not satisfy all or even most of the criteria of the Western prototype of haiku. However, they demonstrate that the fundamental defining features of haiku – from the perspective of Western references to this art – include singular sensorial imagery and affirmative tenderness. The unity of the subject and object of observation is probably hard to achieve, and even harder to verify. The brevity principle permits a multitude of variations within the (relatively) short form. The abandonment of emotional exhibitionism is no guarantee of “haiku-ness” either. Finally, the embeddedness in the natural world can turn out to be illusory – closer scrutiny often reveals the tangled, “mandrake-like” roots of poems.

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287 J. Sławiński, ‘Postmodernizm,’ in *Słownik terminów literackich*, p. 414. See also, for example, A. Szahaj, ‘Co to jest postmodernizm?’ [What is Postmodernism?], in *Postmodernizm. Teksty polskich autorów* [Postmodernism. Texts by Polish Authors], ed. M. A. Potocka, Kraków, 2003, pp. 49–50.

288 The title on the cover also evokes associations with Brzóska’s audiovisual project HiQ – “combining the ideas of Japanese haiku poetry, contemporary visual art and intuitive improvisation in music” (<http://hiq.com.pl/#>, accessed November 19, 2013).

At the heart of the opposition between Brzósiewicz’s and Grochowiak’s writing procedures lies the mode of utterance and methods of absorption (and surface adsorption) of “East-Asian-ness.” An examination of the polemical haiku (or rather “haiku”) through the prism of sensorial imagery allows us to discern several vital defining features of extreme cases of referencing the Japanese genre in Poland. What comes into view, for example, is the creative tenacity of Grochowiak, who strived to come close to the assumptions of Japanese poets, even as taking the liberty to weave into his poems, in line with the haiku postulate of authorial sincerity, motifs and stylistic devices completely foreign to the poetics of Bashō and his successors. In this perspective, the work of Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, who is widely seen as a poet of “joke-playing,” is surprisingly heterogeneous. As it turns out, his poems, presenting specifically framed, linguistically unique and inimitable snippets of reality, have a polemical relationship with haiku, and with its incarnations in the work of Grochowiak. The fulfilment of numerous requirements of haiku concomitant with a complete change in the modality of utterance leads to the negation of fundamental aesthetic and ethical values of Japanese miniature verse. With its combination of horror and laughter, coupled with absurdity and considerable familiarity, haiku transformed so radically becomes an important (and widely appealing) mirror of the present, closely coexisting with classical satirical haiku, conceptist *zappai* or *senryū*.<sup>289</sup> It is also apparent that those texts of both poets which do not follow the haiku precept of sensorial clarity lose any resemblance to their ostensible Oriental model.

As a result, schemas which eschew sensoriality (specifically – imagery) of classical haiku lose a substantial part of their polemic clarity. As it turns out, only poems with clear references to haiku imagery can actually be bracketed as polemical “haiku,” that is the haiku actively engaging in a polemic with the Japanese model. Thus, sensorial schemas are the crucial, albeit typically underestimated, element of the Polish polemical “haiku game.”

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289 See Part 1 of the book.

## Part 4 Oscillations around Haiku

I want to devote this part of my study to the poetry of two outstanding masters of contemporary Polish literature: Czesław Miłosz and Miron Białoszewski. Their poems – significantly dissimilar in stylistics – in different ways oscillate around the poetics of haiku. These texts are not “extreme” semantic and stylistic utterances about literary and philosophical tenets of the form;<sup>1</sup> nor could they, in their more comprehensive selection, become exemplifications of chapters on the “most genuine” Polish haiku.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, they vividly demonstrate a range of loose oscillations around the Western prototype of the genre.<sup>3</sup>

Miłosz spoke openly about his fascination with haiku and the conglomerate of artistic and philosophical phenomena underlying Japanese seventeen-syllable verse. However, he would rarely express himself in miniatures. Therefore a “haiku-centric” look at short forms in Miłosz’s poetry and translation works is particularly valuable. The opposite is the case with Miron Białoszewski: an accomplished miniaturist with an inimitable, expressive “brushstroke,” he would never mention haiku or write about Japanese culture. He was regarded as an eccentric master of “life-writing.” To what extent can Białoszewski’s poetic “brushstroke” and life lend themselves to orientalization?

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1 I analyse these in Part 3.

2 See Part 5.

3 Within haiku’s orbit – one often quite distant from the genre’s centre – one can also place some works of Polish poets such as Jerzy Harasymowicz, Ryszard Krynicki, Jan Polkowski, Urszula Koziół, Krystyna Miłobędzka, Agata Tuszyńska, Janusz Szuber, Janusz Stanisław Pasierb, Julian Kornhauser, Tadeusz Wyrwa-Krzyżański. This list is by no means exhaustive. In the output of these authors, we also find poems or, not infrequently, entire groups of poems coming very close to the Western prototype of haiku. A significant part of these texts is analysed in Part 5. Naturally, the less “haiku-like” texts of the poets mentioned here deserve a broad description as well, for example through the prism of the Japanese form that is of interest to me here. In this book, however, I do not undertake such a detailed, monographic analysis of the oeuvre of Harasymowicz, Krynicki, Pasierb, Polkowski (and others).

## I. The Poetry of Mindfulness: Czesław Miłosz and Haiku

*From human speech to the muteness of verse, how far!<sup>4</sup>*

Czesław Miłosz's name has been inextricably linked with haiku, becoming for many readers synonymous with indigenous haiku writing, or at least a stamp of approval validating and giving credence to such creative endeavour.<sup>5</sup> The poet himself would readily acknowledge his fascination with the Far East: he translated haiku<sup>6</sup> and Zen poems,<sup>7</sup> and on numerous occasions discussed the amalgam of philosophical and cultural phenomena underpinning haiku,<sup>8</sup> and held in high esteem

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- 4 Cz. Miłosz, *Second Space: New Poems*, transl. by the author and Robert Hass, New York 2004, p. 32.
  - 5 This opinion is reinforced by popular science publications. For example, in the entry "haiku" in *Wielka encyclopedia PWN* [The Great PWN Encyclopaedia], Vol. 11, Warszawa, 2002, p. 78), Czesław Miłosz and Stanisław Grochowiak are mentioned as the only Polish practitioners of haiku (in both cases this assertion is dubious). *Antologia polskiego haiku* (ed., com. and with an introduction by E. Tomaszewska, Warszawa, 2001, pp. 47–8) features a selection from Miłosz's *Zdania* [Sentences] from his *Hymn o perle* [Hymn of the Pearl], yet these texts are not furnished with critical commentary.
  - 6 Miłosz's haiku translations are discussed at greater length in the third section of this chapter, and in the chapter 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'
  - 7 See, for example, 'Zen codzienny' [Daily Zen], transl. Cz. Miłosz, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1990, No. 48, p. 3 (Texts included in the volume *Dalsze okolice*, English edition Czesław Miłosz, *Provinces: Poems 1987–1991*, transl. Czesław Miłosz and Robert Hass, New York, 1993), 1991, Ww 1042–1046); Cz. Miłosz, *Wypisy z ksiąg użytecznych*, Kraków, 1994 [English edition Cz. Miłosz, *A Book of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry*, Orlando, 1996], passim.
  - 8 See, for example, Cz. Miłosz, I. Kania, [...] "wolę polegać na Łasce – albo na braku Łaski [...]" O buddyzmie' ["I Prefer to Rely on Grace – or Lack of Grace" On Buddhism], in Cz. Miłosz, *Rozmowy polskie 1979–1998* [Polish Conversations 1979–1998], Kraków, 2006, pp. 491–511 (originally published in *Znak*, 1995, No. 1); E. Sawicka, 'Czyste lustro' [Clear Mirror], in Cz. Miłosz, *Rozmowy polskie...*, pp. 307–9 (originally published in *Rzeczpospolita*, 1992, No. 286); Cz. Miłosz, K. and S. Chwin, 'Literatura nie jest od prawdy' [Truth is not Literature's Task], in Cz. Miłosz, *Rozmowy polskie...*, p. 284 (originally published in *Tytuł*, 1992, No. 4); Cz. Miłosz, P. Lisicki, 'Znaki nadchodzących czasów' [Signs of the Times to Come], in Cz. Miłosz, *Rozmowy polskie...*, pp. 412–5 (originally published in *Znak*, 1994, No. 3); Cz. Miłosz, J. Illg, 'Miłosza księga olśnień' [Miłosz's Book of Illuminations], in Cz. Miłosz, *Rozmowy polskie...*, pp. 420–6 (originally published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1994, No. 130); Cz. Miłosz, T. Walas, 'Poezja i religia' [Poetry and Religion], in Cz. Miłosz, *Rozmowy polskie 1999–2004*, Kraków, 2010, pp. 448–9 (originally published in *Dekada Literacka*, 2002, No. 3/4); Cz. Miłosz, 'Przeciw poezji niezrozumiałej', in Cz. Miłosz, *Życie na wyspach*, Kraków, 1997, pp. 99–100 (alternatively *Teksty Drugie*, 1990, No. 5/6, or *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1990, No. 21; English edition Cz. Miłosz, 'Against Incomprehensible Poetry', in Cz. Miłosz, *To Begin Where I Am: Selected Essays by Czesław Miłosz*, ed. and transl. B. Carpenter and M. G. Levine, New York, 2001; Cz. Miłosz, *Abecadło* [Alphabet], Kraków, 2001,

mindfulness that was crucial to this art form.<sup>9</sup> Finally, in common with Japanese authors of seventeen-syllable verse, Miłosz was a seeker of everyday epiphanies,<sup>10</sup> a poet of the concrete,<sup>11</sup> “instinctively attached to the visible, tangible, sensorial

pp. 84–5, 308–10, 333–6. See also Cz. Miłosz, *A Year of the Hunter*, New York, 1994; T. Merton, Cz. Miłosz, *Striving towards Being: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Czesław Miłosz*, ed. Robert Faggen, New York, 1997.

- 9 As Miłosz writes: “According to a Buddhist monk’s book [...] the very essence of Buddhism is *mindfulness*. This could be translated into Polish as *uwaga* (the word which appears already in Mikołaj Rej’s work). It means taking notice of the here and now instead of turning to what was or will be. Providential to martyrs of conscience, chewing on their past falls, providential to the restless, imagining with fear what would happen tomorrow. May my poems help their reader dwell in the now. And may I as a human being be cured of diseases of memory.” (Cz. Miłosz, *Piesek przydrożny*, Kraków 1998, p. 19; see the English selection from *Piesek przydrożny*, where the above excerpt is not included, Cz. Miłosz, *Road-side Dog*, transl. Robert Hass, New York, 1998; see also M. Zaleski, ‘Od “grzechu anielstwa” do “uwaga”’, czyli poezja jako instalowanie się w świecie’ [From the “Sin of Angelhood” to “Mindfulness” or Poetry as Installing Oneself in the World], *Teksty Drugie*, 2011, No. 5, pp. 31–2).
- 10 According to Miłosz, epiphany “may [...] mean sheer openness of the senses to reality. The eyes seem to be the privileged organ here, however, it can also happen through hearing, touch or taste.” (Cz. Miłosz, *Wypisy*, p. 20). See also, for example, J. Błoński, ‘Epifanie Miłosza’ [Miłosz’s Epiphanies], in J. Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat* [Miłosz like the World], Kraków, 1998, pp. 50–78; T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja. Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii*, Kraków, 2010, pp. 343–60; W. J. Cymbalista, ‘Czesława Miłosza poetycka obrona epifanii’ [Czesław Miłosz’s Poetic Defence of Epiphany], in *Pogranicza, cezury, zmierzchy Czesława Miłosza* [Czesław Miłosz’s Borderlines, Caesuras, Twilights], eds. A. Janicka, K. Korotkich, J. Ławski, Białystok, 2012, pp. 509–15; A. Fiut, *Moment wieczny. Poezja Czesława Miłosza* [Eternal Moment. The Poetry of Czesław Miłosz], Kraków, 1998, pp. 317–22; R. Nycz, “Wyrwać z rzeczy chwilę zobaczenia.” Czesława Miłosza tropienie realności’ [“Seizing from Things the Moment of Seeing:” Czesław Miłosz’s Probing of Reality], in R. Nycz, *Literatura jako trop rzeczywistości. Poetyka epifanii w nowoczesnej literaturze polskiej* [Literature as a Trace of Reality. Poetics of Epiphany in Modern Polish Literature], Kraków, 2012, pp. 167–1; J. Szymik, *Problem teologicznego wymiaru dzieła literackiego Czesława Miłosza* [The Problem of the Theological Dimension of Czesław Miłosz’s Literary Output], Katowice, 1996, pp. 168–71; W. Kudyba, “Zostaw ten złudny umysł.” Echa medytacji zen w poezji Czesława Miłosza’ [“Let Go of This Illusory Mind.” Echoes of Zen Meditation in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz], in *Medytacja. Postawa intelektualna, sposób poznania, gatunek dyskursu* [Meditation. An Intellectual Attitude, Way of Knowing, Genre of Discourse], eds. T. Kostkiewiczowa, M. Saganiak, Warszawa, 2010, p. 267; see also A. Fiut, ‘Ciemne iluminacje’ [Dark Illuminations], in A. Fiut, *W stronę Miłosza* [Towards Miłosz], Kraków, 2003, pp. 18–26; R. Nycz, ‘Miłosz: bio-grafia idei’ [Miłosz: A Bio-graphy of Ideas], in R. Nycz, *Sylwy współczesne. Problem konstrukcji tekstu* [Modern Silva Rerum. Problem of Text Construction], Wrocław, 1984, pp. 46–7.
- 11 A. Fiut, *Moment wieczny*, p. 23; R. Nycz, ‘Miłosz: biografia idei’, p. 46; E. Dryglas-Komorowska, ‘Haiku w refleksji Czesława Miłosza’ [Haiku in the Reflection of

world,”<sup>12</sup> “called to the praise of things, because they are.”<sup>13</sup> Is this far from the attitude – and poetics – of the *haijin*?

Haiku is a poetic miniature. One which wants to exist independently,<sup>14</sup> and is autonomous, although it can retain – on various levels, in various cultural forms – traces of its association with linked verse.<sup>15</sup> In the poetic output of Miłosz, from its beginnings to the most recent texts (and, above all, at its beginnings and in his late volumes), we find numerous passages<sup>16</sup> embedded in nature and presenting, akin to haiku, one or several shapes against a distinct sensorial background (and with the emotionally restrained speaker). As the poem develops, however, the text undergoes sensorial, metaphorical, and philosophical condensation. One sensorial image, irreducible exclusively to a visual representation,<sup>17</sup> which could constitute the core of a haiku poem (though it is usually more specific than roughly sketched classical compositions of *haijins*), is immediately complemented by more images, which again are potential centres of Japanese-style miniatures. In Miłosz’s poetry, a plain, clear image demands more images, it is, to quote Tuwim’s term, “a radix” of subsequent images, striving for a multi-faceted sensorial whole. To give an account of the “suchness” of the world the *haijin* needed only a fragment, a snippet, a clearly composed scene. Miłosz wants to experience things in many different ways, from different angles,<sup>18</sup> in their different configurations;

Czesław Miłosz], in *Obrazy dookoła świata*, eds. J. Bielska-Krawczyk, S. Kołos, M. Mateja, Toruń, 2013, p. 296.

- 12 The poet’s self-description, as quoted in Cz. Miłosz, I. Kania, “[...] wolę polegać na Łasce – albo na braku Łaski [...]” p. 504. See also, for example, A. Fiut, *Moment wieczny*, pp. 7–10; J. Błoński, ‘Dziękczynienie’ [Thanksgiving], in J. Błoński, *Miłosz jak świat*, p. 217. Particular attention has been devoted to visual experience in the work of Miłosz – see, for example, K. van Heuckelom, “*Patrzeć w promień od ziemi odbity: Wizualność w poezji Czesława Miłosza* [“Looking at Light Reflected by Earth.”] Visuality in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz], Warszawa, 2004; J. Jarzębski, “Być samym czystym patrzyeniem bez nazwy” [To See, Purely and Simply, without Name], in *Poznanwanie Miłosza 3, 1999–2010* [Getting to Know Miłosz, 3], ed. A. Fiut, Kraków, 2011, pp. 235, 250.
- 13 Miłosz’s words quoted in Ch. S. Kraszewski, *Irresolute Heresiarch: Catholicism, Gnosticism and Paganism in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2012, p. 174.
- 14 This, after all, was the origin of this form – it is *hokku* that came into its own. See Part 1 (‘A Brief History of Haiku’).
- 15 See, for example, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec haiku,’ *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 4.
- 16 Passages from various longer poems are discussed in the context of haiku in, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics in Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Poetry*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–Toronto–Plymouth, 2011, pp. 125, 132–3, 204–6.
- 17 See Part 1.
- 18 Krzysztof Zajac commented on the work of Miłosz: “Individual things, phenomena, fleeting moments, memories – are fascinating not by themselves, but because they contribute to the image of being as a whole. The poet attempts to extrapolate

he sees the possibility of fulfilment – which, as it turns out, for the most part, is unattainable – only in a dense description that is averse to emptiness.<sup>19</sup> He may be looking for self-limitation (which will be treated in this chapter), pursuing silence,<sup>20</sup> striving “to see, purely and simply, without name,”<sup>21</sup> but his literary element is luxuriance (of words, phenomena, attitudes), rather than austerity, asceticism, and silence.<sup>22</sup>

Reality reproduced in Miłosz’s poetry “feeds upon ... its own splendour,”<sup>23</sup> however, this is not the aim of his poetic utterance. The artist reaches further – towards reflection, knowledge, and intellectual speculation.<sup>24</sup> This is neatly illustrated by

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ontological truth from fragments of reality. [...] Moments of sudden illuminations, during which consciousness seems to “touch” the truth, are momentary and cannot be put into words, therefore the poet will always be condemned to “accumulating details” drawn from life (K. Zajas, *Miłosz i filozofia* [Miłosz and Philosophy], Kraków, 1997, pp. 36–7). As Ireneusz Kania asserts: “[Miłosz] highly valued [...] his own uncontrollable desire for all possible impressions, yet at the same time he was aware of the dangers it posed. Without making total war on it, he adopted a detached and patient attitude to it, in a stoical and Buddhist vein [...]. (I. Kania, ‘Czesław Miłosz a buddyzm,’ *Dekada Literacka*, 2011, No. 1/2 [244/245], p. 95).

- 19 The unattainability of fullness is perfectly demonstrated by the poet’s comment on his own poem *No More* (which will be discussed below in the main text). “The real is simply too abundant; it wants to be named, but names cannot embrace it and it remains no more than a catalogue of data devoid of any ultimate meaning ... Second, to desire ardently to possess an object cannot be called anything but love. The poet, therefore, appears as a man in love with the world, but he is condemned to eternal insatiability because he wants his words to penetrate the very core of reality.” (Cz. Miłosz, “A Quarrel with Classicism,” in *The Witness of Poetry*, Cambridge, Mass., 1983, pp. 73–4).
- 20 See, for example, A. Gleń, ‘Nie-przedstawianie. O ograniczaniu podmiotowości w późnej twórczości poetyckiej Mirona Białoszewskiego i Czesława Miłosza’ [Non-representation. On the Reduction of Subjectivity in the Late Poetry of Miron Białoszewski and Czesław Miłosz], in *Dwudziestowieczność* [Twentieth-centuryism], eds. M. Dąbrowski, T. Wójcik, Warszawa, 2004, pp. 450–6. It is puzzling, however, that Adrian Gleń never mentions Miłosz’s fascination with Asian thought.
- 21 Cz. Miłosz, *The Collected Poems*, New York, 1988, p. 450.
- 22 See, for example, A. Gleń, ‘Nie-przedstawianie’, pp. 450–5.
- 23 T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja*, p. 342.
- 24 A similar intuition can be gleaned from this comment by Aleksander Fiut (if somehow we reverse Fiut’s line of reasoning): “In the work of Miłosz [...] a desire for direct contact with the visible world is expressed from the outset. The seen and remembered world – not interpreted, imagined, and imaginary. Knowledge, fantasy, and imagination are not a mere appendage to intellectual operations, but their first and most reliable impulse. In short, sensorialism seems to be both an epistemological method and a motive force of this poetry.” (A. Fiut, *Moment wieczny*, p. 8).

the poem ‘Nad strumieniem’ [By a Stream], opening with a clear, multi-sensory image (two initial verses), then bringing “lush” sensorial contemplation, ecstatic joy of communing with multitude and multifariousness (also on the plane of naming), truly epiphanic *horror vacui*. And closing with enunciations transporting the reader to entirely different spaces:

Szmer przezroczystej wody na kamieniach  
 w jarze pośrodku wysokiego lasu.  
 Jaśnieją w słońcu paprocie na brzegu,  
 piętrzy się nieogarniona forma liści  
 lancetowatych, mieczykowatych,  
 sercowatych, łopatomatych,  
 językowatych, pierzastych,  
 karbowanych, ząbkowanych,  
 piłkowanych – i kto to wypowie.  
 I kwiaty! Białawe baldachy,  
 modre kielichy, jaskrawożółte gwiazdy,  
 różyczki, grona.  
 Siedzieć i patrzeć  
 na uwijanie się trzmieli, loty ważek,  
 podrywanie się muchołówki,  
 w płataninie łodyg pośpiech czarnego żuka.  
 [...]

Wydaje mi się, że słyszę głos demiurga:  
 “Albo nieme skały jak w pierwszym dniu stworzenia,  
 albo życie, którego warunkiem śmierć,  
 i to upajające ciebie piękno.”

[The murmur of clear water on stones,  
 in a gully deep in a tall forest.  
 Ferns brighten in the sun on the banks,  
 the stacked, ungraspable shapes of leaves,  
 lancet-like, sword-like,  
 heart-like, shovel-like,  
 notched, serrated,  
 saw-toothed—who will express it?  
 And the flowers! Whitish umbels,  
 deep blue chalices, bright yellow stars,  
 roselets, clusters.  
 To sit and to watch  
 the bustle of bumblebees, the flight of dragonflies,  
 the takeoff of a flycatcher,  
 in the tangle of twigs the hurry of the black beetle.  
 [...]

It seems that I hear the voice of a demiurge:



“Either speechless rocks, as on the first day of creation,  
or life, whose condition is death,  
and this beauty which elates you.”<sup>25</sup>

It would be highly interesting to look at Polish poetry through the prism of passages akin to haiku and their metamorphoses in longer sections of Miłosz’s poems. However, this topic would merit an entirely different monograph. At this juncture, I will only recall a handful of “haiku-like” fragments extracted from several decades’ worth of Miłosz’s poetry and containing one or more sensorial images. These depictions are intense and vividly sensorial, focused on deeply individually experienced fragments of reality. However, these individual experiences can be found in the reader’s own store of sensorial memory, and as such meet the postulates of sensorial mimesis.<sup>26</sup>

Interestingly enough, a significant part of haiku-like passages are fragments of poems firmly embedded in the reader’s memory, widely known and discussed on numerous occasions and in various contexts. Their “catchiness” can be linked, I think, for example with the striking sensorial clarity of images, corresponding to certain rules of human perception:<sup>27</sup>

Była już jesień. Nad wzgórzami wrzosów,  
Nad mglistym lasem, nad jeziorem stał  
Głos trąbki srebrny jak o szkło trącanie.

[It was autumn already. Over the hills of heather,  
By the misty forest, by the lake, stood  
The sound of a trumpet silver as the chinking of glass.]<sup>28</sup>

Gdy wiatr powieje, mienią się ogrody  
Jak wielkie ciche i łagodne morza.  
Piana po liściach przebiegnie, a potem  
Znowu ogrody i zielone morza.

[When the wind blows, the gardens sparkle  
Like great calm and gentle seas.  
The foam will run across leaves, and then  
Gardens and green seas again.]<sup>29</sup>

W mojej ojczyźnie, do której nie wrócę,  
Jest takie leśne jezioro ogromne,

25 ‘Nad strumieniem,’ from the volume *To [It]*, Ww 1152, the English translation by Cz. Miłosz and R. Hass, “By A Stream,” *New Yorker*, August 13, 2001, p. 33.

26 See esp. Parts 1 and 5.

27 For more on this subject, see Part 1.

28 ‘2 strofy’ [Two Stanzas], from scattered poems 1930–1936, Ww 44.

29 ‘Piosenka pasterska’ [Pastoral Song], from the collection ‘Ocalenie’ [Rescue], 1945, Ww 183, poem dated: Warszawa 1942.

Chmury szerokie, rozdarte, cudowne  
Pamiętam, kiedy wzrok za siebie rzuć.

[In my native land where I won't return  
There is a vast forest lake.  
I remember, any time I look back,  
Wide clouds, torn, marvelous]<sup>30</sup>

Piwonie kwitną, białe i różowe,  
A w środku każdej, jak w pachnącym dzbanie,  
Gromady żuczków prowadzą rozmowę,  
Bo kwiat jest dany żuczkom na mieszkanie.

[The peonies bloom, white and pink.  
And inside each, as in a fragrant bowl,  
A swarm of tiny beetles have their conversation,  
For the flower is given to them as their home.]<sup>31</sup>

Jak ciepłe światło! Z różowej zatoki  
Choiny masztów, odpoczynek lin  
We mgłach poranka. Tam, gdzie w wody morza  
Sączy się strumień, przy mostku, dźwięk fletu.

[How warm the light! From the glowing bay  
The masts like spruce, repose of the ropes  
In the morning mist. Where a stream trickles  
Into the sea, by a small bridge-a flute.]<sup>32</sup>

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- 30 'W mojej ojczyźnie,' from the collection *Ocalenie*, 1945, Ww 145, poem dated: Warszawa 1937, English translation, 'In my Native Land,' in Cz. Miłosz, *Between Anxiety and Hope: The Poetry and Writing of Czesław Miłosz*, ed. E. Możejko, Edmonton, 1988, p. 6.
- 31 'Przy piwoniami,' from the collection *Ocalenie*, 1945, the sequence *Świat (Poema naiwne)* [The World, Naive Poems], Ww 201, the cycle dated: Warszawa 1943, English translation, 'By the Peonies,' in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931–2001*, transl. Cz. Miłosz and R. Hass, R. Pinsky, D. Scott, et al. New York, 2001, p. 47. The following poem by Matso Bashō provides an interesting intertext here:  
from deep in the  
peony's pistils, the bee's  
reluctant parting  
As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 52.
- 32 'Szczęście,' from the collection *Król Popiel i inne wiersze* [King Popiel and Other Poems], 1962, Ww 471, poem dated: Washington D.C. 1948; English translation 'Happiness' in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931–2001*, p. 161.

Zarzucaś wędkę, stojąc na kamieniu.  
 Bose nogi okrąża woda migotliwa  
 Twojej rodzinnej rzeki w gęstwie lilii wodnych.

[Standing on a boulder you cast a line,  
 Your bare feet rounded by the flickering water  
 Of your native river thick with water lilies.]<sup>33</sup>

Moment niskich obłoków przed wzejściem księżyca  
 Doskonale nieruchomych na linii morza:  
 Świetlistość morelowa z obrzeżem popiołu  
 Ciemniejsze, gaśnie, stygnie w szary karmin.

[An instant of low white clouds before the rising of the moon,  
 Perfectly immobile on the line of the sea.  
 The apricot translucence with edges of ash  
 Darkens, wanes, sets into grey vermillion.]<sup>34</sup>

Las był nad wodą i ogromna cisza.  
 Perkoz czubaty w jeziornej zatoce,  
 Stadko cyranek w środku jasnej toni.

[The woods reached water and there was immense silence.  
 A crested grebe popped up on the surface of the lake,  
 In deep water, very still, a flock of teals.]<sup>35</sup>

Rzeka płynęła dalej przez dębowe i sosnowe lasy.

Stałem w trawach po pas, wdychając dziki zapach  
 żółtych kwiatów.

I obłoki. Jak zawsze w tamtych stronach,  
 dużo obłoków.

[The river flows through a forest of oak and pine.

I stand in grass up to my waist,  
 Breathing in the wild scent of yellow flowers.

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33 'Chłopiec,' from the collection *Nieobjęta ziemia* [Unattainable Earth], 1984, Ww 817; English translation, 'A Boy,' in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931–2001*, p. 422.

34 'Wieczór,' from the collection *Dalsze okolice* [Provinces], 1991, Ww 979; English translation 'Evening' in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 505.

35 'Przeszłość,' from the collection *Na brzegu rzeki* [By the Riverside], 1994, Ww 1078; English translation, *The Past*, in Cz. Miłosz, *Facing the River*, transl. by Cz. Miłosz and R. Hass, Manchester, 1995, p. 40.

Above, white clouds. As is usual in my district,  
an abundance of white clouds.<sup>36</sup>

## 1. Miłosz's Miniatures: Towards Haiku?

"Haiku-like" passages are abundantly scattered throughout the oeuvre of Miłosz. One can also find here a small group of miniatures intriguingly fluctuating around the poetics of the Japanese form. I have in mind selected texts from the *Zdania* [Sentences] sequence (the volume *Hymn o perle*, 1982) and a small number of poems scattered across his other poetry books. Having said that, it is surprising how little literary scholars,<sup>37</sup> who on numerous occasions explored the poet's sundry Oriental fascinations, have had to say so far about Miłosz the haijin.<sup>38</sup>

36 'Po,' from the collection *To [This]*, 2000, Ww 1213; English translation, *After*, in *Cz. Miłosz, New and Collected Poems*, p. 744.

37 Specialists in literary studies see Miłosz primarily as practising haiku "indirectly, through translation" (A. Dziadek, *Obrazy i wiersze. Z zagadnień interferencji sztuk w polskiej poezji współczesnej*, Katowice, 2004, p. 166. Leszek Engelking writes explicitly: "Czesław Miłosz himself has not written (or at least not published) any haiku as of yet [i.e. in 2000]. However, he put out a volume of translations or perhaps paraphrases of Japanese haiku and contemporary American and Canadian haiku." (L. Engelking, 'Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie pod bananowcem,' in *Droga na Wschód. Polskie inspiracje orientalne. Materiały z forum dyskusyjnego*, ed. and introduction by D. Kalinowski, Słupsk, 2000, p. 130). Edyta Tuz-Jurecka talks about affinities between Miłosz's view and description of the world, and old East-Asian poetry, including haiku ("Great discipline in self-effacement and the focus on the observed object, a liking for detail, so typical of Miłosz, create a common ground for him and old poets of China and Japan" – E. Tuz-Jurecka, 'Buddyjskie intuicje w twórczości Czesława Miłosza' [Buddhist Intuitions in the Work of Czesław Miłosz], in E. Tuz-Jurecka, *Natura w poezji Czesława Miłosza* [Nature in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz], Jelenia Góra, 2007, p. 71). However, Tuz-Jurecka does not explore how deep these connections with Japanese miniatures would run, and in which of Miłosz's poetry books they are most clearly manifest. Alina Świeściak, in turn, sees Miłosz as a "practitioner of haiku" (A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki Ryszarda Krynickiego*, Kraków, 2004, p. 166). She voices her opinion on this subject merely in conjunction with her reflections on Krynicki's poetics (A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki*, pp. 165–6). The only essay I know of entirely devoted to kinship between Miłosz's work and haiku is the text by Ewa Dryglas-Komorowska *Haiku w refleksji Czesława Miłosza*. As we have seen, Ewa Tomaszewska included a selection from the sequence *Zdania* in *Antologia polskiego haiku* (a compilation I find partially controversial). It is also symptomatic that in the selected subject bibliography devoted to Miłosz's work included in the volume *Poznanwanie Miłosza 2. Część druga: 1980–1998*, ed. A. Fiut, Kraków, 2001, p. 359, the haiku section contains references (not always precise) to texts dealing with translations by Miłosz.

38 See, esp., I. Kania, 'Czesław Miłosz a buddyzm,' pp. 82–97; W. Kudyba, "Zostaw ten żudny umysł," pp. 263–76; T. Pólichłopek, 'Motywy wedyjskie w "autobiografii

Piotr Michałowski asserts that Miłosz's interest in haiku is belated: "His ideal of poetry has long come close to haiku ideology. However, the poet didn't notice this until his [...] introduction to the selection of his own translations [of haiku]."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, it was as late as the 1990s that Miłosz spoke approvingly of this form (the book of translations supplied with an introduction,<sup>40</sup> his numerous interviews,<sup>41</sup> Kobayashi Issa's haiku in *Wypisy z ksiąg użytecznych*).<sup>42</sup> Already in 1978, however, he writes the poem 'Czytając japońskiego poetę Issa' [Reading the Japanese Poet Issa] (as discussed below) which is a polemic against the assumptions of this art (as he saw them at the time). Numerous fragments of his poems in some measure come close to haiku, but at the same time, as I have demonstrated, transcend this form in various sensorial and intellectual ways. Therefore, it would be worthwhile finding out what exactly is happening at the level of poetics inherent in the few miniature poems oscillating around the Western prototype of the form. We should still bear in mind that Miłosz could easily have come into contact with haiku earlier (and to a much larger extent) than poets living in Poland. In the multicultural environment of Berkeley, he had ready access to (translations) of literary and philosophical Japanese texts, along with opportunities for a comprehensive discussion on the cultural universe of the Far East.

In my analyses, I will follow the chronological order (with a few exceptions), trying to determine whether the output of Miłosz the miniaturist underwent any haiku-related evolution. The following is one of the first haiku ever written in Polish (the text is dated "Berkeley, 1971"):

Przezroczyście drzewo pełne ptaków przelotnych  
O niebieskim poranku, chłodnym, bo jeszcze śnieg w górach.

[Transparent tree, full of migrating birds on a blue morning,  
Cold because there is still snow in the mountains.]<sup>43</sup>

- 
- uczuc" Czesława Miłosza' [Vedic Motifs in Czesław Miłosz's "Autobiography of Feelings"], in *Pogranicza, czury*, pp. 379–92; M. Bernacki, 'Wpływ kabbalistycznej kosmogonii na twórczość Czesława i Oskara Władysława Miłoszów' [The Influence of Kabbalistic Cosmogony on the Work of Czesław Miłosz and Oscar Miłosz], in *Pogranicza, czury*, pp. 393–408; A. Fiut, *Moment wieczny*, pp. 317–22; T. Garbol, 'Prostota – jako narzędzie poetyckie' [Simplicity as a Poetic Tool], in T. Garbol, *Po upadku. O twórczości Czesława Miłosza* [After the Fall. The Work of Czesław Miłosz], Lublin, 2013, pp. 416–7; E. Tuz-Jurecka, 'Buddyjskie intuicje,' pp. 58–73.
- 39 P. Michałowski, 'Barokowe korzenie haiku (ostatnia przygoda Stanisława Grochowiaka),' *Akcent*, 1993, No. 4, p. 9.
- 40 Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, introduction by Cz. Miłosz, Kraków, 1992.
- 41 See footnote 8 in this part of the book.
- 42 Cz. Miłosz, *Wypisy*, p. 20. See the English edition, Cz. Miłosz (ed.), *A Book of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry*, New York, 1996, p. 6.
- 43 'Pory roku,' from the volume *Gdzie wschodzi słońce i kędy zapada* [From the Rising of the Sun], 1974, Ww 629; English translation 'Seasons', in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 276.

A clear, ascetic, orientaling image: a tree, most likely leafless (since “transparent” and “there is still snow in the mountains”), and birds perched on its branches. The background made up of two sensorial planes: the blue and the cold. The title can call to mind haiku’s embeddedness in the cyclical changes of the natural world.<sup>44</sup> It would seem that there is no room for anything else here. Miłosz, however, manages to smuggle additional content, augmenting the poem’s sensorial plane, equipping it with “links” to subsequent chain-linked images (the passage of birds, snow-capped mountains). Besides this, attention – and senses – are already attracted by the initial visual and tactile “transparency” of the tree, acoustically highlighted by the alliteration within the first verse (in the original we have “Przezroczyście drzewo pełne ptaków przelotnych”). In this miniature, one feature highly characteristic of the poet is manifest: the pursuit to infuse a poem with sensorial intensity, the inability to confine oneself to a single austere image.

A few years earlier, Miłosz writes ‘Okno’ [Window], a poem composed of three components separated with interline spacing. The incipit is a fine, subtly metaphorical image (incidentally, also featuring a “transparent” tree):

Wyrzależem przez okno o brzasku i ujrzależem przezroczystą jabłkłę w jasności<sup>45</sup>

[I looked out the window at dawn and saw a young apple tree translucent in brightness.]

Which is followed by:

A kiedy wyrzależem znowu o brzasku, stała tam wielka jabłń obciążona owocem.

Więc duzo lat pewnie minęło, ale nic nie pamiętam, co zdarzyło się we śnie.

[And when I looked out at dawn once again, an apple tree laden with fruit stood there.

Many years had probably gone by but I remember nothing of what happened in my sleep.]<sup>46</sup>

The closing verses run counter to haiku’s momentariness, suspending the ontological status of occurrences.<sup>47</sup> However, they open up, in common with Miłosz’s longer poems employing “haiku-like” images, very broad cultural contexts.

44 See E. Dryglas-Komorowska, ‘Haiku w refleksji,’ pp. 297–8.

45 I decided to write this part of the poem in one line. In various editions (Ww 564; Cz. Miłosz, *Miasto bez imienia. Poezje*, Paryż, 1969, p. 26) the enjambment of the first line will appear in different places of the sentence, which indicates that lineation has been adapted to accommodate the width of the page.

46 From the volume *Miasto bez imienia* [City without a Name], 1969, Ww 564, poem dated Berkeley, 1965; English translation in Cz. Miłosz, *Window*, in *New and Collected Poems*, p. 224.

47 A similar extension of momentariness very seldom occurs in classical haiku:

Particularly noteworthy is *Zdania* (included, let us recall, in the volume *Hymn o perle*, 1982), the cycle which eludes comprehensive description and simple genre qualifications.<sup>48</sup> In the heterogeneous group of texts, one can find gnomic poems, dark pictorial and reflective “verses,” historiosophical propositions, texts appearing to be fragments of longer poetic narratives. Finally, we come across several haiku poems:<sup>49</sup>

‘Zachód’

Na słomianożółtych pagórkach, nad zimnym niebieskim morzem, czarne krzaki  
Kolczastego dębu.

[THE WEST

On straw-yellow hills, over a cold blue sea, black bushes of thorny oak]<sup>50</sup>

‘Co nam towarzyszy’

Kładka z poręczą nad górskim potokiem  
Pamiętana do najdrobniejszej wypukłości kory.

[WHAT ACCOMPANIES US

Mountain stream, footbridge with a rail  
remembered down to the smallest burr on its bark.]<sup>51</sup>

Thus, is it possible that in this heterogeneous collection Miłosz decided to give proof of his ability as a haikin? Our analysis shows that *Zdania* contains merely “flashes” of haiku. In most texts suspected of “haiku” affinities, the poet escapes from contemplative simplicity, from isolated detail – into, for example, “UNBOUNDED

A short nap, then  
awakening—the spring  
day darkened.

Buson (English translation as quoted in Y. Sawa, E. Marcombe Shiffert, *Haiku Master Buson*, p. 40.).

- 48 Miłosz described *Zdania* using the phrases “forma graniczna” [borderline form], “forma pośrednia” [intermediary form] (Cz. Miłosz, R. Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata* [World Traveller], Kraków, 2002, p. 223). See also A. Fiut, *Moment wieczny*, p. 334; P. Michałowski, ‘Inne gatunki’ [Other Genres], in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin, 1999, pp. 117–8.
- 49 See E. Dryglas-Komorowska, ‘Haiku w refleksji,’ pp. 296–7. Interestingly, in the conversation between Miłosz and Renata Gorczyńska devoted to *Zdania* (Cz. Miłosz, R. Gorczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, pp. 223–35) there is no mention of possible Asian affiliations of the cycle. The texts approaching haiku (except for *Góry* [The Mountains]) were not discussed either – perhaps they did not provide the interlocutors with sufficiently intense intellectual stimuli.
- 50 Ww 710, English translation Cz. Miłosz, *Poezje wybrane. Selected Poems*, transl. P. D. Scott, Kraków, 2005, p. 263.
- 51 Ww 710 English translation in Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 352.

FORESTS flowing with the honey of wild bees” (to quote ‘Krajobraz’ [Landscape]),<sup>52</sup> which cannot be experienced in the manner of haiku (immediately, intimately).<sup>53</sup> Or – into an indefinite and probably impersonal past:

‘Exodus’

– Kiedy przyszedliśmy, puszcza tu tylko rośla, gęsta, o jak palce.

[EXODUS

– When we came, only primeval forest grew here, dense, look, like fingers]<sup>54</sup>

‘Świątynia’

W gąszczu klęcząc, adorowali pochody na niebie

[A TEMPLE

Kneeling in the thicket, they adored processions in the sky.]<sup>55</sup>

The relationship between the subject and object, also crucial to haiku, can be an interpretive puzzle.<sup>56</sup> As we read in *Zdania*:

‘Środek przeciwko pesymizmowi’

Uspokoił mnie las w ogniu od pioruna.

[REMEDY FOR PESSIMISM

The forest on fire from thunder calmed me down.]<sup>57</sup>

The centre of the text is situated in the experiencing subject, whose feelings seem ultimately incongruous with the state of the observed (and objectified?) nature. The dissonance compels us to read the poem, again and again, to investigate whether we are dealing with a record of a profound experience of the destructive element. The construction of the poems provokes the reader to “live” the depicted situation (the fire is described sketchily, but it elicits intense resonance in the sensorial memory of the reader). At the same time, the poem functions as a haiku that pulls the reader into the centre of sense experiences – and as an “exhibitionistic” confessional lyric mode inducing psychological interpretations.

52 Ww 708; emphasis added, English translation in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 351.

53 The intertextual allusion (“land of milk and honey,” Ex 3.8) additionally archaizes and “mythicizes” the message. In his conversation with Górczyńska, Miłosz “sees [here] a direct echo of [school] translations of Ovid [...] ‘golden honey dripped from green oak’” (Cz. Miłosz, R. Górczyńska, *Podróźny świata*, p. 225).

54 Ww 705.

55 Ww 705.

56 Miłosz spoke (approvingly) of the “deep identification between the subject and object” as late as in 1990s – see Cz. Miłosz, E. Sawicka, ‘Czyste lustro,’ p. 308; Cz. Miłosz, ‘Przedmowa,’ in Cz. Miłosz, *Wypisy*, p. 10.

57 Ww 705.



Finally, occurring frequently in *Zdania* is the search for an additional “jumping-off point” for the intellect and imagination. Miłosz writes:

‘Kusiciel w ogrodzie’  
Nieruchomo patrząca gałąź, i zimna, i żywa.

[THE TEMPTER IN THE GARDEN  
A still-looking branch, both cold and living.]<sup>58</sup>

A branch, garden, poetic miniature – only seemingly are we led towards Asian aesthetics. The title refers to a biblical story from Eden, while the antithetically described branch could be construed, through visual similarity, as the snake from the Garden of Eden.<sup>59</sup> Communing with nature is an excuse, not a cornerstone of the poem.

Another “sentence” reads as follows:

‘Zaobłoczna góra’  
Wstępowaliśmy, pędząc przed sobą stada nadziemskich jeleni.

[A CLOUDED MOUNTAIN  
We ascended, driving herds of unearthly deer in front of us.]<sup>60</sup>

Is this about animals obliterated by fog or clouds and “driven” by climbers? Or about clouds constantly appearing before the climbers? Or maybe the “unearthly deer” are mythical beings associated with the austere primaevial landscape? Mysteriousness, subtle archaization (“we ascended”), the eponymous neologism (the Polish title is ‘Zaobłoczona góra,’ A Behind-cloud Mountain) de-automatizing reception. The semantic “fogginess” stands in contradiction with the strong sensorial haiku-like anchoring in the concrete.

Finally, in concise ‘Zdania,’ as in the fragments of longer poems cited at the beginning, the poet occasionally paints fully fledged, multi-sensory, multi-dimensional, “multi-haiku” images:<sup>61</sup>

‘Góry’  
Mokre trawy do kolan, maliniak na porębach wyższy od człowieka, chmura  
u stoku, w chmurze czarny las.  
I pasterze w średniowiecznych skórzniach nam na spotkanie schodzili

58 Ww 709; English translation in Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 352.

59 See Cz. Miłosz, R. Górczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, pp. 230–1. Miłosz sums this up as follows: “Maybe this is merely an illustration from the Bible. The snake partakes of a plant, ‘branchiness.’ As if the eyes looked from the tree” (Cz. Miłosz, R. Górczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, p. 231).

60 Ww 705.

61 Miłosz summed up *Góry* in the interview with Górczyńska: “nice, isn’t it? Yes, it is a somewhat fantasied description of Switzerland” (Cz. Miłosz, R. Górczyńska, *Podróżny świata*, p. 234).

## [MOUNTAINS

Wet grass to the knees, in the clearing, raspberry bushes taller than a man, a cloud on the slope, in the cloud a black forest. And shepherds in medieval buskins were coming down as we walked up.<sup>62]</sup>

Haiku-centred fluctuations in Miłosz's poetics can also be traced in his later texts. In 1997, the following poem was published:

'Z okna u mego dentysty'

Nadzwyczajne. Dom. Wysoki. Otoczony powietrzem. Stoi. Pośrodku niebieskiego nieba.

## [FROM MY DENTIST'S WINDOW

Extraordinary. A house. Tall. Surrounded by air. It stands. In the middle of a blue sky.<sup>63]</sup>

This description is "uncompressed" visually and sensorially, yet concrete enough to meet the requirements of sensorial mimesis. Actually, this is an excellent, supremely indeterminate haiku. A poem full of breathing space (semantics, "telegraphic" record: frequent pauses, capital letters), simplicity and sublimity – despite the unpoetic "dentist's window." Miłosz resigns from lineation altogether. One gets the impression that the poet's pen quite unexpectedly transformed a short note into a miniature approaching the principles of the Japanese style. This text is somewhat parallel with the first haiku discussed in this section but even clearer and "cleaner." So is it not the case that Miłosz finally arrived at haiku – and decided to follow these poetics?

The volume in question includes quite a few miniatures, most of which, however, have nothing to do with haiku.<sup>64</sup> The misleadingly "un-haiku-like" poem 'Nazwa' [Name] (Ww 1123) may act as a counterpoint to the above-discussed poem:

Wspaniałość była wielka, ale wymyślona:  
blask mieszkał w nazwie Emberiza citrinella  
nie w ptaku, drzewie, kamieniu czy chmurze.

62 Ww 711; English translation in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 353. This lineation was likely dictated by space limitations of the page. In *Hymn o perle* (Ann Arbor, n.d., p. 32) the text was divided into three verses, without enjambment (the second verse starts with the phrase "a cloud on the slope").

63 From the volume *Piesek przydrożny* [Roadside Dog], 1997, the cycle *Osobny zeszyt – kartki odnalezione* [The Separate Notebooks – Found Sheets], Ww 1129; English translation in Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 649. I use the one-line arrangement. In various editions (Ww 1129; *Piesek przydrożny*, p. 138) the text is variously divided depending on page width.

64 Amongst the most interesting examples of subtle parallels with Oriental seventeen-syllable poems is the strongly metaphorical poem 'Sny' [Dreams] (Ww 1124), which renders dreams unreal and is closed with a superb image that standing on its own could be a haiku (and a basis of a haiku illustration – *haiga*).

[The magnificence was great, but invented:  
the radiance dwelled in the name *Emberiza citrinella* [yellowhammer],  
not in a bird, tree, stone or cloud.]

Finally, in the context of Miłosz's relationship with haiku, the poem 'O!' should be presented:

O, szczęście! widzieć irys.

Kolor indygo jak kiedyś suknia Eli  
I delikatny zapach, jak zapach jej skóry.

O, jaki bełkot żeby opisać irys,  
który kwitł, kiedy nie było żadnej Eli  
i żadnych naszych królestw  
i żadnych krajów.

[O happiness! to see an iris.

The colour of indigo, as Ela's dress was once,  
and the delicate scent like that of her skin.

O what a mumbling to describe an iris  
that was blooming when Ela did not exist,  
nor our kingdoms or our countries!]<sup>65</sup>

The first three verses constitute a form approaching haiku.<sup>66</sup> Let us note, however, that the speaker is so keenly focused on the object that he... forgets about it, abstracting it from reality, immersing it exclusively in his own memory. After three verses, the poet finishes off the image, without further "sensorializing" it and without striving for new scenes. We move to the plane of "autotelicity," to reflections on the ineptness and inadequacy of description.<sup>67</sup>

The epiphanic poem 'O!,'<sup>68</sup> calling to mind *aware*, the Japanese aesthetic category purportedly originating from (among other things) shouts of delight and amazement, (compared to "the lowering of one's head with admiration for the

65 From the collection *To [This]*, English translation in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 683.

66 Adam Dziadek can hear "haiku resonances" in apostrophes in all poems opening with the exclamation mark "O!" (Dziadek, *Wiersze i obrazy* [Poems and Images], pp. 166–8). Dziadek detects confluences with haiku in, for example, connections of Miłosz's texts with painting, in their narrative character and elusiveness. Aneta Grodecka also briefly mentions haiku inspiration "in poems about paintings from the volume *To*" (A. Grodecka, *Wiersze o obrazach. Studium z dziejów ekfrazy*, Poznań, 2009, p. 226).

67 See Cz. Miłosz, *Kroniki* [Chronicles], Kraków, 1988, p. 34; K. Zajas, *Miłosz i filozofia*, p. 21; E. Drygła-Komorowska, 'Haiku w refleksji...', p. 300.

68 Dziadek also detects irony here (unlike me) – see A. Dziadek, *Obrazy i wiersze*, p. 166.

extraordinariness, magnificence, exquisite charm, dignified beauty”), could be linked to haiku.<sup>69</sup> Japanese haijins would sometimes be literally struck dumb by a phenomenon, patiently contemplating the very impossibility of expression:

This! This!  
I could only say at blossoms  
of Mount Yoshino  
Teishitsu<sup>70</sup>

Miłosz’s attempt to describe the flower is very significant. Haiku refers to what is individually experienced but available to the reader’s experience and sensorial memory (the central principle of sensorial mimesis).<sup>71</sup> In this poem, the need to render experience supremely concrete is expressed not through the multiplication of sense-images known from the poet’s longer poems, but by means of extreme individualization of the description of impressions, “slamming the door” in the face of the reader eager to follow in the footsteps of the experiencing subject. The entire description is concerned with comparing the flower to the shade of a dress and the smell of one specific woman unknown to the readers at large. Miłosz avoided “mushiness,”<sup>72</sup> but confined himself to a narrow sphere of “private” sensations.

The second part of the poem brings another surprise. “To describe an iris that was blooming when Ela did not exist, nor our kingdoms or our countries!” That is – not one, unique iris, analogous with the smell and dress of one particular person?<sup>73</sup> Iris in general, the “essence” of a flower?<sup>74</sup> Not a “single sensorial experience,” “individual specimen, individual existence?”<sup>75</sup> Or maybe there are no significant differences between individual irises? This is where extensive philosophical planes open up, far removed from simple, sensorial contemplation of a single phenomenon of nature.<sup>76</sup>

69 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły Matsuo Bashō*, Warszawa, 2007, p. 248. For additional meanings and another possible etymology of the term, see A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły...* See also Part 1 of the book (section ‘Aesthetic Categories’).

70 R. Aitken, *A Zen Wave*, p. 115.

71 The combination of universal experience and individual sensitivity in the context of Miłosz and haiku (in translation) has been discussed, for example, by Lidia Końska, ‘Miłosz czyli Issa’ [Miłosz or Issa] *Arka*, 1993, No. 43 (1), p. 169. See also J. Błoński, *Epifanie Miłosza*, p. 211.

72 See I. Kania, ‘Czesław Miłosz a buddyzm,’ p. 89.

73 Let us recall the famous, widely commented sentence from the long poem ‘Na trąbach i na cytrze’ [With Trumpets and Zithers] (the collection *Miasto bez imienia*, 1969, Ww 569): „Opisywać chciałem ten, nie inny, kosz warzywa z położoną w poprzek rudowłosą lalką poru” [I wanted to describe this, not that, basket of vegetables with a redheaded doll of a leek laid across it]. See, for example, K. Zajac, *Miłosz i filozofia*, p. 22.

74 See Cz. Miłosz, *Miasto bez imienia*, 1969, Ww 569, p. 36.

75 Phrases quoted from the already canonical description of sources of Miłosz’s epiphanies – J. Błoński, *Epifanie Miłosza*, p. 211.

76 One could quote Krzysztof Zajac here: “On the surface, Miłosz supports the philosophical thesis that there is nothing but an individual being – but his inquiries always

As we have seen, Miłosz did not wish to adopt the attitude – and poetics – of the *haijin*. Certainly, he could write excellent, innovative haiku (the material gathered here demonstrates that he was capable of it), yet the analysis of his miniatures does not show any “haiku-centric” evolution of his style. His miniatures did not have enough space to accommodate strings of “haiku-like” images typical of the poet’s longer poems. Despite this, the poet did not want to limit himself to a roughly outlined, ascetic image. He felt and understood the Zen-like need for silence, but for many reasons could not consistently translate it into poetry.

## 2. Reading Japanese Poets

In discussions of Miłosz’s fascinations with the Far East, typically two of his poems have been referenced: ‘Nie więcej’ [No More] (1957; from the volume *Król Popiel i inne wiersze* [King Popiel and Other Poems], 1962) and ‘Czytając japońskiego poetę Issa (1762–1826)’ [Reading the Japanese Poet Issa, (1762–1826)] (dated 1978, from the volume *Hymn o perle*, 1982) – and their canonical discussions by Aleksander Fiut.<sup>77</sup> In the former one, Japanese poems about chrysanthemums, a cherry tree’s blossoming, and the moon (and, as the speaker suggests, similar Western texts) are examples of literary craftsmanship, a convention ill-equipped to convey the overwhelming sensoriality of things and events. As Aleksander Fiut writes:

Miłosz presents [here] two quite different varieties of poetry. The first one, with which Japanese art becomes synonymous, abandons its illuminative, revelatory ambitions and quite explicitly limits itself to repeating conventional aesthetic patterns. It is marked by the use of affective universals, the deftness of imitation and compliance with time-honoured canons. The poet is no longer someone special, a demiurge or prophet [...]. The second variety of poetry does not settle for composing poems on a

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attempt to go further, to touch the essence” (K. Zajas, *Miłosz i filozofia*, pp. 36–7). A fragment of the poem by Miłosz called ‘Podziw’ [Amazement] (Ww 699) might serve as an important intertext here:

Nieprzebrane, niepoliczone substancje ziemi.  
 Zapach cząbrku, kolor jodły, szron, tańce żurawi.  
 A wszystko równoczesne. I chyba wieczne.  
 Oko nie widziało, ucho nie słyszało, a to było.  
 Struny nie wygrają, język nie wypowie, a to będzie.

[Innumerable and boundless substances of the Earth:  
 Scent of thyme, hue of fir, white frost, dances of cranes.  
 And everything simultaneous. And probably eternal.  
 Unseen, unheard, yet it was.

Unexpressed by strings or tongues, yet it will be.]

English translation in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 345.

77 See, for example, E. Dryglas-Komorowska, ‘Haiku w refleksji,’ p. 299.

set topic. On the contrary, it measures its value by the capacity to describe reality in its momentary, fleeting manifestations. The poet's ambition is to reach the essence of phenomena, overcome limitations resulting from the linear order of language, and finally – a multifaceted perspective that would permit recording not only the semiotic complexity of the object of the description, but the attitude of the cognizing subject which is not without influence on this object.<sup>78</sup>

The view of Japanese poetry that emerges from Fiut's account is not false. However, it is not related, as one might judge from the description, to "Japanese art" in general, but only to some of its manifestations. Let us bear in mind that Miłosz writes about "Merchants and artisans of Old Japan / Who arranged verses about cherry blossoms" (Ww 468). Thus – about "average people who practised poetry in their free moments,"<sup>79</sup> fully satisfied with the conventional, ossified form. He does not mention wanderers leaving court service and travelling the country in search of aesthetic and spiritual sensations (like Matsuo Bashō), patient artists apprenticed to numerous masters, perfecting their skills for many years (like Yosa Buson), and eulogists of ordinary everyday life struggling with poverty and adversity (like Kobayashi Issa), or writers provoking vital literary disputes, fully aware of the power of literary expression (like Masaoka Shiki). Therefore, it seems that 'Nie więcej' is not an appropriate reference point for Miłosz's interest in haiku, especially as classical haiku is markedly closer to the second type of poetry, which according to the speaker of 'Nie więcej' is unattainable. It is neatly characterized by the phrases used in Fiut's analysis: "the capacity to describe reality in its momentary, fleeting manifestations," penetrating to "the essence of phenomena," transcending "limitations resulting from the linear order of language,"<sup>80</sup> presentation not only of the subject but also of the object of the description. It should be added that, during the 1950s (Let us keep in mind that the poem was written in 1957), haiku presumably did not pique Miłosz's interest.

The poem composed twenty-one years later, demonstrably taking issue with the assumptions of haiku poetry, carries altogether different messages. As Fiut writes:

In 'Reading the Japanese Poet Issa (1762–1826),' [Miłosz] notes that, because of the observer's "diffusion" with the observed, so characteristic of haiku, purified in an act of contemplation, the emerging image of the world is vague ("For we cannot really know the man who speaks" – "And whether this is the village of Szlembark"), while the poem lasts as if "it subsisted by the very disappearance of places and people."<sup>81</sup>

78 A. Fiut, 'Poezja w kręgu hermeneutyki,' in *Poznawanie Miłosza. Studia i szkice o twórczości poety* [Getting to Know Miłosz. Studies and Sketches on the Poet's Work], ed. J. Kwiatkowski, Kraków–Wrocław, 1985, p. 244. See also A. Dziadek, *Obrazy i wiersze*, pp. 154–5; L. Końska, 'Miłosz czyli Issa,' p. 168.

79 Cz. Miłosz, 'A Quarrel with Classicism,' in *The Witness of Poetry*, pp. 73, 75.

80 See Part 7 of this book.

81 A. Fiut, *Moment wieczny*, p. 321. See also: E. Dryglas-Komorowska, 'Haiku w refleksji,' pp. 299–300. English translation of excerpts from 'Reading the Japanese

A few words of clarification are in order here. In ‘Reading the Japanese Poet Issa (1762–1826),’ Miłosz quotes and poetically discusses Issa’s texts that are rather distant from the prototype of haiku,<sup>82</sup> moving away from the sketchy – yet highly clear – momentary sensoriality recognizable in universal experience. I have in mind mainly the first and third of Issa’s works referenced in Miłosz’s poem.<sup>83</sup>

*Dobry świat: rosa  
Kapie po kropli,  
Po dwie.*

[A good world—  
dew drops fall  
by ones, by twos.<sup>84</sup>]

*Nigdy nie zapominaj:  
chodzimy nad piekłem,  
ogłdając kwiaty.*

[In the midst of this world  
we stroll along the roof of hell  
gawking at flowers.<sup>85</sup>]

Seen in the perspective of the vast majority of classical seventeen-syllable verse, both texts are conspicuously abstracted from the sensorial background (“world” and “hell” are notions removed from sensorial concreteness.) The extremely antithetical (and completely un-Zen-like) “strolling along the roof of hell”<sup>86</sup> and looking at flowers stir the imagination of the Western artist, yet again these have little to do with haiku poetics of the experiential concrete. Presumably, even if the poet had set his sights on the most sensorially concrete haiku, he would not have found in them (at that moment of his life and work) what he was looking for. For he was looking for sensorial fullness serving as a springboard for philosophical, meta-artistic, and historiosophical reflections. In ‘Reading the Japanese Poet Issa,’ Miłosz used the same strategy as in many verses discussed at the beginning, where

Poet Issa (1762–1826)’ in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems 1931–2001*, New York, 2001, p. 349.

82 See Parts 1 and 7 of this monograph.

83 Miłosz included Polish translations of these poems in his anthology of haiku translations (also available in Ww 703–4).

84 English translation in L. Stryk and T. Ikemoto, *Zen Poetry: Let the Spring Breeze Enter*, New York, 1995, n.p.

85 English translation in K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life and Selected Haiku by Kobayashi Issa*, Boston–London, 1997, n.p.

86 The concept of hell (actually different types of hell located underground) does occur in the Buddhist system, but as a rule it is not invoked in Zen Buddhism. For haiku in the context of Japanese religions, see Part 1 of the book.

a single “haiku-like” image triggers a series of sense-images “concretizing,” “particularizing,” and “totalizing” experience. Issa’s poems inspire several clear sequences of images essentially focused on nature. Highly dissatisfied with Bashō’s precepts (“The haiku that reveals seventy to eighty per cent of its subject is good. Those that reveal fifty to sixty per cent we never tire of”),<sup>87</sup> Miłosz busies himself with the meticulous filling up of all places of understatement<sup>88</sup> in Issa’s poems.

In common with some of the above-discussed texts, images that the reader can “piece together” from his/her own sense experiences are intertwined with data available only to the speaker’s memory (and possibly several people close to the author). Sense images eventually lead to inquiries on the possibilities and obligations of poetry. Let us quote this fragment:

*Dobry świat: rosa  
Kapie po kropli,  
Po dwie.*

Parę kresek tuszem i staje się.  
Wielka cichość białej mgły,  
Przebudzenie w górach,  
Gęsi krzyczą,  
Żuraw skrzypi u studni,  
Krople z okapu chaty.

Albo może ten inny dom.  
Niewidoczny ocean,  
Mgła do południa  
Rzęsistym deszczem kapiąca z gałęzi sekwoi,  
Syreny buczące w dole na zatoce.

Tyle może poezja, ale nie więcej.  
Bo nie wiadomo, kim jest naprawdę ten, kto mówi,  
jakie jego ścięgna i kości,  
porowatość skóry,  
jak siebie czuje od środka.  
I czy to jest wioska Szlembark,  
nad którą w mokrych trawach znajdowaliśmy salamandry  
jaskrawe jak suknie Teresy Roszkowskiej,  
czy inny kontynent i inne imiona.

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87 As quoted in K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature and History*, 1957, rpt. Boston, 2001, p. 7; see also K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku. Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English, with Selected Examples*, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1957, p. 6.

88 See Part 1 of this book (the end of the chapter “The Poetics of Haiku; Haiku and Senryū”.



Kotarbiński, Zawada, Erin, Melanie:  
 nikogo z ludzi w tym wierszu. Jakby trwał  
 samym zanikaniem okolic i ludzi.

[A good world—  
 dew drops fall  
 by ones, by twos

A few strokes of ink and there it is.  
 Great stillness of white fog,  
 waking up in the mountains,  
 geese calling,  
 a well hoist creaking,  
 and the droplets forming on the eaves.

Or perhaps that other house.  
 The invisible ocean,  
 fog until noon  
 dripping in a heavy rain from the boughs of the redwoods,  
 sirens droning below on the bay.

Poetry can do that much and no more.  
 For we cannot really know the man who speaks,  
 what his bones and sinews are like,  
 the porosity of his skin,  
 how he feels inside.  
 And whether this is the village of Szlembark  
 above which we used to find salamanders,  
 garishly coloured like the dresses of Teresa Roszkowska,  
 or another continent and different names.  
 Kotarbinski, Zawada, Erin, Melanie.  
 No people in this poem. As if it subsisted  
 by the very disappearance of places and people.<sup>89</sup>

A dozen or so years later, Miłosz already notices wider expressive possibilities of haiku. In an introduction to the volume of his own translations of these poetic miniatures, he writes:

In each haiku one can guess at the entirety of the writer's situation. [...] All of a sudden, an individual emerges at a given moment and place, and does not even have to give an account of himself, as a certain impersonality, adopted from Japanese

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89 Ww 703–704, English translation in Cz. Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, p. 349.

models, shows him all over in one flash, as if in a beam of a flashlight. The most ordinary, everyday matters are transfigured, elevated into poetry [...].<sup>90</sup>

Thus, specifying “whether this is the village of Szlembark” is not the most important at all. What counts is the “flash-like” showing of an individual and events in a specific, though not necessarily precisely specified, place. Unlike in his original works approaching haiku, in Miłosz’s thinking on this form a clear evolution is clearly discernible.

Let us return to Michałowski’s diagnosis. It does not seem that haiku for decades was the hidden ideal of Miłosz’s poetry. At various stages of his writing, Miłosz was tempted by the “ideology of haiku” to varying degrees (and over the years its influence was more and more recognized), but in his original literary endeavours, it proved to be insufficient.<sup>91</sup> It is not without reason that the last quotation from Miłosz comes from his book of translations. Therefore, this degree of Miłosz’s “initiation” in haiku finally has to be subjected to analysis.

### 3. Miłosz the Translator

“Czesław Miłosz, *Haiku*” reads the cover of the book published in 1992, with a superb graphic design by Andrzej Dudziński.<sup>92</sup> Miłosz’s gesture<sup>93</sup> raises objections: why does the translator display his name in the place traditionally reserved for the author? Such a decision is understandable in the case of another admirer, and translator (but also a student) of haiku, Reginald Horace Blyth, who authored extensive compendia-anthologies devoted to Japanese seventeen-syllable verse, which he provided with erudite specialist commentary.<sup>94</sup> But why Miłosz? Lidia Końska understands this in the following way:

This acceptance of full responsibility is very telling. The translation was done via English, so the Japanese original is separated by a double barrier. The selection was made absolutely arbitrarily and “for pleasure.”<sup>95</sup>

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90 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie’ [Introduction], in Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, Kraków, 1992, p. 17.

91 At this point we have to concur with Alina Świeściak: “for Miłosz, this genre is only a stage in the search for a “more spacious form” (A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki*, p. 165).

92 See Part 7 of this book for more on this subject.

93 Which may have contributed to the general belief, especially among non-specialists, that Miłosz is a haiku poet.

94 See, for example, H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 1: *From the Beginnings up to Issa*, Tokyo, 1963; H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 2: *From Issa to the Present*, Tokyo, 1984; H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 1: *Eastern Culture*, Tokyo 1949; H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 2: *Spring*, Tokyo 1950; H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 3: *Summer–Autumn*, Tokyo, 1952; H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 4: *Autumn–Winter*, Tokyo, 1952.

95 L. Końska, ‘Miłosz czyli Issa,’ p. 169.

Marek Bernacki even writes about “haiku created/translated by Miłosz.”<sup>96</sup> Indeed, in his “Introduction” the poet warns that he “does not speak Japanese and relies on literal or less literal English versions.”<sup>97</sup> He goes on to add: “This collection may be considered as my private sketchbook, made available for the reader’s inspection.”<sup>98</sup> So are we dealing here with strongly “Miłoszean” translations, bearing an unmistakable stamp of the translator’s original work? Or maybe – which would explain the appropriate gesture of the Polish poet – even with poems only loosely inspired by *haijins’* miniatures (travesties, paraphrases)?<sup>99</sup> Kośka sees in this volume of translations “overt traces of Miłosz’s style.”<sup>100</sup> Is that really the case?

Reflections on Miłosz’s translations must be divided into two parts, discussing translations of Japanese texts based on English translations separately from renditions of poems by contemporary Canadian and American poets, which can be easily confronted with the originals.<sup>101</sup> It is worth comparing the style of these translations with the poetics of Miłosz’s miniatures approaching haiku and with “haiku-like” fragments of his longer poems.

Miłosz’s translations of classical haiku,<sup>102</sup> as we have seen in the second part of the book, are an excellent illustration of modern poetry striving for maximum compression. The most obvious example is this already analysed text:

Stara sadzawka,	[Old pool,
Żaba – skok –	A frog – a jump –
Plusk.	Splash!]
H 44 <sup>103</sup>	

The multilevel compression inherent in Miłosz’s translations stands out clearly when compared to other twentieth and twenty-first century translations of the same texts.<sup>104</sup> I suggest analysing some more combinations of this kind:

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96 M. Bernacki, ‘Haiku – forma najbardziej pojemna?’ (Haiku – the Most Specious Form?), *NaGłos*, 1994, No. 13 (38), p. 189.

97 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 17; emphasis added. Miłosz described himself as an “accidental translator, simply rather a reader who notes down what he liked, choosing some things, rejecting other” (Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 17).

98 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 18.

99 This intuition is shared by Leszek Engeklng – L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 130.

100 L. Kośka, ‘Miłosz czyli Issa,’ p. 169.

101 The difficulty of confronting translations of Japanese haiku with their originals is discussed extensively in the chapter ‘Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.’

102 The vast majority of these are translations of haiku belonging to Bashō’s tradition.

103 The volume of translations by Miłosz (Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*) is designated by the letter H, the number occurring after the abbreviation indicates a page number.

104 See the chapter ‘Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.’

A.

Ciemniejszą fale –  
 Krzyk dzikich kaczek  
 Białawy  
 Bashō, transl. Cz. Miłosz, H 32

[Waves darken  
 Wild ducks' call  
 Whitish]

Morze ciemnieje  
 i wysokie wołania dzikich kaczek  
 majaczą ledwo białe.  
 transl. A. Krajewski-Bola<sup>105</sup>

[The sea's darkening  
 and high calls of wild ducks  
 loom faintly white.]

Zmierzcha się morze  
 tylko głos kaczki  
 bieleje niewyraźnie  
 transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda<sup>106</sup>

[The sea grows dusky  
 only a duck's sound  
 stands out faintly white]

B.

Letnie trawy,  
 Wszystko co zostaje  
 Z marzeń żołnierzy.  
 Bashō, transl. Cz. Miłosz, H 36

[Summer Grasses,  
 All that remains  
 Of warriors' dreams.]

Bujność traw latem –  
 jedyny ślad czczych dążeń  
 dawnych żołnierzy...  
 transl. W. Kotański<sup>107</sup>

[Lushness of grass in summer  
 the only remnant of vain strivings  
 of old soldiers]

Te trawy latem  
 tylko ślad snów i marzeń  
 dawnych rycerzy  
 transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda<sup>108</sup>

These grasses in summer  
 a mere trace of dreams  
 of old knights]

Tylko trawa zostaje  
 Z marzeń żołnierzy  
 O podbitych ziemiach  
 transl. P. Madej<sup>109</sup>

[Only grass remains  
 of soldiers' dreams of  
 conquered lands]

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105 *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 36.

106 *Haiku*, transl. and with an introduction by A. Żuławska-Umeda, Bielsko-Biała, 2006, p. 215 (henceforward: *Haiku*, [2006]).

107 W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 15.

108 *Haiku*, [2006], p. 117.

109 M. Bashō, *140 haiku*, p. 8.

Ach, letnie trawy!  
Tyle tylko zostało  
ze snów rycerzy –  
transl. R. Krynicki<sup>110</sup>

[Oh, summer grasses!  
All that remains  
of soldiers' dreams –]

Tylu wojowników  
ostatni ślad.  
O, letnia trawo.  
transl. A. Krajewski-Bola<sup>111</sup>

[The last trace  
of so many warriors.  
O, summer grass.]

C.  
Jak smętnie –  
Pod rozbitym hełmem  
Głos świerszcza.  
Bashō, transl. Cz. Miłosz, H 42

[How wistful –  
Under the shattered helmet  
The sound of a cricket.]

Jakiż straszny los!  
Pod hełmem zabitego  
śpiewa cykada.  
transl. A. Krajewski-Bola<sup>112</sup>

[What a dreadful fate!  
Under the helmet of the killed  
a cicada is chirping.]

D.  
Późna jesień:  
Mój sąsiad –  
Myślę o tym, jak żyje.  
Bashō, transl. Cz. Miłosz, H 50

[Late autumn  
My neighbour –  
I wonder how he lives.]

Jesień głęboka  
i coś w te dni porabia  
sąsiad mój bliski  
transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda<sup>113</sup>

[Deep autumn  
what is he up to, these days  
my next-door neighbour]

Kiedy odchodzi jesień  
Ciekawe jak żyje

[When autumn ends  
How fares my neighbour?

110 R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, Kraków, 2014, p. 53.

111 *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 35.

112 *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 36.

113 *Haiku*, transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda, afterword by M. Melanowicz, Wrocław, 1983, p. 196 (henceforward: *Haiku*, [1983]).

- Mój sąsiad?  
transl. P. Madej<sup>114</sup>
- I wonder]
- E.
- Tą drogą  
Nikt nie idzie  
Tego jesiennego wieczoru.  
Bashō, transl. Cz. Miłosz, H 36
- [Along this road  
Goes no one  
This autumn evening.]
- droga na której  
po mnie nie przejdzie już nikt  
wieczór jesienny  
transl. A. Janta<sup>115</sup>
- [the road on which  
no one will follow me  
autumn evening
- Jesienny mrok gęstnieje  
i ani żywej duszy  
na drodze.  
transl. A. Krajewski-Bola<sup>116</sup>
- [Autumn dusk gathers  
and not a single soul  
on the road.]
- Już nikt nie idzie  
tą naszą drogą pustą  
wszedł zmierzch jesienny  
transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda<sup>117</sup>
- [No one goes along  
our empty road  
autumn dusk has fallen]
- F.
- Opadły kwiat  
Wrócił na gałąź?  
To był motyl.  
Moritake, transl. Cz. Miłosz, H 20
- [A fallen blossom  
Returned to the branch?  
It was a butterfly.]
- Kwiat, który opadł,  
Wraca, widzę, na gałąź, – –  
– Przecież to motyl!  
transl. B. Richter<sup>118</sup>
- A blossom that had fallen  
It is returning, I can see, to the branch, – –  
– But it is a butterfly!

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114 M. Bashō, *140 haiku*, p. 18.

115 M. Bashō, *140 haiku*, p. 23.

116 *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 36.

117 *Haiku*, [1983], p. 206.

118 *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 26.

Widzę, jak wraca  
 na gałąź kwiat opadły...  
 Żal, że to motyl...  
 transl. W. Kotański<sup>119</sup>

I see a fallen blossom  
 returning to the branch...  
 Pity it is a butterfly...

The above comparison bears out the initial diagnosis: Miłosz decides on supremely dynamic renditions, enumerative and making use of asyndetons.<sup>120</sup> He often resigns from the sentence structure in favour of short nominal sentences (as in C, and partly in A), makes use of ellipses (F, D), and syntactically highlights the juxtapositional structure of texts (D). Compression occurs also on planes other than one of syntax. The poet keeps to the minimum the number of expressions that render the space more specific (“whitish” versus, for example, “loom faintly white” in example A, the verbal-stylistic minimalism in examples B and D), eschews understatements suggesting metaphoric dimension (see stylistic solutions in E), shuns exclamation marks and cuts down on signs of strong emotional reactions (B, F, C). Finally, he strives for the maximum simplicity of expression – without a hint of lexical and phraseological “ornamentation” (which is particularly in evidence in sets B, D, and E). Occasionally there are Polish haiku translations close to Miłosz’s stylistic restraint, but these are a relatively rare occurrence.<sup>121</sup>

Miłosz’s translations of classical haiku differ from the great majority of Polish translations of the same poems by the extreme elimination of any, even apparent, excess. Apart from condensation, however, the poet avoids any further interference with these canonical (as was obvious for the author belonging to the literary world of America) texts. From these observations alone, it is apparent that translations by Miłosz are by no means paraphrases strongly departing from the originals and transforming their motifs.

119 W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 18.

120 As Lidia Końska writes: “Miłosz’s poetry is dominated by the impression of the uniqueness of moments. They were not painted by a brush, instead a shutter just clicked, and we managed to capture what in eternity was meant to be unique” (L. Końska, ‘Miłosz czyli Issa,’ p. 170).

121 The following are two additional renditions of Bashō’s text: (as quoted in, respectively, N. Dzierżawska, ‘Synestezja w poezji Matsuo Bashō,’ Warszawa, 2008 [Master’s thesis written under the supervision of M. Melanowicz at the Department of Japanese and Korean Studies of the University of Warszawa], p. 74; M. Bashō, *140 haiku*, p. 15).

morze ciemnieje	[the sea darkens
krzyki kaczek	ducks’ cries
są lekko białe	are slightly white]
transl. N. Dzierżawska	

Morze ciemnieje	[The sea darkens
Krzyk dzikich kaczek	Wild ducks’ cry
Nabiera jasności	grows bright]
transl. P. Madej.	

Interestingly enough, these translations follow a poetics that was essentially foreign to Miłosz's original work, which also in large part approached haiku. In his own poetry, Miłosz strove for fullness through a multitude of names and sensorial "grasps" of reality, was fond of accumulating designations and testing the usefulness of various ways of naming phenomena. Even in his most haiku-like miniatures, he introduced additional – sensorial, philosophical – jumping-off points. The poetics of translations of classical haiku can evoke associations with postulates of the Awangarda Krakowska group (maximum content – minimum words) that up to this point had been far removed from the author's thought and stylistics.<sup>122</sup>

Miłosz's translation practice is readily understandable. The artist probably did not want to sensorially expand images of translated poems (while close to his sensibility, they were not his own images, drawn directly from personal experience, recorded in his original poetic work). He could not bring himself to imbue his texts with metaphoricity that in haiku was employed sparingly (if anything, he would "invalidate" any subtle metaphorical potency, as illustrated by the E group). He felt obliged to keep the form of a concise, three-line miniature. How was he supposed to leave his stamp on those translations, while remaining true to himself, to the translators whose work he used, and to Japanese haijins themselves?<sup>123</sup> It is precisely by paring down, compressing, laying bare (in a flash-like, and very poetic, manner) the essence of micro-scenes. In this type of writing practice, he would no longer mind painting with "a few strokes of the pen,"<sup>124</sup> while in his original work he saw drawing "a few strokes of ink" ('Reading the Japanese Poet Issa') as a highly insufficient practice.<sup>125</sup>

It would be very interesting to compare Miłosz's translations with their English-language originals. Presumably, the poet chose from a large body of existing renditions those that he found closest to his heart. He could also rely on many different translations of a given haiku simultaneously.<sup>126</sup> Finally, it is possible that he translated selected English versions of some poems literally (in the light of intuitions

122 See also: J. Fazan, 'Czesław Miłosz wobec awangardy i jej ponowoczesnych konsekwencji' [Czesław Miłosz on the Avant-garde and its Post-modern Consequences], in *Poznawanie Miłosza* 3, pp. 194–209.

123 The claims about overcoming the author's strong "self" do not seem convincing (M. Bernacki, 'Haiku,' pp. 188–9).

124 "I work [...] like other MODERN translators and imitators of haiku, and I just try to draw a picture with a few pen strokes" (Cz. Miłosz, *Wprowadzenie*; emphasis added).

125 Translator's work on haiku can be neatly summed up by quoting Miłosz himself (his words, however, concerned the translation of 'Zen codzienny' – see footnote 7 in this part of the book): "The beautiful mystery of brevity. It is a dream of every poet to say as much as possible in as few words as possible" (Ww 1042).

126 For Miłosz's "dwelling in translation," see T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja*, p. 14.



that follow, this seems most likely). However, establishing this is impossible due to the large number of English-language versions of classical haiku.<sup>127</sup>

For example, Miłosz's rendering of Bashō's last haiku<sup>128</sup> ("Chorując w podróży – / Nad suchym wrzosowiskiem / Wędrują sny" – H 44 [Sick while travelling – / Over a dry moor / Dreams wander about]) may – but does not have to – be a translation of one of the English translations of the poem containing the word "moor."<sup>129</sup> The translations with the "moor," relatively close to the economical style adopted by Miłosz, are plentiful, so one cannot possibly pinpoint the source text (aside from this, a researcher has no way of gaining access to all existing translations).<sup>130</sup> Miłosz may have relied on one of the following texts:

on a journey, ailing –  
my dreams roam about  
on a withered moor  
transl. M. Ueda<sup>131</sup>

On a journey, ill–  
My dreams roam  
Over a wild moor.  
transl. M. Ueda<sup>132</sup>

Ill on a journey;  
My dreams wander  
Over a withered moor.  
transl. R. H. Blyth<sup>133</sup>

sick on a journey  
dreams roam about  
on a withered moor  
transl. H. Shirane<sup>134</sup>

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127 See, for example, a comparison and analyses of English-language versions of Bashō's "frog" haiku – H. Sato, *One Hundred Frogs: From Renga to Haiku in English*, New York, 1995.

128 On this poem and its translations, see also the closing section of the chapter 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'

129 The no less frequent solution is the use of the word "field."

130 For example, one is puzzled by the ordering of scenes in the second and third verse of Miłosz's translation and the English-language one cited here. Perhaps the poet relied on a translation unknown to me that uses a similar inversion or decided on this sequence – quite natural in Polish – independently.

131 M. Ueda, *Bashō and His Interpreters: Selected Hokku with Commentary*, Stanford, 1991, p. 413; as quoted in *Selected Hokku by Bashō with Multiple Translations*, <http://www.uwosh.edu/facstaff/barnhill/es-244-basho/hokku.pdf>, accessed March 25, 2014.

132 M. Ueda, *Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1967, p. 171.

133 R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 1, p. 107.

134 H. Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō*, Stanford, California, 1998, pp. 279, 337.

An analysis of translations of poems by American and Canadian poets requires entirely different interpretative procedures. The putting together of translations and originals is puzzling:

Night begins to gather between her breasts    Noc zaczyna się zbierać między jej piersiami.  
G. Swede<sup>135</sup>    H 144

walking with the river    Idę z rzeką.  
the water does my thinking    woda myśli za mnie.  
B. Boldman<sup>136</sup>    H 114

day darkens    in the shell    Zmierzcha się  
B. Boldman<sup>137</sup>    W muszli.  
H 114

in the temple a heartbeat    [W świątyni Bicie serca.]  
B. Boldman<sup>138</sup>    H 115

Trying to forget him    [Próbując go zapomnieć  
stabbing    Sztyletuję  
the potatoes.    Kartofle.]  
A. Rotella<sup>139</sup>    H 138

Late August    [Późny sierpień,  
I bring him the garden    Przynoszę mu ogród  
in my skirt    W mojej spódnicy.]  
A. Rotella<sup>140</sup>    H 140

raining at every window    [Pada w każdym oknie.]  
C. van den Heuvel<sup>141</sup>    H 148

holding you    [Trzymając ciebie  
in me still...    Jeszcze we mnie...

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135 As quoted in *Haiku Moment. An Anthology of Contemporary North American Haiku*, ed. B. Ross, Boston–Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1993, p. 252.

136 As quoted in *Literature of Nature: An International Sourcebook*, ed. P. D. Murphy, Ann Arbor, 1998, p. 123.

137 As quoted in <http://terebess.hu/english/usa/boldman.html>, accessed June 21, 2016.

138 As quoted in <http://terebess.hu/english/usa/boldman.html>, accessed June 21, 2016.

139 As quoted in [terebess.hu/english/usa/rotella.html](http://terebess.hu/english/usa/rotella.html), accessed March 5, 2014.

140 As quoted in [terebess.hu/english/usa/rotella.html](http://terebess.hu/english/usa/rotella.html), accessed March 5, 2014.

141 As quoted in <http://terebess.hu/english/usa/heuvel.html>, accessed March 5, 2014.

sparrow songs A. Virgil <sup>142</sup>	Świergot wróbli.] H 150
spring breeze... her breasts sway over the porcelain tub A. Virgil <sup>143</sup>	Wiosenny powiew... Jej piersi kołyszą się Nad porcelanową muszlą. H 150

These renditions turn out to be very straightforward and surprisingly literal. In the Polish texts, one can hardly detect any major translational additions, and the translator does not resort to compression and abridgements. In the renderings of classical haiku preceding the American miniatures, readers get used to the fact that the poems in the volume are simply stripped of “redundant” expressions (and we could consider as such, for example, possessive pronouns in the cases where ownership is obvious). Here, however, Miłosz is at pains to translate word for word – even though he is not dealing with canonical texts of a far-off culture. For example, in the Polish version of the poem by Alexis Rotelli, we get a literal (from the perspective of Japanese poem translations – verbose) translation “w mojej spódnicy” [in my skirt].

On the other hand, the translator’s interference is discernible on the level of graphic lay-out – which in the case of classical haiku and contemporary poems is the same. Miłosz decides on very traditional lineation, for example, dispensing with the single-line arrangement of the original (in the poem by Bob Boldman), paring down extended spacing (texts by George Swede and Boldman),<sup>144</sup> and ignoring the subtle – yet clearly detectable – tensions between lineation and semantics (Boldman’s last haiku). Conventionally – and contrary to the authors’ choices – he begins each and every line with capital letters and closes all poems with full stops.<sup>145</sup>

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142 As quoted in <http://terebeess.hu/english/usa/virgil.html>, accessed March 5, 2014.

143 As quoted in <http://terebeess.hu/english/usa/virgil.html>, accessed March 5, 2014.

144 In one analysis of the single-line poem by Boldman quoted here, the blank space between sections of the text is even taken to constitute the poem’s *raison d’être* (I. Hashimoto, ‘day darkens in the shell,’ *Manichi Japan*, 2015, 15 Sept., <http://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20150827/p2g/00m/0fe/072000c>, accessed June 21, 2016).

145 As Miłosz confessed in *Wypisy z ksiąg użytecznych* (p. 15): “I have a liking for those poets who start each verse with an upper-case letter and use the prescribed punctuation. However, nowadays we see all sorts of ‘systems,’ such as capital letters only at the beginning of a sentence, no punctuation, selective punctuation, etc. I follow each author’s preference. On the other hand, in translations of old poetry, to avoid pedantry, I adjust the graphic form to the content, i.e. all lines start either with

He “decoratively” justifies his texts, creating perfectly symmetrical compositions. In a word, he typographically “sanitizes” the poems and subjects them to a sort of regression, despite the fact that graphic forms offered by American and Canadian poets ceased to be a novelty many decades ago (after all Miłosz gave his chapter on English-language miniatures the title ‘Nowoczesne haiku’ [Modern Haiku]!). It seems that the most vital decision on the part of the translator was the mere selection of several dozen (sixty-eight) haiku from thousands of poems produced in America. Interestingly, a significant part of this material are love poems – that is, texts violating the taboo of classical haiku.<sup>146</sup>

Finally, one puzzling question should be noted. Miłosz’s translations of classical haiku are not much distinct from the concise texts by American and Canadian authors (translations of modern haiku occasionally are even more verbose, probably due to the poet’s direct contact with the originals). “Given the language and versification differences,” writes Miłosz, “Asian poetry merely provides material and each translator has to rely solely on his own filter or imagination.”<sup>147</sup> In his work on haiku translation, Miłosz did not give free rein to his imagination, adopting instead to these Asian miniatures a filter that he deemed both modern and universal. He homogenized the “haiku-ness” of poems from different times and locations, regarding haiku (not without reason) as a form close to the spirit of modernity.<sup>148</sup> However, this modernity is a bit different from the one emanating from Miłosz’s original work.

Marek Bernacki considers haiku to be another example of Miłosz’s heterogeneity, “a manifestation of the newly found ‘more spacious form.’”<sup>149</sup> He is inclined to treat the poem’s volume of translations “as a self-contained work,” inextricably linked with Miłosz’s late poetic output, and at the same time significant in the context of the poet’s enunciations about obligations and functions of the art of writing, or lecture ‘Against Incomprehensible Poetry.’<sup>150</sup> Fair enough. However, I also see here another link in Miłosz’s literary (!) interest in the Far East. The link

upper-case or lower-case for the sake of sentence continuity.” In the volume *Haiku* published two years earlier, Miłosz consistently follows one principle, in line with the preference he declared in the text quoted here.

146 See Part 1 of the book.

147 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Przedmowa,’ pp. 14–5.

148 See Cz. Miłosz, ‘Wprowadzenie,’ p. 9. See also P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii nowoczesnej,’ in P. Michałowski, *Głosy, formy, światy. Warianty poezji nowoczesnej*, Kraków, 2008, pp. 129–33, 142–4; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*; J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre. Fellow-Traveler of Modernism,’ in *Modernism*, Vol. 2, eds. A. Eysteinson, V. Liska, Amsterdam–Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 693–714; Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, New York, 2009.

149 M. Bernacki, ‘Haiku – forma najbardziej pojemna?’, p. 189 (a quote within a quote – from Miłosz’s poem ‘Ars poetica’).

150 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Against Incomprehensible Poetry,’ in Cz. Miłosz, *To Begin Where I Am*, pp. 373–87.

that is quite a surprise from the perspective of Miłosz's diverse earlier references to haiku. As Adam Dziadek rightly remarks: "Miłosz's small book is not just about translation itself, it is rather a presentation of his reading of haiku."<sup>151</sup> We could add – of his reading and seeing haiku in the transcultural history of literature.

## II. Haiku? *Senryū?* *Mironū?* The Poetry of Miron Białoszewski and Oriental Genres

*W poezji jest tyle za długich utworów.*  
[There are so many overly long poems.]

M. Białoszewski<sup>152</sup>

### 1. Białoszewski's Zen? Białoszewski's Zen Poetry?

Westerners tend to closely associate haiku with Zen Buddhism. As I have demonstrated, this is to some extent a historical and cultural oversimplification, yet one fairly well-grounded.<sup>153</sup> Indeed, numerous Japanese miniatures manifest a worldview close to Zen outlook (specifically, I have in mind mindfulness, a non-judgemental approach to phenomena, and acceptance of all sorts of, though not all,<sup>154</sup> manifestations of being). The writing and attitude of many *haijins* – naturally, especially of Bashō, who studied under a Zen master – along with the Zen- and Daoism-suffused cultural background of haiku, validate the adoption of this specific philosophical perspective. Especially as within Bashō's school (which gave rise to the so-called classical haiku lineage), creative activity was a natural extension of everyday life – qualities such as the authenticity of experience, emphatic contemplation of the world, the accurateness of the utterance, and constant reliance on personal experience were necessary conditions for the existence of poetic texts.

151 A. Dziadek, 'Haiku,' *Zeszyty Literackie*, 1994, No. 2, p. 143.

152 From the volume *Rozkurz* [Draftage], 1980, Uz 8, 143. The acronym Uz 8 indicates the volume M. Białoszewski, *Utwory zebrane* [Collected Works], Vol. 8: *Rozkurz*, Warszawa, 1998. The other collections from this publication are referred to by the following acronyms: Uz 7 – Vol. 7: "*Odczepić się*" i inne wiersze opublikowane w latach 1976–1980 ["To Leave Alone" and Other Poems Published between 1976 and 1980], Warszawa, 1994; Uz 10 – Vol. 10: "*Oho*" i inne wiersze opublikowane po roku 1980 ["Oh" and Other Poems Published after 1980], Warszawa, 2000; Uz 11 – Vol. 11: *Chamowo* [Churlsville], Warszawa, 2009. The numbers that follow the acronyms indicate page numbers. Each time I provide the text's location, citing the volume from which a given text was taken. Whenever only a cycle name is given, this means that the poem in question was not included in a separate volume of poetry (as is the case with selected texts published in Uz7, between 1975–1979 – see 'Nota wydawcy' [Publisher's Note], in Uz 7, p. 291).

153 See Part 1 of the book.

154 The taboo in haiku is discussed in Parts 1 and 5.

One cannot fail to detect here parallels with the work of Miron Białoszewski.<sup>155</sup> As it happens, Białoszewski's "life-writing"<sup>156</sup> has already been situated in the context of Zen, koans, and haiku.

For a while, I will let my predecessors in "mironology" speak:

Miron Białoszewski offered – in common with yoga or Zen masters – being a transcendent witness to the reality of my own "self." [...] Like Zen masters, he taught the difficult art of the presence of mind, contact with life free from rigid conventions, and experiencing the present moment.<sup>157</sup>

The way Miron Białoszewski looks at the world is nothing less than Zen. After all, Zen is not a religion but a supra-religious and transcultural way of being in the world, known to numerous poets from internal experience rather than from reading.<sup>158</sup>

[...] poetry attested by experience with equal precision is something of a rarity today [this statement applies to the volume *Obroty rzeczy*]. And an equally personal one: showing through each poem is the poet; and in each poem, a situation is expressed, one that – what a paradox! – is quite common, quite non-individual.<sup>159</sup>

He taught me attentiveness to all reality, the most ordinary one which we typically experience apathetically, as well as to one bizarre, terrible, unmanageable and incomprehensible.<sup>160</sup>

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- 155 In the case of Białoszewski, I take into account – in an orthodox, haiku-like manner – the biographical dimension.
- 156 Some scholars have already attempted to distance themselves from this formula and its literary use in the study of Białoszewski's works (see A. Gleń, "W tej latarni." *Późna twórczość Mirona Białoszewskiego w perspektywie hermeneutycznej* ["In this Lighthouse" Late Work of Miron Białoszewski in a Hermeneutic Perspective], Opole, 2004, p. 17 and ff.). From the perspective of my inquiries, however, this issue is of vital importance. For haiku-related aesthetic and ethical categories, see Part 1 of the book.
- 157 A. Sobolewska, 'Być sobie jednym' [Being One Oneself], in A. Sobolewska, *Maksymalnie udana egzystencja. Szkice o życiu i twórczości Mirona Białoszewskiego* [A Maximally Successful Existence. Sketches on the Life and Work of Miron Białoszewski], Warszawa, 1997, pp. 16–7.
- 158 A. Sobolewska, 'Lepienie widoku z domysłu. Percepcja świata' [Forming a View from Guesswork. Perception of the World], in A. Sobolewska, *Maksymalnie udana*, pp. 92–3.
- 159 J. Błoński, 'Słowa dodawane do rzeczy' [Words Added to Things], in J. Błoński, *Zmiana warty*, Warszawa, 1961, p. 48.
- 160 H. Zaworska, 'Ostatni wieczór z Mironem' [The Last Evening with Miron], in *Miron. Wspomnienia o poecie* [Reminiscences of the Poet], selected and ed. by H. Kirchner, Warszawa, 1996, p. 349. See also, for example, J. Fazan, "Ale ja nie Bóg." *Kontemplacja i teatr w dziele Mirona Białoszewskiego* ["But I am not God." Contemplation and Theatre in the Work of Miron Białoszewski], Kraków, 1998, p. 47.

In addition to kindness and wisdom, Miron was distinguished by highly-developed empathy. I think through you now, he would say. He would deeply put himself in the other's place. And this is how he had this understanding.<sup>161</sup>

I have the impression that Miron would even get through to a plant. They would find a shared topic, say, water. This is a matter of huge importance. And beyond words. This is how he would communicate with me. With everyone – if he wanted.<sup>162</sup>

Zen offers this way of enlightenment – a koan. And I am convinced that inherent in Miron's writings were flashes of something that can be compared with enlightenment. [...] I think that Miron's work was a kind of koan.<sup>163</sup>

He spoke in favourable terms about states of not feeling himself, of being so intensely in something else that everything was already one, one's own individuality existed collectively, painlessly. Some people achieve something like this through meditation, by repeating one word, yet I don't follow any plan, I have my own ways, or rather little ways, explaining it is difficult, but sometimes possible.<sup>164</sup>

I could relate to him the definition of Zen I heard once as something that cannot be defined: "it is precisely this suspension, doubt, uncertainty, searching, this attempt

- 161 J. Stańczakowa, 'Odmienił moje życie' [He Changed My Life], in *Miron. Wspomnienia o poecie*, p. 250.
- 162 A. Żurowska, 'Ważny jest sam lot' [It's the Flight Itself that Matters], in conversation with T. Sobolewski, in H. Kirchner, *Miron. Wspomnienia*, p. 248. As Helena Zaworska writes (H. Zaworska, 'Być i nie być' [To Be and not to Be], *Twórczość*, 1986, No. 4, p. 106): "In the realm of [Białoszewski's] imagination and sensitivity, it is possible to become part of entirely different, separate non-human beings: a wall, [...] plants and trees, birds and flies, the play of darkness and light, the dripping of tap water."
- 163 A. Żurowska, 'Ważny jest sam lot,' p. 238. Asked by Tadeusz Sobolewski (p. 243): "Did he solve this koan of his – what do you think?" Anula (Anna Żurowska) answered: "He did, but he was not capable of staying there. He was not a 'master.' I think he could be one from time to time. In fits and starts. This was one of his favourite expressions." Elsewhere, Żurowska talks about Białoszewski: "His writing was outmatched by his person. Even though he did not speak the way he wrote. But beside this, he had the whole magic of gestures. There is so much he could express with a half-turn of his hand, with his little finger! Sometimes he would nod his head like a metronome. And that spoke volumes. It was magic. However, words had something secondary to them" (A. Żurowska, 'Ważny jest,' p. 240).
- 164 H. Zaworska, 'Ostatni wieczór z Mironem,' p. 349. Zaworska goes on to clarify: "He talked a little about these ways, I surely did not grasp everything, but I guess these states were the product of attention taken to the limits of human possibilities. He was so special in this – we all live so inattentively, carelessly, apathetic, exhausted, seized by an incessant rush that never stops. Miron lived with avid attention, as he writes: 'Everything is interesting.'"

at solving the koan of life rather than actually solving it, it is constant being-on-the-road-to-awakening rather than awakening itself.”<sup>165</sup>

The poet's friends and experts on his work unanimously talk of his avid experience of reality, an insatiable curiosity about the “surrounding” world, fascination with the ordinary, and openness to everyday epiphanies. Studies devoted to Białoszewski often directly discuss Zen. Teachers of this branch of Buddhism claim that Zen is a strain of spirituality that can function at any latitude and in any cultural background (though, naturally, some backgrounds are more favourable than others). However, one should be aware of the superficiality of such comparisons. Zen practice requires daily discipline, which never becomes part of the poet's routine.<sup>166</sup> As Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki writes:

its [Zen's] uniqueness consists, so far as its practical aspect goes, in its methodical training of the mind in order to mature it to the state of satori, when all its secrets are revealed. Zen may be called a form of mysticism, but it differs from all other forms of it in system, in discipline, and in final attainment. By this I mean principally the koan exercise and zazen.<sup>167</sup>

Is it not the case then that Białoszewski simply fits into a certain stereotype of Zen (even though he was so non-stereotypical)? It is quite conceivable. On the other hand, enlightenment, “wznenwtajemniczenie” (Zen-initiation) can supposedly happen without external, rigorous trappings. Therefore, Białoszewski's Zen perhaps is uniquely “separate,” cut to private size, which for some makes it more genuine, and for others – cloudy, simplified, dubious. Apart from that, invoking Zen Buddhism in studies of the poet's work has additional consequences – it induces researchers to look for connections between Białoszewski's work and Zen poetry.<sup>168</sup> I will come back to these topics later. At this point, I wish to point out additional Oriental philosophical and cultural confluences (also relevant in the perspective of haiku), which, strangely enough, have hardly been discussed in

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165 T. Sobolewski, *Człowiek Miron* [The Man Miron], Kraków, 2012, p. 49 (source of quotation not provided).

166 As it happens, this routine was never shared by some Japanese artists whose empathy-suffused texts in the West are seen as the quintessence of the Zen-like perception of reality. Perhaps rightly so (more on that below).

167 D. T. Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, New York, 1964, p. 97.

168 See, for example, T. Cieślak, ‘Prawie haiku Mirona Białoszewskiego,’ in *O wierszach Mirona Białoszewskiego. Szkice i interpretacje*, Łódź, 1993, pp. 113–27; T. Sobolewski, ‘Dzieci Mirona’ [Miron's Children], in T. Sobolewski, *Dziecko Peerelu. Esej-dziennik* [The Child of Communist Poland. Essay-journal], Warszawa, 2000, pp. 51–2; P. Sobolczyk, ‘Od “Karmelickich plot” do wierszy medytacyjnych. Białoszewskiego “obroty transcendencji,”’ in *Doświadczenie religijne w literaturze XX wieku*, eds. A. Głeń, I. Jokieli, Opole, 2006, pp. 143–66.



reflections on Białoszewski and his work,<sup>169</sup> I have in mind Daoism<sup>170</sup> with its fundamental principle of *wu-wei* (acting through inaction, not forcing oneself and others to do anything that is not natural and necessary).<sup>171</sup> The following quote could be seen as a fitting description of Białoszewski:

A Taoist recluse has all the ease and gracefulness of the truly free. He is truly free because he is so thoroughly the Child of the Present. He lives from moment to moment, taking life as it comes and giving it up as it passes.<sup>172</sup>

At this juncture, one could engage in some further reflections on the universality of the experience of reality that is akin to Zen and Daoist precepts; on the fact that Białoszewski was looked upon as a master, a teacher detached from certain seemingly inevitable aspects of life, buried in hardly accessible dimensions of everyday life;<sup>173</sup> on Białoszewski's resignation from judgement.<sup>174</sup> However, I will restrict myself to a brief outline of selected themes from the poet's biography.

169 This omission is all the more surprising given that, for example, Białoszewski's work has been linked with Hasidic or Jainistic contexts (see, for example, J. Stańczakowa, 'Odmienił moje życie,' p. 252; J. Fazan, "Ale *Ja* nie *Bóg*," p. 52), and analysed in the perspective of Indian philosophy and phenomenology of religion developed by Pavel Florensky (see A. Sobolewska, "Ja – to ktoś znajomy," ["I is Someone We Know"], in P. Florensky, *Mistyka dnia powszedniego* [Everyday Mysticism], Warszawa, 1992, p. 45).

170 In its philosophical aspect, not magical or religious. See, for example, T. Żbikowski, 'Prawie wszystko o tao' [Almost All about Dao], in *Taoizm*, selected by W. Jaworski, ed. M. Dziwisz, Kraków, 1988, pp. 39–47; P. Glita, 'Taoizm,' in *Filozofia Wschodu*, ed. B. Szymańska, Kraków 2001, pp. 335–45.

171 See D. T. Suzuki, T. Merton, 'Wisdom in Emptiness: A Dialogue by Daisetz T. Suzuki and Thomas Merton,' in T. Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (Part Two), New York, 1968; F. Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, New York, 1984; P. Glita, *Taoizm*, p. 337. Daoism and Zen share not only similar assumptions but also historical links. Unfortunately, all (numerous) health-related aspects of Daoism were completely alien to Białoszewski.

172 Lin Tung-Chi, 'The Chinese Mind: Its Taoist Substratum,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (June 1947), p. 265. One wonders why this context did not become an interpretive thread in the study of the poet's work. Perhaps this is precisely because Daoism is extremely difficult to fix in any formulas (more so than Zen, which in many respects is related to it), similarly to Daoist-inspired art. It is not without reason that the canonical work of Daoism, *Daodejing*, opens with the following words: "Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao" (Lao-tzu, *Tao Te Ching: Six Complete Translations*, various translators, Radford, VA, 2008).

173 See A. Sobolewska, 'Lepienie widoku z domysłu,' pp. 5–36. See also reminiscences included in the book *Miron* (e.g. A. Żurowska, 'Ważny jest sam lot'). The readers' – and critics' – enduring fascination with the oeuvre and personality of Białoszewski testifies to the great appeal of such an attitude and such literature. See also J. Niżyńska, *The Kingdom of Insignificance. Miron Białoszewski and the Quotidian, the Queer, and the Traumatic*, Evanston, 2013.

174 A. Sobolewska, "Ja – to ktoś znajomy," p. 67.

I would like to return to the question of whether in the case of Białoszewski the above-described attitude translated into Zen art, and in particular its haiku emanation.<sup>175</sup> On the surface, it seems that Białoszewski's poetry is more provocative, more autothematic, and more literary than texts linked with Zen.<sup>176</sup> However, this is an overgeneralization. Zen poetry is a vast, practically uncodified, open-ended collection of a variety of texts:<sup>177</sup> contemplative, low-key, but also dialogical, taboo-breaking, making use of vulgarisms, embedded in the poetics of nonsense. One cannot exclude a priori Białoszewski's texts from this philosophical and literary circle.<sup>178</sup> At this point, however, I am interested only in possible affinities with haiku. Japanese haiku and *senryū*, as well as works related to Zen literature created during the twentieth century outside Japan will serve as exemplifications, and sometimes as a sort of degree of comparison. I have in mind here Jack Kerouac's poems that are almost unknown in Poland<sup>179</sup> and were collected in his *Book of Haikus*.<sup>180</sup> Affiliations with Zen philosophy naturally suggest themselves on account of Kerouac's biography and literary legacy alike.<sup>181</sup> In my opinion, it is

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- 175 The adoption of a certain attitude in life does not have to involve embracing literature associated with it (nor does it have to prove any knowledge of this literature). For haiku as Zen poetry, see, for example, R. Aitken, *A Zen Wave. Bashō's Haiku and Zen*, foreword W. S. Merwin, Washington D.C., 2003; *The Poetry of Zen*, transl. and eds. S. Hamill, J. P. Seaton, Boston–London, 2007.
- 176 Such conclusions can be drawn, for example, from the book *The Poetry of Zen*. See also Cz. Miłosz, *Zen codzienny*.
- 177 Some idea of the heterogeneity of Zen texts may be gained, for example, from a small book published in Polish, *Jak trudna jest droga. Wiersze Zen Chin i Japonii* [How Difficult the Road Is. Zen Poems from China and Japan], transl. and selected by A. Szuba, with an introduction by M. Has, Kraków, 1991. Even less coherent is the collection of Daoist texts (apart from several canonical philosophical works). One may speak of Daoist inspirations discernible in various works rather than of poems that are par excellence Daoist.
- 178 A humorous selection of Białoszewski's texts presented in an article by Tomasz Woźniak, 'I ty możesz zostać mistykiem. Zestaw ćwiczeń z dodaniem dziewięciu wierszy Mirona Białoszewskiego' [You Too Can Become a Mystic. A Set of Exercises with Nine Poems by Miron Białoszewski], *Teksty Drugie*, 1996, No. 2/3, pp. 228–32, in no way reflects the "Zen-ness" of Białoszewski's poetry.
- 179 I have found only 12 published Polish translations of Jack Kerouac's haiku. (*Haiku – wybór*, transl. L. Engelking, Gdańsk 1995, No. 3/4b, pp. 356–8).
- 180 J. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, New York, 2003. The volume contains a very wide cross-section of the author's haiku (his overall haiku output nears 1000), collected for the first time in one volume.
- 181 Kerouac's "haiku-writing" was preceded by his reading of several volumes of haiku translations by Reginald Horace Blyth and texts on Zen Buddhism by D. T. Suzuki. See R. Weinreich, 'Introduction: The Haiku Poetics of Jack Kerouac,' in J. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, pp. XII–XIII; Y. Hakutani, 'Jack Kerouac's Haiku and Beat Poetics,' in Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, pp. 89–109. See also J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 194, 199–204; T. Lynch, 'Intersecting Influences in American Haiku,' in

worthwhile evaluating Białoszewski's poetry, which eludes genre formulas,<sup>182</sup> by the tried-and-tested standards of Western haiku. But then again, whenever I apply the East-Asian criterion, I try to reference, as often as possible, classical haiku unknown in Poland (representative of the poetics of the genre), in many instances not conforming to the stereotype of the form that has been created on the basis of incomplete second-hand information.<sup>183</sup>

At first glance, Białoszewski's poetics and the style of classical haiku may seem almost antithetical. I set out to demonstrate how – and on what grounds – one can identify any affinities here. This is one of the aspects of the problem that interests me, namely transculturality, which, it should be recalled, concerns not only entire societies but also the “microlevel of individuals' identity.”<sup>184</sup> I also want to show,

*Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism. New Readings*, ed. Y. Hakutani, London, 2001, pp. 123–4. Some “beatnik” parallels in Białoszewski's life were noted by Tadeusz Sobolewski (*Dzieci Mirona* [Miron's Children], pp. 56–7): “Miron lived in PRL [communist Poland] not unlike an American beatnik. When I read about the meeting in New York, in 1947, of three young men from the war generation – Ginsberg, Kerouac, and Burroughs – practising their life-writing ‘to the beat of life, the beat of breath,’ counter to rules, schools, hierarchies, I cannot help but think of Miron, about Swen-Czachorowski, about Lech Emfazy Stefański. [...] This hitherto unstudied underground domestic culture of the 1950s came into being in radically different conditions, but it was not so remote from the New York one.” I have not yet found any literary texts dealing with similarities between the work of Beatniks and that of Białoszewski.

182 See, for example, M. Głowiński, ‘Małe narracje Mirona Białoszewskiego’ [Miron Białoszewski's Small Narrations], in M. Głowiński, *Gry powieściowe. Szkice z teorii i historii form narracyjnych* [Novel Games. Sketches on the Theory and History of Narrative Forms], Warszawa, 1973, pp. 319–38; M. Głowiński, ‘Białoszewskiego gatunki codzienne’ [Białoszewski's Daily Genres], in *Pisanie Białoszewskiego. Szkice* [Białoszewski's Writing. Sketches], eds. M. Głowiński, Z. Łapiński, Warszawa, 1993, p. 145; J. Sławiński, ‘Białoszewski: sukces wycofania się’ [Białoszewski: the Success of Withdrawal], in M. Białoszewski, *Wiersze*, Warszawa, 1976, p. 8; A. Sobolewska, “Ja – to ktoś znajomy,” p. 59; S. Barańczak, ‘Rzeczywistość Białoszewskiego’ [Białoszewski's Reality], in *Pisanie Białoszewskiego*, p. 10; W. Wantuch, ‘Miron Białoszewski w poszukiwaniu gatunków lirycznych’ [Miron Białoszewski in Search of Lyrical Genres], in *Pisanie Białoszewskiego*, pp. 162–3. As Hanna Konicka writes in 1997: “despite a degree of exhaustion with genre studies, the discussion on Białoszewski's writing revolves primarily around genre issues” (H. Konicka, ‘Kulturowy sens gatunkowych decyzji Mirona Białoszewskiego’ [Cultural Sense of Miron Białoszewski's Generic Decisions], *Teksty Drugie*, 1997, No. 1/2, p. 63). It looks like genre studies are still a very important branch of “mironology.”

183 For stereotypes inherent in the Western reception of haiku, see Part 1 of the book (chapter ‘Prototype – Invariant – Stereotype. Haiku in the West’).

184 W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization: A Transcultural Perspective,’ *Aesthetics & Art Science* 1 (2002). It is worthwhile recalling a larger passage from the philosopher's considerations: “For the Japanese, the foreign-own

through the example of poems variously oscillating around haiku, what and where “gets beyond” – as Białoszewski might put it – the economical style of miniatures of Japanese origin.

## 2. Haikuing in an “Anthill Tower?”

I have applied the question of proximity to the poetics of Japanese seventeen-syllable verse to the entire oeuvre of Białoszewski (Tomasz Cieślak, who has so far most fully put into practice the idea of reading Białoszewski through the lens of haiku, relied solely on the material from the volume *Rozkurz* [Whitling Up]). As an initial criterion for the selection of poems for this sketch, I took brevity and compliance with at least two of the following “boundary conditions” of the form:

- the withdrawal, “toning down” of the speaker,
- the focus on sensorially experienced detail of everyday life, – simple sensorial arrangements, and in particular the clear figure-ground (or trajector–landmark) alignment,<sup>185</sup> – stylistic economy.

This is a cluster of features constituting the Western prototype of haiku.<sup>186</sup> Naturally – which to every reader of Białoszewski is obvious – I have not encountered in his poetry too many pure, “spitting images” of haiku most directly reproducing the prototype of the genre. However, I have identified a considerable number of texts that meet several of these criteria. The greatest number of poems suspected of “haiku-ness” are found among Białoszewski’s late poems written between 1976 and 1983, after the poet moved to the high-rise on Lizbońska Street (he called this building “mrówkowiec,” an “anthill tower,”). It is probably no coincidence that Białoszewski’s late work is characterized by a certain toning down of vision and language<sup>187</sup> (despite the disruption brought about by moving into a block of flats

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division, or more precisely, this division based on the criterion of origin, did not play any role. Closeness becomes the basis of their assessment. If something fits well with Japanese culture, it is Japanese – regardless of where it comes from. In this way, foreign objects can be considered as theirs. Personally, I admire this attitude. It seems to me the golden way to happiness, especially in modern conditions” (W. Welsch, ‘Rethinking Identity,’ p. 42). One could envisage an analogous line of reasoning concerning a cultural identity of individual artists. And in this context, one could recall the words of Anna Sobolewska (“Ja – to ktoś znajomy,” p. 70): “Białoszewski’s poetic personality absorbs everything. »I will eat everything«, we hear in the song of the ‘Kitty Katty’s Cabaret’ sequence (‘Kabaret Kici Koci’) and this does not apply to rationed food. What has been referred to as franciscanism, pantheism or Buddhism of the poet was merely a scrap of his spiritual world.”

185 See Part 1 of the book.

186 See Part 1.

187 However, I reject assertions, in my opinion overgeneralizing, that Białoszewski’s work evolved from things, through words, to transcendence (see S. Burkot, *Literatura*

and the “new life” in it), and that in a “Białoszewskian” way it fits well with the “tradition, convention of the ‘late poems.’”<sup>188</sup> Jacek Brzozowski – adopting a caesura similar to the one I have pointed out, marked by the collection *Odczepić się* [To Rid Oneself] from 1978 – writes on this part of Białoszewski’s oeuvre:

[what] comes to the fore ... is a great – and yet devoid of pathos and sentimentality – mounting drama of habituation, accommodation and coming to terms with what is irreversible: fate, pain, suffering, illness, the thought of death. A deep and subtle sensitivity emerges to problems of infinity and immortality, matter and spirit, time and eternity, being and nothingness – ones that are metaphysical and at the same time replete with everyday paradoxes. Finally, finding expression in numerous poems is the empathetic acceptance for all things and phenomena of this world, acceptance rooted in ever-fresh, youthful astonishment.<sup>189</sup>

However, in the miniature poems analysed above, I find relatively few traces of illness, death, and pain. What I see instead is the acceptance, affirmation of life in its various manifestations and, indeed, perpetual astonishment at the world. Is it not the case that the very choice of the haiku-like form somehow automatically modified the semantics (and that initial selection criteria of texts did not specify strictly semantic issues)? Or maybe affirmative senses are easier to express via a clear form that, perhaps accidentally, is slightly “orientalizing?”

A certain temporal convergence is also puzzling: Białoszewski’s texts that were comparable to haiku coincided with the beginnings of serious interest in

*polska w latach 1929–1999* [Polish Literature in the Years 1929–1999], Warszawa, 2002, p. 155).

188 J. Brzozowski, ‘Wiersze ostatnie Mirona Białoszewskiego’ [Miron Białoszewski’s Last Poems], in *Pisanie Białoszewskiego*, p. 217 (text also published with the title ‘Liryki anińskie Mirona Białoszewskiego’ [Miron Białoszewski’s Anin Lyrics], in *Późne wiersze poetów polskich XX wieku. Dwanaście szkiców i komentarzy* [Late Poems of 20th-century Polish Poets. Twelve Sketches and Comments], Łódź, 2007, pp. 99–112). Białoszewski’s late period was also discussed by Brzozowski (‘Wiersze ostatnie,’ p. 216): “The heart attack in 1974, the move across the Vistula-Styx to Warszawa’s Saska Kępa neighbourhood the following year, stays in hospitals and sanatoriums, and finally numerous travels. All this throws the poet off and shakes him out of his contemplative “reclinings” in the safe cosmos of his flat, out of his “reclinings” in familiar places of his intimate world and in several ways brings keen awareness of the imminent moment of departure.” The “otherness” of texts from this period is also noticed by Sobolewski (‘Dzieci Mirona,’ p. 51): “Inherent in Białoszewski’s late poems and prose pieces, in his short (like Zen poetry), paradoxical, sometimes humorous epigrams from the volumes *Odczepić się*, *Rozkurz*, *Oho*, is the striving to get to the bottom of existence, as if one were looking at the underside of a leaf.” See also A. Gleń, “W tej latarni,” P. Sobolczyk, ‘Od “Karmelickich plot,”’ pp. 143–66.

189 J. Brzozowski, ‘Wiersze ostatnie,’ pp. 216–7.

the Japanese genre in Poland. A vital milestone here was the publication of the issue of *Poezja* (1975, No. 1) devoted to haiku, containing interwar and most recent translations of seventeen-syllable Japanese verse along with texts on haiku embedded in cultural and literary studies. Another landmark literary event was the publication of Stanisław Grochowiak's volume *Haiku-images* (two editions in 1978!), which entered into an intriguing dialogue with haiku.<sup>190</sup> As it happens, Grochowiak's book can also be seen as an example of the so-called late work.<sup>191</sup>

There is no point in insisting that the haiku genre is particularly ("influencologically") important for Białoszewski. His entire legacy – and life – proves that he did not need to know about Japanese miniatures in order to engage in continuous literary contemplation of reality.

However, the awareness of the poetic form existing for several centuries at the other side of the world may have influenced Białoszewski's late poems a little. It is common knowledge that the writer was interested in the Orient (perhaps inspired by various Eastern and esoteric passions of many people close to him).<sup>192</sup> Despite all this, I have not found – either in Białoszewski's work or in reminiscences and critical texts about him – any information about his fascination with haiku. However, the sheer coincidence of the special "haiku issue" of *Poezja* with the publication of Grochowiak's poetry book and haiku (or "haiku-like") traces in Białoszewski's verse is noteworthy.

### 3. "The Most 'Eastern' of Polish Poets"<sup>193</sup>

Before proceeding with further analysis, it is advisable to give a voice here to the scholars who were the first to take up the issue of affiliations between Białoszewski's work and Japanese seventeen-syllable verse. As Czesław Miłosz writes:

In Japanese haiku, an epiphany occurs as a glimmer, as something that is glimpsed unexpectedly and for a very brief time, in the way that a familiar landscape appears different to us in the glare of a lightning flash or a rocket. For example, in the poet Issa (1763–1827):

From the bough  
floating down river  
insect song.

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190 The content of this issue of *Poezja* and Grochowiak's poetry book *Haiku-images* is discussed at length in the chapter *Grochowiak's Longest Journey*.

191 *Haiku-images* were the poet's last poetry book, published posthumously. That said, it should be noted that Grochowiak died at the early age of 42.

192 See P. Sobolczyk, 'Od "Karmelickich plot,"' p. 148.

193 An abridged quote from a text by Miłosz (cited more extensively in the first quotation in this section).

Related to this are the short verse-perceptions of the poet Miron Białoszewski (1922–1983), perhaps the most “Eastern” of Polish poets. In his case, this was probably connected to his lifestyle, which gave those who knew him pause: carelessness about his own person, an attitude of disengagement, an almost perfect Buddhist monk.<sup>194</sup>

Miłosz limits himself to a literary impression, without attempting an analysis of affinities between Białoszewski’s “poems-perceptions” and haiku “flashes.” Other researchers go a step further. Piotr Michałowski tries to justify his diagnosis, even if in most general terms:

[Haiku] is about humble listening to the world rather than active exploration thereof; it is about aboulia, an attitude which in Poland was best represented by Miron Białoszewski, who, as it happens, did not write haiku. He programmatically did not write haiku, but in his numerous poetic utterances, he came close to this model. The following poems may be mentioned as examples: ‘yoga jarzębinowy’ [rowan yoga], ‘Dziki kraj przyczyn’ [The Wild Country of Causes], and especially some poems from the volume *Rozkurz* [Dispersion] included in the cycle *Wryrywki* [Snippets], or this poem:

pierwszy raz słyszę	[I hear two silences
dwie cisze	in two ears
na oba uszy.	for the first time.]

While the last example is merely a declaration of passivity, as the utterance focuses on subjective introspection, the relationship with haiku seems to be the most obvious here.<sup>195</sup>

Michałowski leaves the reader with apparent truisms, without explaining where the alleged “haiku-ness” lies in ‘yoga jarzębinowy’ (certainly not in the meditative hint in the title, which, as it happens, does not come from the Japanese universe)

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194 Cz. Miłosz, ‘Against Incomprehensible Poetry,’ in Cz. Miłosz, *To Begin Where I Am*, p. 385. The poet repeated this diagnosis in its unchanged form on several occasions. See Cz. Miłosz, ‘Przeciw poezji niezrozumiałej’ and ‘Postscriptum,’ *Teksty Drugie*, 1990, No. 5/6, pp. 160–1; *Wypisy z ksiąg użytecznych*, Kraków, 1994, p. 20. See also ‘O komunistycznym maglu i polskiej szkole poezji. Rozmowa z Czesławem Miłoszem’ [On the Communist Rumour Mill and Polish School of Poetry. A Conversation with Czesław Miłosz], *NaGłos*, 1990, No. 1, p. 29 (where the similarity of “some of Białoszewski’s short poems” to “Japanese Zen poems” is mentioned). Miłosz’s intuitions are also invoked by Piotr Sommer – *Ucieczka w bok (pytania i odpowiedzi)* [Escaping Aside: Questions and Answers], Wrocław, 2010, p. 17 – who merely asserts that according to Białoszewski the status of a “haikuist” is “not the best idea.”

195 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ pp. 140–1.

and ‘Dziki kraj przyczyn,’ and how hearing “two silences” should actually be analysed in this context (is it not that contemplative passivity presupposes self-awareness?). Nor does he clarify in what sense the fact of not writing haiku would be programmatic.<sup>196</sup>

Tomasz Cieślak looks at this from yet another angle:

The indication of a strong presence of haiku structure in some of Miron Białoszewski’s minor texts does not mean that the poet consciously followed in the footsteps of E. Pound and S. Grochowiak. ... Anna Sobolewska’s suggestion is completely satisfactory in this respect. As Białoszewski looked at the world in a Zen way, he came to poetic effects similar to those used by advocates of the Zen path.<sup>197</sup> On the other hand, one must recall in this context the content of Białoszewski’s reference library on Hoża Street (according to Jadwiga Stańczakowa’s testimony). It contained many of his favourite books on parapsychology, for example, *Wonderworkers of Tibet [...]*, *The Tibetan Book of Death [...]*<sup>198</sup>

It is not that simple. Cieślak’s article does not prove at all the existence of clear affinities between the “haiku structure and Białoszewski’s poems (as discussed below). What is more, the scholar does not seem to be aware that following in the footsteps of Pound or Grochowiak is by no means a straight path to haiku, because the poems of both artists relate to Japanese seventeen-syllable verse remotely and “circuitously.”<sup>199</sup> Additionally, the books read by Białoszewski that Cieślak mentions, relying (not quite accurately) on Stańczakowa’s account,<sup>200</sup> in no

196 Perhaps the point is that the poet would never use this genre name, and instead offered many neological designations of “domestic and amateur genres” (according to Michał Głowiński’s formula from his text ‘Białoszewskiego gatunki codzienne,’ p. 145), such as *ziewanny* [yawnesses], *blokowidła* [high-risers], *faramuszeki* [trifles], *podfruwaje* [flutteries], *śnitki* [dreamlets]. See also: A. Sobolewska, “‘Ja – to ktoś znajomy,’” p. 59. W. Wantuch, ‘Miron Białoszewski w poszukiwaniu,’ pp. 162–3; K. Rutkowski, ‘Odmiany wypowiedzi Białoszewskiego’ [Types of Białoszewski’s Utterances], in K. Rutkowski, *Przeciw (w) literaturze / Esej o “poezji czynnej” Mirona Białoszewskiego i Edwarda Stachury* [Against (in) Literature / Essay on Miron Białoszewski’s and Edward Stachura’s ‘Active Poetry’], Bydgoszcz, 1987, pp. 163–89.

197 In Sobolewska’s texts referred to by Cieślak, such an emphatic statement is nowhere made in express terms.

198 T. Cieślak, ‘Prawie haiku,’ p. 124. A quotation within a quotation: J. Stańczakowa, ‘Ocalić wszystko’ [To Salvage Everything], in *Pisanie Białoszewskiego*, p. 262.

199 See the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

200 Most probably the book in question was *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* by Alexandra David Néel (Polish edition *Mistycy i cudotwórcy Tybetu*, transl. M. Jarosławski, Warszawa, 1938), instead of, as Stańczakowa writes in the text ‘Ocalić wszystko,’ the publication authored by David O’Neal. The second book mentioned there was most probably *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* by Sogyal Rinpoche or *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.



way validate the “haiku-ness” or “Zen-ness” of Białoszewski’s poetry. These books are related to Tibetan Buddhism, radically different from Zen Buddhism, which is irrational, immersed in the commonplace, makes use of paradoxes, and escapes codification. It looks like nothing is obvious here.

The last proposal to set Białoszewski’s poetry (from his “high-rise” period) side by side with haiku was put forward by Piotr Sobolczyk:

*Rozkurz* includes a whole cycle entitled *Wiersze na blysk* [Poems to a Shine]. Yet this title is ambiguous: it might rather suggest that these poems are – so to speak – “polished,” which actually is the impression they make in most cases (poems that would justify being seen as “glints,” flashes are less numerous). For this reason, it seems to me that this section of Białoszewski’s poetry should more accurately be viewed as “meditation poems” rather than “haiku-like poems.” The European tradition has accustomed us to conceiving a “literary genre” as a set of formal features, hence it may seem that the essence of haiku is determined by the verse and syllable pattern. However, much more important is the inner feeling called *satori*. It appears also as a result of meditation and positive attitude towards all being but is much more momentary in character (it could be translated as an epiphany). In addition, it completely excludes the involvement of the intellect (reasoning) in favour of direct insight into the essence of things.<sup>201</sup>

Sobolczyk suggests looking from the perspective of spirituality rather than the rigorous “letter of genre studies.” In fact, the mere arrangement of syllables and verses will not lead to haiku (after all, the same versification model is used in satirical ironic *senryū!*). Additionally, the “non-measurable” record of *satori* cannot become a genre marker (Let us note here that this, as it seems, is not the scholar’s postulate). Caution is needed here and let us not be seduced by axiological stereotypes: not every classical Japanese haiku is poetic proof of enlightenment. Furthermore, spirituality, illumination, and inner experience are not intrinsically in contradiction to the creative “work of the intellect.” Haiku verse did not have to be instantaneous “note-downs” (*zanoty*) of momentary illuminations.<sup>202</sup> The poems’ “high shine” does not always cancel their “haiku-ness” (although, of course, there is such a possibility).<sup>203</sup>

Classical Japanese haiku are perceived in the West as almost transparent stylistically, which is something of a misconception with regard to the poetics of the original, which indeed is very difficult to translate (the ambiguity of the Japanese

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201 P. Sobolczyk, ‘Od “Karmelickich plot,”’ pp. 165–6. “Haikological” enquiries are only a small segment of Sobolczyk’s literary-critical narrative. The scholar did not explore here the issues that are of interest to me, nor did he offer a wider selection of Białoszewski’s “meditative” texts approaching haiku (the ones I cite are quite distant from “haiku-ness”).

202 See Part 1 of the book.

203 See the discussion in Part 5.

language, the uniqueness of the poetic rhythm, the cutting syllable *kireji*, polysemous and peculiarly multifunctional words, intertextuality, and so on).<sup>204</sup> In part, the contrived simplicity of the “imported” form known only via translation turns out to be invariably intriguing to Western readers, as evidenced by the sustained popularity (of translations) of poems by Bashō, Buson, and Issa. Faithful imitation of the simplified foreign model may, however, seem less interesting and less original.<sup>205</sup> Many artists reproduce imperfect matrices fashioned on the basis of information obtained second or third hand. The so-called major poets rarely write “pure” haiku, which usually is not the result of insufficient knowledge about this poetic genre. There is also reason to believe – I come back to Białoszewski’s case here – that a thorough familiarity with haiku poetics would not necessarily influence Białoszewski’s “haiku-like” poems.

Finally, the most important thing (again apropos Sobolczyk’s observations): language and epiphany. It is possible that the epiphanic quality of experiencing the world can be convincingly conveyed in Western literature today via a form that is at once “flash-like” (capturing the moment) and brilliant (on the plane of verbal articulation). Perhaps a record approaching stylistic “transparency” (characteristic of numerous haiku translations) would be insufficient.<sup>206</sup> In the case of “haiku-like” texts, the flash of reality should not be obscured by “interword” flashes of the text (in which case the “polish” of the language outshines the epiphany of a sense experience of the world).

The time has come for a tentative summary. The state of research briefly outlined here demonstrates that in the case of Białoszewski – not much different in this perspective from the case of Miłosz – haiku-related inquiries can be carried out in almost uncharted territory.<sup>207</sup> Pronouncements of literary scholars tend to be contradictory, and their conclusions can sometimes be intuitive, not always supported by further in-depth research. Therefore, I would like to give a voice here to the poet’s “nadzwyczajnosteczki”<sup>208</sup> (a neologism that can be loosely translated as “remarkablets”) woven into the meandering course of analyses. Białoszewski went

204 This point is discussed at greater length in Part 1.

205 See the discussion in Part 5.

206 See, for example, R. Nycz, *Literatura jako trop rzeczywistości*, esp. pp. 8–9, 41–3. For modern epiphany in the context of haiku, see Part 5.

207 In 1997 a “genological monograph” on Białoszewski was published A. Świrak, *Z gatunkiem czy bez... O twórczości Mirona Białoszewskiego* [With or Without Genre... On the Work of Miron Białoszewski], Zielona Góra, 1997). However, its author made no mention of any affiliations of the poet’s oeuvre with haiku. Prior to Anna Świrak’s assertion, there were many important, though unrelated to the problems of haiku, works dealing with genres in Białoszewski’s work (including the already mentioned studies by Głowiński, Janusz Sławiński, and Stanisław Barańczak). I will refer to these texts later in this chapter.

208 Białoszewski’s formula from the volume *Szумы, zlepy, ciągi* [Hums, Lumps, Threads], in M. Białoszewski, *Utwory zebrane*, Vol. 5, Warszawa, 1989, pp. 51–5.

to great lengths to make it impossible to map out straightforward genre routes in his poems. Yet I find the untrodden paths to the East very tempting.

#### 4. Haiku? *Senryū?* *Mironū?*

As Białoszewski writes:

Żaba ćwierka  
Sama w rowie  
Medytatorka

[A frog is chirping  
Alone in a ditch  
A meditator

Zresztą Europejka  
the cycle *Wyrwy z zamyśleń*  
[Breaches from Reveries], *Uz* 7, 237

And a European at that]

Associations with haiku seem inevitable here. It is hard to find a literary scholar today who would not be familiar with Bashō's famous "frog" haiku (at least in several translations),<sup>209</sup> while other "frog" poems by Japanese haikins are popular as well. Let us confront Białoszewski's text with a poem by Issa:

coltsfoot leaves  
a noisy frog  
perched on them on the side  
Issa<sup>210</sup>

Both of these literary records of a similar visual and aural experience fit into haiku's conventions of representation (a clear-cut figure-ground alignment, a shape highlighted visually and acoustically). Issa, however, tries to depict the scene as accurately as possible (within the constraints of the seventeen-syllable form): he specifies the type of leaves and describes how the frog sat down on them. Białoszewski adopts a different strategy. In place of visual accuracy, he offers a description with subtle semantic oddities along with a singular, ambiguous commentary. Instead of croaking or even crying, his frog is chirping. In Polish poetry (especially that written for children), chirping had long been the preserve of sparrows. So why is this sound produced by the amphibian? Perhaps the idea was to produce a faithful, though not the most obvious (as in haiku) depiction of the observed scene, which in this case involved a precise description of sounds that de-automatizes the poem's perception. It is possible that, to the observer of this scene,

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209 Polish and English translations of the poem are discussed in the chapter 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.' This poem by Bashō is seen as a literary record of *satori*, enlightenment triggered by a small, unexpected event (however, the spiritual "incident" of this kind would be preceded by meditative peace and stillness). See, for example, D. Keene, *Japanese Literature. An Introduction for Western Readers*, New York, n.d., pp. 39–40; R. Aitken, *A Zen Wave*, pp. 3–7.

210 English translation based on the Polish rendering in *Haiku*, [1983], p. 106.

the chirping seemed to be closer to the inarticulate “speech” of the frog than the onomatopoeic croaking conventionally reserved for these amphibians.

The accurate record of a potentially “haiku-parous” experience (a solitary frog making a noise in a ditch and the chirp-like sounds it produces) gave rise, however, to a text with a modality radically different from classical haiku.<sup>211</sup> A Japanese haijin would probably end the poem after the phrase “alone in a ditch.” In Białoszewski’s poem, the speaker takes a pause (white space, blank line), takes a breath (and haiku is a one-breath poem!)<sup>212</sup> and enters a different level of the text: he makes a humorous, perhaps even subtly ironic comment about the presented image. The change in diction is visible (and audible) on the very plane of versification and sound instrumentation.<sup>213</sup> Two simple, short trochaic lines, which sound most natural in Polish, are followed by two longer verses (despite the smaller number of words), made highly prominent aurally and visually. These lines are phonetically “heavy:” they contain lexemes rarely occurring in everyday communication (loanwords, a neologism) and difficult in articulation (sound effects making use of the “t”/“d” pair and an expressive, trilling “r;” the over-representation, by the standards of colloquial Polish, of vowels, arising from the use of loanwords; the disrupted trochaic rhythm).

Stylistic changes tie in with the “changeover” in semantics. Emotional engagement gives way to distance, the speaker is far from uniting with the object of his utterance. The frog is revealed as a “meditator” (a surprising, “angular,” “unpoetic” neologism). This designation seems to additionally justify the text’s linkage with the East-Asian tradition (meditation is strongly associated with the culture of the Far East). This line of interpretation is also borne out by the somewhat antithetical descriptive addition in the last line: “And a European at that.”

Thus, a frog is sitting in a ditch, croaking, or rather chirping. This kind of sitting is meditation, a frog *zazen*. The solitary meditator-frog evokes Eastern associations. And what additional information is provided by the final verse? Is it merely a description of the poem’s setting? – the story does not take place in Japanese meadows but in an all-too-familiar Central-European ditch.

It is surprising how many interpretations a short poem like this can provoke. Let us play with this “haiku” (the quotation marks, at least for now, are obligatory):

1. The most straightforward reading, one that is most haiku-centric and does not seek any subtexts (but at the same time seems incomplete, ignoring the stylistic diversity of the text): a most common European frog sits on the edge of the road

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211 I adopted the category of modality from Włodzimierz Bolecki (‘Modalność. Literatura i kognitywizm (rekonesans),’ in W. Bolecki, *Modalności modernizmu. Studia, analizy, interpretacje*, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 169–200, esp. pp. 180–99).

212 See, for example, R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 2, p. 350; see also Part 1 of the book.

213 I would like to extend my grateful thanks to Professor Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska for her comments on this part of my analysis. I am also grateful to Professor Agnieszka Kluba for the close reading of my inquiries.

producing chirp-like sounds. For Białoszewski, “everything is interesting”<sup>214</sup> – this also applies to a frog in a ditch.

2. A “journalistic and cultural” interpretation: a familiar European frog is doing something contrary to its amphibian nature – it is meditating. Meditating, it is not fully itself, it does not croak, but instead chirps like a bird. This text might be a reaction to the infatuation, quite widespread at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, with the Orient, often superficial and “losing sight of its identity” (when the poem was created, that time also saw various fascinations with the East, grouped under the rubric of New Age).<sup>215</sup>
3. A fairytale interpretation (as it seems, the least grounded in the text): a well-travelled frog, a European, inevitably a bit of a snob, speaks languages and chirps like a sparrow (even when it is on its own). Thenceforward, the story could be developed in the spirit of Alexander Fredro or Jan Brzechwa (but it is not).

One could surely come up with more interpretations. What is telling, however, is the fact that the interpretative procedure soon loses touch with what constitutes the essence of haiku. In this short, eight-word (!) text, the poet managed, perhaps unconsciously, to capture crucial haikems (the initial clear-cut image with elements of the natural world), only to subsequently transcend them in a clear yet ambiguous way. Undoubtedly, the poem in question is not a haiku, but it is one of those works by Białoszewski that almost automatically trigger haiku-related comparative procedures.

Let us consider another issue: “There is a general consensus that Białoszewski as a poet places language at the foreground, making it not immediately and not quite transparently intelligible.”<sup>216</sup> In the text analysed here, the poet seems to “hide the language,” depicts and comments on the situation, without throwing into focus the poem’s style. Despite all this, however, mere stylistic nuances of the words used in the poem’s closing line provoke us to question its senses and view the miniature from a non-contemplative perspective different from the one suggested by initial lines.

A comparison of the text in question with a “frog” poem by another Western author leads to interesting conclusions. In this case, as we have seen, affiliations with Zen and haiku are not based on conjecture. The following is a poem by Kerouac:

Little frogs screaming  
in the ditch  
At nightfall.<sup>217</sup>

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214 As quoted in H. Zaworska, ‘Ostatni wieczór z Mironem,’ p. 349.

215 See, for example, A. Sobolewska, *Mapy duchowe współczesności. Co nam zostało z Nowej Ery?*, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 103–18.

216 H. Konicka, ‘Kulturowy sens,’ p. 66.

217 As quoted in J. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, p. 157.

Frogs making a noise in a ditch – an almost identical poetic image. Yet interpretative possibilities are far fewer in number. Additionally, the genre qualification is simple: this is just a proper haiku. Kerouac, like Japanese haikins, focuses on an image (a clear figure–ground alignment), yet does not transform his snapshot of the natural world into anything from outside this world, does not manipulate modality. The text by the American poet partakes of some dramatic quality, arising in part from the use of enjambment. The first line, breaking off after the word “screaming” (a verb which can refer in English to humans and animals alike) seems to carry connotations related to pain, suffering and fear. Subsequent lines, adding detail to the textual background, reassure the reader, demonstrating that whatever premonitions the reader might have had (probably as a result of habits acquired over many years of reading Western poetry), they were unfounded. Nothing disturbing takes place, these really are just (?) frogs at dusk.

While Kerouac did not engage in a discussion with the genre, deciding instead to simply add his miniature to a considerable body of haiku depictions of frogs,<sup>218</sup> Białoszewski did not adopt any genre restrictions.

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218 In the vast majority of Kerouac’s haiku, clues as to the crossing of genre boundaries are very elusive (contrary to the pronouncements of some scholars) – see, for example, R. Weinreich, ‘Introduction,’ pp. XXX–XXXI; Y. Hakutani, ‘Jack Kerouac’s Haiku,’ pp. 92–109; B. Ungar, *Haiku in English*, Stanford, California, 1978, pp. 28–32), and typically have to do with subtle metaphorization of texts (occurring also in classical haiku) and their certain ambiguity (resulting, in part, from the specificity of the language). Another “frog” haiku by Kerouac can be interpreted similarly to the above text about frogs in the ditch:

Wet frog  
 shining  
 In lamplit leaves  
 Frogs don’t care  
 just sit there  
 Brooding on the moon  
 This July evening,  
 A large frog  
 On my doorsill

Signals of modernity in the poem’s universe are no obstacle to the haiku status either (after all, haiku was intended to be immersed in everyday life, which obviously changes in parallel with the development of civilization). The following is an interesting example (quoted in J. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, p. 33) of modernized haiku staffage and a singular discussion of death, close to haiku periphrases (the diagnosis of comic undertones in this text seems to be unfounded – J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 200–1):

Run over by my lawnmower,  
 waiting for me to leave,  
 The frog

At this juncture, it is worth recalling once again the ludic “reverse” of haiku, little-known in Poland: *senryū*.<sup>219</sup> This Japanese “comic and satirical”<sup>220</sup> genre was governed by considerably fewer formal restrictions: seventeen-syllable *senryū* dispensed with *kigo* (seasonal words) and *kireji* (the cutting syllable marking an important versification and semantic caesura), did not conform to any ethical or stylistic requirements (looser composition; tolerance of vulgarisms; disregard for the elements characteristic of haiku, such as elegance of style, clarity, and refined simplicity),<sup>221</sup> and did not focus on the natural world. Their “epiphanic potency” seems markedly lower and – simply different.<sup>222</sup> Likewise, imagery is less clear (rejection of the figure-ground alignment typical of most haiku poems). Western readers know much less about *senryū* than about haiku. As it turns out, the reason behind it is paradoxical: satirical seventeen-syllable poems are much more homely, close to the poetics of an epigram, aphorism, or short satirical poem. As less unusual and less spiritual, they do not fit well with the formula of Oriental illuminations and hold less appeal to translators and promoters of Japanese culture.<sup>223</sup>

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219 This poetic form is discussed at great length in Part 1. See also the *senryū* quoted in the chapter ‘Haiku-Blague or “Freestyle Haiku?” – Notes on the Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.’

220 M. Melanowicz, ‘*Senryū*,’ in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, eds. G. Gazda, S. Tynecka-Makowska, Kraków, 2006, p. 689. See also *Senryū. Japanese Satirical Verses*, transl. and explained by R. H. Blyth, Tokyo, 1949; *Light Verse from the Floating World. An Anthology of Premodern Japanese Senryū*, selected, transl. and with an introduction by M. Ueda, New York, 1999.

221 *Senryū* were most commonly written by poorly educated authors and were not a sophisticated art form. In this poetic production a huge role was played by editors (and selectors) (Karai *Senryū*, 1718–1790, after whom the genre was named, was one such editor; *senryū* authors for the most part remained anonymous). See Part 1 of this monograph and, for example, W. J. Higginson, P. Harter, ‘Beyond Haiku,’ in W. J. Higginson, P. Harter, *The Haiku Handbook. How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku*, Tokyo–New York–London, 1989, pp. 227–8. Vulgarisms appeared also in haiku, but they were much less frequent and definitely more justified stylistically.

222 The following is an example of astonishment at everyday life typical of *senryū* (as quoted in R. H. Blyth (ed), *Senryū. Japanese Satirical Verses*, transl. and explained by R. H. Blyth, Tokyo, 1949, p. 69:

The lost child  
 Began to cry suddenly, –  
 He saw his mother

See also numerous examples of *senryū* quoted in Parts 1 and 3 of this book.

223 In Japan, the distinction between haiku and *senryū* is relatively clear, unlike in Western literature, where the fascination with haiku, combined with no awareness of the existence of *senryū*, often results in forms merging the poetics of both genres. Interestingly, in some modern anthologies, haiku and *senryū* were printed side by side, with editors making no distinction between them (See, for example, *The Haiku Anthology. Haiku and Senryū in English*, ed. C. van

*Senryū* is derived from *maekuzuke*<sup>224</sup> (“one of the forms of exercises aimed at mastering the art of adding a linking verse to the preceding ready-made one”).<sup>225</sup> The following is an early example of such a text:

it resembles Hitomaro  
 reciting songs!  
 below the hedge  
 in the stream  
 a singing frog<sup>226</sup>

In order to understand this poem, a commentary is needed: the verse translated as “below the hedge,” in Japanese reads as “kaki no moto o.”<sup>227</sup> For the Japanese, this is an obvious pun,<sup>228</sup> as the name of the famous poet Hitomaro was actually... Kakinomoto. The second stanza (*tsukeku*) essentially calls to mind the much later “frog” haiku and... the initial two verses of the above-quoted poem that Białoszewski wrote independently of the thirteenth-century Japanese text. In both cases, the clear-cut image of the croaking frog is aimed at the contemplation of nature. The “non-frog” references in *maeku* (first stanza of *maekuzuke*) again surprisingly bring to mind the poem by the Polish poet. The frog is seen from a distance, for some reason resembles a man and, paradoxically, diverts attention away from the natural world.

I am by no means claiming that Białoszewski took Japanese *senryū* (let alone its early literary progenitors) as his model, but I want to demonstrate that references to foreign forms should not be superficial. At first glance, Białoszewski’s miniature comes across as a European haiku. Our acquaintance with the world’s most famous haiku (Bashō’s poem about a frog jumping into a pond)<sup>229</sup> seems to confirm this diagnosis. However, if the reader knew *senryū* as well as Bashō’s or Issa’s “frog”

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den Heuvel, New York–London, 2000; see also R. Niece, ‘The Mistreated Haiku and His Dizygotic Brother, Senryu,’ *The Clearing House*, 1978, Vol. 51, No. 5, pp. 201–3).

224 See footnote 221 in Part 1 of the book.

225 M. Melanowicz, ‘*Senryū*,’ p. 689. See also *Understanding Humour in Japan*, ed. J. Milner-Davies, Detroit, 2006, pp. 156–9. By way of a reminder: the first stanza, *maeku*, typically consists of two 7-syllable verses, while the second one, *tsukeku*, is composed of three verses of the 5 + 7 + 5 syllable count (*tsukeku* gave rise to *senryū*) – *Light Verse*, pp. 1–3.

226 The text by Tamesuke from the first anthology of *renga* (*Tsukubashū*, 1356) compiled by Nijo Yoshimoto, as quoted in W. J. Higginson, P. Harter, *Beyond Haiku*, p. 224.

227 Explanations as given in W. J. Higginson, P. Harter, *Beyond Haiku*.

228 Puns would also appear in haiku, yet they never disturbed so intensely the contemplation of nature. See, for example, A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Od tłumacza,’ in *Haiku*, [1983], pp. 9, 13–14.

229 For the discussion of this text and its translations, see the chapter *Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku*.



haiku, he/she certainly would not link Białoszewski's text with a haiku epiphany. This is because the fundamental modality of this poem is different.

In the beginning, I presented a poem, which seemingly was very close to haiku, but in fact summoned up an entirely non-contemplative territory. Let us examine some more cases. The following is another miniature by Białoszewski, one which Cieślak "suspected" of "haiku-ness," namely *ziewanna* [yawnness]:

'Zacieki' a to góry widziane z góry księżyca the volume <i>Rozkurz</i> , 1980, Uz 8, 209	[DAMP PATCHES and these are mountains seen from above from the Moon]
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Indeed, as Cieślak notes, we witness here a "breakdown of old patterns," "shift of reference point, change of perspective."<sup>230</sup> The de-automatization of perception, however, is not merely about a simple change in perspective. The device of image reversal, looking at things from "upside-down" was known in classical haiku. Białoszewski's oddities go much further and are more ambiguous. Let us compare 'Zacieki' with two haiku: a nineteenth-century Japanese poem by Issa and a Western incarnation of the genre – a piece by Kerouac:<sup>231</sup>

Deep silence  
 at the bottom of the Biwa lake  
 bulky clouds  
  
 Reflected upsidedown,  
 in the sunset lake, pines  
 Pointing to infinity<sup>232</sup>

The haiku quoted above only slightly impede the perception of visible reality, without diverging far from a straightforward representation of the sensorially experienced world. Białoszewski's "lunar" image is governed by entirely different rules. At first, it seems that at the centre of the text is a focus on the sensorially perceived detail, typical of haiku. The de-automatization of perception, however, goes much further. The damp patches themselves turn out to be suspicious...

230 T. Cieślak, 'Prawie haiku,' p. 116.

231 See the discussion by Yoshinobu Hakutani 'Jack Kerouac's Haiku,' p. 94).

232 J. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, p. 101. Similar devices are used by Polish "hajjins" – the following is a poem by Janusz Koryl (as quoted in *Strużka piasku w klepsydrze... Haiku* [A Trickle of Sand in an Hourglass... Haiku], eds. J. Brzozowski, J. Sikorzanka, Łódź, 2006, p. 7):

Ucichły ptaki i niebo odpoczywa na dnie strumienia.	[The birds have fallen silent and the sky is resting at the bottom of the stream.].
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ontologically (!). How can this quatrain be interpreted? The following is one of the suggested explications. The ordinary damp patch with an interesting (at least to some observers) contour resembles an outline of a mountain range. One observed, of course, from a considerable distance. This is only a step away from the conclusion that seen from above (for instance, from the surface of the Moon, through a proper telescope), the Earth's mountain ranges resemble... damp patches.

However, is the poem's patch an actual stain on an actual surface in the first place? Or is it merely an inquiry, a conceptist "possible" image (guesswork concerning the perception of terrestrial mountains seen from space)? There is no clear answer. It seems that the focus on everyday life (one cannot but suspect that the primary cause of the poem was a real stain on the wall) becomes a creation going beyond the practice of haijins. Imagination comes to obscure reality. We arrive at a point that is far removed from haiku's sensorial mimesis.

This is where we come close to the following humorous and completely un-haiku-like piece:

ćśśś	[shushshsh
Siedzimy w tej ścianie.	We're sitting in this wall.
Jesteśmy Marsjanie.	We're Martians.]
from the sequence <i>Moce nocy</i> [Night's Mights], Uz 7, 248	

Let us have a look at another "lunar" miniature by the poet:

<b>Czas wieczoroo</b>	['Sundoown'
Ciało niebieskie w pełni.	A full celestial body.
Kolor nieba pnie się, pnie się	The colour of the sky rising, rising
i opada.	and falling.
Gregoriański.	Gregorian.]
from the collection <i>Odczepić się</i> [To Rid Oneself], 1978, Uz 7, 88	

The basic difference between the two "lunar" texts is obvious – in 'Damp Patches' the Moon was an invention, while here we can actually see a landscape accessible to daily experience: the full moon and the sky changing colour (in time: as it gets dark, or in space: in different places of the horizon). One would be hard put to find a more trivial picture, yet Białoszewski successfully gets away from banality. The idea of verbal representation of the view is based on masterful synaesthesia. Colour – like sound – goes up (the duplicated "rising") and down: bright and "high" just after sunset, then ever darker and closer to the horizon (?). Colour changes are not unlike sound changes in a Gregorian chant. The first suggestion of oddity, which becomes perfectly justified in the perspective of the subsequent fusion of sound and colour, is the very title that can be interpreted as a visual (the doubling of "o") and articulatory-acoustic representation of the "rising" of the colour of the



This is primarily a linguistic and graphic concept.<sup>237</sup> The poem's entire content, apart from the title explaining its enigmatic theme, is reduced to two truncated words ("sky," "moon") that "gape with broken sounds,"<sup>238</sup> cut off by a bar that obstructs the observer's view. As Anna Sobolewska writes: "The block of flats in Chamowo came into being only by virtue of the scaffolding that veiled it, the 'moon' from which several letters were cut off draws attention to itself more forcibly – it simply IS more."<sup>239</sup> It may attract more attention indeed. But does it really attract attention to itself? The poem does not provide anymore information about the moon (we do not even know what quarter it is in!), no room was left for "feeling our way into" the world depicted. Something hard to imagine needs to be stated here: the poem does not contain enough words to count as haiku. They are sufficient enough for a successful textual concept (one approaching concrete poetry), but not for contemplative sensoriality. This observation becomes clearer when we compare "LOOKING THROUGH THE BARS" with another of Białoszewski's poetic miniatures:

Dalekie grzmoty.	[Far thunderclaps.
Niebo w papiloty.	The sky in curl papers.]
from the collection <i>Stara proza. Nowe wiersze</i> [Old Prose. New Poems], 1984, Uz 10, 61	

This is one of Białoszewski's most haiku-like poems. It possesses a clear, synaesthetic, masterfully and tersely delineated figure (thunder)—ground (sky) alignment. The short text almost tangibly registers a snapshot of reality. Poetic language did not dominate the image, despite the fact that we are dealing here both with a fine and crisp metaphor drawn from everyday life and an exact rhyme. At the same time, the poem turns out to be subtly humorous in a haiku-like (and "Białoszewskian") way: the thunder described by means of the "domestic" metaphor loses all its horror and amuses.

The following is another acoustic and visual landscape:

<b>Świta zatokowo</b>	<b>[Dawn breaks gulflike</b>
na wysokim niebie.	high in the sky.
Niskie zbite z chmur	Low, packed with clouds
wisi,	hanging,
pod nim	underneath it
jak pod morzem	as under the sea
szczekają	they are barking
z wsi.	from the village.
from the cycle <i>Jedno rano</i> [One Morning], Uz 7, 175	

237 For the use of concepts in classical haiku, see Parts 1 and 5 of this monograph.

238 A. Sobolewska, "Ja – to ktoś znajomy," p. 43.

239 A. Sobolewska, "Ja – to ktoś znajomy" p. 44; emphasis Sobolewska.

This extensive text-image by and large comes close to the haiku prototype. In haiku, the reader typically views the detail against a plane. Sometimes, however, as in Białoszewski's poem, a more complex, three-stage interrelation of representations occurs.<sup>240</sup> In the Polish poem we see/hear: dawn "HIGH in the sky," below – tumbling clouds ("LOW, packed with clouds / hanging"), further below – barking. The comparison of the plane of clouds to the sea does not eliminate the clarity and sensorial mimesis of the scene. The image remains clear and concise (as confirmed by the paronomastic alignment that binds the whole together: the rhyme "wisi" (hanging) – "z wsi" (from the village), finding, retroactively, inverted resonance in the initial "świta" (dawn breaks). Let us add that, contrary to popular belief, haiku is by no means a barrier for imagination, it rather keeps a tight rein on it, as Bashō's poems projecting aerial images demonstrate:

with clouds and mist  
 in a brief moment a hundred scenes  
 brought to fulfilment<sup>241</sup>

passing clouds –  
 like a dog running about and pissing,  
 scattered winter showers<sup>242</sup>

In this context, one must recall the often commented "Buddhist" poem by Białoszewski:

**Okno na deszcz**

Szarzeje.  
 Ja się kleję  
 Do szyby.  
 Rozwodzę ze sobą.

from the collection *Rozkurz*, 1980, Uz 8, 248

**[Window to Rain**

It's getting grey.  
 I am sticking  
 To the window pane.  
 Divorcing myself.]

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240 This is apparent in the following haiku (as quoted in W. Kotański, 'Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,' p. 18; K. Issa, *The Year of My Life. A Translation of Issa's 'Oraga Haru,'* transl. Nobuyuki Yuasa, Berkley – Los Angeles – London 1972, p. 117.):

The cry of the skein of geese  
 that fell into the reeds rises...  
 I feel the chill of the night...

Utterly helpless in the autumn wind,  
 A firefly crawls away  
 From my hand.

K. Issa

See also Part 1.

241 As quoted in *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 41.

242 As quoted in *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 23.

According to Cieślak, the above text is a literary rendition of the unification of the subject and the object, of the loss of the perceiver's individuality, and his/her dissolution in experience.<sup>243</sup> Indeed, the poem seems to be a record of deep meditative experience.<sup>244</sup> As opposed to Cieślak, however, I do not treat 'Okno na deszcz' as a poem particularly close to haiku. The highly conceptist, linguistic "divorcing" of oneself situates the text far from simple "haiku-ness." Paradoxically, genre identification is hindered by the subject. The main theme of the miniature is not the observed reality, but... the extraordinary inner experience of a person in a state of "in-feeling."

Let us abandon the sweeping aerial perspective while remaining on the plane of visual sensations. In another poem we read as follows:

"Barwny ich strój"	["Their motley attire"]
amaranty	amaranths
pod szarym	under grey
to kot je	it's a cat eating
róże	roses]
from the collection <i>Rozkurz</i> , 1980, Uz 8, 185–186	

This poem is also situated in the haiku context. Cieślak juxtaposes it with two conceptist miniatures by Japanese haijins:<sup>245</sup>

Red pepper pods!  
 Add wings to them,  
 and they are dragonflies!  
 Bashō<sup>246</sup>

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243 T. Cieślak, 'Prawie haiku,' p. 117.

244 Białoszewski describes a similar (as one might think) state of mind in the following way: "And finally, if you keep staring at "such a point on the wall, you stop feeling yourself, you fall apart and no longer occupy a place and space." ("To, w czym się jest." Z M. Białoszewskim w dniu 2 II 1983 rozmawiała A. Trznadel-Szczepanek' [That in Which One is. A. Trznadel-Szczepanek in Conversation with M. Białoszewski, Feb. 2, 1983], *Twórczość*, 1983, No. 9, p. 31).

245 T. Cieślak, *Prawie haiku*, p. 123. For concepts in Japanese haiku, see Parts 1 and 5.

246 As quoted in Harold G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, n.p.

I thought: back to their branch  
 The fallen flowers float and rise.  
 I looked again—lo! 'twas the butterflies.  
 Moritake<sup>247</sup>

The poems discussed above indeed correspond in one way or another with Białoszewski's visual and verbal riddle (one is tempted to travesty it, as in children's guessing games: "What is it: amaranths underneath grey?," "What is it: a pepper pod with wings?").<sup>248</sup> It seems, however, that Białoszewski's "riddle" is much more difficult than the Japanese ones, actually utterly insolvable without the author's help (complicating things further are intertextual references, which will be discussed below). It should also be emphasized – in contradiction to Cieślak – that similar puzzles with surprising solutions are very rare in the tradition of classical haiku. Finally, a significant role is played here by the above-mentioned intertextuality. Classical haiku would sometimes be subtly intertextual (something that is difficult to grasp by the Western reader).<sup>249</sup> In Białoszewski's poetry, intertextual cues are exceptionally strong (he even uses quotation marks) and extremely misleading. The poem also carries references to military songs. Its beginning invokes one called 'Wizja szyldwacha' [The Sentry's Vision]: "Their motley attire, amaranths buttoned under the chin."<sup>250</sup> In turn, the subsequent greyness explains (naturally, only partially) the content of another song: "No lampasses, but grey uniforms they were."<sup>251</sup> So – "amaranths under grey." Is this a colourful soldier's shirt? Or maybe a scarf under a grey uniform? Of course not! It is the cat that is grey in this poem, as these are the roses that are colourful. What is the relationship with these songs? Are they linked to the poem by something more than the illogical "flash associations?"

In the course of our inquiries, again, as in the analysis of the poem about the meditating frog, we depart significantly from the perceptual procedures of haiku. While the sensorial sensibility recorded in the text comes close to haiku aesthetics, its conceptism and pervert intertextual ambiguity lead away from such poetics.

The reading of another "amaranth" miniature leads to different conclusions:

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247 As quoted in *Classic Haiku: An Anthology of Poems by Basho and His Followers*, translated and annotated by A. Miyamori, Mineola, NY, 2002, transl. Curtis Hidden Page, n.p.

248 For riddle poems among Polish haiku, see Part 5 (section 'Conceptism').

249 See Part 1.

250 *Do niebieskich pował. Pieśni znane i lubiane* [To Heavenly Ceilings. Songs Known and Loved], selected and ed. by M. A. Faber, Warszawa, 1995, p. 106.

251 'Piechota (Maszerują strzelcy, maszerują...)' [The Grey Infantry], in Z. Adrjański, *Złota księga pieśni polskich. Pieśni, gawędy, opowieści* [The Golden Book of Polish Songs. Songs, Tales, Stories], Warszawa, 1997, p. 237.

## NASTRÓJ Z DODATKIEM

Zielsko i amaranty

kwiatowe

Płyty.

Pusto.

Kwianty.

from the collection *Odczepić się*, 1978, Uz 7, 68

## [A MOOD WITH AN ADDITION

Weeds and amaranth

flower

Flagstones.

Empty.

Flowerths.]

Unlike the previous poem, the text is devoid of a conceptist anecdote suggested by a description. Białoszewski paints a clear picture: weeds (probably green) and amaranth. The poem is extremely static, consisting of graphically separated nouns, an adjective and adverb. The first two verses alone could be taken as an ascetic, stylistically restrained haiku. However, the poet expands the image, all the while remaining within the confines of visual asceticism (“empty!”). The word “płyty” is puzzling (alliteration with “pusty” [empty]) – in Polish, it can mean flagstones, a panel building (block of flats), or a music record. The reader does not know which of these meanings applies here. This semantic ambiguity does not spoil the image, which is calm yet possessed of lurid colours. Attention is also directed to the neological “kwianty” (flowerths) from the last verse, which rhyme with “amaranths” (a structural closure) and at the same time call to mind a fifth in music (in which case, would “płyta” be a music record? Does the image assume an additional sound dimension in this way?). It is like a final blink of an eye, a smile in an empty amaranth-green landscape. Classical haiku are distinguished by a unique, restrained, affirmative humour (yet one devoid of neologisms, which, however, is an issue of secondary importance here).<sup>252</sup>

This ascetic, albeit masterfully stylized text, also carries humorous overtones. As we have seen, Białoszewski by no means wants to conceal language. He successfully registers certain scenes from reality, investing them with a haiku-like form and vivid language effects. If we compare ‘NASTRÓJ Z DODATKIEM’ with the poem about the European frog discussed at the beginning, we will clearly see the difference in the modality of both texts.

And here is another snapshot of nature – ‘W Ameryce jak gdzie indziej’ [In America As Somewhere Else]:

Z trawy strony  
czerwony klon  
na małym niebie  
niebieskim  
świeci

[On the grass side  
a red maple  
in the little blue  
sky  
shines

---

252 See Part 1.



to on	here it is
kl	fra
atka przeżycia	me of survival
klap!	clap!
już po niej	it's dead now
ten śmietnik świata	this dumpster of the world
czasem piękny jest	sometimes is beautiful]

the collection *Obmapywanie Europy. AAAmeryka. Ostatnie wiersze* [The Mapping of Europe. Aaamerica. Last Poems], 1988, Uz 10, 249

The text begins like a genuine haiku: here is a maple against the sky. We see a single motif from the natural world vividly shown against a monochrome plane.<sup>253</sup> Its expressiveness, however, seems a bit suspicious – the red maple shines against the small (postcard-like, slightly untrue?) sky. In this part of the poem, lines obediently stick to the left margin. Then the poem becomes surprisingly alive – typographically, linguistically, and conceptually. Białoszewski does not reduce his text to a “haiku-like” observation.

In the second part of the poem, he resorts to striking yet plain graphic and sound effects that intriguingly play with semantics. Set in from the left margin, the diminutive verse consisting only of the consonant cluster “kl” (in the Polish original) links both to the preceding line “to on” (“here it is,” the maple) as well as to the succeeding, “mutilated”<sup>254</sup> phrase “atka przeżycia (“me of survival”), triggering the process of retrograde reconstruction of words. “Kl” (“Fra”) is also repeated in the following verse “klap” (“clap”), also indented, printed precisely under “kl.”

“Białoszewski’s fragmentary view does not record fractions, shreds of reality, but a pulsating whole. Each ‘frame of survival’ is a whole, fullness,” Sobolewska writes of this text.<sup>255</sup> I would be inclined to agree with the assertion that the poet conceptually shows that the beautiful image is merely a surprisingly “blank” frame, cut out (maybe by a camera? – hence the “frame,” “clap!” and the travel-related title) from tangled, vague pictures of reality (“dumpster of the world”). A pulsating whole – indeed, although one not fully harmonious and “fulfilled.” Nevertheless, this is the only whole that exists and to which the subject simply consents.

253 See descriptions of trees in the poetry of Young Poland, radically different in terms of stylistics and “iconographically” employing an analogous figure-ground alignment – analysed in Part 2 of the monograph, in subsection ‘Young-Poland Haiku?’

254 For the avant-garde tradition of the “poetry of mutilated words” (relevant to discussions of Białoszewski’s work), see E. Balcerzan, *Styl i poetyka twórczości dwujęzycznej Brunona Jasińskiego* [The Style and Poetics of Bruno Jasiński’s Bilingual Work], Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków, 1968, p. 66 and ff.; B. Śniecikowska, “*Nuż w uhu?*” *Koncepcje dźwięku w poezji polskiego futuryzmu*, Wrocław 2008, pp. 32–8.

255 A. Sobolewska, “*Być sobie jednym,*” p. 22.

Let us return to the basic question: how far removed are we from haiku here? The conceptist game clearly shifting the poem's centre of gravity from contemplation to perverse conceptualisation, along with the excessive "polishing" of the initial image and the "moral" provided at the end, are a departure from the modality of the form. Nevertheless, certain affinities with haiku aesthetics are undisputed.<sup>256</sup>

Let us change the diction a little. Here is another miniature:

szara noc	[grey night
czarna noc	black night
idzie się	walking
siwieje	greying]

from the collection *Oho* [Oh], 1985, Uz 10, 189

This is an entirely different record of reality, less literal, peculiarly "compressed in time." Transience, inexpressibility, metaphysics, and a clear figure-ground alignment (dark night, a shining/greying point against its backdrop). This is a fine, visually crisp and acoustically homogeneous (note the intriguing accentual-syllabic metre, slightly contrived in the final verses) sensorial image created by the detached speaker. It seems that this metaphorical representation is at the same time a record of a specific moment and a specific journey.<sup>257</sup> The poem in question is somehow akin to the poems by Bashō:

Autumn again  
 getting old is like  
 a bird flying into a cloud<sup>258</sup>

weary of the journey,  
 how many days like today?  
 autumn's wind<sup>259</sup>

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256 Especially as authors of classical haiku were not averse to certain conceptist, sometimes paronomastic linguistic devices that cannot be rendered in translation. See Part 1 of the book.

257 It is worthwhile comparing it to another of Białoszewski's miniscule poems:

A można się i zobaczyć we mgle	[And one can see oneself in the fog
w samym tle	in the very background
po sobie	of oneself]

(from the collection *Odczepić się*, 1978, Uz 7, 68).

Here, in turn, we are confronted with an ostensible paradox (one-hand clapping from Hakuin's koan also comes to mind). By quickly turning back in very thick fog (almost like in Berkeley's thought experiment!), one probably can see the "empty space" of one's body from a moment ago.

258 As quoted in Bashō, *Moon Woke Me Up Nine Times: Selected Haiku of Bashō*, selected and transl. by David Young, New York, 2013, p. 99.

259 As quoted in *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 80.

The boundary between haiku-like sensoriality and conceptual gnomicity can be extremely narrow. As we have seen, conceptism does not have to be at odds with haiku sensoriality. However, the conceptism testing the limits of gnomicity or aphorism begins to preclude “haiku-ness.” Zen-suffused haiku invalidates numerous dualities, but this duality (sensoriality – gnomicity) remains in force.<sup>260</sup> The following markedly un-haiku-like miniatures by Białoszewski can serve as evidence here:

Z wysoka	[From on high
wyglądam	I look
ogólnie ogólnie	generally general
from the collection <i>Stara proza, nowe wiersze</i> [Old Prose, New Poems], 1984, Uz 10, 14	

bez ludzi	[without people
tylko ja	just me
pole do przepisu	a room for oeuvre]
from the collection <i>Oho</i> , 1985, Uz 10, 189	

The excess of sense percepts also nullifies “haiku-like” aesthetics:<sup>261</sup>

ja do okna	[I to the window
trawa w wodzie	grass in water
woda w błysku	water in the flash
błysk na mnie	the flash on me

szum	a hum
co? co?	what? what?

wszystko zgasło	everything went out]
from the collection <i>Rozkurz</i> , 1980, Uz 8, 217	

From the perspective of classical haiku, the “poem to a shine” quoted above turns out to be too “action-packed” – a simple sensorial experience somehow expands and evolves in a multisensory direction (despite the fact that this is a record of one epiphany – something flashed and went out!). It seems that nothing special takes place, and that is too much for this literary form.<sup>262</sup>

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260 See Part 6. See also E. Winiecka, *Białoszewski sylleptyczny* [Sylleptic Białoszewski], Poznań 2006, p. 205.

261 See Part 5.

262 When discussing this “poem to a shine,” Cieślak rightly points to the momentariness, the potency of experience, and the immersion in the world (T. Cieślak, ‘Prawie haiku,’ p. 116; see also A. Sobolewska, “Być sobie tylko jednym,” p. 21; E. Winiecka, *Białoszewski sylleptyczny*, p. 205). However, one cannot agree with

A comparison of this text with a simpler, less “flash-like” piece by Kerouac turns out to be meaningful:

Looking up to see  
the aeroplane  
I only saw the TV aerial<sup>263</sup>

Białoszewski, however, can sometimes see things this way:

urwane	[picked
niosłem	I carried
czułem	and felt
cielska zielsk	weeds' bulk]
from the cycle <i>Awanturki</i> [Little Squabbles], Uz 7, 253	

It is apparent here that the sensoriality of Białoszewski's poems suspected of “haiku-ness” is not limited to visuality and audibility. Of central importance in

the following assertions intended to prove the poem's proximity to classical haiku poems: “What matters is that the ‘I’ feels lost by virtue of its temporary liberation from the existing frame of reference and established order and is anxious as to where it actually is and what is happening to it. This sensation quickly passes, but this temporary independence can lead to general existential questions, to questions about man's place in the world and his relationship with the world. Again – only to questions, only to raising an issue. A trivial, banal event in an everyday setting: rain, window, grass outside the window” (T. Cieślak, ‘Prawie haiku,’ p. 116). It would be incorrect to claim that haiku poetry is lacking in fundamental existential questions. But is that the reason why this poem should be a “Białoszewskian” version of this form? Is it not the case that a banal incident opens the door to intellectual inquiry (yet the question “what? what?” is a dubious hint of strictly intellectual commitment)? Let us confront Cieślak's voice with a different, “heideggerizing” reading of the poem: “This description calls to mind a semi-mystical experience of achieving the unity of man and the world. However, not entirely so; what is disruptive here and precludes a positive result ... is the rationalist element itself, to which the subject (involuntarily?) submits itself (represented here by the question about the object: “what? what?”); in other words, the “trembling” [a term borrowed from Greimas], to which the subject succumbs, caused by the momentariness of the flash, is destroyed in the desire to rationally recognize the nature of being. Therefore, the greatest challenge for the man grounded in Being is persevering, persisting (das Halten) ‘in revealed-being’ as a ‘state’ to which man – enchanted and called upon by Being (*Sein*) to take the risk of understanding that being – is entitled” (A. Gleń, ‘Nie-przedstawianie’ [Non-representation], p. 446). I consider this reading to be misguided, very remote from the poem, which it purports to elucidate.

263 As quoted in J. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, p. 65.

the above-cited text are corporeality, tangibility, weight, materiality.<sup>264</sup> One could also add to this list – in a way *in absentia* (although the verb “to feel” also carries such connotations) – a smell. Unexpected rhymes (“niosłem” [I carried] – “czułem” [and felt], “cielska zielsk” [weeds’ bulk]), additionally augmented by paronomastic correspondences (the second rhyme), do not obscure the clear-cut, expressive, “strong” sensoriality. The speaking subject pressing to his chest a large bouquet of wild plants (commonly perceived as ordinary weeds) becomes a sensorial plane for the presentation of a bunch of plants and at the same time for its sensorial reception.

The above poem can be interpreted in various ways. The following is Wiesława Wantuch’s proposal:

The poem has its origin in an extraliterary situation “verified through itself.” the picking and carrying of an armful of weeds. Yet this seemingly banal event is unsettling on account of the consonance of the last words. The picture of a man with a bunch of weeds loses the charm of a genre scene. The corporeality bestowed on plants means that the picking assumes proportions of a crime, of which the perpetrator becomes aware perhaps belatedly. That is why “weeds’ bulk” hangs heavy not only in the literal sense. A short story about this fact told in four verses begins to resemble a rambling, “broken-off” testimony.<sup>265</sup>

This is one way of looking at things. However, I stick to a simple haiku reading of this poem. A similar record of the contact with reality can be found in poems by Bashō and Issa:

without a hat  
winter rain falls on me  
so what<sup>266</sup>

I took off my hat  
and became filled  
with the buzzing of midges<sup>267</sup>

By contrast, let us have a look at another “corporeal” miniature by Białoszewski, one of the few texts analysed here to carry a suggestion of illness:<sup>268</sup>

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264 This is one of the texts that are a perfect match for Marian Stala’s comments in ‘Czy Białoszewski jest poetą metafizycznym?’ [Is Białoszewski a Metaphysical Poet?], in *Pisanie Białoszewskiego*, p. 107 and ff.) about Białoszewski’s “deeply felt materiality of the world,” “blending of existence and materiality.”

265 W. Wantuch, ‘Miron Białoszewski w poszukiwaniu,’ pp. 162–3. Investigations dealing with the title of the cycle *Awanturki*.

266 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō, The Complete Haiku*, p. 82.

267 English translation based on the Polish rendering by A. Żuławska-Umeda in *Haiku*, [1983], p. 168.

268 See also poems quoted in footnotes 270 and 275.

zawiązuje wokół szyi	[tying around the neck
samo	by
się	itself
i łyk	and a sip
i dech	and a breath
i i	and and
i	and]
	the collection <i>Odczepić się</i> , 1978, Uz 7, 79

The record of a moment, maximum brevity, stylistic asceticism, sense perceptions, avoidance of excessive detail. Do we not come close to haiku here? Not quite so. Conspicuously absent here is the background (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.) against which the depicted event could be presented. As a matter of fact, the textual trajectory itself was not described either and instead was merely (as much as) represented via “faltering,” “choked” language. There is only the breathing difficulty and – language. The masterful verbal expression and drama of physical sensation “happen” at the same time. In haiku, the record of experience is always enclosed in a specific formal and visual frame. Even that which seemingly is completely unaesthetic, physiological, naturalistic, nonfigurative can be used to build a poem.<sup>269</sup> Provided, however, that such an element is complemented by a sensorial background. Let us have a look:<sup>270</sup>

hangover:  
 but while the cherries bloom,  
 what of it?<sup>271</sup>  
 Bashō

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269 Which perhaps is the source of the West’s difficulty in distinguishing haiku from *senryū*.

270 See also the following (also “sickness-related”) poem by Białoszewski:

biało	[white
zakopane tramwaje	buried trams
coś po prawej stronie	something on the right side
do niesienia?	to be carried?
bolenie wątroby”	the hurting of the liver]
(the cycle <i>Fatygi</i> [Bothers], Uz 7, 285).	

271 As quoted in *Bashō’s Journey*, p. 21. Let us compare this poem with a *senryū* poem (quoted in *Understanding Humour in Japan*, p. 168) on a similar topic, yet remote from haiku’s sensorial schemes:

Hangover  
 I’m trying to remember  
 Where I was drinking.

summer robes:  
still some lice  
I've yet to pick<sup>272</sup>

Bashō

taking medicine  
it is as bad as having  
frost on the pillow

Bashō<sup>273</sup>

Białoszewski's records of auditory experiences, somewhat similar and peculiarly iconic, seem to be closer to haiku than the poem 'tying around the neck...'

- chych	- [huh
chyachocho	ruffarfho
choł choł cha!...	wuf wuf hah!....
noc staroświecka psia	old fashioned doggy night]
from the collection <i>Rozkurz</i> , 1980, Uz 8, 199	

'Niezgrabność czasu zakręconego'

kropla klap

kropla klap

from the collection *Rozkurz*, 1980, Uz 8, 213

[AWKWARDNESS OF TWISTED TIME

droplet clap

droplet clap]

The three initial verses of the first poem are again, as it were, a naturalistic – however, less linguistic and conceptist – record of experience. Constituting the poem's primary figure, its acoustic trajectory, are proper onomatopoeias (which actually are foreign to the poetics of classical haiku). The phrase in the fourth verse explains the depicted situation and the background against which expressive auditory impressions are received. "Night," especially "old-fashioned night," carries connotations such as darkness and quiet.

In the second poem, which is strongly alliterative (the "k" sound and the somewhat metathetical sound clusters "pla" and "lap") and onomatopoeic, the foregrounded figures are droplets. The sensorial background was constructed from sounds and pauses alternating throughout the poem (the latter forced by the asyntactic combination of nouns with similar articulation). We are dealing here with a silence

272 As quoted in *Bashō's Journey*, p. 52.

273 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō, The Complete Haiku*, p. 101.

extended in time, punctuated by awkward resonant “claps.”<sup>274</sup> The surprising title facilitates interpretation and clarifies the poem’s rather unremarkable (?) setting – it is probably a flat where water drips from a turned-off leaky tap.<sup>275</sup>

Let us analyse now yet another “acoustic” text:

Kapalo	[it was dripping
przejechał ...mochód	...omobile passed by
przestało	it stopped

nikt nie jedzie	no-one’s going
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to ono znów	it is, again]
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from the collection *Oho*, 1985, Uz 10, 163

Two auditory impressions compellingly overlap here. The continuous dripping, surprisingly animalized by the poet (as well as the mere expectation of dripping), constitutes the auditory background for the text’s acoustic and visual trajectory – a passing car. The only thing left from the “car” is “omobile” – the car not only made noise (drowning out the dripping) but also probably passed at high speed (its front is literally not visible anymore). Evidently, the masterful, clear, “Białoszewskian” sensorial convolution does not preclude proximity to haiku poetics.<sup>276</sup>

274 In the following poem we find a somewhat similar sensorial schema based on onomatopoeias (the collection *Rozkurz*, 1980, Uz 8, 224):

szum, szumek	[hum, humlet
pora nieobrotna	tongue-tied time
mucha się wzięła.	a fly arrived.]

275 It is worthwhile analysing here the poem neighbouring with ‘tying around the neck...’ – ‘A może wróćę z mostu’ (also sickness-themed):

A może wróćę się z mostu	[Maybe I’ll come back from the bridge
a może będę musiał	maybe I will have to
słyszać	can be heard
coraz głośniej	louder and louder
ser-ce	hea-rt
ser-ce	hea-rt]

(from the collection *Odczepić się*, 1978, Uz 7, 79). See also E. Winiecka, *Białoszewski sylleptyczny*, p. 205.

276 An extreme example – oscillating both around haiku and *senryū* – is the following poem, successfully reproducing proprioceptive and auditory experiences by means of sound effects:

<b>Zjeżdżam, wjeżdżam</b>	<b>[I’m going down, going up</b>
i zagnieżdżam się	taking root
w budzie windy	in the lift’s booth
tej blokowej matulińdy	this high-rise mammy
tryńdyryńdy”	bippity-bippity-doo-wop]

(from *Odczepić się*, 1978, Uz 7, 45).



Haiku often presents merely one sensorial plane, which for some reason is intriguing:

Look, how beautiful  
snow surface  
lit up in the sun  
Taigi<sup>277</sup>

Dusk – The blizzard  
hides everything,  
Even the night  
J. Kerouac<sup>278</sup>

Similar situations are found in Białoszewski's poetry, one example being the following image defamiliarized by an excellent visual-tactile metaphor:

lato	[summer
obwisłe	droopy
koci się i koci	keeps kittening
chmurami	with clouds]
from the collection <i>Rozkurz</i> , Uz 8, 186	

However, in Białoszewski's work even the simplest, most homogeneous images can sometimes be "blurred." The uniformity of sensorial impressions is no longer sufficient, some vague, indefinite action starts. In the context of the unique sensorial "monochromatism" and attempts to eliminate it, it is worth recalling the following poem, which has been widely commented upon, also in conjunction with haiku.<sup>279</sup>

pierwszy raz slysę	[for the first time I can hear
dwie cisze	two silences
na oba uszy	with both ears]
from the collection <i>Rozkurz</i> , 1980, Uz 8, 201	

The hearing of silence(s), and sensorial homogeneity (with concurrent surprising stereophony!) come close to the reception and record of impressions occurring in haiku. Despite everything, the sensoriality of the experience of "soundlessness" devoid of any sensorial detail seems quite abstract and somewhat empty. The hearing of "nothing" in "both ears" is at once sensorial (the epiphanic "for the first

277 English translation based on the Polish rendering in *Haiku*, [1983], p. 248.

278 As quoted in J. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, p. 38. See also the commentary by Hakutani (Y. Hakutani, 'Jack Kerouac's Haiku,' p. 95).

279 T. Cieślak, 'Prawie haiku,' p. 115; P. Michałowski, 'Haiku wobec epifanii,' pp. 140–1.

time!”) and conceptual. The perceptual differences in reception are clearly seen (and heard) in comparison with another poem about silence:

cisza	szumi	[silence	hums
a umie		it surely can	
nagle	mruga	suddenly	it winks
w uchu		in the ear	
a to ta druga:		actually it is the other one:	
	mucha		the fly]

from the collection *Oho*, 1985, Uz 10, 181

The text strikes the perfect balance between de-automatization of impressions – additionally underlined by the graphic layout and irregular rhyming echoes – and sensorial clarity. The background “hums” monotonously (on the plane of phonostylistics a paronymic juxtaposition comes into being: “szumi” [hums] – “umie” [can]), while the figure suddenly synaesthetically “winks” (“the other one” is not silence, but a fly). I see this poem as an intriguing, linguistic version of haiku.

Discernible among Białoszewski’s late poems is a large group of miniatures focused on details of everyday life, consistently avoiding judgement, “replete with sparkling yet friendly irony, so characteristic of Białoszewski’s work”<sup>280</sup> but differing from the previously described variously “haiku-like” texts:

pociąg lata na boki, staje	[the train is swaying from side to side, stops
– <b>Komombo!</b>	– <b>Komombo!</b>
muchy wsiadły	flies got on it]

from *Rozkurz*, 1980, Uz 8, 294

Ludzie jak muchy w bloku [People in the block like flies

Każdy w bunkrze	Each in his bunker
Na swoim cukrze	On his own sugar]

from the collection *Rozkurz*, 1980, Uz 8, 247

Are these poems concerned with flies again? Not exactly. The text ‘silence hums...’ described a concrete auditory encounter with a particular insect buzzing in silence. Here flies play entirely different roles. Sensoriality is not as expressive and

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280 J. Brzozowski, ‘Wiersze ostatnie’, p. 224.

intense as in the haiku-like miniatures. Even if a figure appears against a ground – as in the text ‘Ludzie jak muchy w bloku...’ – we are dealing not so much with an epiphany of sensorial experience as with a superb semantic and visual concept intended as a sparkling record of sociological observation. The similarly brilliant miniature featuring flies getting on the train in the godforsaken Komombo does not present the experience of an encounter with nature or profound contemplation of reality (represented for example by ordinary insects). What is at stake here is not looking at concrete flies, but a witty, epigrammatic portrayal of an exotic journey and sleepy provinces in an overseas country. Interestingly, these types of poems tend to move away from the natural world. If, however, nature appears here (e.g. in the form of flies), it is used for poetic concepts, paradoxes, epigrams. If texts of this kind are applied to the Japanese categories that are of interest to me here, one may conclude that these poems walk a fine line between haiku and *senryū*.<sup>281</sup> This middle ground status is even more pronounced in less epigrammatic or aphoristic works:

‘Rozkład jazdy’	[TIMETABLE]
Na paluchach oczy Po rozćmuchach. from the cycle <i>Wyrwy z zamysleń</i> , Uz 7, 239	On toes eyes roused from sleep.]
‘Bliźnię’	[FELLOW-WOMEN]
Jechały w tramwaju ostrożnie jak jajo dwie ociemniała z przewodniczką from the cycle <i>Podfruwaje</i> , Uz 7, 262	They were on a tram careful as an egg two the blind one with her guide]

As we have seen, the *senryū* genre is less crystallized, less distinctive, with a narrower trans-cultural sphere of influence. In my sketch, references to satirical seventeen-syllable poems are primarily intended to show the comparative “impurity” of forms, the absence of a direct relationship between culturally distant realisations. Such a comparison once again demonstrates, however, that the remoteness from haiku to a large extent results from the departure from some form of sensoriality.

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281 See the *senryū* cited in Parts 1 and 3 (chapters: ‘Haiku Poetics, Haiku and *Senryū*’ and ‘Brzóska’s Haiku – Snatches of Everyday Life?’).

The above analysis is distant from linear argumentation clearly advancing the central thesis. The quoted texts still oscillate between near-haiku poetics and its various violations, strains or even contradictions. At the same time, despite the common features shared by these poems, “Białoszewskian” poetic diversity is manifestly apparent here. This diversity is further brought into relief by the comparison with Kerouac’s haiku. According to critics, the Beat poet experimented with the Japanese form and tested its limits.<sup>282</sup> In comparison with Białoszewski’s activities (but, on the other hand, also with Grochowiak, for example)<sup>283</sup> Kerouac’s haiku are stereotypical exemplary incarnations of the genre. The extensive *Book of Haikus* is somewhat tedious to read – these texts are satisfactory, but after a dozen or so the reader already knows what to expect on the following pages. By contrast, Białoszewski – also in his late work – is constantly surprising and never sticks to any ready-made pattern.<sup>284</sup>

Let us return to genre aspects of Białoszewski’s poetry. Genological problems with this writing have been diagnosed on numerous occasions. In his preface to the selection of Białoszewski’s poems from 1976, Janusz Sławiński declares (the texts I have analysed here still did not exist at the time):

genre distinctions in Białoszewski’s work are related to its, so to speak, surface layer. Perhaps their function is mainly instrumental: they make it possible to assign writerly initiatives to existing categories of literary culture, thus facilitating the circulation of texts among readers along routes seen as natural. In fact, these texts (irrespective of their lyrical, epic or dramatic labelling) represent a hardly nameable category of poetry-prose or prose-poetry, which has little to do with the genre qualifications to which we are accustomed.<sup>285</sup>

In 1993, Michał Głowiński, picking up on his thoughts from ‘Małe narracje Białoszewskiego’ [Białoszewski’s Small Narrations],<sup>286</sup> writes of Białoszewski’s “one great crypto-(intimate)-diary.”<sup>287</sup> At the same time, Stanisław Barańczak writes

282 See footnote 218.

283 See the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

284 I essentially have in mind Białoszewski the poet (not the prose writer).

285 J. Sławiński, ‘Białoszewski: sukces wycofania się,’ p. 8.

286 M. Głowiński, ‘Małe narracje Mirona Białoszewskiego,’ pp. 319–38.

287 M. Głowiński, ‘Białoszewskiego gatunki codzienne,’ p. 146. Głowiński notes on p. 144, however: “It is true, classical genres crop up here, openly respected by the poet, suggested in poems’ titles [which, by the way, are a starting point for the genre analyses conducted by Świrek in her book *Z gatunkiem czy bez* [With or Without Genre]; I have in mind, of course, the ballad and the diary. One could certainly pinpoint other genres, clearly crystallizing, yet not elevated by being put in a title (travel). However, we are concerned here with something else, with genres that have not undergone petrification, yet are more than one-off accidental utterances – with these variously named forms of speaking, which are so plentiful here [Świrek enumerates *zapęły* [fervours], *toki* [lekkings], *docieki* [probes], *frywole* [frivolous], *ziewanny* [yawnesses],

about “the Bermuda triangle created [in Białoszewski’s texts] by the genological space located exactly between the intersecting borderlines of three literary genres and the corresponding three modes of discourse: narration, lyrical monologue and dramatic dialogue.”<sup>288</sup>

Therefore, we are still close to Sławiński’s findings from the 1970s. In 1997, a monograph on Białoszewski’s use of genres was published.<sup>289</sup> Its author, Anna Świrek, however, primarily focused on traditional – from the perspective of European poetics – genres that the poet often summoned up in the very titles of his texts (ballad, ode, song, travelogue, etc.). The vast expanse of the poetry to which Białoszewski did not attach any genre label is yet to be described in more detail.

Therefore, one should ask a question about the specificity of the forms studied in my sketch. I recognise that, despite apparent differences, we are dealing here with a fairly distinctive and coherent group of works (from which I exclude relatively few texts, which in the course of analysis are found to be the most distant from haiku modality). Białoszewski’s late poems that interest me here move away from mainstream poetry and are located on the LYRICAL edge of the “great intimate diary.”

It should also be added that the observation about the unity of poetry and prose characterizing Białoszewski’s oeuvre to some extent also applies to his late work.<sup>290</sup> Haiku-esque passages are also found in Białoszewski’s “high-rise” prose. Interestingly, these are often graphically or compositionally separated from the rest of the text: by double space lines, “quasi-lineation,” the positioning at the end or beginning of text units. In comparison to the whole collection, these sections also turn out to have fewer colloquialisms, are more diverse syntactically, more, as it were, solemn. The following are a handful of representative examples drawn from the collection *Chamowo* [Churlsville]:

Niebo zgranatowiało.  
Pierwszy księżyc w oknie.  
Uz 11, 33

[The sky turned blue.  
First moon in the window.]

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*śnitki* (dreamlets), *awanturki* [quiblets], *faramuszeki* [trifles], *podfruwaje* [flutteries], connected, after Krzysztof Rutkowski, with genres of speech].”

288 S. Barańczak, ‘Rzeczywistość Białoszewskiego,’ p. 10.

289 See A. Świrek, *Z gatunkiem czy bez*.

290 It is noteworthy that in Bashō’s *haibun* – travel journals combining prose and haiku – poetic “haiku-like” prose passages occur occasionally (see ‘Sarashina Journal,’ in *Bashō’s Journey, The Literary Prose of Matsuo Bashō*, translated and with an introduction by David Landis Barnhill, Albany, 2005). Affinities between Kerouac’s haiku and his *Dharma Bums* have also been noted (see R. Weinreich, ‘Introduction,’ pp. xiv–xxvii).

Wszystkie dalsze światła mrugają. Od  
falowania powietrza. [All distant lights are twinkling. From air  
wafts.]

Uz 11, 39

Na Chamowie księżyc za rurami rusztowań. [In Churlsville, the Moon behind scaffolding  
I moje zmęczenie. Potem dobrze. tubes. And my tiredness. Then well.]

Uz 11, 159

Wieczorem wleciał do Warszawy lodowaty [In the evening, an icy wind blew to  
wiatr. Warszawa.]

Dziś słońce, biało i strasznie zimno. Today sunny, white and very cold.]

Uz 11, 384

Let us return to Białoszewski's late poems. Almost all of the quoted poems (of course, apart from the ones which have been shown to be far removed from haiku), capture the most essential elements of haiku: sensorially experienced and uniquely framed reality, contemplative amazement at the world with the concomitant absence of judgement. I consider the crisp and clearly recorded sensoriality and withdrawal of the speaker as the most important haikems (from the perspective of Western poetry).

Interestingly, the vast majority of the poems analysed here presented, like Japanese haiku, the natural world. I am not claiming that Białoszewski wrote haiku – we come across too many inconsistencies, deviations, “variations” here, which becomes readily apparent in comparison with texts by Kerouac and, alternatively, with *senryū*.<sup>291</sup> However, these poems are akin to creations (and re-creations) of the world in haiku, possessed of haiku modality or – to use different parlance – these are texts wherein *hai-i*, the spirit of haiku, resides.<sup>292</sup> Approximations often remain clear even when epiphanic quality is encumbered by intense linguistic conceptualism, “fevered” (from the perspective of haiku) imagination, and distorted clarity of imagery.

It should also be noted, as I have emphasized on several occasions, that in Western literature the epiphanic quality of experience not accompanied by the epiphany based on verbal expression could prove to be unconvincing. And markedly less interesting than the oscillation around haiku poetics, various occasional approximations to it and departures from it. Once again, it is worth calling to mind the comparison of Białoszewski's poems with Kerouac's adequate but largely predictable haiku. It seems that the former's original, diverse and surprising texts are

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291 I am not saying that Białoszewski practised *senryū*. However, certain similarities to this less stable, less expansive and less distinctive genre allow for a wide diversity of analyses.

292 T. & T. Izutsu, “Haiku: An Existential Event,” in *The Theory of Beauty in the Classical Aesthetics of Japan*, The Hague, 1981, pp. 62–76.

fresh, more invigorating in terms of literary quality and at the same time are a much more efficient and modern gateway to everyday epiphanies.

Finally, one more comment. In my analyses, I have followed various (phono)stylistic devices used by Białoszewski. Most of them are deeply rooted in the linguistic innovation of the avant-garde, and above all in the activities of the Futurists and artists associated with the *Zwrotnica* magazine.<sup>293</sup> This fact is of no small importance. Białoszewski does not try to clothe his poetry, at all costs, in Eastern costume, and instead keeps to the confines of his own tradition (even if it is a relatively recent tradition) and his own culture. And, at the same time, he clearly moves close to the form that came into being a few centuries ago in a country thousands of kilometres away. The unmistakable literary “alloy” characterising Białoszewski’s poetry is proof of intriguing proximities between modern poetry and the tradition of Japanese haiku. As it turns out, the following are of relevance here: changes in the concept of the poem’s speaker, openness to individual sensorial experience, reduction of the poem’s size and stylistic “exuberance,” philosophical and ideological openness coupled with faithfulness to one’s own cultural tradition.

Let us now return to Białoszewski’s late verse miniatures. One could suggest adding to paragenological formulas invented by the author – to those numerous *flutteries* [*podfruwaje*], *yawnnesses* [*ziewanny*], *aggluts* [*zlepy*] and *frivols* [*frywole*] – a genre related to haiku but less rigorous: *MIRONŪ* (the eponym akin to *senryū*). This form would be much more clear-cut than the rather “arbitrary” flutteries, *yawnnesses*, and *frivols*, which have invariably fascinated literary scholars. The modern epiphanic *mironū* has the following distinguishing features (given here in order of importance):

- brevity,
- expressive, often multisensory or even synaesthetic, sensorial schemas (typically: figure-ground imagery),
- withdrawal of the speaker,
- anchorage in everyday life, often in the natural world,
- an affirmative attitude,
- intriguing, linguistic and/or graphical defamiliarisation of language, with conceptism occasionally competing with sensorial imagery for the reader’s attention.<sup>294</sup>

This, essentially, is the cluster of characteristic features of the Western prototype of haiku.<sup>295</sup> In Białoszewski’s work, however, various departures from haiku’s typical

293 See, for example, B. Śniecikowska, “*Nuż w uhu?*”, pp. 545–6.

294 In this context, Stanisław Barańczak’s pronouncement in *Język poetycki Mirona Białoszewskiego* [Miron Białoszewski’s Poetic Language], Wrocław 1974, p. 124, concerning Białoszewski’s earlier poetry, about “the primacy of reality over artistic creation,” becomes particularly topical in this context. In the case of poems that are of interest to me here, this primacy is by far more prominent than in the poet’s “pre-high-rise” work.

295 See Part 1, the chapter ‘Prototype – Invariant – Stereotype. Haiku in the West.’

sensory schemas, along with the frequent strong conceptism, situate his poems far from the prototype. Thus, this is not haiku but precisely *mironū*.

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Naturally, the idea of labelling the forms that interest me here with the term *mironū* is a literary-critical joke. However, I treat their very identification very seriously.

Finally, let us allow Master Miron to have the last word. Despite everything, his oeuvre persistently defies categorizations, picks holes in various concepts in a Zen-like manner, and undercuts the solemnity of scholarly verdicts. Here are two texts engaged in dialogue with each other. The first one is, as it were, a germ of a haiku poem. However, no epiphany akin to those recorded by Bashō, Issa, Buson, Shiki grows from it. The other miniature is a step further – it mocks the first “germinating” illumination in a “Białoszewskian” way (and in the spirit of Zen!):

Dnieje	[It's dawning
Jestem.	I am.]
from the cycle <i>Wiersze po</i>	
<i>przeprowadzce</i> [Poems after Moving Houses], Uz 7, 224	

Ale tam!	[Yeah, right!
Jestem zanika.	I am vanishes
Zasuwa się jak kurze oko.	It slides shut like a hen's eye.
Głupieje.	Gets silly.]
from the cycle <i>Wiersze po przeprowadzce</i> , Uz 7, 225	



## Part 5 Originals or Imitations? On the “Perfectly Genuine” Polish Haiku

### I. *Mimesis*<sup>1</sup> and Epiphany

Western poems approaching the Occidental haiku prototype are rather difficult to describe. It seems that more intriguing – and more amenable to analysis – are works that are only tangentially related to the haiku aesthetic and in various ways manifest their incompatibility with the ascetic formula of Oriental miniatures. Standing out among Polish texts, however, is a group of works substantially approximating the assumptions of haiku, some of which could even be mistaken for translations of Japanese seventeen-syllable verses. Still, paradoxically, poems belonging to this mix are highly heterogeneous and by no means easy to describe.

An examination of these texts with respect to their compatibility with the prototype of the genre would, in large measure, amount to methodological tautology – after all, I set apart this body of texts (whereof I quote only a fraction) by searching in various poems for a conglomerate of prototypical features of the form.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in this part of the book, I treat haiku primarily as an invariant set of features (which, for that matter, make up a bundle of prototypical features).<sup>3</sup> Playing a central role, however, is their profiling, as is their salience. I set out to offer here a series of thematically-ordered micro-readings<sup>4</sup> – some of the diagnoses put forward tend to be rather subjective, being a variant of my individual attempt to answer the question about... the beauty and role of contemporary poetry. To illustrate this problem as thoroughly as possible, I make a reference to numerous works of Polish haijins (relying on the considerable brevity of this poetry). I deliberately create a mini-anthology of haiku poems that hitherto had been scattered across low-circulation poetry books and ephemeral magazines or websites.

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- 1 I start from the most basic understanding of the concept, in keeping with the definition of *mimesis* which is also the starting point of the Zofia Mitosek’s monograph: “By the most general definition, *mimesis* is an act or procedure, as a result of which an object or behaviour acquires some aspects of the form of another object or behaviour, existing previously and in different substance” (Z. Mitosek, *Mimesis. Zjawisko i problem* [Mimesis. A Phenomenon and a Problem], Warszawa, 1997, p. 17).
  - 2 I acknowledge that the haiku prototype took shape and became established in Poland during the 1980s and 1990s. Some of the poems discussed here demonstrate precisely this process of “becoming haiku,” which – in the case of the most interesting poetic concretizations – also involved an exploration of all haiku-related peripheries.
  - 3 The use of invariant and prototypical genre modelling is treated extensively in Part 1 of the book.
  - 4 See ‘Introduction.’

Piotr Michałowski, who, as it happens, is also a haiku practitioner, is strongly critical of the constantly expanding (from the turn of the 1970s and 1980s onwards) Polish literary “production” falling under the heading of “haiku” and fitting into the assumptions of the genre adapted to Western realities. He sees the bulk of these texts as unexciting imitations of the foreign form:

Typically, these are second-rate attempts, and one can hardly see in them something more than just the effect of a hectic scramble to catch up with an overlooked fad; there is no individualism here, no attempt at a synthesis nor a full-fledged proposal of the Polish model of the genre.<sup>5</sup>

[...] imitation is about ensuring that the poem is recognized as haiku and fits into the paradigm as seamlessly as possible. There are no “forms of stylistic opacity” that occur so abundantly in Grochowiak’s work [in the volume *Haiku-images*];<sup>6</sup> no signals of apotheosis and or opposition of the cited poetics and the implemented poetics. What we have instead is the programmatic use of the source, leaving aside the experience of predecessors. The form is not a problem here, but merely a task. It is an act of faith, not a topic for discussion. What occurs is the author’s resignation from what is his/her “own” [...]. “Haikuists” simply PRACTISE a genre, without taking note of the conflict of cultures and the problem of the foreignness of the model of Oriental poetry. Their compositions are somehow an anonymous reproduction of stock motifs, coming to resemble translations from Japanese masters. As in the early days of the genre, the scheme and “school” reign supreme.<sup>7</sup>

The adoption of haiku poetics is [...] the starting assumption, with the genre being the goal, not the means and consequence of a particular type of utterance.<sup>8</sup>

Do poems close to the prototype of the genre really deserve exclusively this qualification? Let us examine this using examples:<sup>9</sup>

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5 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin, 1999, p. 106. *Haiku-images* are discussed in more detail in chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

6 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ pp. 106–7 (emphasis in original).

8 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ p. 108. See also observations of Tom Lynch on the reasons behind the lack of serious critical interest in numerous American haiku verses: T. Lynch, ‘Intersecting Influences in American Haiku,’ in *Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism. New Readings*, ed. Y. Hakutani, London, 2001, p. 114.

9 Elsewhere, Michałowski writes (still about haiku): “what must become a subject of comparison are poetic ideas rather than their divergent realizations, which instead of demonstrating artistic fulfilment more often display a divergence from assumptions. Analyses of individual poems can rarely serve as a universal exemplification of certain equivalences of juxtaposed poetics, inductively derived from a reading of a large body of haiku and proving valid only at a certain level of generality” (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii nowoczesnej,’ in P. Michałowski,

Na pustym polu  
dziewczyna czesze włosy  
na cień swój patrząc  
L. Engelking<sup>10</sup>

[In an empty field  
a girl is combing her hair  
looking at her shadow]

Północny wiatr  
przewraca morze  
na brzegu  
F. Haber<sup>11</sup>

[The north wind  
blows over the sea  
on the shore.]

idę polami  
ziemia pachnie po deszczu  
kwitnie tarnina  
D. Piasek<sup>12</sup>

[I am walking across the fields  
the earth is fragrant after rain  
blackthorn is blooming]

‘Wielki Mur’  
na cóż Wielki Mur  
w szczelinach głazów tętni  
kielkujące źdźbło  
W. Jaworski<sup>13</sup>

[THE GREAT WALL  
Oh well, the Great Wall  
in the cracks of boulders  
a sprouting stem is throbbing.]

Wiosna się budzi  
Kwieciami okrywa sady  
Skowronek śpiewa  
J. Tylus<sup>14</sup>

[Spring is waking up  
Bestrewing orchards with blossom  
A lark is singing]

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*Głosy, formy, światy. Warianty poezji nowoczesnej*, Kraków, 2008, p. 131). However, I assert that in literary studies we cannot abstract from comparative analyses of adequately selected (with the help of the expertise in literary studies) specific works. While generally subscribing to Michałowski's diagnosis, Leszek Engelking goes on to add: "The question [...] immediately arises about the possibility of creating artistically first-rate haiku that fully retain the genre identity" (L. Engelking, 'Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie pod bananowcem,' in *Droga na Wschód. Polskie inspiracje orientalne. Materiały z forum dyskusyjnego*, ed. and with an introduction by D. Kalinowski, Słupsk, 2000, p. 129). Engelking does not answer this question, nor does he direct readers to his own haiku. However, one could do it in this part of my book.

- 10 L. Engelking, *I inne wiersze (utwory wybrane i nowe)* [And Other Poems (Selected and New Works)], Kraków, 2000, p. 89.
- 11 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów* [In the Garden of Words], Warszawa, 2001, p. 120.
- 12 *Antologia polskiego haiku*, ed. and with an introduction by E. Tomaszewska, Warszawa, 2001, p. 103.
- 13 W. Jaworski, *Kropla. Haiku. Wiersze nowe i dawne* [A Drop. Haiku. New and Old Poems], Kraków, 1998, p. 14.
- 14 J. Tylus, *Haiku*, Kalisz, 2004, p. 35.

The last of the poems quoted above in every “measurable” respect successfully conforms to the conventions of the genre (imagery, sensoriality, the construction of an emotionally restrained subject, and even versification and information about the time of year). However, among the miniatures cited here, this text is the least successful artistically – it is a banal piece that reproduces played-out tropes, with a needlessly archaic way of expression. The stereotyping of the image and language subtly undermines the mimetic dimension of the scene, without offering the reader anything in return. The reader has no desire or, in fact, no possibility to penetrate into the world described in this manner.

In turn, the poem by Wit Jaworski exhibits the strongest degree of Orientalization (though in the Chinese rather than Japanese mode): the Great Wall automatically refers to the culture of East Asia, again slightly suspending the mimetic character of the description (probably the Wall is merely a symbol of man’s herculean effort of taming nature). The stem sprouting in the cracks of boulders in an obvious, maybe all too obvious, way fulfils haiku’s conditions of sensorial clarity<sup>15</sup> (we do not know, however, why – synecdochically – there is only one stem and multiple crevices). The text simultaneously employs a handful of strong antinomies manifested in the opposition between the Great Wall and the small plant: enormity – tininess, inanimate matter – animate matter, permanence – impermanence, culture – nature. Overall, the poem seems to be rather artistically inexpressive, trivial even. Admittedly, the “throbbing stem” is a decent metaphor, but it pales beside the rather too obvious Great Wall. The poem is not helped by the didactic, rhetorical, archaizing “oh well.” What, then, is the use of the entire East-Asian backdrop, if we convey truisms by using literary clichés?

The poem by Dariusz Piasek (by the way, one of the few Polish authors whose writing was included in the monumental anthology *Haiku World*)<sup>16</sup> comes across as a textbook haiku: one capturing an instant of time, highly sensorial, succinct,

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15 See Part 1 of the book.

16 See *Haiku World. An International Haiku Almanac*, ed. W. J. Higginson, Tokyo–New York–London, 1996, p. 69. The anthology includes over a thousand works written in 25 languages by over 600 poets (*Haiku World* contains English translations of poems, accompanied by their original versions; however, featured most prominently are poems originally written in English). William J. Higginson’s anthology also features a text by Robert Szybiak (*Haiku World*, p. 310; Szybiak’s poetry is discussed in subsection *Intertextuality*) and an English-language poem by Lidia Rozmus, a poet originally from Poland, who lives in the USA and publishes chiefly in English (I analyse Rozmus’ verbal-visual work in Part 7 of the book, while her selected Polish poems are discussed in subsequent chapters of this part of the monograph).

not overly philosophical. The text could easily be mistaken for a translation of an unknown poem by Matsuo Bashō or Kobayashi Issa. Paradoxically, such poems pose the greatest challenge for the researcher. How can we tell if the text really “works” like an authentic haiku? And even if it does, are we not dealing here merely with a skilful counterfeit of Eastern poetic gems? The awareness of the subjectivity of our assessment hinders description. However, analytical quandaries should be named. Indeed, the poem in question “fits into the [haiku] paradigm [...] seamlessly.”<sup>17</sup> Yet I would not call this miniature a failed imitation of the Japanese form. Piasek’s poem can be a “window” to sensorially perceived reality, opening our eyes, in a simple way, to ordinary, intense impressions. Doubts arise, however, whether such strong mimesis, which is neither accentuated nor overshadowed, by the mode of utterance, offers the Western reader a sufficient incentive to enter the textual world. For some, it probably does (as evidenced by the inclusion of the Occidental haiku in numerous anthologies),<sup>18</sup> for others, the triplet may be insufficiently “artistic” and “polished” to become a vehicle for a genuine illumination.

The poem by Franciszek Haber is, in turn, an image, constructed from as few as six words, depicting the struggle of wind and water. “The blowing over” of the sea is at the same time tangible, metaphorical, and polysemous. Something that is formless cannot be blown over, thus the sea seems to assume a solid form. The description suggests a confrontation of subtly shaped elements (the blowing over of an opponent), but also vividly depicts the process of the breaking of waves on the shore, of somehow turning them over and watching from below. The raw clarity of the image is accentuated by assonances /p/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/. The concise, dispassionate text (intentional connotations of the phrase “the north wind”) rivets the reader’s attention. Its unfeigned – yet at the same time quite refined – simplicity conceals a metaphorical and lexical “jumping-off point:” we are intrigued not only by the mimetic representation of the moment but also by the way it is recorded in language. The illumination is somewhat twofold, or maybe two-stage. The mode of expression becomes for the reader a catalyst of an impression.

And, finally, we come to Leszek Engelking’s haiku. It is difficult to skip through this poem – it attracts attention, invites its re-readings. The strangeness and oddness of the text are striking, yet none of the motifs used in it come from a culturally or geographically remote universe, while its form – orthodoxly reproducing Oriental rules – does not break Polish readers out of their versification habits. However, the feeling of “strange” loneliness, encompassing the entire image,

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17 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku,’ pp. 106–107.

18 See, for example, *Haiku World; Haiku Moment. An Anthology of Contemporary North American Haiku*, ed. B. Ross, Boston–Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, 1993; *The Haiku Anthology. Haiku and Senryū in English*, ed. C. van den Heuvel, New York–London, 2000.

touching both the person described and the landscape, is very acute.<sup>19</sup> The textual peculiarity is heightened by the unusual syntax (with the participle positioned at the end of the utterance, the poems seem to cut off abruptly) and the sheer oneiric character of the world depicted. The empty field and the lonely girl combing her hair resonate with clear echoes of Symbolism. Yet the poem is devoid of any symbolic decorativeness,<sup>20</sup> it does not seek to conjure up a mood with long, “caressing” phrases. On the other hand, it is not utterly ascetic stylistically. There is a striking difference in sound instrumentation between the first verse and the two lines completing the scene (the phrase *puste pole/empty field* that brings the initial expressive alliteration versus the phonostylistically different verses suffused with fricatives and affricate consonants: “dziewczyna czesze włosy / na cień swój patrząc” [a girl is combing her hair/ looking at her shadow]).

The poetics of the miniature in question comes close to precepts of haiku writing, it even seems to be a prime example of the poetic incarnation of *sabi* (abandonment, solitariness, emotional distance, acceptance of the inevitable) and *yūgen* (hidden, ephemeral, mysterious beauty).<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the author has no hesitation in achieving complete unhaiku-like isolation of the situation from real life. Haiku poems gravitate towards mimesis, despite certain convolutions of juxtapositional depictions. Engelking’s poem subtly slides into raw surrealizing dreaminess (its mood evokes metaphysical landscapes akin to those depicted, for example, in the paintings by Giorgio de Chirico – although its “iconography” rather echoes the canvases and graphics of the symbolists). Classic seventeen-syllable poems centre on a detail singled out from the world, yet behind this detail – or beside it – lies a conglomerate of everyday phenomena, from which a realistic micro-scene was picked out. In Engelking’s poem, however, the situation is unclear, surprising, mysterious, alien to everyday experience. It seems that there is too much guesswork and uncertainty for a classic Japanese haiku, but just enough to make a good Polish haiku.

I would like to remind here an essay by Beata Szymańska focusing on affinities between haiku and the poetry of the Young Poland period.<sup>22</sup> Echoing her

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19 On the distinctive sensorial mood of haiku, see M. Ueda, *Zeami, Bashō, Yeats, Pound. A Study in Japanese and English Poetics*, London–The Hague–Paris, 1965, p. 57.

20 This brings to mind Art Nouveau vignettes printed in the *Chimera* magazine – for example, women with long, loose hair against a landscape in Edward Okunia’s illustrations. At the time, however, of central importance was moody decorativeness.

21 See, for example, B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, Kraków, 2009, pp. 59–63, 84, 296–7. Japanese aesthetic categories are treated in detail in Part 1 of the book. For discussions of Engelking’s other haiku poems, see P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ pp. 138–9.

22 B. Szymańska, ‘Haiku i Młoda Polska,’ in B. Szymańska, *Kultury i porównania*, Kraków, 2003, pp. 127–60. I refer in detail to Szymańska’s contentions in Part 2 of the book (section ‘Young-Poland Haiku?’).

pronouncement, it is worth underlining the importance of mood construction in haiku and symbolist poetry inspired by Symbolism.<sup>23</sup> Obviously, this is not an identical creation, however, points of commonality are apparent. As Engelking's poem demonstrates, the use of East-Asian borrowings and atmospheric symbolic motifs within one miniature does not generate aesthetic dissonance – quite the reverse, it can lead to intriguing literary discoveries in Western poetry. Naturally, provided that we do not deal with epigonic references.<sup>24</sup> It is quite a challenge to fit into the tight orientalizing straitjacket and at the same time speak in one's unique voice. Apparently, however, this is not impossible.

The juxtaposition of these five texts reveals the diversity of poems approaching the prototype of the genre. It also demonstrates something obvious: that it is virtually impossible to determine the criteria of a good haiku (just like those of a good literary text in general). Naturally, this also applies to old Japanese poetry. Poems composed thousands of kilometres away from the birthplace of haiku (and its culture) inevitably must meet slightly different requirements, as they strive to become relevant in a different, yet equally rich cultural universe – several centuries after the establishment of the rules of Bashō's school of poetry. Poems marked by an extremely toned-down style, avoiding a more suggestive depiction of the subject, may turn out to be rather tedious, too "respectful" of the foreign model (known only from translations).

This is all the more apparent if we realize that translations cannot convey all the internal tensions of Japanese miniatures.<sup>25</sup> Classical haiku are by no means as straightforward and transparent as it seems – one should recall the stylistic figures employed by the masters of the genre:<sup>26</sup> *tatoe* (comparisons or allusions), *honkadori* (quotations, intertextual allusions), *mugon* (passing over in silence), *kakekotoba* (polysemous words or homonyms), *engo* ("various words or morphemes which through their similar content are associated with each other in deeper layers of

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23 Szymańska's considerations focus on potential parallels between classical haiku and Symbolism rather than between Symbolism and the so-called *new haiku* (for more on this topic, see, for example, *Modern Japanese Haiku. An Anthology*, compiled, transl. and with an introduction by M. Ueda, Toronto – Buffalo, 1976, p. 10).

24 In atmospheric haiku composed late in the nineteenth century, one finds, for instance, "the veil of dreamy mists" or "camellia flowers surrounded by downy fog" – excerpts from poems by, respectively, Marcin Myszkiewicz and Zdzisław Czmer, as quoted in *Haiku*, 1995 No. 1 (2), p. 23, and *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 12.

25 See Part 1 of the book and the chapter 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'

26 Based on A. Żuławska-Umeda, 'Okolice poetyki Matsuo Bashō' [Around Matsuo Bashō's Poetics], in *Haiku*, transl. and introduction by A. Żuławska-Umeda, Bielsko-Biała, 2006, p. 231 (hereafter: *Haiku*, [2006]); A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły Matsuo Bashō*, Warszawa, 2007, p. 25. I discuss this in more detail in Part 1 of the book. Naturally, with time, some of the devices I have mentioned have become conventionalized, but the haiku poetics in Japan has been subject to numerous renewals.

meaning”),<sup>27</sup> *makurakotoba* (“words-attributes that impart a special semantic value to phrases succeeding them”).<sup>28</sup> In some measure, therefore, one should concur with Michałowski’s diagnosis. However, we should not content ourselves with this pronouncement.

Sometimes vital in descriptions of haiku is the category of epiphany. In my research, I have chiefly referred to an epiphany in its modern rather than traditional incarnation. However, analyses call for a confrontation with old Japanese texts, as it is their knowledge (more or less profound) that spawned the “mass mobilization” of haikuists. Therefore, how do we reconcile modern epiphany with references to the poetry that is so remote in time and space?

On closer inspection, it turns out that the poetics of classical haiku is surprisingly similar to certain imperatives of modernity (it is not without reason that the brilliant Western career of haiku coincided with modernism).<sup>29</sup> In haiku’s home, efforts were also made to modernize this form. Throughout Japan, a great metaliterary and poetic discussion, completely overlooked in the West, took place on the principles of haiku, started in the 1890s by the form’s rejuvenator, Masaoka Shiki.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, and perhaps more importantly for my inquiries, the West (France, England, Spain, Germany, the United States, Latin America) also saw vigorous experimentation with haiku in the first decades of the twentieth century. Suffice it to mention here haiku and haiku-inspired writings of poets such as Giuseppe Ungaretti, Julien Vocance, Paul Éluard, Antonio Machado, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Guillermo de Torre, José Juan Tablada, Federico García Lorca, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Juan José Domenchina and, subsequently, Jorge Luis Borges, Octavio Paz, American beat poets, and others.<sup>31</sup> Many of these texts come close to the Western prototype of the genre or, to be more precise, contribute to this prototype. Poets would incorporate into their haiku diction various explicitly Occidental elements (at the level of poetics and, naturally, the structure of the world depicted), heavily drawing on East-Asian models. Haiku written by these authors are, however, little

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27 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Okolice poetyki*, p. 231.

28 A. Żuławska-Umeda, *Poetyka szkoły*, p. 25.

29 Problems of haiku’s modernism and avant-gardism have recently been extensively explored in English-language studies – see, for example, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics in Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Poetry*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–Toronto–Plymouth, 2011; Y. Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics*, New York, 2009; J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre. Fellow-Traveler of Modernism,’ in *Modernism*, Vol. 2, eds. A. Eysteinnsson, V. Liska, Amsterdam–Philadelphia, 2007; T. Lynch, *Intersecting Influences*. See also K. Satō, ‘Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku? (Japońskie haiku i ruch haiku na Zachodzie),’ transl. A. Szuba, *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 1, pp. 210–17; P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ pp. 129–44. See also ‘Introduction’ and Part 7 of this monograph.

30 See Part 1.

31 I discuss this at greater length in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the book.



known in Poland – relatively few translations are available, and a large proportion of them is not easily accessible.<sup>32</sup>

Still, it is hard to expect that Polish poets will engage in “haiku-ing” relying exclusively on old precepts (which in Japan are considered by many to be obsolete), even if more recent formulas are unknown to them. Just as it is difficult to expect notable innovativeness in the reproduction of old models, even if these were decent or even highly successful repetitions. Authors aware of their craft and poetics of their time cannot content themselves with producing “clones” of old Eastern poems (or rather “clones” of their translations).<sup>33</sup> This becomes all the more apparent when we become aware of the modern shifts in understanding haiku in Japan itself. By way of reminder, it was Shiki who already claimed (probably intentionally provoking a heated discussion with his controversial opinions):

Bashō’s works are devoid of what is critical to modern poetry: complexity, passionate dynamism, unbridled imagination. The search for a model in Bashō’s oeuvre [...] would constitute a return to the pre-modernist ideal, consent to a decline in poetry.<sup>34</sup>

In Poland, the models of Bashō, Issa, and Yosa Buson are deep-rooted and relatively well recognized (unlike the poetic practice of, e.g., Shiki or Takahama Kyoshi). Robust models, however, do not preclude experimentation. Nor do they shut the door on ways of modernizing the form.

I will attempt to point out parallels between poems by Polish authors and those of other Western poets. Especially interesting are the similarities and differences between Polish texts and poems by artists from Western Europe and Latin America from the first decades of the twentieth century. As baffling as such analogies may sound, the Polish authors writing during the 1980s or 1990s were in a similar situation to one of French, English, Spanish, Mexican, and American poets in the first decades of the last century.<sup>35</sup> A more serious interest in haiku in Poland can

32 Polish translations (relatively few) are by and large scattered across various magazines. For bibliographical information on Polish translations, see footnote 26 in Part 2 of the book.

33 Writing about Polish haiku (as modern poetry), Piotr Michałowski references old, fossilized stylistic patterns: a codified “set of ‘ready-made’ motifs,” “commonplace natural motifs,” “stock epithets attached to specific classes of words,” “rather rigid rules of phraseology, the canon in the form of a dictionary or a topical catalogue” (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ p. 133). I offer a wider – and modernized – system of reference.

34 *Modern Japanese Haiku. An Anthology*, p. 6. Shiki had a much higher opinion of the more versatile Buson – see pp. 6–7. For more on Shiki’s reform, see Part 1 of the book.

35 In 1920, a special haiku-themed issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* appeared in France – the issue of *Poezja* published fifty-five years later (*Poezja*, 1975, No. 1) could be seen as its Polish “equivalent.” That said, the issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* saw print in a country in which quite a number of haiku translations had been known and where texts inspired by this form had already been written. It is worth

be observed from the mid-1970s onwards, while the first critical anthology of translations was published here in 1983.<sup>36</sup> While over the course of more than 50 years a lot has changed, the spirit of modernism – as I shall demonstrate – is still alive.<sup>37</sup>

Let us come back to the problem of modern epiphany. Ryszard Nycz writes:

The modern epiphanic discourse is marked primarily by the special attitude to a broadly conceived yet specific “object.” [...] The writer resigns [...] from exercising his/her licence to display his/her subjectivity, richness of imagination or power of artistic inventiveness – and GIVES PRECEDENCE TO THE “OBJECT” [...], EMPLOYING THE POSSIBILITIES OF HIS ART TO CAPTURE OR REVEAL IT AS FAITHFULLY AND PRECISELY AS POSSIBLE. [...]

Within the epiphanic text [...] they [epiphanic utterances] become merely superficial, empirical symptoms, exponents or manifestations of a) previously unknown and inscrutable aspects of reality, namely those that were neither part of a shared experience nor available (cognizable) in any other way. Consequently, b) THEY ARE NOT OBJECTS OR ASPECTS OF REALITY THAT COULD BE RECOGNIZED AS IDENTIFIABLE AND DEFINABLE IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR LINGUISTIC AND ARTISTIC ARTICULATION. This, in turn, may mean that c) THE FEATURES OF THE OBJECT – IF NOT ITS VERY EXISTENCE – ARE (OR CAN BE) INTERDEPENDENT ON THE MEDIUM IN WHICH THEY ARE “EMBODIED.”<sup>38</sup>

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noting that also in 1920 the poet Adolfo Salazar made an appeal on the pages of the Spanish magazine *La Pluma* calling on authors to practise haiku exploring its nature, but not limiting themselves to producing imitations (see J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 104–5, 130). In Poland similar appeals – and similar problems – did not appear until the 1990s.

- 36 *Haiku*, transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda, afterword by M. Melanowicz, Wrocław, 1983 (hereafter: *Haiku*, [1983]). In an anthology published a dozen or so years earlier in Great Britain, *Godzina złotej kaczki* [The Hour of the Wild Duck], haiku translations constituted only a small proportion of the content, and their critical editing was incomparably less comprehensive and perceptive, finally, the availability of these publications in Poland was very limited (A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczki. Mała antologia poezji japońskiej*, with an introduction by J. Miś, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, 1966). For more on the early days of haiku in Poland, see Part 2 of the book.
- 37 Among Polish haiku, one finds very few texts in a postmodern vein (except, for example, for poems by Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz or “hajki-bajki” (haiku fables) from Radosław Nowakowski’s book *Hasa Rapasa* – see Parts 3 and 7 of the book). As Libor Martinek asserts: “In postmodern culture, haiku is one of the possibilities of enriching the repertoire of artistic methods and ideas” (L. Martinek, ‘Głębia w detalu’ [The Depth of Detail], *Tygiel Kultury*, 2003, No. 10–2, p. 114). I see here mostly modernism.
- 38 R. Nycz, *Literatura jako trop rzeczywistości. Poetyka epifanii w nowoczesnej literaturze polskiej*, Kraków, 2001, pp. 8–9; emphasis added. See also T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka*

By the term the poetics of epiphany, I refer to a set of convictions, derived from the evidence of modern literature, about the special status and functions of the poetic language and the rules for constructing an artistic utterance, at the centre of which are precisely these “epiphanies,” i.e. records – or places of occurrence – of vivid, discontinuous, momentary traces of the extraordinary value of everyday existence of individual things.<sup>39</sup>

[...] IN CONTRADISTINCTION TO THE MIMETIC THEORY, A WORK CANNOT BE TREATED AS A TRADITIONALLY CONCEIVED REPRESENTATION OF AN INDEPENDENTLY EXISTING OBJECT (since it assumes its specificity in the process of artistic articulation), but as a UNIQUE VERBAL MANIFESTATION OF ITS FORM.<sup>40</sup>

Naturally, the writing belonging to this revelatory [epiphanic] tendency, as we could define it in most general terms, historically came in multifarious varieties, such as inspired poetry, a sublime, wondrous, direct vision, or the rhetoric of ecstasy [...]. IN MODERN LITERATURE, THEIR FUNCTION WAS TAKEN OVER PRIMARILY BY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SPECIAL KIND OF MOMENTARY EXPERIENCE IN WHICH THE ORDINARY, BANAL, VULGAR, “UNIMPORTANT” ALL OF A SUDDEN ACQUIRED IMMENSE SIGNIFICANCE, REVEALING THE NATURE OF WHAT IS. THIS KIND OF EXPERIENCE INEVITABLY BECAME CLOSELY INTERTWINED WITH THE SPECIAL PRESENTATION TECHNIQUE, BECAUSE ITS “SUPER-SENSE” COULD ONLY MANIFEST ITSELF IN THE VERBAL FORM. From the point of view of poetics, this meant the emergence of a specific construction principle, with its centre occasionally located in “moments” excluded from the ordinary passage of time, “flashes,” suddenly appearing “images,” etc. – from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards increasingly referred to as epiphanies (since Joyce took this concept out of the theological context, adopting it to define a secular experience and an aesthetic-literary phenomenon).<sup>41</sup>

In other words, in successful, truly arresting literary texts conveying epiphanic experience, “the reality depicted [...] is not something offered directly, but rather

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*i interpretacja. Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii*, Kraków 2010, p. 345 and ff.

39 R. Nycz, *Literatura jako trop rzeczywistości*, pp. 89–90; emphasis in original. The “modern epiphanic discourse” naturally has its own sweeping and multi-faceted history and prehistory. Its prehistory primarily includes the traditions of religious and mystical theophanies and literary revelations of the transcendent order in the empirical one, as well as of the eternal one in the temporal one; its history comprises non-mimetic and non-expressive (in the traditional sense) articulations of the value of the existence of ordinary reality, which in the Polish tradition can be found in the literature of the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century (R. Nycz, *Literatura jako...*, p. 90).

40 R. Nycz, *Literatura jako...*, p. 41; emphasis added.

41 R. Nycz, *Literatura jako...*, p. 43; emphasis added.

something simultaneously created and discovered in the process of tropological representation,<sup>42</sup> and “the world depicted is at the same time pre-existing and created, located on both sides of the bastion of knowledge.”<sup>43</sup> Note that this description fits well, for example, with Engelking’s and Haber’s poems cited above.

Researchers examining Polish haiku have already applied to it the category of epiphany. Aleksandra Ołędzka-Frybesowa remarked on the “small epiphanies” of haiku in 1994.<sup>44</sup> In 2008, Piotr Michałowski discoursed extensively and enigmatically on haiku and modern epiphany, largely denying the existence of modern epiphany in the miniatures that are of interest to me here, which in the tripartite classification of haiku he defines as “imitations,” “copying.”<sup>45</sup> I do not accept Michałowski’s distinction between Przybosian haiku (“metaphorical,” in which category Michałowski included the work of Jerzy Harasymowicz) and “Leśmianian” one (“metonymic,” the case of Engelking), of which only the latter may turn out to be modern and modernly epiphanic.<sup>46</sup> As it happens, we cannot know the extent to which this division is universal (should we to apply it only to the category of imitation?). Moreover, the distinction itself relies on rather superficial qualifications – such as the perspective of the oeuvre of the poets Michałowski references in proposed types of poems.

I assert that the most fascinating, successful, and interesting “genuine” Polish haiku (including poems by Harasymowicz) can be treated as manifestations of modernist epiphany.<sup>47</sup> These texts also explore the spaces of metaphorization,

42 R. Nycz, *Literatura jako...*, p. 12.

43 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ p. 132.

44 A. Ołędzka-Frybesowa, ‘Przeciw czemu protestują haiku,’ *Teksty Drugie*, 1994, No. 2, p. 114. The haiku-writing poet Waldemar Frąckiewicz pointed out on the pages of the *Haiku* magazine (1995, No. 2 (3), p. 13) “the two most important value criteria of what we do (in haiku):/ 1) the author’s illumination, wonder at the world (if not enlightenment) as a source of creative power;/ 2) the reader’s illumination, wonder at the poem-world./ Both criteria are subjective.”

45 For the tripartite division into “imitations – mass copying,” “inspirations and approximations,” and texts testifying to the “syncretism of cultures and dialogue of traditions,” see P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ pp. 143–4. According to the scholar, however, some exceptions are conceivable. Michałowski writes about “two diametrically opposed tendencies” in imitations of haiku: pre-modern mimesis (the case of Harasymowicz) and, despite everything, modern epiphany (the case of Engelking) (P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ p. 144).

46 P. Michałowski, ‘Haiku wobec epifanii,’ pp. 136–144. See also Part 2 (section ‘Przyboś and Leśmian. “Przybosian” and “Leśmianian” Model of Haiku?’).

47 I treat the category of epiphany – similarly to Nycz or Michałowski – somewhat functionally, which may diminish the importance of this originally revelatory and “sacred” qualification. Perhaps not every good innovative poem “capturing” a unique sense experience deserves such a high grade (I apply this reservation also to classical haiku). Nevertheless, I do not intend to create any typology of epiphany, nor do I differentiate between epiphany and illumination (as Michałowski does in his text ‘Funkcje miniatur,’ in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, pp. 177–8). In my further

conceptism, intertextuality, and, finally, sensoriality (which is of vital importance here). At the same time, they are haiku exercising the “privileges of naturalization”<sup>48</sup> – in various ways drawing upon the culture of its the adopted homeland.

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Artists seeking to write haiku approaching the Japanese prototypes as closely as possible, however, have to beware of several well-hidden pitfalls. I would like to take a closer look at the one which – despite its inconspicuousness – I see as the most dangerous: the trap of triviality. Modern epiphany protects against banality. Except that there is no ready-made recipe for a modern epiphany – or any other epiphany. It is worthwhile giving the matter a closer inspection.

Makoto Ueda aptly draws attention to the objectivity of description that typifies the genre: the poet does not comment on his experiences nor does he analyse his emotions, leaving the reader to make sense of the presented scene.<sup>49</sup> Haiku’s asceticism can sometimes be an impenetrable perceptive barrier for today’s readers – the extremely plain, “non-artistic,” sketchy “note-down” of a fragment of reality may be an insufficient stimulant to mental and sensory reproduction of haiku’s “high moments.”<sup>50</sup> In order for the Western reader (especially experienced one) to go through the experiences that were the original motivating force behind European or American haiku, he/she must be additionally encouraged to do so. As we have seen, we tend to measure classical haiku and original poems written in the West by a slightly different yardstick.<sup>51</sup> The latter, if they merely reproduce the poetics reconstructed on the basis of necessarily imperfect translations, can turn out to be lacklustre and rather barren. Indeed, “Haiku is in danger of excessive purity. Devoid of beauty, intellectuality, and emotion, it may easily fall into triviality.”<sup>52</sup> As it happens, Matsuo Bashō writes about it much earlier:<sup>53</sup>

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inquiries, I will continue using the category of epiphany, yet I will try not to overuse this term.

- 48 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 130. For the possibilities of composing crisp, intriguing haiku verses in keeping with the tradition of the “adopted homeland” (and also following similar directions as modern Japanese haiku), see T. Lynch, ‘Intersecting Influences,’ p. 114 and ff.
- 49 M. Ueda, *Zeami*, pp. 40–5.
- 50 H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, p. 2.
- 51 A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki Ryszarda Krynickiego*, Kraków, 2004, p. 165.
- 52 An assertion made by Reginald Horace Blyth in R. H. Blyth, *A History of Haiku*, Vol. 1: *From the Beginnings up to Issa*, Tokyo 1963, p. 12. See also *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, Vol. 3, Tokyo–New York, 1983, p. 81.
- 53 The master’s remarks first and foremost refer to the composition of a diary, yet the specificity of Bashō diaries (a *haibun* combining a prose travel journal and travel meditations with haiku poetry) gives grounds for relating this note to haiku.

It would be easy to write, for example, that such and such a day was rainy in the morning but turned sunny in the afternoon, that there was a pine tree at a certain place, or that there was a river called such and such at a certain place. Records like this, of course, are not worth mentioning unless they present the uniqueness of Huang Tingjian and the novelty of Su Dongpo. Yet, views of the landscape at different places remained in my mind, and the touching impression of places, such as a house in the mountains, or an inn at a remote province, provided the seeds of words. I decided to jot down randomly the unforgettable places, with a hope that they might record traces of messages from the winds and clouds. My words are like the reckless words of the intoxicated, and therefore the audience should take them as no more than the rambling talk of the dreaming and should listen to them recklessly.<sup>54</sup>

Meanwhile, stumbling into the trap of triviality are both minor poets concerned primarily with composing orientalizing miniatures, and reputed, versatile artists. “Such and such a day was rainy in the morning but turned sunny in the afternoon,” says Bashō ironically. Polish poets write in all earnestness:

synogarlica  
na kwitnącej czereśni  
schronienie w deszczu  
E. Tomaszewska<sup>55</sup>

[a turtledove  
on a blossoming cherry  
shelter in the rain]

Piórko gołębia spada na  
kroplę rosy,  
robi się mokre.  
Kropła rosy ginie  
W. Ulicka<sup>56</sup>

[A pigeon feather falls on  
a dew drop  
getting wet.  
The dew drop is lost.]

tunel za nami  
znowu mogę przez okno  
oglądać księżyc  
L. Engelking<sup>57</sup>

[the tunnel behind us  
I can see the moon again  
through the window]

Płaszcz zmókł  
i buty też  
Przeszedł mnie dreszcz  
K. Kmiecik<sup>58</sup>

[The coat got wet  
and so did shoes  
A shiver went down my spine]

54 As quoted in E. Kerkham (ed.), *Matsuo Bashō's Poetic Spaces*, p. 66.

55 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczy. the day still shining. haiku*, Kraków, 2005, p. 21.

56 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1 (2), p. 3.

57 L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*, Kraków, 1990, p. 20.

58 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 24.

słońca nie widać  
tylko chmury dziś szare  
są nad głowami  
A. Surma<sup>59</sup>

[the sun is invisible  
only the clouds gray today  
are above their heads]

w marcowym słońcu  
pąki zwinęte jeszcze  
uśpione życie  
E. Tomaszewska<sup>60</sup>

[in the March sun  
buds still curled up  
dormant life]

A poem – a highly simple snapshot from daily life<sup>61</sup> – becomes almost anonymous, the poetics of individual authors becoming virtually unrecognizable. One could, however, ask to what extent the poetics of individual authors of classical haiku artists remains individual. Even a discerning reader may have trouble distinguishing a poem by Bashō from a verse by Issa or Shiki.<sup>62</sup> Complicating matters further are texts of the students from the Bashō School or heirs of later masters.<sup>63</sup> Naturally, one could hardly expect that a wealth talent akin to those of the most outstanding Japanese haikins will suddenly explode in Poland and that all these authors will wish to write precisely haiku – the form that calls for great discipline and where the writer has to go to great lengths to leave his/her individual stamp. The significant proportion of Polish haiku writing is, therefore “production” lacking in artistic expression, although most probably – as Bashō postulated – it may be heartfelt and based on experience.

The triviality possesses (at least) one more aspect: contributing to its manifestation are researchers rehashing stereotypes.<sup>64</sup> I have in mind the strong, banalized antithetical nature of composition – again, most common in poems by less-known

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59 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 12.

60 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczący*, p. 9.

61 Sometimes odd solutions occur, as a matter of fact fascinating on account of their banality:

W pustej szafie	[In an empty wardrobe
Nagi wieszak	A naked coathanger
Czeka na spodnie	Waiting for trousers]

(G. Stańczyk, *W pejzażu: haiku, rysunki* [In Landscape: Haiku, Drawings], Łódź, 1995, p. 11).

62 Already in 1946, a Japanese literary critic, Kuwabara Takeo, argued for the difficulty of telling apart the haiku of the masters of the genre; he also asserted that Japanese non-professional readers find it difficult to distinguish classic haiku from verses composed by obscure contemporary amateurs. See *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Japanese Culture*, ed. S. Buckley, London–New York, 2002, p. 180.

63 See, for example, *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, Vol. 3, p. 79.

64 See Part 1 of the book, the chapter ‘Prototype – Invariant – Stereotype. Haiku in the West’.

authors mainly specializing in haiku, but also seen in the work of highly-regarded, versatile authors:

<p>W czarnej, zatrutej Wiśle – białe łabędzie Tu przywiódł je los. R. Krynicki<sup>65</sup></p>	<p>[In the black, poisoned Vistula – white swans Fate brought them here.]</p>
<p>Krzak bzu pod płotem kołysze kiście kwiatów płot się rozpada J. Stańczakowa<sup>66</sup></p>	<p>[A lilac bush under the fence sways bunches of flowers the fence is falling apart]</p>
<p>kwitnący dąb naderwana klepsydra łopocze na wietrze R. Zabratyński<sup>67</sup></p>	<p>[blossoming oak half-torn obituary fluttering in the wind]</p>
<p>opuszczony fort zardzewiała armata tonie w jaśminach R. Leniar<sup>68</sup></p>	<p>an abandoned fort a rusty cannon drowning in jasmine</p>
<p>kwiat na gnojówce niespodziewanie zakwitł w jesienny dzień Z. Mysłowiecki<sup>69</sup></p>	<p>[a flower on a dung heap blossomed unexpectedly on an autumn day]</p>
<p>‘Jaśmin’ patrzę na koronę jaśminu widzę czarną mszycę pod dziewiczą bielą. E. Borkowska<sup>70</sup></p>	<p>[JASMINE Looking at the crown of jasmine I see a black aphid under pristine whiteness.]</p>

Plain, salient contrasts put off the reader, discourage from participation in a micro-event, trivialize senses.

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65 R. Krynicki, ‘Haiku z minionej zimy’ [Last Winter’s Haiku], *Kwartalnik Artystyczny*, 2010, No. 4, p. 41, reprinted in R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, Kraków, 2014, p. 39.

66 As quoted in *Antologia polskiego haiku*, p. 90.

67 See <http://antologia.haiku.pl/node?page=18>, accessed February 7, 2011.

68 See <http://antologia.haiku.pl/node?page=5>, accessed February 7, 2011.

69 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 10.

70 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 3 (4), p. 11.



The poems presented in this part of the chapter originally might have been intended to reflect unique, perhaps even epiphanic experiences. However, the modernist epiphany is nowhere to be found here. The same is the case with epiphany in the non-modern (or pre-modern) sense,<sup>71</sup> which has no chance of manifesting itself in the above-quoted texts – the message is too scanty and ascetic (often even more so than in classical haiku) to actually testify to the beauty of the world underlying the poem.

It is not easy, however, to strike a balance between the aesthetic rawness and strong “artiness” (artificiality) of the poem. Served “raw,” the snapshot of the ordinary world is not too palatable to the reader. Strongly processed, however, it goes beyond haiku aesthetics. The juxtaposition of two night images of plants against the moon is symptomatic:

for a while  
flowers are above  
the night’s moon  
Bashō<sup>72</sup>

Na półmisku księżycy  
drzewo układa do snu  
czarne liście  
J. Harasymowicz<sup>73</sup>

[On the moon’s platter  
the tree lays to sleep  
black leaves]

For the Japanese haikai, straightforward description of a phenomenon seemingly disturbing the established order of things is enough. Of course, the reader quickly grasps the essence of the alleged disturbance but directs his/her attention to a clear-cut, quasi-graphic scene. The Polish poet builds a rich metaphorical construction in a similar picture, perhaps fearing that the mere depiction of leaves against the moon will not be enough to support the poem. Thus, what we get is the metaphor of the moon platter – incongruous with the poem’s overall semantics and mood – on which the personalized tree puts leaves (its children?) to sleep. In this context, the adjective “black” ceases to be simply a designation of colour and instead its symbolic overtones become relevant.

A similar process is in evidence in another poem by Harasymowicz. Its first three verses could make a full-fledged haiku – the double-line “addition” (adjustment to

71 R. Nycz, *Literatura jako trop rzeczywistości*, pp. 89–90.

72 M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, transl., annotated, and with an introduction by J. Reichhold, Tokyo–New York–London, 2008, p. 175. For rules governing the quotation of foreign-language texts and transcription of Japanese names, surnames, and nicknames, see the footnote to the motto in the Introduction.

73 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen* [In the Botanical Garden. Zen Poems], Kraków, 1992, p. 14. The review of the collection by I. S. Fiut, ‘Zen mistrza Jerzego’ [Master Jerzy’s Zen], *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 30.

the tanka form?)<sup>74</sup> disrupts the sensorial image (the instrument is out of keeping with the overall sensorial imagery) and introduces the symbolic context (pearls) that undermines the contemplative mood:

‘Botaniczny Jesień VI’ Sam siedzę na ławce deszcz po parasolu dudni	[THE BOTANICAL GARDEN AUTUMN VI I am sitting alone on a bench The rain is piping down my umbrella
taka moja duda z pereł <sup>75</sup>	my bagpipe of pearls]

Highly simple textual images, almost devoid of stylistic ornamentation, can, however, strike the reader with their crispness or even provide fertile ground for an epiphany, on condition that they really are moving, full of affection for their protagonists, intriguing, unsettling, far from banality:

pocałunek czuję twój uśmiech na moich ustach L. Rozmus <sup>76</sup>	[a kiss I feel your smile on my lips]
oczekiwanie w kręgu kuchennej lampy tnę awokado E. Tomaszewska <sup>77</sup>	[anticipation in the circle of the kitchen lamp I am chopping an avocado]
milczymy o miłości pomagam córkom wydlubywać z arbuza zęby czarnego luda K. Lisowski <sup>78</sup>	[we are silent about love I help daughters pick teeth of a black giant out of a watermelon]

74 Tanka are discussed in Part 1 and 2 of the book (the chapter ‘A Brief History of Haiku’ and section ‘Japanese Miniatures by Pawlikowska-Jasnorzevska (and Staff)?’).

75 J. Harasymowicz, *Późne lato* [Late Summer], selected by K. Lisowski, Kraków, 2003, p. 15.

76 L. Rozmus, *W podróży* [Travelling], Evanston, 2005, n.p.

77 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczący*, p. 111.

78 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku. Inne wiersze* [99 Haiku. Other Poems], Kraków, 1993, p. 24.

po fajerwerkach odciski małych dłoni na szybie A. Kurek <sup>79</sup>	[after the fireworks prints of small hands on the window pane]
głęboka jesień jak cicho z porannej mgły wypływa rzeka J. Margolak <sup>80</sup>	[deep autumn how quietly the river flows out of the morning fog]
mówiąc milczę	[speaking I am silent]
mycie szklanek, patrzenie pod światło	the washing of glasses, the looking against the light
wrześniowe niebo i te chmury przejrzyste K. Miłobędzka <sup>81</sup>	September sky and these clouds so see-through]

## II. The Poetics of the Revitalization of the Genre

The modernist epiphany of Polish haiku usually goes hand in hand with the special, intentional<sup>82</sup> or unconscious foregrounding of certain features of the genre. Subtle violation of haiku's taboo can also be a way of revitalizing the form in

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79 See <http://antologia.haiku.pl/node?page=1>, accessed February 7, 2011. Compare Issa:  
in the spring breeze  
a child sleeps, chopstick  
in his hand

(as quoted in M. Ueda, *Dew on the Grass: The Life and Poetry of Kobayashi Issa*, Leiden, 2004, p. 61).

80 Online magazine *Haiku po polsku*, November, 2006, <http://abc.haiku.pl/1106.html>, accessed October 20, 2007.

81 From the collection *gubione* [one by one lost], 2008, quoted in K. Miłobędzka, *zbierane, gubione* [collected, one by one lost], Wrocław, 2010, p. 356. English translation in Krystyna Miłobędzka, *Nothing More*, transl. Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese, Todmorden, 2013, p. 135.

82 In this part of the study, I have presented works of numerous poets who on several occasions verbalized their knowledge of haiku (such as Leszek Engelking, Ewa Tomaszewska, Hieronim Stanisław Kreis, and Ryszard Krynicki). Therefore, one can assume that they were familiar with the features of the poetics of form, even those less obvious and known.

a new cultural context. We are still close to the Western prototype of the genre. As it turns out, however, some regroupings and intensifications of features are deeply significant. Let us take a closer look at them.

## 1. De-automatization of Sensorial Perception

All the poems presented in this part of the book adhere to the haiku imperative of clear sensoriality. However, there is a group of texts in which the de-automatization of perception is the main “jumping-off point” for the reader’s imagination and senses. Nonetheless, perception is invariably limited by sensorial mimesis:<sup>83</sup> despite all the deformations of the world depicted, the image is still sensorially clear-cut, and the reader is able to relate it to the repository of his/her own sense impressions.<sup>84</sup>

The poems are, therefore, in various ways additionally sensorialized, the defamiliarizing intensification of sensorial impressions often brings about modern epiphany, drawing the reader into the sensorial universe of the text. Sensoriality entails here not so much the exploration of taboo semantic fields,<sup>85</sup> but the condensation of the presentation – and reception – of what is commonly experienced sensorially and is not subject to the proscription on verbalization. Moreover, we often deal with multi-sensory or even trans-sensory imagery. Typically, however, poets do not exceed the bounds of haiku’s characteristic sensorial schemas (primarily the figure-ground alignment).<sup>86</sup>

Let us use concrete examples to examine mechanisms of the condensation of sense experiences that de-automatizes reader’s reception. The following are two descriptions of clouds:

obłoki z waty  
zaplątały się w sosnach  
znieruchomiały  
J. S. Pasierb<sup>87</sup>

[cotton-wool clouds  
got tangled in the pines  
becoming motionless]

83 Unlike in earlier understandings of mimesis, however, a text does not have to be a “traditional representation of an independently existing object” (R. Nycz, *Literatura jako trop rzeczywistości*, p. 41).

84 See B. Śniecikowska, ‘Mimetyzm sensualny haiku,’ [www.sensuanosc.bn.org.pl/mimetyzm-sensorialny-haiku-986/](http://www.sensuanosc.bn.org.pl/mimetyzm-sensorialny-haiku-986/), accessed June 24, 2016, in addition to Part 1 of the book.

85 However, at times such poems occur (interestingly enough, finding counterparts among Japanese haiku):

Pociąg podmiejski	[Suburban train
Smród rzygowin śnieg wpada	The stench of puke snow is falling
Przez żółtą szybę	Through the yellow window]
(L. Engelking, <i>I inne wiersze</i> , p. 97).	

86 For inter-sensorial interrelations in classical haiku, see Part 1 of the book.

87 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie* [Żarnowiec Haiku], comp and ed. M. Wilczek, Pelplin, 2003, p. 70.

Wiatraki  
mieszają białe chmury  
na niebie  
L. Rozmus<sup>88</sup>

[Windmills  
are mixing white clouds  
in the sky]

In Janusz Stanisław Pasierb's poem, the phrase "cotton wool" not only describes the appearance of clouds (white, bringing to mind tufts of cotton) and their weight (light), but also creates the illusion of haptic perception (soft tufts). In this context, the clouds' "entanglement" and immobilization in pine crowns become intriguingly literal. The world depicted seems palpable, and at the same time somewhat minuscule and a little unreal (since we can feel the clouds' cotton wool). Lidia Rozmus, in turn, augments visual experiences (windmills with white clouds in the background) with surprising haptic sensations (mixing generates tangible resistance of matter) and implicitly suggested aural sensations (the hum of wind). In no more than six words the author managed to convey a very rich sensorial charge, which, however, initially is completely undetectable. In both cases, the clarity of the figure-ground alignment has been retained. As a result, these multisensory poems, suffused with sense impressions, maintain special aesthetic and perceptual purity. They are both stylistically and visually austere and exquisitely rich in sensoriality.

Another Rozmus text reads:

cisza  
deszcz pada  
na mech  
L. Rozmus<sup>89</sup>

[silence  
it's raining  
on the moss]

The first two verses delineate a subtle (Zenist?) paradox (quietness means we should hear the falling drops), which is softly (!) explained in the poem's closure. The figure-ground configuration is preserved and suppressed at the same time. The pattern is actually three-fold: rain – moss – silence. The figure ("active" rain) and the sensorial background of the whole scene (silence) are simultaneously disjunct and fused into a single sensorial plane. This effect is in part due to sound instrumentation. The swishing /ʃ/ sound occurring in the first two words (the first of these is *cisza*/silence) muffles redundant sounds. Finally, they are

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88 L. Rozmus, *W podróży*, n.p.

89 L. Rozmus, *W podróży*, n.p.

muted – acoustically (the voiceless fricative /x/) and semantically – by the moss in the poem’s closing line.

The following is another description of nature:

szelest deszczu	[the rustle of rain
kąpią się wśród gałęzi	birds’ warbles
szczebioty ptaków	bathe amidst branches]
H. S. Kreis <sup>90</sup>	

The birds in Kreis’ poem are by no means close relatives of Bashō’s famous crow perched at dusk on a bare branch.<sup>91</sup> There are no birds in the Polish poem. Among branches, their warbles are bathing (!), synecdochically. Both the birds and the rain exist principally as sound phenomena; the sensorial metonymy means that the reader tries to hear all the sounds in this rainy, onomatopoeic synaesthetic micro-world.

Images of modern civilization can sometimes pass through synaesthetic filters:

gęsty smak mroku	[thick taste of darkness
już zmierzch otula miasto	the twilight already envelops the city
stygłą tramwaje	trams are cooling down]
Z. Mysłowiecki <sup>92</sup>	

The taste turns out to be thick (thus almost haptic), the dusk, somewhat banally, envelops the city, which in such a strongly sensorial context seems almost tangible. Finally, the trams, which can usually be seen and heard, cool down after a busy day.

Naturally, the sensorial intensity not always succeeds in renewing haiku. For example, Pasierb, author of sensorially arresting miniatures,<sup>93</sup> occasionally

90 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku* [Stream of Yellow Sand], Kraków, 2002, p. 24.

91 The poem is quoted in footnote 353 in this part of the book.

92 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 10.

93 Pasierb’s triplets are balanced between two extremes: the intense, “tense” sensoriality held in check by sensorial mimesis, and (as in the examples below) blurring the contours of textual images, diverting the poem, through abstraction, away from the haiku prototype (see also Part 7 of the book; as quoted in J. Pasierb, ‘Haiku,’ in J. Pasierb, *Wiersze wybrane*, selected and ed. by J. Sochoń, Warszawa, 1988, pp. 236, 232):

nareszcie słońca	[rainy weather finally
deszcz w moim sercu	rain in my heart
odżywają	ogrody come back to life]
uszliliśmy z klęski	[having escaped calamity
siejemy nowe złudzenia	we are sowing new illusions
nasiona klęski.	seeds of calamity].

produces oddities that manifestly lack haiku's lightness (ill-conceived culinary comparison, banal ambiguity, senses stated explicitly rather than implied):

ciężkie obłoki	[heavy clouds
pelen bitej śmietany	full of whipped cream
niebieski talerz <sup>94</sup>	a blue plate]

Haiku can also be encumbered by an excess of stylistically intensified sensorial impressions. In such a case, the arrangement of images loses clarity. The reader has to "translate" the image for himself/herself in order to simply apprehend it. All epiphany evaporates in the process; there is no chance to really (literally) visualise the poem:

Mrok z wolna gaśnie	[Dusk slowly fades away
we wschodzących płomieniach	in rising flames
chłodnego stawu	of the cool pond]
A. Żywień <sup>95</sup>	

However, the multitude of sensorial events, along with the eschewal of the overall figure-ground configuration, does not necessarily have to overwhelm a miniature (naturally, on condition that the poem is possessed of high artistic quality). The following are a handful of excellent, densely sensorial, metaphorical texts that move away from the one-event simplicity of haiku (some could, at best, be broken into several haiku), yet distinctly oscillate around the prototype of the genre:

Smak ziemi. Przylepione do nieboskłonu	[The taste of the earth. Stuck to the horizon
szybują kruki. Siwieję	ravens are gliding. I turn grey,
powracam.	return.]
J. Polkowski <sup>96</sup>	

Rośnie noc. Rozkwita w łoscocie	[Night is growing. Blooming in the clatter
przelatujących gęsi. Piją korzenie,	of flying geese. The roots are drinking

94 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 66.

95 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 7.

96 J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór* [Elegies from Tymowa Hills], Kraków, 2008, p. 43; the collection's first edition, containing 12 poems less than the publication from 2008 (which consists of 35 poems), J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór i inne wiersze* [Elegies from Tymowa Hills and Other Poems], Kraków, 1990. The text quoted here saw print as early as 1990.

prostują się konary.  
J. Polkowski<sup>97</sup>

the limbs are straightening up.]

Zawodzi myszołów, kołuje zanurzony w  
czerwonym morzu. Był dzień.  
Gasną nazwy. Płonie szron.  
J. Polkowski<sup>98</sup>

[A buzzard is wailing, circling, immersed in  
the red sea. It was daytime.  
Names die down. Hoarfrost is on fire.]

brzózko  
złoto-biała smużko  
w polu jesieni  
gdzie  
na zew cykad  
ciszę przechodzą ciarki  
U. Koziół<sup>99</sup>

[oh, little birch  
the golden-white streak  
in the autumn field  
where  
the call of cicadas  
gives the silence the creeps]

## 2. Metaphorization

The deliberations carried out so far call for a closer analysis of the metaphorization of Polish haiku. The latter is one of the most commonly used literary devices aimed at livening up these poems. The Japanese haijins from the Bashō line did not avoid metaphors but used them much more sparingly. It should be noted that also in Polish-language poems examples can be found of supremely subtle use of metaphors (usually animization) typical of classical haiku, ones that do not dominate the image or turn it inside out:

Stałem pod magnolią  
wśród gałązek  
zamieszanie  
F. Haber<sup>100</sup>

[I stopped under a magnolia  
among the branches  
commotion]

zmęczone kwiaty  
w opuszczonym ogrodzie  
praca dzikich pszczół  
J. S. Pasierb<sup>101</sup>

[tired flowers  
in a forlorn garden  
work of wild bees]

97 J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór*, p. 45 (the text not included in the book's first edition from 1990).

98 J. Polkowski, *Elegie...*, p. 65 (the text published already in the 1990 edition).

99 *Pestki deszczu VI*, the collection *Wielka pauza*, 1996; as quoted in U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010*, Wrocław, 2011, p. 397.

100 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 13.

101 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 22.



pyłki topoli  
fruwają sukieneczki  
białe bielutkie  
A. Kabza<sup>102</sup>

[poplar pollen  
dresses are flying  
white, lily-white]

to jest południe  
paszcza czarnego kwiatu  
brzęczenie muchy  
J. S. Pasierb<sup>103</sup>

[it's midday  
the maw of a black flower  
the buzzing of a fly]

However, the metaphorization of Polish poems typically goes much further:

‘Listopad w Botanicznym’

[NOVEMBER IN THE BOTANICAL  
GARDEN

Na ławce siedzi  
mgła bez twarzy  
odleciały kwiat  
J. Harasymowicz<sup>104</sup>

Sitting on the bench  
Faceless fog  
a flower that flew away]

perlista rosa  
trawy w srebrnej gorączce  
narasta księżyc  
H. S. Kreis<sup>105</sup>

[pearly dew  
grass in silver fever  
the moon is mounting]

‘Październik’

[OCTOBER

Światło zasypia  
z głową pod skrzydłem chmury  
J. Harasymowicz<sup>106</sup>

The light falls asleep  
with its head under the wing of cloud]

...akacja  
ciemność od zapachu taje  
U. Koziol<sup>107</sup>

[...oh, acacia  
darkness thaws from your scent]

Deep metaphors pervading a poem in its entirety do not have to, as we have seen, disrupt the haiku framework, provided that the image delineated with such potent

102 As quoted in *Wiśnie i wierzby / Cherry Trees and Willows / Sakura to yanagi. Antologia polskiej szkoły klasycznego haiku* [Anthology of the Polish School of Classical Haiku], ed. A. Żuławska-Umeda, Warszawa, 2015, p. 32.

103 *Wiśnie i wierzby...*, p. 25.

104 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 17.

105 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 39.

106 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 15.

107 ‘Z pestek deszczu II,’ from the collection *Smuga i promień* (1965); as quoted in U. Koziol, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 77.

means remains sensorially and, at least to some extent, semantically clear. The text of Harasymowicz is filled with personified “faceless fog” and flowers that... flew away. As it turns out, the image is sensorially and semantically distinct: it is a representation of empty foggy space in the garden in which only the shape of the bench looms. The second element of the scene, flowers, is present only *in absentia*. However, we can readily visualize the image. Sensorial mimesis has been retained, although the author achieved (used) the mimetic effect in a very specific manner. In the case of the poem by Hieronim Stanisław Kreis, because of the sensorial intensity arising from the suggestive, synaesthetic portrayal of “grass in a silver fever” and the language game with mounting tension/moon, the seemingly conventional scene (re)gains potency, and the sensorial personification pervades and transforms the overall scene (pearly dew brings to mind sweat on a feverish body). However, the most important role in the poem is played by the image itself – odd, vibrant, yet easily recognizable in the reader’s personal experience. Similar is the case with Harasymowicz’s poem ‘Październik’ [October], where in spite of considerable animization and additional phraseological complication (“to take somebody under one’s wings”), the haiku-like sensorial image remains clear-cut and easy to decipher (the pale sphere of the Sun – or the Moon – is obscured by the cloud). Finally, the poem by Urszula Kozioł (written in 1965, proof to the early post-war *Vorgeschichte* of haiku in Poland).<sup>108</sup> This very short poem superbly conveys the intensity of sensorial perception – notwithstanding the fact that it is deeply, synaesthetically metaphorical and subtly intertextual (“the thawing darkness” may bring to mind a fragment of Franciszek Karpiński’s Christmas carol: “fire solidifies, the glow darkens”).

We could analyse in a similar vein the following strongly metaphorical and yet sensorial, mimetic texts dealing with the topic most commonly used in metaphoric Western haiku: the “private,” hidden life of plants, animals, stones:

Dziecko mówi: dotykam nieba  
tą trawką. Zamknąwszy oczy  
płyną obłoki  
J. Polkowski<sup>109</sup>

[The child says: I touch the sky  
with this blade of grass. Clouds float by  
With closed eyes.]

w wieczornej ciszy  
drżą czarne wierzchołki drzew  
skąd ten niepokój  
J. S. Pasierb<sup>110</sup>

[in the evening silence  
the black treetops are trembling  
whence this anxiety]

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108 See Part 2 of the book, chapter ‘Before Haiku-images: Staff, Brzękowski, Kozioł, Krynicki...’.

109 J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór*, p. 47 (the text already included in the first 1990 edition of the collection).

110 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 50.

sierpniowa czułość  
 chmurnej łąki dotyka  
 ciepła dłoń słońca  
 J. S. Pasierb<sup>111</sup>

[August tenderness  
 the sun's warm hand touches  
 the cloudy meadow]

tyle niezbędnych zajęć –  
 drażniłiśmy srebrną skórę rzeki  
 uczyliśmy płaskie kamyczki latania  
 K. Lisowski<sup>112</sup>

[so many must-do activities  
 we irritated the silver skin of the river  
 taught flat stones to fly]

Spaliśmy głodni  
 wśród dzikich gęsi  
 ja i księżyc  
 w świtających trzcinach  
 J. Gawroński<sup>113</sup>

[We slept hungry  
 among wild geese  
 me and the moon  
 in dawning reeds]

Katakumby jodeł. Na polanie  
 brzozy trwają w uniesieniu  
 bezlistnej mszy.  
 J. Polkowski<sup>114</sup>

[Catacombs of firs. In a clearing  
 birches are still in the rapture  
 of the leafless mass.]

Sensorial mimesis can also be effective in poems bordering on oneirism,<sup>115</sup> although the oneiric quality ostensibly completely contradicts “haiku-ness.”

cisza tak wielka  
 w dolinie usnął pociąg  
 sączy się czas  
 K. Lisowski<sup>116</sup>

[silence so great  
 a train fell asleep in the valley  
 time is trickling by]

Then, violations of sensorial mimesis – even ostensible ones – have a very strong effect of the reader:

stromym łożyskiem  
 zeskakują bezgłośnie  
 głazy granitu  
 H. S. Kreis<sup>117</sup>

[down a steep riverbed  
 granite boulders  
 are jumping down quietly]

111 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 46.

112 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 28.

113 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 47.

114 J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór*, p. 55 (the text absent from the collection's first edition from 1990).

115 See, for example, J. Kwiatkowski, ‘Z poetyckich lektur’ [From My Poetry Reading List], *Twórczość*, 1971, No. 11, p. 116 and ff.

116 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 22.

117 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 41.

The image appears to stand in flat contradiction with sensory experience. Big, animalized boulders “jump down quietly.” This is all the more peculiar because the textual description makes great use of alliteration (“bezgłośnie głazy granitu”). The poem can be coherently interpreted as a narrative explication of an image in nature: boulders forming the rocky slope of a stream seem to be frozen in their tracks, motionless. The disruption of sensorial mimesis, however, disturbs haiku-like epiphanic contemplativeness.<sup>118</sup>

It is even more seriously disturbed by the complete eschewal of this kind of mimesis. The following are some examples of strongly metaphorical, surreal, oneiric poems paratextually qualified by their authors as haiku and preserving many of the features of the genre. However, by cancelling sensorial mimesis, these texts are far removed from the prototype of the form:

Na krętej drodze  
Zardzewiały nietoperz  
Wiśnie karleją  
S. Zwierzyński<sup>119</sup>

[On a winding road  
A rusty bat  
Cherries are dwarfing]

Stado staruchów  
kica między wydhami  
puszki po piwie  
J. Gawroński<sup>120</sup>

[A herd of old men  
hops among dunes  
empty beer cans]

Świt w brzezynie  
to starcy otulają pnie  
– objawienie aniołów  
J. Gawroński<sup>121</sup>

[Dawn in a birch copse  
groundsels wrap the trunks  
– apparition of angels]

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118 Here, too, exceptions occur, as seen in the text by Agata Tuszyńska (which compels us to read it through the prism of the author’s biography, namely illness and death of the poet’s husband):

bosonogie haiku	[barefooted haiku
po szarej wodzie	across gray water
biegnę	I run chasing
za twoim	your
oddechem	breath]

(A. Tuszyńska, *Miejsce przy oknie* [A Place by the Window], Warszawa, 2003, p. 60).

119 S. Zwierzyński, *Sylaby na palecie. Haiku* [Syllables of the Palette], introduction by R. Szybiak, n.p., n.d. [1995], p. 55.

120 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 29.

121 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 19.

### 3. Conceptism

Conceptism is the speciality of a great many Polish haijins – and another way of making lyric miniatures more appealing. It manifests itself in various ways: as a compositional principle of textual puzzles, in unexpected visual arrangements, as a mainstay of compositions relying on linguistic ambiguities.<sup>122</sup>

The popularity of conceptist formulas can be explained in two ways. The corpus of classical Japanese haiku does not offer many examples of conceptist poems (I have in mind mostly the first two of the aforementioned planes of conceptism, the subtle linguistic conceptism of haiku is practically unintelligible for reader not conversant with poems' original versions).<sup>123</sup> Conceptist poems known from translations – e.g. early haiku about the flower-butterfly returning to a branch or the text about the pepper pod turned into a dragonfly<sup>124</sup> – have, however, received enormous publicity: they have been published in anthologies and cited in numerous articles dealing with haiku. In the general perception of Western readers, these texts function as quintessential incarnations of the genre.<sup>125</sup>

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122 For concepts in the avant-garde (Western) poetry inspired by haiku, see, e.g. J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 106, 121, 159, 162.

123 See the chapters 'The Poetics of Haiku; Haiku and Senryū' (Part 1).

124 These poems mentioned here (and several other conceptist haiku) are quoted in Part 1 of the book, pp. 68–9. At this juncture, it is worth invoking several more haiku-concepts:

petal after petal  
mountain roses flutter down:  
the sound of the rapids  
Bashō

Melon skin –  
spider-legs floating  
on the water  
Kikaku

if you add  
a handle to the moon—  
a Chinese fan!  
Sōkan

as quoted, respectively, in David Landis Barnhill, *Bashō's Journey*, p. 38; *Matsuo Bashō's Poetic Spaces*, ed. E. Kerkham, p. 218; S. Addiss, *The Art of Haiku*, p. 60. Naturally, the poems cited – here and in Part 1 of the book – are not the only texts-concepts among classical haiku, yet the reading of numerous Japanese poems not translated into Polish does not bring many more examples. For other, few examples, see, for example, *1020 Haiku in Translation*, pp. 169, 183; S. Addiss, 'Interactions of Text and Image in *Haiga*,' in E. Kerkham, ed., *Matsuo Bashō's Poetic Spaces*, New York, 2006, p. 238; see also *Haiku*, [2006], p. 198; *Haiku*, [1983], p. 242.

125 For texts-concepts, see the section *Intertextuality* in this part of the monograph.

I find that the second reason behind the popularity of conceptism among Polish haijins is the need to make the utterance more attractive, which is another variant of the drive to de-automatize perception, move beyond the barest mimesis, finally, produce a modern epiphany. These procedures evince the striving to convey the state of bedazzlement with sheer being, but also, which is not mutually exclusive, a great desire for originality.

### A. Texts-puzzles

Riddle poems are often founded on a simple scheme – they could easily be reduced to the question “What is it?” and the not-so-obvious, short answer. The explanation is usually concealed in the final verse and in a haiku-like manner refers to the world of nature. Authors try to shake readers out of their perceptive habits, directing them, for instance, to various spheres of culture, and – evocatively throwing the reader off the trail. Not infrequently, in the first part of the text (typically: two initial verses) they seem to disrupt sensorial mimesis, to finally, quickly and strikingly (courtesy of the concept), return to it.

For example, Janusz Stanisław Pasierb sketches a scene bringing to mind a corrida:

podnosi rogi	[raising its horns
ostrzy je jak dwie szpady <sup>126</sup>	sharpening them like two épées]

The last verse, however, reveals that it is the “young moon,” which Japanese haijins described in completely different scenes.<sup>127</sup>

On another occasion, we wonder why there are:

aż dwa księżycy	[as much as two moons
w aksamitnej ciemności <sup>128</sup>	in velvet darkness]

Is it – like in classic haiku – the moon and its reflection in the pond? No, it is “[oczy] kota ślicznego jak noc” ([eyes] of a cat as cute as a night).

And here’s one more concept from this thematic “series:”

nocna zmiana	[the night shift
piekarz zerka na rogalik	the baker peeks at a croissant]

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126 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 31.

127 Kreis produced another “bovine” image of the moon, but immediately revealed the solution to the puzzle:

pełnia księżycy	[full moon
bawół zwinięty w kłębek	a buffalo curled up
na pastwisku nieba	in the pasture of the sky]

(H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 39).

128 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 28.

The last verse brings only the prepositional phrase: “wśród chmur” [among clouds].<sup>129</sup> The following are initial lines of a haiku by Ewa Tomaszewska:

na pół rozcięta  
filiżanka z herbatą<sup>130</sup>

[half cut  
a cup with tea]

A cup cut in half, a sign of relaxation and tranquillity? The work of some crazy samurai? Everything is explained in the last verse: “ostatni promień” [the last ray].

Elsewhere, Tomaszewska sketches an idyllic, though the surprisingly dynamic image

dziś tulipany  
wyrósł spod moich stop<sup>131</sup>

[today tulips  
sprouted from under my feet]

This is not a description of a garden or park. The third line is: “rozbity wazon” [a broken vase]. In one of the poems printed in the *Haiku* magazine we read:

z kwadratu szarego  
wiszą nitki srebrne

[from a gray square  
silver threads are hanging]

One could get the impression that is the ekphrasis of a lesser known contemporary installation. Yet the last verse offers a question: “czyj jest ten jesienny deszcz?” [whose is this autumn rain?].<sup>132</sup>

And two more tricky concepts of Jerzy Harasymowicz (the second one happens both on the plane of language and typography):<sup>133</sup>

Nic nie pada  
sam rośnie  
deszcz na dachu<sup>134</sup>

[Nothing is falling down  
it grows itself  
rain on the roof]

129 A poem by Artur Lewandowski, as quoted in *Wiśnie i wierzy* [Cherry Trees and Willows], p. 78.

130 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczy*, ps. 59.

131 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczy*, p. 23.

132 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 22 (a poem of Magda Marciniak). See also W. Kokoszka, *Haiku*, Siedlce, 2000, p. 55; *Haiku*, 1995, No. 4 (5), p. 14; H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego pisaku*, p. 22.

133 An interpretation provided by Michałowski – P. Michałowski, *Haiku wobec epifanii*, p. 138.

134 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 9. The poem can be contrasted with the strictly linguistic concept of Grzegorz Stańczyk based on polysemy (G. Stańczyk, *W pejzażu*, p. 17):

Pada	[It is falling down
I nie podnosi się,	And does not get up
Deszcz.	Rain.].

PAŁAC	[PALACE
Sześć pięter motyli chwije się nad trawnikiem. <sup>135</sup>	Six storeys of butterflies are wobbling above the lawn.]

Occasionally, however, conceptism becomes slightly blurred, and the tension between the “question” and “answer” turns out to be very subtle:

Pod dębem czarne diamenty, oczy jeża K. Agams <sup>136</sup>	[Under an oak black diamonds or eyes of a hedgehog]
Po rozlewisku płynie kulista łódka, Gniazdo perkoza K. Agams <sup>137</sup>	A spherical boat, floating on floodwater A grebe’s nest
Błady gość w chacie – przez nieszczelną podłogę zawiał powój W. Frąckiewicz <sup>138</sup>	[A pale guest in the cottage – through a leaking floor bindweed came in]

Contrary to popular belief,<sup>139</sup> it is this subtler gentler method, far removed from sharp paradoxes and conceptism, that turns out to be closer to the imagery of classic haiku, which assuredly capture apparent inconsistencies and ambiguities:

blossoming waves:  
has snow returned to water,  
flowering out of season?  
Bashō<sup>140</sup>

The authors of all the poems presented in this section succeeded in striking a balance between an intellectual game and the freshness of imagery. Ideas for

135 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 5.

136 K. Agams, *Chorał kniei* [Forest Plainsong], Kraków, 1996, p. 21.

137 K. Agams, *Chorał kniei*, p. 25.

138 See <http://serwisy.umcs.lublin.pl/w.frackiewicz/KS.htm>, accessed July 27, 2011.

139 For stereotypes in the Western perception of haiku, see Part 1.

140 Quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku: Selected Poems of Matsuo Bashō*, p. 21. Bashō’s early poem, still characteristic of the Teimon School.



de-automatizing the record of experience are crisp and not contrived, except that the vast majority are manifestly more conceptist than those known from classical haiku. The haiku-like (in some cases perhaps even epiphanic) “ah!” (*aware* in Japanese)<sup>141</sup> comes into life at the boundary between an intellectual puzzle and sensory experience communicated to the recipient.

All the miniatures presented above are within the limits of sensorial mimesis. Their authors try to shake the readers from their intellectual and sensory routine in order to put them (maybe already changed) back into known reality. This does not mean, however, that among Polish haiku-puzzles there are no banal, derivative or overelaborate texts, or, conversely, ones bordering on the abject. Now and then the desire to shock the reader with a controversial subject prevails over the poetic “work” itself,<sup>142</sup> sometimes the author simply fails to generate tension between the “question” and “answer” (especially if the “solution” is offered already in the first verse). Finally, there are post-avant-garde poems completely unconcerned with everyday experience.<sup>143</sup>

księżyc  
pępek na czarnym  
brzuchu  
nocy  
J. Malina<sup>144</sup>

[moon  
a navel on the black  
belly  
of the night]

Młody księżyc  
pomarańcza  
w szklance nieba  
Karolajna<sup>145</sup>

[young moon  
an orange  
in a glass of sky]

grzmoty  
niebo ma  
czkawkę  
Gutek<sup>146</sup>

[thunderclaps  
the sky  
has a hiccup]

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141 According to one hypothesis, the name of the aesthetic category of *aware* derives from shouts of amazement or emotion. See Part 1 of the study.

142 Szczotka kiblowa [The bog brush  
kusi widokiem tęczy beckons alluringly with a view of the rainbow  
– wąsate berło – mustachioed scepter]  
(S. Zwierzyński, *Sylaby na palecie*, p. 44).

143 See also poems-concepts of the avant-garde authors mentioned in the section ‘Japanese Miniatures by Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska (and Staff)?’.

144 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 22.

145 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 22.

146 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 22. It is worth noting the subtle graphical concept.

gwiazdy –  
 graffiti boga  
 A. Afanasjew<sup>147</sup>

[the stars  
 god’s graffiti]

### B. *Word-image Concepts*

A great number of Polish haiku were built on conceptist paintings, but without offering, as the poems discussed earlier, “flash” riddles. The reader’s task is to puzzle out – and sometimes even decode – the scene. However, conceptism does not arise merely from the “iconographic” content – on several occasions equally important is the manner of speaking. Let us have a look at this poem:

Na białym murze  
 w biały dzień czarny zarys  
 białego ptaka  
 L. Engelking<sup>148</sup>

[On a white wall  
 a black outline of a white bird  
 in white broad daylight]

Already at second glance, we can see that Engelking is playing with the text, offering a variation on haiku’s simple sensorial arrangement of figure–ground. The graphic crispness of the sketch was contrasted with the convoluted way of speaking. The short poem consists of three iterations of the adjective “white,” juxtaposed antithetically with a “black outline” of a bird. The strong contrast is also derived from the use of sound instrumentation: The “black outline” stands out against the “white background” of the poem also acoustically (each of the two words in the phrase “czarny zarys” contains the expressive, trilling “r” sound.) The miniature is a tricky verbal-pictorial puzzle – the effort of keeping track of various senses (for instance, the author employs a phraseme) and picturing the simple (despite everything!) image absorbs the reader so much, that in the process any potential “flash” epiphany may simply evaporate.

By contrast, let us have a look at a simple (also “white”) concept developed by Kreis:

patrzę przez okno  
 ileż nieba przybyło  
 razem ze śniegiem<sup>149</sup>

[I look out the window  
 how much bigger the sky has become  
 with snow]

147 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1 (2), p. 21.

148 L. Engelking, *I inne wiersze*, p. 90.

149 H. S. Kreis, *jak leci* [what’s up], Kraków, 2002, p. 10.

The key to the numerous compositions that are of interest to me here is the quintessentially haiku-like awareness of the potential inherent in the surprising combination or interpretation of phenomena, often related to the adoption of an unusual perspective on ordinary events:

nocne ekspresy uciekają przed świtem nieuniknionym L. Engelking <sup>150</sup>	[night express trains are fleeing from the inevitable dawn]
O zmierzchu niebo Zachmurzone komarami A. Regulski <sup>151</sup>	[At dusk the sky Clouded over with mosquitoes]
późną jesienią brzoza ze skraju lasu omal nie uleciała ku niebu gdy zerwały się gawrony jej czarne liście S. Kobielius <sup>152</sup>	[late autumn the birch-tree from the edge of the forest almost flew away to the sky when the rooks sprang up its black leaves]

This conceptist imagery is sometimes joined with metaphors which substantially modify senses:

zadzwończyły wiadra przy studni staruszka zaczyna doić ziemię K. Lisowski <sup>153</sup>	[buckets have clicked by the well an old woman starts milking the ground]
Twarz młodziutkiej łąki w trądziku kretowisk wysoki śpiew skowronków J. Gawroński <sup>154</sup>	[The face of a young meadow in the acne of molehills larks' high-pitched trill]

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150 L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*, p. 15.

151 A. Regulski, *Haiku, czyli zaśpiewy wyobraźni* [Haiku or The Songs of Imagination], Poznań, 2002, p. 29.

152 S. Kobielius, *Zaśpiewać światłem* [To Sing with Light], Warszawa, 1992, p. 19.

153 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 23.

154 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 6.

mikroskop judasz niezależnych galerii toczka i eugleny P. Michałowski <sup>155</sup>	[microscope-peephole of independent galleries of a volvox and euglena]
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From time to time, haiku is a record of some narrative, an anecdote underpinning the image or even one explaining it. Sometimes a fantastic narrative occurs:

góry cały czas za parawanem przymierzają nowe mgły K. Lisowski <sup>156</sup>	[the mountains unremittingly try on new mists behind the screen]
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firanka płąsa duchy panien znów przymierzają białe pantofelki K. Lisowski <sup>157</sup>	[curtain is swaying spirits of maidens are trying on white court shoes again]
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In the first poem, the metaphorical “story” does not disrupt sensorial mimesis, neither does it divert attention away from the “suchness” of the world; in the second one, the reader is dealing with the phantoms conjured up by the author rather than literally visualising the poem’s reality. Thus, the striving to achieve conceptist originality can undermine a haiku (just like the accumulation of too many sensorial impressions in the text), and as a result, the “little epiphany” will be superseded by the labyrinth of images and senses. Here’s another example:

po soplu splywa głaz na odwrócony szczyt pod niebo zaspy P. Michałowski <sup>158</sup>	[a boulder flows down an icicle to the inverted top of a sky-high snowdrift]
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The author encodes meanings and produces numerous concepts while losing haiku’s axiom – the poem is no longer a window on reality and becomes peculiarly self-reflexive.

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155 P. Michałowski, ‘Mikroświaty. Haiku ekologiczne’ [Microworlds. Ecological Haiku], in P. Michałowski, *Za czarnym wielokropkiem...* [Behind the Black Ellipsis], Szczecin, 1999, p. 61.

156 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 20.

157 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 11.

158 P. Michałowski, *Mikroświaty. Haiku ekologiczne*, p. 66.

Finally, it is worth noting that even the postulate of “feeling into” nature and non-human beings can be fulfilled in an extremely un-haiku-like way:<sup>159</sup> through strong anthropomorphization and not entirely intelligible semantic-visual games:

uśmiech kasztana w kolczastej rdzy przyłbicy drzewo lub kieszeń P. Michałowski <sup>160</sup>	[the smile of the chestnut in the barbed visor of rust a tree or a pocket]
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Let us contrast this with two other “chestnut” poems: a subtly metaphorical miniature by Bashō and a sensorially mimetic haiku of Agata Tuszynska:

departing autumn—  
with their hands outspread,  
chestnut burs  
Bashō<sup>161</sup>

jedyne oparcie brązowy kasztan w zaciśniętej dłoni A. Tuszynska <sup>162</sup>	[the only support a brown chestnut in a clenched hand]
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### C. Verbal Concepts

Verbal concepts employed by Polish haijins rely primarily on the use of polysemy and experiments with idioms. As might be expected, artistic effects are varied.

The following are two representative examples of the use of polysemous words:

Łagodny brzeg Zwierciadło wody Słuczone pyskiem krowy G. Stańczyk <sup>163</sup>	[A gentle bank, Watertable Shattered by a cow’s muzzle.]
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Przy starym płocie wygrzewają się kotki	[By the old wooden fence basking in the sun are kittens]
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159 For more on this subject, see Part 1.

160 P. Michałowski, *Mikroświaty. Haiku ekologiczne*, p. 65 (the cycle *Jesień* [Autumn]).

161 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 125.

162 A. Tuszynska, *Miejsce przy oknie*, p. 57.

163 G. Stańczyk, *W pejzażu*, p. 32. In Polish the phrase *zwierciadło wody* literally means “the mirror of water” – translator’s note.

wiosennej bazi  
T. Huk<sup>164</sup>

of spring catkins]

The first line takes the reader by surprise. While speaking about the surface of water, in Polish literally “the mirror of water,” the poet deceptively returns to the basic meaning of the word “mirror.” The text assumes a synaesthetic character: in the idyllic landscape, we can hear the surface of glass/water being broken. This brings to mind the frog jumping into a pond in Bashō’s poem, where the splash of water is loud and non-onomatopoeic<sup>165</sup> (but even more differently than in Grzegorz Stańczyk’s poem). I have presented the second poem with the purpose of contrasting seemingly equivalent devices. The use of enjambment to bring out polysemy is pointless – when stale and banal concepts are employed, the surprise effect is really negligible (“kittens” – “catkins”). This does not mean, however, that haiku cannot be used to ingeniously dust off the trivial and lexicalized:

jezioro ziewa  
tak wcześniej już harczą  
koty na wierzbie  
H. S. Kreis<sup>166</sup>

[the lake is yawning  
capering about so early are pussies  
on a willow]

gawron na lampie  
– pod niebem

[a rook on the lamp  
– under the sky]

próbuje wykrakać śnieg  
B. Brandys<sup>167</sup>

trying to croak snow]

Haiku-like use of polysemy can also rely on a simultaneous actualization of the literal and symbolic meaning of a word (e.g. “darkness”):

śnieg  
pod tą bielą  
tyle ciemności  
marcel<sup>168</sup>

[snow  
under this whiteness  
so much darkness]

The use of polysemy frequently leads to the very radical intellectualisation of a text:

164 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 9.

165 See the section *Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku*, p. 19.

166 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 19.

167 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1 (2), p. 14.

168 See <http://bezsennik.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2010-01-01T00:00:00%2B01:00&updated-max=2011-01-01T00:00:00%2B01:00&max-results=50>, accessed June 5, 2012.

ramki zieleni	[frames of greenery
zlizują deszcz z chodnika	lick the rain off the pavement
zaszachowane	checked]
P. Michałowski <sup>169</sup>	

Michałowski does not so much use “existing” ambiguity of words, as wittily creates it, tapping into the etymology of one of the lexemes used. The animalized strips of greenery were “checked,” that is arranged in the shape of a chessboard and at the same time kept in check (their existence is limited by concrete slabs). The text calls for the work of the intellect rather than the effort of the heart and senses.<sup>170</sup> Urszula Kozioł goes even further, “suspending” the entire poem on a single parenthetically written, ambiguous participle:

Alpy	[The Alps
pod ścianą nieba	by the wall of the sky
pijany (zawiany) horyzont	the drunk (plastered) horizon
runął jak długi.	measured its length.]
U. Kozioł <sup>171</sup>	

Let us also examine several examples of a haiku-like use of phrasemes. An idiom can sometimes be one of many stylistic devices in a poem:

Niebo uchylone nad targowiskiem	[The sky ajar above the marketplace
mech słońca na powiekach	the sun’s moss on the eyelids
gołębie podkradają groch	pigeons are stealing away peas]
J. Gawroński <sup>172</sup>	

The text begins with “the sky ajar” at a rather unpoetic location (marketplace) (In Polish the phrase “niebo uchylone” is an allusion to the idiom “uchylać nieba,” literally “to open the heavens for someone,” which means to do everything for somebody). What follows is a series of linguistic and visual surprises – the sensorial, ambiguous, metaphorical “sun’s moss on the eyelids” and the slightly alliterative, simple, mimetic phrase (“gołębie podkradają **groch**”/pigeons are stealing

169 P. Michałowski, *Mikroświaty. Haiku ekologiczne*, p. 62 (the sequence *Wiosna* [Spring]).

170 The following highly simple (too simple to intrigue the reader?) text by Leon Leszek Szkutnik is the artistic reverse of Michałowski’s poem:

plyty chodnika	[paving slabs
źdźbła trawy	blades of grass
pomiędzy	in between].

171 The sequence *Pestki deszczu VI*, the collection *Wielka pauza*, 1996; quoted in U. Kozioł, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 400.

172 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 24.

away peas). The stylistic richness does not eclipse the sensorial schemas, quite the reverse, it intensifies (more so than in a prototypical haiku) and condenses them. Rather than being the centre of the text, the idiom partakes in the creation of a deftly delineated, highly sensorial landscape.

Sometimes a modified phraseme can lie at the heart of a haiku. The following is Danuta Wawiłow’s proposition:

ptaki	[with their morning chirping
porannym ćwierkaniem	birds
wiercą dziury w szybach <sup>173</sup>	bore holes in the windowpanes]

This witty, affirmative poem refers to the colloquial Polish expression “wiercić dziurę w brzuchu,” which literally “to bore a hole in someone’s stomach,” meaning to pester, badger someone. “Boring holes in the windowpanes” masterfully conveys the intensity, relentlessness and nuisance of bird trills outside the window. As much and as little.

On occasions, the phraseme employed in the text does not lend itself to clear interpretation:

na środku torów	[in the middle of the tracks
całująca się para	a kissing couple
pierwsza jaskółka	the first swallow]
E. Tomaszewska <sup>174</sup>	

Does the poem deal with a bird flying over a couple, or is the sight of lovers the “first swallow” heralding spring (changes?)? Hard to say. The poem combines both interpretive potencies and despite its fundamentally un-haiku-like theme (love) it neatly fits into the spectrum of haiku’s semantic ambiguity.<sup>175</sup>

With its de-automatizing effect, the use of phrasemes or proverbs can also be fraught with pitfalls. Numerous examples of failed, banal haiku can be found in the work of Antoni Regulski. These poems can only be redeemed by an interpretation aimed at bringing out the almost nonsensical humour, akin to that known from the texts of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.<sup>176</sup>

173 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 22. See also poem of Mariusz Parlicki with lavish use of phrasemes: [http://www.parlicki.pl/Podszepty\\_chwili\\_-\\_haiku](http://www.parlicki.pl/Podszepty_chwili_-_haiku), accessed August 4, 2016.

174 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczący*, p. 11.

175 See the section ‘Uncertainty, Ambiguity’.

176 See the chapter ‘Haiku-Blague or “Freestyle Haiku?” – The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’.



Krecia robota A ziemia się wzrusza <sup>177</sup>	[Moles work And the earth is moved.]
Na widok bociana Uciekły żaby Po rozum do wody <sup>178</sup>	[Seeing the stork The frogs jumped through the hoops Into water]
Lato w ogrodzie Mój przyjaciel Wpuszcza mnie w maliny <sup>179</sup>	[Summer in the garden My friend Leads me up the path]

#### D. Acoustic Concepts

Surprisingly few Polish haiku offer distinct sound patterning that becomes the stylistic “dominant” of poems.<sup>180</sup> Some haikuists are certain that quite numerous classical seventeen-syllable poems make use of alliteration, homophony, supporting (and complicating) the semantics with sound patterns. Perhaps Polish authors do not want acoustic games to eclipse the recording of sensorial experience and to take control of their poems. In any case, in the most phonostylistically distinct Polish haiku, occurring most commonly are subtle auditory embellishments in the form of initial and intra-word alliterations:

Śpi salamandra w pajęczynie paproci okruchy słońca. J. Brzozowski <sup>181</sup>	[A salamander is sleeping in the cobweb of ferns specks of sun.]
w jasnym pokoju całe stosy twych listów ciemno od liter U. Zybura <sup>182</sup>	[in a bright room whole piles of your epistles it is dark from letters]

177 A. Reguński, *Haiku, czyli zaśpiewy wyobraźni*, p. 72. [In Polish the phrase “krecia robota,” literally, ‘the work of moles,’ means ‘intrigue,’ ‘scheming’. Translator’s note].

178 A. Reguński, *Haiku, czyli...*, p. 58.

179 A. Reguński, *Haiku, czyli...*, p. 73.

180 One of the few examples – that, however, are far removed from the prototype of the genre – is Radosław Nowakowski’s collection *Hajki-bajki*, which I discuss in the part ‘A “Haiku” Miscellany’ (chapter “Haiku-miroślady,” or a Librarian Gloss). This is where I also mention sound poems of Pedro Xisto. For visual poems among Polish haiku (“haiku”), see Part 7 of the book.

181 J. Brzozowski, E. Ledóchowicz, *Łódka z papieru. Haiku* [Paper Boat. Haiku], Kraków, 1996, p. 52; emphasis added.

182 U. Zybura, *Haiku*, Kalisz, 1998, p. 44; emphasis added.

Za oknem  
nadchodząca burza  
**kołuje nad kościołem**  
J. Gawroński<sup>183</sup>

[Outside the window  
the approaching storm  
circles above the church]

W kokonie burzy  
pochylony  
nad **wiatrakami wiosel**  
J. Gawroński<sup>184</sup>

[In the cocoon of the storm  
bending  
over the windmill of oars]

On occasions, although relatively infrequently, the concentration of alliterations, onomatopoeias, and words imitating motion calls to mind dense webs of sounds woven by Julian Przyboś or Jan Brzękowski.<sup>185</sup> However, sound patterns do not eclipse the meaning – and sensorial mimesis:

**Wiosna rozczesywała**  
koki **wierzb wietrznym**  
**grzebieniem**  
K. Agams<sup>186</sup>

[Spring was combing out  
willows' buns with a windy  
comb]

Gdy wokół zamieć  
to **szreń trzeszczy szurpata**  
**strużyny śniegu**  
S. Zwierzyński<sup>187</sup>

[When the blizzard hits  
it's the coarse hoar frost crackling  
shavings of snow]

**sierpniowe żniwa**  
**wiatr unosi do nieba**  
**zzęte źdźbła żyta**  
E. Tomaszewska<sup>188</sup>

[August harvest  
the wind lifts rye stalks  
to the sky]

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183 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 73; emphasis added.

184 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, emphasis added.

185 B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu?” *Koncepcje dźwięku w poezji polskiego futuryzmu*, Wrocław, 2008, pp. 531–40.

186 K. Agams, *Chorał kniei*, p. 14; emphasis added. Cf.:

spring rain –  
blowing back and forth like straw coats,  
river willows

Bashō, as quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, p. 35.

187 S. Zwierzyński, *Sylaby na palecie*, p. 79.

188 E. Tomaszewska, *Jeszcze dzień błyszczący*, p. 39; emphasis added.

pod ciężkim słońcem  
wz**ó**rza zbo**ż**a żniwiar**z**e  
gną śniade gr**z**biety  
J. S. Pasierb<sup>189</sup>

[under the heavy sun  
hills of corn reapers  
bending their swarthy backs]

Poems of Polish haijins feature relatively few paronomasias. The use of polyptoton (which in the poem cited below is supported by a rigorous lexical repetition) and pseudoetymology – especially in the poem-forming function – are exceptions from the haiku rules:

**p**ada i **p**ada  
między **k**roplą a **k**roplą  
**k**ropla  
M. Banaszekwicz<sup>190</sup>

[the rain keeps falling  
between a drop and a drop  
a drop]

zapalam światło  
w pokoju aż **ciem**no  
od **ciem**  
M. Banaszekwicz<sup>191</sup>

[I turn on the light  
the room is thick  
with moths]

Providing an interesting counterpoint to the practice of Polish haikuists are procedures employed by some Western haijins, who are less afraid of phonostylistic experiments, often combining with versificatory and typographic innovations. Let us have a look at a text by Gary Snyder:

**‘How’**

small birds flit  
from bough  
to bough to bough  
to bough to bough to bough<sup>192</sup>

The text-forming operations on sounds that deeply influence the semantic plane can, however, considerably move the poem away from the haiku prototype. This is the case in the conceptist, sound-patterned, neological ‘baiku’ (definitely not haiku) by Maria Cyranowicz:

‘baiku’

[FABLEAIKU]

skulone embrionalnie

fetally curled

189 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 39; emphasis added.

190 See <http://budzenie-jasna.blogspot.com/>, accessed June 4, 2012.

191 See <http://jasna-haiku.blogspot.com/>, accessed June 4, 2012.

192 As quoted in J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 214.

udaję wciąż poczwarkę  
 przepotwarzam się<sup>193</sup>

I still pretend to be a chrysalis  
 metamorphosing]

Naturally, it is not paronomasia alone (“poczwarkę” – “przepotwarzam”/chrysalis – metamorphosing) that is un-haiku-like here. Of essential importance here is semantics that is co-determined by sound devices. It would be worthwhile looking into the problems of the construction of meaning in Polish haiku from a yet broader perspective.

### III. Into the Depths of Meanings

In the chapter that follows, I will concentrate first and foremost on semantic issues. I will begin with the complex questions of ambiguity, which is of vital importance to haiku. Subsequently, I will go on to analyse subtle transgressions of haiku taboos (eroticism, death) and, finally, references to East Asian topoi and religious inspirations.

#### 1. Uncertainty, Ambiguity

A crucial way to revitalize haiku outside the Orient is the use of all sorts of obliqueness. As a matter of course, the subtle and discrete exploitation of uncertainty is not tantamount to “noisy” conceptism.<sup>194</sup> The haiku discussed here are very close to their East-Asian prototypes, which make frequent use of ambiguities latent in the structure of language and poetry and in the very systems of notation.<sup>195</sup>

Let us examine several poems:

staw  
 zmarszczone odbicie  
 ze słońcem na ramieniu  
 L. Rozmus<sup>196</sup>

[a pond  
 a crinkled reflection  
 with the sun in my mouth]

bezludna wydma  
 ślad stóp na piasku grzebie

[a desert dune  
 a footprint in the sand buries]

193 From the collection *neutralizacje* [neutralizations], 1997, as quoted in *Gada!zabić? pa]n[tologia neolingwizmu* [To Finish off!the Reptile?, Pa]n[thology of Neologism], eds. M. Cyranowicz, P. Kozioł, Warszawa, 2005, p. 16; emphasis added.

194 See, for example, R. L. Tener, ‘Richard Wright’s Haiku: “This Other World,”’ in *Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism*, p. 149.

195 The ambiguities of classical haiku are discussed in more detail in Part 1.

196 L. Rozmus, ‘Haiku i sumi-e,’ *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 15.

podpis powietrza  
P. Michałowski<sup>197</sup>

the air's signature]

In both poems, the visual *kireji* (the caesura dividing the text into units-images, which I see as the Western equivalent of the Japanese cutting syllable/word called *kireji*)<sup>198</sup> occurs after the first verse, sketching the background for unobvious poetic expressive devices. Standing out in the poem of Rozmus is the phrase “ze słońcem na ramieniu” (literally “with the sun on my shoulder”), which in Polish echoes the idiom “mieć duszę na ramieniu,” literally “to have one’s soul on one’s shoulder,” which in English means “to have a heart in one’s mouth.” A shoulder can carry (no longer idiomatically) a backpack, a bag or, more fantastically, a bundle or habituated bird. On accounts of the connotations of the word “sun” – and in contradistinction to the senses of the phraseme in question – we are inclined to read the last verse of the haiku as affirmative, strong, positive (the sun seems “habituated” or even tamed by the protagonist). The image’s explication is straightforward – the sun is most likely located just behind the figure examining his/her reflection in the pond. The text resorts to one more ambiguity. How are we to interpret the “crinkled reflection?” Is it the surface of water that has wrinkles or a man’s face? If the protagonist is an old man, he is full of strength and stamina, since... he has the sun on his shoulder. To see a grimace of anger, pain and disbelief in the “crinkled reflection” would be less legitimate. Rozmus leaves the reader with a distinct image and unfathomable semantic uncertainty.

Alternatively, Michałowski once again constructs a maze of meanings. The initial “desert dune” is already intriguing – an echo of the lexicalized “desert island.” The reader’s attention is directed to alliterations (“śląd stóp na piasku,” “**podpis powietrza**”) and the very metaphor of the final verse. Finally, the syntactical ambiguity of the last two lines is something of a puzzle. Is it the wind that covers the footprints, or does the foot destroy the wind’s signature on the dune? Most likely, the wind effaces the traces human presence (footprints can hardly be taken as the grammatical agent and the dune is not populated anyway). The syntactic obliqueness puts the reader off, but it compellingly corresponds with haiku’s convolutions. It is likewise relatively subtle in comparison with the following extreme example of the use of syntactic uncertainty (further reinforced by an enjambment):

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197 P. Michałowski, *Mikroświaty. Haiku ekologiczne*, p. 63 (the sequence *Lato* [Summer]).

198 The use of a visual *kireji* (cutting the text into visual parts) is a very significant and often-overlooked element of the poetics of Western haiku. *Kireji* and visual *kireji* are discussed in more detail in Part 1 of the book. The category of *kireji* is deftly employed in Mariusz Bartosiak’s analyses (M. Bartosiak, “Szelest kwitnących wiśni” w najnowszej poezji polskiej. Korespondencje z klasyczną estetyką japońską’ [“The Rustle of Blooming Cherries” in the Most Recent Polish Poetry. Correspondences with Classic Japanese Aesthetics], in *Nowa poezja polska. Twórcy – tematy – motywy*, eds. T. Cieślak, K. Pietrych, Kraków, 2009, pp. 513–22).

w kosodrzewinie	[in creeping pines
ścieżka oko ciągnie grań	a path eye pulls the ridge
wyżej już biała	higher up it is already white]
S. Cichowicz <sup>199</sup>	

Ambiguity also underlies some of the haiku by Pasierb:

pole jęczmienia	[a field of barley
w słońcu lipca grzeje sierść	in July sun warming its fur
złote zwierzątko <sup>200</sup>	a little golden animal]

The poem “captivates” the reader with its intriguing semantic uncertainty and intense, unobvious sensoriality (the feeling of warmth, almost tangible, the life-like texture of animal-vegetal fur, and finally colour, specified at the end, but in practice present already in the first verse with the “field of barley”). The text can be read in two ways – the visual *kireji* may occur after the first or second verse. A “metaphorical reading” impels us to recognise the barley field itself, accordingly followed by the *kireji*, as the little golden animal basking in the sun. Images can also be separated: here is a field of barley – the background for a small creature nearby.

And here is another miniature composed by Pasierb:

tuż nad pagórkim	[just above the hill
przycupnęło mdłe niebo	the dull sky crouched down
w którą iść stronę	which way to go]
J. S. Pasierb <sup>201</sup>	

Assuredly, the poem’s caesura occurs here after its second verse. The first impression is that the question posed at the end of the text concerns a man looking at the hill, but... maybe it is the sky – by virtue of being animalized (it “crouched down”) – that is pondering its next step? In some measure, analogous to my inquiries are the deliberations of Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda, who in the context of *kireji* is trying to find out in

one of Bashō’s *hokku*: ‘Stopped awhile / inside a waterfall— / summer retreat begins’ – is it the poet that stopped and took refuge inside the waterfall or is it the summer retreat shyly crouching there to rest before continuing on its way?<sup>202</sup>

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199 S. Cichowicz, *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku? 67 haiku*, Warszawa, 1997, p. 31.

For visual-verbal patterning, see Part 7.

200 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 36.

201 J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, p. 74.

202 A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Od tłumacza,’ in *Haiku*, [1983], p. 9.

Joanna Bielska-Krawczyk writes simply, yet intriguingly vaguely:

Listopadowy dzień	[A November day
zimne ręce	All Saints'
Wszystkich Świętych <sup>203</sup>	cold hands]

Whose hands are cold? And why? Does the poem refer to hands of people visiting a cemetery – as, naturally, November days can be very cold? Or maybe these are the hands of the saints themselves, because they are long dead (and may be unconcerned with human affairs)? In other words, how juxtapositional is this text and where the visual *kireji* should be placed: after the first and the second verse (as the uppercase letters in the name of the Christian festival would suggest)? Or perhaps only after the first line? This haiku is “suspended” on ambiguity, which becomes the underpinning of its reasonably skilful literary structure. Leon Leszek Szkutnik’s semantically similar poem could be analysed correspondingly:

pusty cmentarz	[empty cemetery
tyle myśli	so many thoughts
najbliższych <sup>204</sup>	of loved ones]

The following are two poems by Kreis:

złoty pajęczek	[a golden little spider
na stygnącej nitce	on a cooling silk thread
lata oblicza <sup>205</sup>	counting years]

na śnieżnej wydmie	[on a snowy dune
skrzydlate ziarna lipy	winged linden seeds
zaloty ważek <sup>206</sup>	dragonflies' courtship]

Does the first haiku refer to “faces of summer” or to calculations (suggested by the homophonic pun? (The phrase “lata oblicza” can also mean “faces of summer”). The text is not a riddle, it does not call for a solution that solves and completes the poem’s image (and meaning). The ambiguity does not efface the multisensory momentary image (despite the fact that the last verse suggests the perspective of years!). In the second poem, uncertainty is even more pronounced – do the linden seeds resemble dragonflies (this might be a distant echo of Bashō’s pepper pod transformed into a dragonfly)? Are we dealing here with both dragonflies and

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203 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 4 (5), p. 14.

204 L. L. Szkutnik, *W konwencji haiku* [In Haiku Style], p. 44.

205 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 36.

206 H. S. Kreis, *jak leci*, p. 76.

spinning seeds floating on two “wings?” Finally, why is the dune snowy? Is it the colour of sand? Or maybe it is winter and the floating linden seeds made their way here at an unusual time?

And yet another example:

jesień	[autumn
coraz więcej	more and more
żółtych karteczek	yellow sticky notes]
J. Wnorowski <sup>207</sup>	

At the beginning and further on (up to the penultimate word!), the poem seems to offer a highly conventional description of autumn. Slips of paper, in place of leaves, transfer the text to an entirely different semantic plane. At this juncture, autumn appears to be synonymous with old age, the time when self-adhesive slips of paper ever more frequently are needed to note down things that easily slip one’s memory. Yet, the sticky notes can also be read as a metaphorical designation of leaves, and autumn precisely as autumn. This uncertainty draws attention to this miniature, as well as interestingly refreshing the conventional metaphor of old age-autumn.<sup>208</sup>

The ambiguities of classical haiku never called into question the general ambience of the text, its mood and modality.<sup>209</sup> However, this type of disruption is detectable in some Polish verses, for instance in Haber’s poem below:

Twój list	[your letter
litonosz	the postman
ręce rozgrzewa	warming up his hands]
F. Haber <sup>210</sup>	

Why is the postman warming his hands? Simply because they are cold? Because they became numb from holding the letter? Or maybe he precisely warms them by holding a letter full of warm words? We cannot know. The situation is

207 See <http://antologia.haiku.pl/node?page=3>, accessed February 7, 2011.

208 The world of nature and one of man are compellingly combined, in the context of autumn and old age, by Irena Iris Szewczyk (as quoted in *Wiśnie i wierzby*, p. 74):  
 znów tego roku [this year again  
 przyszła jesień – na dłoni autumn has come – on the palm of your hand  
 brązowa plamka a small brown patch.]

209 That said, the modern Western reader is not always capable of reading haiku modalities in line with authors’ intentions (see, for example, the subsection ‘Death’ in this part of the book).

210 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 148.



so indeterminate that the poem actually “loses its mood” – it is not easy to tell whether it talks about joy, sadness or anxiety. Something hardly imaginable in classical haiku.

The verses cited so far employed ambiguities without disrupting sensorial mimesis. Let us have a glance at an extreme case:

kiedy zjechała	[when she came down
we wnętrzu nocnej windy	inside the night lift
cisza po gwiazdach	silence after the stars]
L. Engelking <sup>211</sup>	

How this text should be read? The author would have made things so much easier had he used punctuation! Where should we place the comma (or, in other words, where the visual *kireji* would stand)? At the end of the first verse? Or maybe only at the end of the last verse – maybe the poem is broken-off and requires completion in the form of some latter-day *haikai-no-renga*? Alternatively, should *kireji* occur after the second line? Hard to say. Just as it is difficult to figure out what experiences constitute the context in which the poem’s situation should be read. The protagonist (a woman?) comes across as a mysterious, unusual person that is active at night – her presence somehow evokes the stars (or maybe she is simply a film or music star?). The text of Engelking – while highly intriguing (“silence after the stars” is especially thought-provoking) – seems too enigmatic, too vague semantically (where should *kireji* be placed?), too abstracted from life to be a legitimate heir to classical haiku.

## 2. Intimacy, Eroticism

Intimacy and eroticism are other crucial semantic fields of Polish haiku. Let us reference one more poem by Engelking:

tam droga mleczna	[over there – Milky Way
a tutaj ty w tej budce	here – you in this phone
telefonicznej <sup>212</sup>	booth]

The poet surprisingly frames the picture: we see a telephone booth against the background of the Milky Way. The galactic perspective seems to intensify the solitariness of someone boxed up in a small booth and trying to make contact with an invisible interlocutor. The poem’s speaker – in control of the whole scene, capable

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211 L. Engelking, *Autobus do hotelu Cytera* [Bus to the Cythera Hotel], Warszawa, 1979, p. 27.

212 L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*, p. 22. Originally published in L. Engelking, *Autobus do hotelu Cytera*, p. 22; reprinted in L. Engelking, *I inne wiersze*, p. 100.

of adopting a cosmic perspective<sup>213</sup> – tenderly lavishes attention on someone who had taken refuge in microscopic space. The text grips the reader, piques his/her curiosity (who is the person from the booth, what his/her connection with the speaker, does he/she call to settle some daily matters or because he/she is going through a personal crisis?). Classical haiku – even though they can indeed be regarded as open micro-texts<sup>214</sup> – did not burden the reader with such a heavy load of ambiguity.

Japanese miniatures often made use of a wide perspective encompassing vast spaces, often contrasting them with close-up views of small fragments. In Engelking’s *Haiku własne i cudze*, a book provoking literary dialogues, the “telephone” miniature was preceded exactly by a text by Bashō offering a similarly cosmic image:

morze wzburzone  
i wyspa sado w dali  
i rzeka niebios<sup>215</sup>

[choppy sea  
and Sado Island in the distance  
and the river of heavens]

The scene presented in Engelking’s poems disrupts our normal reading habits. However, in the light of the genre’s tradition, this is by no means unusual. Decidedly more intriguing is the indefinite “you” on which, despite the vast perspective of the presentation, the subject’s gaze is focused. Nothing is explained, the poem seems to leave things unsaid, as if it were suspended in anticipation of a verb clarifying the message. This brings to mind the formula used by Anatol Stern in one of the first Polish texts consciously referring to haiku: “CAN’T GO ANY FURTHER” (because the literary form adapted from the distant culture does not make it possible).<sup>216</sup>

In classical haiku, people were rather infrequent guests.<sup>217</sup> Man would sometimes be an anonymous figure in the landscape, a patch of colour against the

213 Engelking is not averse to adopting such an all-embracing perspective in his haiku writing. See the poem discussed above, ‘night express trains...’

214 See Part 1.

215 L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*, p. 22 (and L. Engelking, *Autobus do hotelu Cytera*, p. 10). One English translation (J. Beichman, *Masaoka Shiki. His Life and Works*, Boston-Worcester, 2002, p. 39) features the Milky Way. Engelking may have decided not to use the proper name on purpose (because of his intention to set these texts beside each other?), and instead literally translated the Japanese word “Amanogawa” (“the river of heaven,” which means the Milky Way). Wiesław Kotański, in turn, opted for the “river of stars” (W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec haiku,’ *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 14).

216 See the chapter “Hay-kay” by Stern, *Tanka Poems by Iwaszkiewicz*.’

217 Ueda defines Bashō’s poetry as “unhuman,” contrasting this attitude with the “inhuman” one – M. Ueda, *Zeami*, p. 44. People appeared much more often in Buson’s poems, but even in this case, their number was far from impressive.

background of a field, mountain, path.<sup>218</sup> If a flesh-and-blood, personalized protagonist or addressee did appear, the *haibun* prose<sup>219</sup> that accompanied a given poetic miniature often provided information about his/her identity and connection with the poet. Therefore, the relation between the protagonist and the speaking “I” did not arouse additional emotions on the part of the reader. The speaker revealed the world of his/her personal (yet at the same time largely universal) sense experiences, invited the reader’s participation in the poem but did not give insight into intimate relationships. Naturally, exceptions would also occur here,<sup>220</sup> as exemplified by this haiku by Bashō, from his *haibun* collection *Knapsack Notebook*:

the faces of the fishers  
were seen first—  
poppy flowers<sup>221</sup>

The journal mentions only poppies and fishers’ huts. Who were the fishers? We do not know. Likewise, the poems by Engelking strongly foregrounds an unspecified relationship. In both cases, the possibility of the special, perhaps even erotic intimacy cannot be excluded.

Engelking’s poem is subtly aligned with haiku’s diction of intimacy. The interpretation suggested here is further validated by the very construction of the collection, in which the poem was first published. Published in 1979, *Autobus do hotelu Cytera*<sup>222</sup> is an extremely erudite book, a brilliant display of the young poet’s craftsmanship (he was a twenty-four years old student of Polish philology).<sup>223</sup> The volume saw print merely a year after Stanisław Grochowiak’s *Haiku-images*, in the early days of Poland’s fascination with the Japanese form.<sup>224</sup> Throughout the

218 The following is a representative example from Bashō:

first snow—  
the colour of the knapsack  
of a wandering priest  
(M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 118).

219 A form popular in Japan, combining prose (in many cases a diary or travel journal) with haiku poetry. See Parts 1 and 7.

220 A number of subtly erotic classical haiku are referenced in Part 1 of the book.

221 Matsuo Bashō, *Knapsack Notebook*, in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Journey: The Literary Prose of Matsuo Bashō*, p. 41.

222 L. Engelking, *Autobus do hotelu Cytera*.

223 Interesting dialogues between Japanese and Western haiku translated by Engelking (Amy Lowell, Richard Wright, Jorge Luis Borges) and the haiku composed by the poet can be followed in the collection L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*.

224 The beginnings of “haikuing” in the Polish publishing world (the publication of collections offering a relatively large number of poems explicitly, for example paratextually, referring to haiku) is thus traced back to two artistic propositions that have remained artistically compelling to this day: the widely noticed – and commented upon – collection of Grochowiak, *Haiku-images*, which considerably modified the Oriental form (see the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey’), as

book, the author navigates between pastiche, travesty, and translation.<sup>225</sup> At the same time, he engages in intercultural dialogues that are highly spectacular (the use of forms derived from distant cultural universes) and supremely subtle (intercultural discussions are never expressed openly). Through the poems’ ordering and juxtaposition, intertextual links are forged to the volume’s very composition.<sup>226</sup> The reader is looking for reasons behind the surprising and intentional, evident at the first reading, juxtapositions. The text [Tam droga mleczna...] stands side by side with the *sestina*, *Tryumf Pana. Rozmowa telefoniczna* [Lord’s Triumph. A Phone Conversation],<sup>227</sup> which is a formally masterful (the consistent use of the Provençal *sestina*) record of a conversation carrying distinct erotic connotations. At first, one may have an impression that the *sestina* – like poems following the *hokku* in *haikai-no-renga* – is a continuation of a previous stanza and transports us into the telephone booth that previously had been seen from the outside. The first verse reads: “halo słuchaj więc kto mówi” [Hello so listen who’s speaking]. The following lines, however, turn out to be hugely vague, convoluted semantically, syntactically, and interculturally. And extremely un-haiku-like:

kiedy driopy syn ją ujrzał  
i usłyszał śmiechu strumień  
jakże pragnął by się wplątał  
we włos jego brody gęsty  
strumień lepiej pocałunki<sup>228</sup>

[when driop’s son saw her  
and heard the stream of laughter  
how he wished the stream  
got tangled in the hair of his thick  
beard kisses would be better]

---

well as the inconspicuous and intriguingly intertextual *Autobus* by young Leszek Engelking, a book that came close to the defining characteristics of haiku poetics. See also chapter 3 in Part 2 of the book.

- 225 Writing about Engelking’s volume, Andrzej Kosmowski observed: “Engelking is interested in various poetic genres. From the sonnet, so popular in our literature [...], through the Provençal *sestina* [...], to the gazal rooted in the Middle East, [...] and Japanese seventeen-syllable haiku. [...] The author tries to confront himself with the world of old literary forms, their vocabulary and phraseology. Very often these conventions are distant not only in time but also in space, as Engelking eagerly looks for models in the rich treasure trove of Asian culture, which has never found a substantial reflection in our literature, has not taken root in the cultural awareness of the nation. [...] Thanks to his astonishing erudition coupled with considerable verse-making skill, Engelking managed to achieve impressive imitations of the achievements of old masters” (A. Kosmowski, [A blurb on the flap], in L. Engelking, *Autobus do hotelu Cytera*).
- 226 Describing specific inter-textual dialogues in Engelking’s book would be out of place here (it should be added that not all neighbouring pairs of poems are engaged in this dialogue). Suffice it to mention that contact is often established on the basis of a similar topic, a theme that is differently developed in forms with a different cultural background.

227 L. Engelking, *Autobus do hotelu Cytera*, p. 23.

228 L. Engelking, *Autobus do hotelu Cytera*, p. 23.

The erotic intimacy suggested in the sestina has an impact on the haiku preceding this text. What's more, the juxtaposition of both old forms, which practically were hitherto absent from Polish poetry, produces a stunning effect. For today's reader, only the sestina comes across as an artificial and overelaborate composition, to the point of being an erudite technical exercise. Conversely, the haiku – although strictly determined by a rigorous verification – can be seen as a plain form of expression, free from the strictures of conventions and ideally suited to today's needs.

Naturally, Engelking is not the only Polish poet addressing the problems of interpersonal intimacy in haiku. His early haiku shown above is a particularly delicate and elaborate sample. The ambiguous “eroticizing” miniature by Haber could be described in a slightly similar fashion:

Spłoszyłem słowika  
choćaż tyle irysów  
nas osłania<sup>229</sup>

[I scared away the nightingale  
even though so many irises  
screen us]

The textual “we” does not necessarily suggest two people tied by a close intimate relationship, but this interpretation cannot be excluded. Likewise in the following lines: the poems' addressees do not have to be the speakers' lovers, their presence (or absence), sensorially experienced by the subject, to some degree seems to be tinged with sexual overtones:

w czerwonej sukni  
przez rzepak brnęłaś z dłońmi  
ukwieconymi  
S. Cichowicz<sup>230</sup>

[in a red dress  
you waded through rape with your hands  
beflowered]

zza malw lusterko  
w jej dłoniach pochylone  
błysło i zgasło  
S. Cichowicz<sup>231</sup>

[behind hollyhocks a pocket mirror  
tilted in her hands  
flashed and dimmed]

W ciemnych norkach twych źrenic  
śpią złote trzmiele.  
U. Koziół<sup>232</sup>

[In the dark burrows of your pupils  
golden bumblebees are sleeping.]

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229 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 4.

230 S. Cichowicz, *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku?*, p. 13.

231 S. Cichowicz, *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku?*, p. 21.

232 The sequence *Pestki deszczu VI*, in the collection *Wielka pauza*, 1996; as quoted in U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 397.

CICHE, STRZELISTE

[SILENT, SOARING

Ciche, strzeliste  
wczesnojesienne światło  
rozbłysło za oknem.

Silent, soaring  
early autumn light  
glowed past the window.

Tęsknię za tobą.  
R. Krynicki<sup>233</sup>

I miss you.]

The “eroticizing” haiku also contain suggestions of reading nature through the prism of human sexuality or transferring the speaker’s own strong sexual emotions into nature:

Obejmuje mnie  
wyniosła sosna  
szpilki we włosach  
F. Haber<sup>234</sup>

[A soaring pine  
embraces me  
pins in hair]

Wczesnym rankiem  
w objęciach jeziora  
rozchylona trzcina  
F. Haber<sup>235</sup>

[Early morning  
in the arms of the lake  
parted reeds]

Rozplata warkocz  
potok na jej łydkach  
wzburzony  
F. Haber<sup>236</sup>

[Undoing plaits  
a stream on her calves  
agitated]

Twoje uda rozchylone  
nad rzeką senną  
plusnął deszcz  
F. Haber<sup>237</sup>

[Your thighs parted  
above the sleepy river  
the rain splashed]

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233 From the collection *Kamień, szron* [Stone, Hoarfrost] (the cycle *Trzy wiersze tylko dla ciebie* [Three Poems Only for You]), 2004, in R. Krynicki, *Wiersze wybrane* [Selected Poems], Kraków, 2009, p. 318. English translation R. Krynicki, *Magnetic Point: Selected Poems 1968–2014*, transl. by C. Cavanagh, New York, 2017, n.p.

234 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 33.

235 F. Haber, *W ogrodziestów*, p. 41.

236 F. Haber, *W ogrodziestów*, p. 48.

237 F. Haber, *W ogrodziestów*, p. 95.

<p>Wygrałaś wojnę pocałunków – noc          obnażyła piersi          wpłynęliśmy na ocean trawy          J. Gawroński<sup>238</sup></p>	<p>[You won the war of kisses – night          bared breasts          we sailed out onto the ocean of grass]</p>
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<p>LAS</p> <p>Z jaką czułością          rozścieliła włosy          pod ten księżyc miłości          J. Harasymowicz<sup>239</sup></p>	<p>[FOREST</p> <p>The tenderness with which          she spread her hair          for this moon of love]</p>
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Sometimes human eroticism is explicitly transferred to the natural world:

<p>Łuk twoich ramion          i ostre piersi          górską okolicą          F. Haber<sup>240</sup></p>	<p>[The arch of your arms          and sharp breasts          mountainous land]</p>
<p>Niepocieszone kocięta          patrzą tak smutno          różowymi pyszczkami          twoje ciepłe piersi          J. Gawroński<sup>241</sup></p>	<p>[Disconsolate kittens          they look so sadly          with their little pink snouts          your warm breasts]</p>

At times the sheer way of describing intimate relationships can offer another interesting option for refreshing haiku. Even when the starting point may seem trivial:

<p>Siedzą objęci          wokół biegającego mola          fala za falą          F. Haber<sup>242</sup></p>	<p>[They sit embraced          a pier is running around          wave by wave]</p>
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238 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 6.

239 J. Harasymowicz, *Późne lato*, p. 47.

240 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 32.

241 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 42.

242 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 75.

The reader is not focused here on the rather obvious relationship between the characters or on the setting. This haiku is redeemed by the metaphors put into use to describe the lovers and the de-automatization of sensorial perception.

Finally, sometimes freshness and vitality (and intimacy) are brought out in the simplest, non-metaphorical – and non-natural – juxtapositions:

Zgrzyt tramwaju na pętli i nagle tak blisko do ciebie F. Haber <sup>243</sup>	[The grind of the tram at the terminus and suddenly so close to you]
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Haiku’s unwritten rule proscribing overt presentations of erotic interactions is flouted completely openly (just like in twentieth-century Japanese haiku). Among the poems approaching the prototype of the genre, however, there are no texts that shock the reader with “hard” eroticism or pornography (which is how some experiments of contemporary Japanese haijins, for example, Hino Sōjō, have been described):<sup>244</sup>

Wilgotne wrzosa tak nieśmiało pod dłonią jej srom F. Haber <sup>245</sup>	[Wet heathers so shy under the hand her vulva]
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------

Poplątał nasze ciała zagajnik F. Haber <sup>246</sup>	[the copse tangled up our bodies]
----------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------

kropla wędruje po twojej piersi wyrastają jej palce K. Lisowski <sup>247</sup>	[a drop moves on your breast fingers grow from it]
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Na brzegu rzeki z namydloną głową osobna i naga	[By the river bank with her soaped head separate and naked]
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243 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 31.

244 See *Modern Japanese Haiku. An Anthology*, p. 16.

245 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 56.

246 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 102.

247 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 16.



splukuje włosy  
J. Szuber<sup>248</sup>

she's rinsing his hair]

jakże piękne  
w matowym blasku  
linia ud pośladki  
plecy i ramiona  
J. Szuber<sup>249</sup>

[how beautiful  
in a dull glow  
thigh line buttocks  
back and shoulders]

### 3. Death

Death is an infrequent visitor in classical haiku. However, there is a number of moving Japanese seventeen-syllable verses that subtly and periphrastically describe dying, passing away, and mourning. This is how haiku is also used to address the problem of death in poems composed by haijins in their final days or prepared in advance as their poetic testament. Let us recall several Japanese texts.<sup>250</sup>

O cricket, from your cherry cry  
No one could ever guess  
How quickly you must die.  
Bashō<sup>251</sup>

Ill on a journey;  
My dreams wander  
Over a withered moor  
Bashō<sup>252</sup>

and now also  
the clothes of the deceased—

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248 J. Szuber, *Pianie kogutów. Wiersze wybrane* [The Crowing of Cocks. Selected Poems], Kraków, 2008, p. 23 (from the cycle, *Pochwała mistrzów Tao* [In Praise of Dao Masters]).

249 J. Szuber, *Pianie kogutów*.

250 See also the analysis of Buson's poem 'I shudder with cold' (the chapter 'Intertextuality' in this part of the book). Cf. *Japońskie wiersze śmierci*, transl. and with an introduction by M. Has, Kraków 20, 3; *Japońskie haiku śmierci*, introduction by N. Skupniewicz, Kraków, 2007; *Japanese Death Poems Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death*, compiled and with an introduction by Y. Hoffmann, Tokyo–Rutland, Vermont–Singapore, 1986.

251 As quoted in Bashō, *Classic Haiku: An Anthology of Poems by Bashō and His Followers*, translated and annotated by A. Miyamori, Minneola, NY, 2002, p. 23).

252 As quoted in R. H. Blyth, *Japanese Life and Character in Senryu*, Tokyo, 1960, p. 329.

summer airing.

Bashō<sup>253</sup>

summer grass:

all that remains  
of warriors’ dreams

Bashō<sup>254</sup>

Chasing dragonflies

Today what place is it  
he has strayed off to?

Chiyo<sup>255</sup>

It’s falling slowly

Tenderly, on a tombstone – a leaf.

Ransetsu<sup>256</sup>

Classical haiku never depict killing, agony or decay. In short, they do not seek to achieve a shock effect through the display of death’s physicality. Sometimes, with no knowledge of a poet’s biography, without reading the adjacent *haibun* prose descriptions or commentary by a Japanologist-“haikologist,” we will find no traces of dying in a given poem.<sup>257</sup> For example, the following miniatures by Issa make it difficult to guess that they periphrastically describe the loss of loved ones:

This world of dew  
is only a world of dew—  
and yet... oh and yet...<sup>258</sup>

Fog – behind it the moon  
and I stepped into a puddle  
roads are deceptive<sup>259</sup>

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253 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku*, transl. D. L. Barnhill, p. 77.

254 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 93.

255 As quoted in F. Bowers (ed.), *The Classic Tradition of Haiku: Anthology*, Mineola, NY, 1996, p. 48.

256 English translation based on the Polish rendering by B. Richter in *Z polskich tłumaczeń haiku*, “Poezja” 1975, No. 1, p. 26.

257 For taboo in classical haiku, see Part 1 of the book.

258 The poem written after the death of the poet’s child. As quoted in K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life and Selected Haiku*, transl. Sam Hamill, Boston, 1997, p. 115.

259 As Żuławska-Umeda explains, that it is “a New Year’s poem. On January 13, 1795, Issa reached the Saimyōji Temple in the village of Nanba on Shikoku. He planned to visit a friend of his former master. [...] On his arrival, Issa learned that Sarai had died a few days earlier, so he spent that night in sorrow, wandering about the garden.” (a commentary in *Haiku*, [1983], p. 92).

Polish haiku also hardly ever openly speak of death. However, they do not shun the subject of old age and transience:

LATAWIEC

takim już stary  
porywa mnie latawiec  
a więzi ziemia  
W. Jaworski<sup>260</sup>

[KITE

I am so old  
a kite gets me carried away  
and the ground tethers me]

Occasionally we come across poems close to haiku's restrained, periphrastic, sadly-affirmative stories of dying. These miniatures invoke a wide variety of semantic planes – included among them are both deeply metaphorical poems and ones extremely austere stylistically. Many of them, on account of features such as verbal restraint, offer a moving record of moments of mourning, anguish and reconciliation with loss:

Świeżo wydeptana

Ścieżka w zawilcach

Pomiędzy grobami  
herkimer<sup>261</sup>

jak cicho  
wśród opadłych liści  
martwy lisek  
P. Bereza<sup>262</sup>

szepcząc do siebie  
starzec odgarnia z grobu  
jesienne liście  
R. B. Nowak<sup>263</sup>

[Freshly cleared

Footpath through anemones

Between graves]

[how quiet  
among fallen leaves  
a dead little fox]

[whispering to himself  
an old man sweeps autumn leaves  
from the grave]

260 W. Jaworski, *Kropła*, p. 15.

261 See <http://herkimer.blog.onet.pl/Wiosenne-haiku,2,ID372487812,n>, accessed February 8, 2012.

262 See <http://abc.haiku.pl/> (accessed February 7, 2011, online magazine *Haiku po polsku*). It is worth comparing this text with the poem by Buson: “The fox pup / what a playful spirit / in the bush clover,” quoted in A. Persinger, *Foxfire: The Selected Poems of Yosa Buson, a Translation*, p. 218.

263 See <http://haikurobsana.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2010-12-19T13:29:00-%2B01:00&max-results=50>, accessed June 6, 2012.

ważka z furkotem  
upatruje w szuwarach stosownego listka  
na swój ostatni sen  
U. Koziol<sup>264</sup>

[with a flutter a dragonfly  
scours the rushes for the perfect leaf  
for its last sleep]

Oplakuje męża  
Jej rysy złagodniały  
jak u dziewczynki  
herkimer<sup>265</sup>

[She mourns her husband  
Her features softened  
like ones of a girl]

Śmierć jest złotym pyłem  
w smudze światła  
sąsiadka spodziewa się dziecka  
J. Gawroński<sup>266</sup>

[Death is golden dust  
in a streak of light  
the neighbour is expecting]

One notable exception in the treatment of death in Polish haiku is the poetry of Jerzy Gawroński (already cited in this section), published in a small booklet entitled *Haiku*. Gawroński skilfully tests the limits of haiku’s thanatic decorum, touching upon painful events from the history of individuals and societies:

Zmarły za ścianą  
niebo upalne  
przywieźli węgiel<sup>267</sup>

[The deceased behind the wall  
hot sky  
coal has been delivered]

W Jedwabnem  
widma spalonych  
– cisza włosy snuje w niebo<sup>268</sup>

[In Jedwabne  
apparitions of the burnt ones  
– the silence spins hair up into the sky]

Milczenie kąsa  
betonowy podjazd  
przechylone niebo  
nad prosektorium<sup>269</sup>

[Silence bites  
the concrete driveway  
the tilted sky  
over the mortuary]

264 From the sequence ‘Pestki deszczu VI’ in *Wielka pauza*, 1996, as quoted in U. Koziol, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 396.

265 See <http://herkimer.blog.onet.pl/Haiku-jesienne,2,ID343295981,n>, accessed June 6, 2012. The text comes intriguingly close to *senryū* (see the *senryū* quoted in Part 1 of this monograph).

266 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 30.

267 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 78.

268 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 21.

269 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 63.

Krzew tarniny oszroniony  
trumienka jak kamień  
wpada wprost do pieca<sup>270</sup>

[Blackthorn bush frosted over  
a little coffin like a pebble  
falls straight into the furnace]

Gawroński also takes the liberty of drastically flouting the haiku taboo (death-gawrony, the description of dead bodies):<sup>271</sup>

Poranny przyływ tłucze  
topielcem  
w spróchniałym falochronie  
zbiegowisko głodnych mew<sup>272</sup>

[The morning tide thrashes about  
the drowned body  
against a rotten breakwater  
a crowd of hungry seagulls]

Jestem w gnilnej podróży  
u kresu  
jeszcze jedna noc<sup>273</sup>

[I am on a putrefactive journey  
to the end  
one more night]

czerwie w gnijącym brzuchu  
– w bazarowym rajku  
sprzedają brata<sup>274</sup>

[maggots in a rotting belly  
– in the bazaar paradise  
they are selling their brother]

Some of Gawroński's texts are supremely metaphorical, oneiric, obscure, tending to "blur" sensorial mimesis, and at the same time – profoundly moving:

Brzask rozspany po rosie  
w gardziolkach jaskółek  
śmierć – śmierć – śmierć<sup>275</sup>

[Daybreak scattered across the dew  
in swallows' tiny throats  
death – death – death]

W kłębach drutu kolczastego  
poruszenie piskląt  
wiosna i pierwsze perełki krwi<sup>276</sup>

[In tangles of barbed wire  
a commotion among chicks  
spring and first pearls of blood]

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270 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 68.

271 See also the chapter 'Grochowiak's Longest Journey.'

272 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 71.

273 J. Gawroński, *Haiku* p. 48.

274 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 7.

275 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 11.

276 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 40.

Fartuchy wymazane krwią  
 wygłodniałe psy  
 krążą w szklanym deszczu<sup>277</sup>

[Aprons smeared with blood  
 hungry dogs  
 loiter in the glass rain]

In this context, one should also invoke Agata Tuszyńska’s *black haiku* – the cycle of poems where the funereal interpretation is suggested by the title, the eschatological semantics of some lexemes, as well as the knowledge of certain facts from the author’s biography (illness and death of the poet’s husband). Their stylistic austerity, coupled with the clarity of imagery, “pull” those texts towards haiku models, while the rejection of sensorial mimesis moves them away from the simplicity of Japanese poems-flashes:

CZARNE HAIKU

pozwól mi  
 tam wejść  
 przez szczelinę w chmurach  
 przez nieuwagę w ołtarzu  
 przez nieskończony most  
 daj rękę<sup>278</sup>

[BLACK HAIKU

let me  
 get in there  
 through a crack in the clouds  
 through inattention in the altar  
 across an infinite bridge  
 give me your hand]

CZARNE HAIKU 2

druk kolczasty  
 broni  
 przystępu  
 do ciebie

[BLACK HAIKU 2

barbed wire  
 denies  
 access  
 to you]

druk kolczasty  
 z gwiazd<sup>279</sup>

barbed wire  
 of the stars]

Among Polish thanatic haiku, the poems bordering on the grotesque are distinctly rare – one of the few exceptions is the ‘turpist’-incarnational poem by Stanisław Zwirzyński, which considerably deviates from the prototype of the genre:

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277 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 7.

278 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 53.

279 A. Tuszyńska, *Miejsce przy oknie*, p. 54.

Całuję czółko  
gdzie rośnie mech zielony  
fruвам jaskółką<sup>280</sup>

[I kiss the forehead  
where green moss grows  
I swallow-fly]

#### 4. The Orient

East-Asian tropes can be treated by Polish haikuists as a sort of attractive, exotic adornment of a poem. Such use of elements of the remote culture does not necessarily entail trivialisation and objectification. Oriental decoration can “innocently” make a text more attractive, especially when the use of an Eastern motif turns out to be subtly humorous and disingenuous:

partia szachów  
na lysinach staruszków  
wiśniowe płatki  
R. B. Nowak<sup>281</sup>

[A game of chess  
on old men’s bald patches  
cherry petals]

Skrzypienie przęseł  
Trzej Japończycy na moście –  
Przed zamkiem w Trokach.  
E. Tomaszewska<sup>282</sup>

[The creaking of the spans.  
Three Japanese on the bridge –  
In front of the castle in Trakai.]

Na niebie  
Karuzela gwiazd  
Mocna jest sake  
A. Regulski<sup>283</sup>

[In the sky  
A carousel of stars  
Sake is strong]

Poems tapping into the repository of East-Asian cultures also capitalize on distance and self-irony:

IKEBANA  
pięć lat trwało układanie się światła  
żebym mógł zobaczyć na ścianie  
trace ślad po szafie  
P. Sobolczyk<sup>284</sup>

[IKEBANA  
five years’ worth of the work of light  
so I could see the outline of the wardrobe  
impressed on the wall]

280 S. Zwierzyński, *Sylaby na palecie* [Syllables on the Palette], p. 17.

281 See <http://haikurobsana.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2010-12-19T13:29:00-%2B01:00&max-results=50>, accessed June 6, 2012.

282 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczący*, p. 71.

283 A. Regulski, *Haiku, czyli zaśpiewy wyobraźni*, p. 60.

284 P. Sobolczyk, *Obstrukcja insługi* [Obstruction Manual], Łódź, 2014, p. 16.

East-Asian tropes can have a disturbing effect when placed in an unusual context, devoid of the most obvious connotations recognizable by the Westerner:

POSĄG	[A STATUE
Piekące słońce	The scorching sun
Nad wielkim placem stoi	Stands above the vast square
Jak posąg Buddy	Like a Buddha statue]
W. Kawiński <sup>285</sup>	

Alternatively, ostentatious – and stereotypical – orientalization most often than not reveals the artificiality of scenes far removed from a strongly sensorial and flash-like record of reality:<sup>286</sup>

chwila	[a moment
gejsza w kimono	a geisha in kimono
nalewa sake	is pouring sake]
J. Kopeć <sup>287</sup>	
klasztorny śpiew	[monks chanting
nieśmiały uśmiech Buddy	Buddha’s shy smile
pachną wiśnie	the smell of cherries]
J. Kopeć <sup>288</sup>	
koliber nad bonsai	[a hummingbird over a bonsai
popija sake	is sipping sake
trzepot długich rzęs	the flutter of long eyelashes]
J. Kopeć <sup>289</sup>	

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285 *Pismo Literacko-Artystyczne*, 1986, No. 6/7, p. 78.

286 Occasionally, however, some attempts are successful – like the following text by the poet-traveller:

Wysokie dźwięki	[High-pitched tones
na strunach samisenu	on shamisen strings
gaj bambusowy”	a bamboo grove]

(F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 7).

287 J. Kopeć, *Haiku*, p. 119.

288 J. Kopeć, *Haiku*, p. 122.

289 J. Kopeć, *Haiku*, p. 110.



Imagery of this kind is best summed by another, playfully orientalizing poem of a Polish haïjin:

Choć go nie widział  
uparcie opowiada  
o kwiecie wiśni  
L. Engelking<sup>290</sup>

[Though he did not see it  
he keeps talking  
of a cherry blossom]

## 5. Religious Haiku

The literary form genetically related, at least to some degree, to religion (religions), when transplanted to a foreign cultural setting, also frequently tends to invoke religious contexts. In Western haiku, there are two kinds of these contexts: one of Christianity and one of Zen Buddhism (which is strongly associated with haiku and is also seen as a universal, uniquely non-religious attitude in life).<sup>291</sup>

### A. *Zen in Polish?*

Zen texts constitute a large body of poetic and prose works that resist attempts at unambiguous description and codification. We cannot talk of any systematic references to this writing. Polish poems take up a number of significant Zenist themes. In a haiku-like manner, they reconcile a certain “philosophicality” with sensoriality. Some bring to mind terse stories about Zen masters (e.g. about looking at the moon rather instead of Hotei’s finger pointing at it)<sup>292</sup> or even koans, providing no easy answers, demonstrating the importance of “nothing,” negating the teleological and cause-and-effect interpretation of the world.<sup>293</sup>

‘Kwiaty w Botanicznym’

[FLOWERS IN THE BOTANICAL GARDEN

Nic nie wskazuje  
rozkwityły palec irysu  
J. Harasymowicz<sup>294</sup>

Pointing at nothing  
the blossoming finger of an iris]

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290 L. Engelking, *I inne wiersze*, p. 84.

291 See Part 1.

292 See, for example, A. Kozyra, *Estetyka zen*, Warszawa, 2010, p. 133, see also the works of Robert Aitken cited here.

293 See, for example, *The Kōan. Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, eds. S. Heine, D. S. Wright, Oxford, 2000.

294 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 12.



Sengai Gibon (1750–1837), ‘Hotei pointing at the Moon’ (quoted in A. Kozyra, *Estetyka zen* [Zen Aesthetics], Trio, Warszawa, 2010)

Nie zrobiłem nic  
a deszcz przestał padać  
w tej chwili  
F. Haber<sup>295</sup>

[I did nothing  
and the rain stopped  
at this moment]

The following are literary examples revealing features that are crucial to Zen (and naturally are not unknown in Western philosophy), such as viewing the world without knowledge and preconceived ideas, ability to see daily wonders, keen awareness of the mundane and limits of logic:

Podobno nic nie mam  
tymczasem mam tyle palców

[I am said to have nothing  
yet I have so many fingers and toes]

---

295 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, 18. Cf.

I bite into a persimmon  
and the temple bell tolls  
at Horyuji

Shiki (as quoted in N. K. Stalker (ed.), *Devouring Japan: Global Perspectives on Japanese Culinary Identity*, New York, 2018, p. 236.).

jestem zdumiony  
J. Harasymowicz<sup>296</sup>

I am amazed]

Wirujący śnieg  
Wokół mojej głowy,  
Jem marchewkę.  
G. Stańczyk<sup>297</sup>

[Whirling snow  
Around my head  
I am eating a carrot.]

Chmura leci do tyłu  
gdzie jest przód  
J. Harasymowicz<sup>298</sup>

[A cloud flying backwards  
where is its front]

drzewo tak drzewo  
że drzewa już nie ma  
chmury (chmury)  
K. Miłobędzka<sup>299</sup>

[the tree yes the tree  
that the tree is no more  
clouds (clouds)]

These astonishments seem to be similar to the sense of wonder recorded many centuries ago by Onitsura:

Cherry blossoms, more  
and more now! Birds have two legs!  
Oh, horses have four!<sup>300</sup>

Another noteworthy practice is the pointing out of, sometimes seeming, paradoxes:

To tylko kropla  
spadła z liścia do stawu  
– i znikło słońce  
E. Ledóchowicz<sup>301</sup>

[It's just a drop  
that fell from a leaf into a pond  
– and the sun disappeared]

296 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 22.

297 G. Stańczyk, *W pejzażu*, p. 23. Cf. the translation of a Japanese haiku quoted in the study by Roland Barthes (*Empire of Signs*, transl. by Richard Howard, New York, 1992, p. 77; haijin's name not given):

I saw the first snow:  
That morning I forgot  
To wash my face.

298 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 77.

299 From the collection *gubione*, 2008, as quoted in K. Miłobędzka, *zbierane, gubione*, p. 351. English translation as quoted in Krystyna Miłobędzka, *Nothing More*, transl. Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese, Todmorden, 2013, p. 133.

300 As quoted in Ph. R. Thompson, "The "Haiku Question" and the Reading of Images," *The English Journal*, 1967, Vol. 56, No. 4, p. 549.

301 J. Brzozowski, E. Ledóchowicz, *Łódka z papieru*, p. 47.

Wierzba nie rośnie  
to tylko splot powietrza  
pusty w środku  
J. Harasymowicz<sup>302</sup>

[The willow is not growing  
it's just a coil of air  
empty inside]

As it happens, the unveiling of paradoxes may lead to a departure from the haiku-like focus on sensorial qualities:

Postscriptum XLVI

[Postscriptum XLVI

jeśli istnieje tylko  
Teraz  
co tutaj robi  
ta fotografia?  
A. Szuba<sup>303</sup>

if only Now  
exists  
what is this photo  
doing here?]

An interesting effect is also produced by juxtapositions that look utterly random:

jutro tylko szczaw  
i truskawki  
żadnych abstrakcji  
w czwartek  
K. Lisowski<sup>304</sup>

[only sorrel tomorrow  
and strawberries  
no abstractions  
on Thursday]

deszcz myje twarze  
zimnych kwiatów  
we wtorek  
J. Kopec<sup>305</sup>

[rain washes the faces  
of cold flowers  
on Tuesday]

siedem białych motylek  
usiadło dzisiaj  
na kwiatkach lawendy  
\*\*\*<sup>306</sup>

[seven white little butterflies  
settled today  
on lavender flowers]

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302 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 23.

303 A. Szuba, *Postscripta wybrane / Selected Postscripts*, afterword by P. Sarna, English transl. J. Ward, Katowice, 2003, p. 60. On haiku inspirations in *Postscripta*, see A. Dziadek, 'Haiku,' *Zeszyty Literackie*, 1994, No. 2 (46), p. 144.

304 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 10.

305 J. Kopec, *Haiku*, p. 109.

306 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 3 (4), p. 20.

Finally, it is worth invoking poetic evidence of the Zen-like awareness of the unity of all being (austere Zen gardens can provide a vital context here):

Kamień  
pod stopą  
opowiada góry  
F. Haber<sup>307</sup>

[The stone  
under the foot  
speaks mountains]

Siedząc przy stawie  
obszedłem świat dookoła  
znów kwiat wiśni  
F. Haber<sup>308</sup>

[Sitting by the pond  
I walked around the world  
cherry blossom again]

Polish “Zenist” haiku are simply affirmative, far from moralizing, without espousing any cause. Their characteristic momentariness and focus on the keenly experienced moment stand in sharp contrast with the texts that are peculiarly “spiritual” and refer to unspecified metaphysical spaces. It is hard to clearly determine whether these poems allude to Christianity or to other religions or spiritual systems. These poems carry grand high-minded connotations,<sup>309</sup> invoke limitless spaces, and abound in subtle religious allusions. Miniatures of this kind can be found, for example, in the work of Teresa Truszkowska:

Byłam jestem nie będę  
rzeki świata przelewają się  
w mym oddechu<sup>310</sup>

[I was I am I will not be  
rivers of the world are washing  
my breath]

Rozwiany warkocz przestrzeni  
wielka cisza  
nad wodami<sup>311</sup>

[A plait of space blown in the wind  
a great silence  
over waters]

The first text, meditatively focused on breath, seems to point to the practice of zazen (this, however, does not have to be the case). The second one has subtle biblical overtones (“silence over the waters”). Both – despite the paratextual genre qualification (the volume is entitled *Haiku*) – are far removed from miniatures capturing a moment in time and deeply rooted in the concrete.

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307 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 46.

308 F. Haber, *W ogrodzie słów*, p. 8.

309 See, for example, J. Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości w dziele literackim*, Kraków, 2000, p. 160.

310 T. Truszkowska, *Haiku*, Kraków, 1992, p. 13.

311 T. Truszkowska, *Haiku*, p. 17.

B. *Christian Haiku*

In Polish haiku, “native” Christian motifs are considerably more frequent than Buddhist references. Biblical tropes, religious practices and material aspects of worship – sometimes in a metaphorical function – become elements of a coherent, organic sensorial microcosm. Poems are possessed of a significant cultural load, which, however, does not eclipse the sensorial clarity of experience:

zaśniedziała kapliczka  
w cierniowym wieńcu  
swarliwe szpaki  
J. Gawroński<sup>312</sup>

[a run-down roadside shrine  
in a thorny wreath  
quarrelsome starlings]

Pilnie spowiada  
stukając, opukując  
ptak w koloratce  
S. Zwierzyński<sup>313</sup>

[Attentively hearing a confession  
clattering away, tapping  
a bird in the dog collar]

ku drzwiom kościoła  
pod wierzbowymi liśćmi  
droga do Emaus  
E. Tomaszewska<sup>314</sup>

[leading to the church door  
under willow leaves  
the road to Emmaus]

Occasionally we come across subtly humorous, anecdotal tongue-in-cheek texts (which modify some idiom) invoking the sphere of Christian beliefs. Anecdotes and concepts can, however, “un-haiku” a poem:

Śnieg  
Wszyscy święci  
skubią gęsi  
na pierzyny  
A. Cienkosz<sup>315</sup>

[Snow  
All saints  
are plucking geese  
for eiderdowns]

Interestingly, Catholic saints can also be portrayed as witnesses to sensorial “suchness” of the world:

Anioł myszy badylarki  
Święta Gertrudo

[The angel of the harvest mouse  
Saint Gertrude]

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312 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 76.

313 S. Zwierzyński, *Sylaby na palecie*, p. 57.

314 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczący*, p. 19.

315 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 24.

Z Nivelles – jestem takim  
Cieplym kłębuszkiem<sup>316</sup>

of Nivelles – I am such  
a warm curl]

The text by Jacek Brolik quoted above deserves special attention. The collection in which it appeared is entitled *Haiku o aniołach* [Haiku about Angels]. However, a more fitting designation would be *Haiku-angels*, as the “angel” occurring in the title of each miniature signifies simply... a poem.<sup>317</sup> Brolik’s affirmative poems are accompanied by positive connotations of the word used in the title.<sup>318</sup> The foregoing triplet turns out to be surprisingly perverse. Saint Gertrude, whom the animal-subject addresses, is the patron saint of cats, protecting the faithful against mice and rats (which in the Middle Ages represented a grave epidemiological threat). A mouse was one of her attributes, and mice (also symbolizing the souls suffering in Purgatory, for whom she prayed) were depicted on her robe and pastoral.<sup>319</sup> In this context, the voice of a specific, tangible “warm curl” turns out to be intriguingly ambiguous.

Sometimes Christian connotations are reinforced by the reader’s knowledge of the author’s biography (who, for instance, could be a Catholic monk, as in the case of Kreis) or simply by the familiarity with Polish cultural realities (as in the poem by Bielska-Krawczyk). Were it not for this information, the following poems could also be situated in the context of other religions:

wieże kadziła  
sypie się biały popiół  
Boże ocal łzy  
H. S. Kreis<sup>320</sup>

[towers of incense  
white ash is spilling down  
God save the tears]

złote anioły  
rozwiął się w pył lotny  
żywicy zapach  
H. S. Kreis<sup>321</sup>

[golden angels  
airborne dust dissipated  
the smell of resin]

316 J. Brolik, *Haiku o aniołach*, Toruń, 2013, p. 19.

317 ‘Anioł jabłka’ [Apple Angel], ‘Anioł cytryny’ [Lemon Angel], ‘Anioł porannej łąki’ [Morning Meadow Angel], ‘Anioł śliwki’ [Plum Angel], are, respectively, haiku about a lemon, a morning meadow, a plum.

318 See, e.g.:

‘Anioł jabłka’	[APPLE ANGEL
Rumiany zachód słońca	Blushy sunset
na drzewoskłonie	in the treeline
opadających liści	of falling leaves]
(J. Brolik, <i>Haiku o aniołach</i> , p. 3).	

319 See, for example, <http://www.catholictradition.org/Saints/nivelles.htm>, accessed May 21, 2015.

320 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 62.

321 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 32.

zeschłe trawy coraz cichsze modlitwy starych kobiet J. Bielska-Krawczyk <sup>322</sup>	[withered grasses old women’s prayers grow quieter and quieter]
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Finally, quite a number of Polish-language texts seek to interpret the depicted world of sense experiences in teleological and subtly theological terms. The Christian attribution of such poems (not obvious at the plane of verbal expression) also results from the knowledge of Polish cultural realities:

błogosławieństwo paciorki rosy na liściach przed letnim skwarem H. S. Kreis <sup>323</sup>	[a blessing beads of dew on the leaves before summer heat]
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------

Rosa na płatkach czerwonych tulipanów to łaska nieba J. Stańczakowa <sup>324</sup>	[Dew on the petals of red tulips are heaven’s grace]
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Bóg się uśmiechnął do mnie szarą jaskółką A. Tomaszak <sup>325</sup>	[God smiled to me with a gray swallow]
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------

w dojrzałym zbożu podnosi się bławatek podarek nieba W. Jaworski <sup>326</sup>	[in ripe grain a bluebottle rises a gift from heaven]
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In similar sensorial settings, Japanese *haijins* limited themselves to a bare image:

White dew  
 on brambles and thorns—  
 one drop each  
 Buson<sup>327</sup>

What, aside from religious allusions, links the poems cited here? The very method of referring to the sacred: subtle, allusive, subtly suffusing images of the outside

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322 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 3 (4), p. 25.

323 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 32.

324 J. Stańczakowa, *Źapońska wiśnia* [A Japanese Plum], p. 11.

325 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 22.

326 W. Jaworski, *Kropla*, p. 11.

327 As quoted in S. Addiss, F. Yamamoto, A. Yamamoto, eds., *Haiku: An Anthology of Japanese Poems*, Boston, 2009, p. 58.



world with hints of a religious interpretation. These poets do not engage in a deeper dialogue with religious texts, do not moralize, do not convert, affirming instead sense experience. They give readers the freedom to choose their own line of interpretation. The reader can “go into the experience,” visualize (literally) the experiences lying at the heart of individual poems. He/she can also follow the line of a religious interpretation, treating the event depicted as an excuse for intellectual theological considerations.<sup>328</sup>

#### IV. Intertextuality

From time to time, Japanese haiku would be intertextual: they employed numerous allusions and quotations from classical Chinese and Japanese poetry, and occasionally were also ecphrastic.<sup>329</sup> Western haiku can be treated as intertextual<sup>330</sup> on account of the sheer reference to the Eastern model<sup>331</sup> and, indirectly, to the conglomerate of works underlying it and considered to be classical realizations of the genre. At this juncture, however, I am primarily interested in less obvious references – ones to various cultural texts inherent in Polish poems.

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328 For “orthodoxly” Christian texts, see Part 6 of the book.

329 See, for example, M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, pp. 25, 54, 236, 257; *Haiku*, [2006], pp. 154, 162–3. The overwhelming majority of Western readers have no way of detecting on their own these kinds of implications carried by Japanese miniatures – we are condemned to reading erudite comments of translators and scholars, which, however, are not always featured in publications of haiku translations (English editions are relatively the most helpful in this respect, see M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*).

330 I use the term ‘intertextuality’ in a broad sense, for example relying on the study by Stanisław Balbus, *Między stylami* [Between Styles], Kraków, 1993: “By intertextuality I broadly understand all explicit (ascertainable) references to the literary context which are attested in the structure of the work (hypertext), at any of its planes, including the architextual one, i.e. references to the broadly conceived sphere of hypotexts, i.e. to other texts, their classes, forms, styles, which are generally represented by specific texts in intertextual space” (S. Balbus, *Między stylami*, p. 104; see also: pp. 101–4). To use Gérard Genette’s terminology, we should rather talk about architextuality (however, this conception seems too narrowly defined to be applicable to the problems that I have discussed) and hypertextuality. See, Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, transl. by Channa Newman, Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln, NE, 1997).

331 For the problem of the intertextuality of connections between texts and genres, see R. Nycz, ‘Intertekstualność i jej zakresy: teksty, gatunki, światy,’ in R. Nycz, *Tekstowy świat. Poststrukturalizm a wiedza o literaturze*, Kraków, 2000, pp. 91–4.

## 1. References to Japanese Haiku: Paraphrases-Naturalizations, Literary Allusions

Particularly intriguing is the situation when a poet directly juxtaposes his/her work with its Oriental pre-text. In a collection *Haiku własne i cudze*,<sup>332</sup> the following poems are set side by side:

chłód mnie przeniknął  
w sypialni nastąpiłem  
na grzebień zmarłej  
Buson<sup>333</sup>

[What piercing cold I feel:  
My dead wife's comb in our bedroom  
Under my heel...]

Wdowiec wieczorem  
znajduje na tapczanie  
zimne lusterko  
L. Engelking<sup>334</sup>

[In the evening a widower  
finds a cold mirror  
on the couch]

At first glance, Engelking's text looks like a paraphrase that comes surprisingly close to plagiarism.<sup>335</sup> Slight semantic and stylistic differences between these poems can be interpreted compellingly – provided that the reader is open to a meticulous micro-reading of the miniatures. In both cases, the man unexpectedly stumbles on a small, everyday “feminine” object belonging to the deceased. In Buson's case, it is a comb – fitting well with to the Western stereotype of a beautiful, long-haired Japanese girl (other symbolic contexts are practically unavailable to us), while in Engelking's poem we have a mirror lying on an altogether modern couch (a piece of furniture unknown in old Japan). Let us keep in mind that the mirror activates both symbolic and sensorial contexts. It is cold – this observation about the typical temperature of a glass pane can also be read from the perspective of “cold” sad widowhood. The mirror's coldness can also be construed as a distant echo of the incipit of Buson's poem. The piercing cold felt by the man from the Japanese

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332 In *Autobus do hotelu Cytera*, Engelking arranges poems of different genres with a varying cultural background in dialogic pairs (which I have demonstrated above). What is surprising about the volume *Haiku cudzie i własne* is the very adjacence of translations of Japanese haiku and Engelking's own haiku.

333 L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*, p. 26. English version as quoted in *Anthology of Japanese Literature from the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, compiled and ed. D. Keene. New York: n.d.

334 L. Engelking, *Haiku własne*.

335 These similarities become even more pronounced when we compare Engelking's poem with Krynicki's rendering of Buson's haiku (R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, p. 71) and with the translation by Żuławska-Umeda (*Haiku*, [2006], p. 180). An interestingly similar case – the intended proximity of poems by Buson and Shiki – is described by Donald Keene: D. Keene, *Japanese Literature. An Introduction for Western Readers*, New York, n.d., pp. 15–6; this issue has also been discussed by Phyllis Rose Thompson (*The “Haiku Question,”* pp. 548–9). See also analyses of Amy Lowell's haiku paraphrasing poems of Japanese *haijins* – J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 63–7.

poem materializes in Engelking's text in a much subtler way. Tactile sensations are accompanied by visual ones (the vividly depicted lyrical situation; the presence of the mirror itself). At the same time, the Polish poem is literally subdued – no sounds can be heard here (while in Buson's haiku, we can almost hear the sound of stepping on the comb). It seems that the use of the third-person description, instead of the first-person confession used in the Oriental text, also favours this kind of mutedness. Paradoxically, it is the Western poem that turns out to be more distant from the affective extremity of "exhibitionism." As we have seen, direct, close references to Japanese miniatures can lead to an interesting and active extension of an Oriental text, one enriched with new contexts.<sup>336</sup>

I refer to works bearing resemblance to Engelking's miniature discussed here as PARAPHRASES-NATURALIZATIONS: attempts at transferring foreign texts into local cultural, geographical, natural and, no less importantly, personal, subjective realities. These translations-non-translations differ from "classic" paraphrases by a strong (or very strong) affinity with the "original." However, one cannot categorize them as pastiches (they do not bring to the fore the poetics of classical haiku) or travesties (typically one cannot detect even a trace of parodistic intentions).

The paraphrases-naturalizations of Japanese haiku are surprisingly numerous in Polish poetry. Identifying the specific basis for the "translation" is not much of a problem for Polish connoisseurs of the Orient. Pairings with classical haiku are usually not as obvious and automatic as in Engelking's poem (besides, it is the reader himself/herself who makes them). Naturalization practices by poets also produce various artistic effects. Finally, their transcultural import can be different too.

The following are two more examples of a similar relationship:

sześcian powietrza  
świerszcz nawierca ciepłiwie  
okruchy dzwonią  
H. S. Kreis<sup>337</sup>

[a cube of air  
a cricket is drilling patiently  
crumbs are ringing]

stillness—  
penetrating the rocks,  
cicadas' cry  
Bashō<sup>338</sup>

336 See S. Balbus, 'Stylizacja i zjawiska pokrewne w procesie historycznoliterackim,' *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1983, No. 2, p. 145.

337 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 38.

338 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō's Journey, The Literary Prose of Matsuo Bashō*, translated and with an introduction by David Landis Barnhill, Albany, 2005, p. 65. For

Dziś kroję pigwy.  
Odgarniam siwy kosmyk  
– co za aromat!  
E. Ledóchowicz<sup>339</sup>

[Today I am cutting up quinces.  
I sweep the grey strand of hair aside  
– what an aroma!]

wrapping rice dumplings:  
with one hand she puts back  
her fallen hair  
Bashō<sup>340</sup>

The isolation of stylistic and semantic details that make these compositions different affords an interesting micro-reading opening up new interpretation contexts. Once again, we are intrigued by the situation in which an image known from another cultural universe is translated by a Western author into a partly parallel but not identical sensory experience.<sup>341</sup> Kreis turned the cicada into an indigenous cricket which patiently and expressively (alliteration based on the “r” sound) penetrates<sup>342</sup> not a rock, but a somehow antinomic “air cube.” Ewa Ledóchowicz’s poem engages in an even stronger – in semantic and sensory terms – dialogue with the Japanese hypotext. Bashō’s poem in question is one of the few classical haiku in which erotic contexts are traceable.<sup>343</sup> Ledóchowicz offers a miniature marked by an entirely different modality. Sour quinces conjure up different connotations than the rice dumplings made by the Japanese woman from Bashō’s poem. Grey hair subtly softens the erotic context of the gesture (at the same time laying bare stereotypes related to age and sexuality), finally, the aroma provides an additional, non-visual stimulus (as a result, in addition to visual perception, we also have a sense of smell and, indirectly, a sense of taste). A seemingly analogous lyrical situation triggers different senses and inspires a completely different interpretation.

Naturalizations do not always turn out to be artistically successful. Quite often Polish poets attempt to paraphrase a small group of highly popular Japanese conceptual haiku. For instance, Andrzej Tchórzewski “polonizes” the famous Bashō poem as follows:

Dzielny żuk-gnojak  
Wysmukłał, kupił lotnię –

[The brave dung beetle  
He’s slimmed down, bought a hang glider –

---

various Polish and English renderings of this text, see the chapter ‘Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.’

339 J. Brzozowski, E. Ledóchowicz, *Łódka z papieru*, p. 5.

340 As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku: Selected Poems of Matsuo Bashō*, p. 124.

341 This is also the case with the poem of José Juan Tablada quoted later.

342 For various verbs, by no means synonymous, used in the translation of this haiku, see the chapter ‘Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.’

343 See Part 1 of the book.

Niebieska ważka.  
A. Tchórzewski<sup>344</sup>

A blue dragonfly.]

Red pepper pods!  
Add wings to them,  
and they are dragonflies!  
Bashō<sup>345</sup>

Bashō added wings to a pepper pod, turning it into dragonflies (allegedly in response to his student’s action with the opposite effect).<sup>346</sup> Tchórzewski begins his transformations with a native beetle that calls up skatological associations, which in a series of metamorphoses (far removed from a simple association with the Japanese model) is changed into a dragonfly.<sup>347</sup> As a result, we are dealing with a rather infelicitous “fake” of the Japanese miniature (while this “fake” does not imitate the original, it calls for a juxtaposition with its Oriental pre-text). We will not find here any deeper dialogue with the East-Asian prototype – maybe aside from the supposition that in the Polish version everything should be more “rough-hewn.”<sup>348</sup>

Here is another juxtaposition:

motyl  
to płatek róży  
lecający do nieba  
J. Porajska<sup>349</sup>

[butterfly  
it’s a rose petal  
flying towards the sky]

344 A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*, Warszawa, 1999, p. 20.

345 As quoted in Harold G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, n.p.

346 See W. Kotański, ‘Japoński siedemnastozgłoskowiec,’ p. 7.

347 All other Polish translations of Bashō’s haiku that I know of feature a “damsselfly” (“łątka”), however, it is not surprising that Tchórzewski opts for the colloquial “dragonfly.” Indeed, ‘łątka dzieweczka’ [azure damsselfly] is an insect commonly found in Poland, but in a colloquial speech, this word is practically nonexistent. It can, however, bring to mind the old Polish term for a puppet (for example known from Jan Kochanowski’s epigram ‘O żywocie ludzkim’ [On Human Life]).

348 It is worthwhile citing a text by Grochowiak here:

Ważka w opisanu ucznia Bashō [Described by Bashō’s student, a dragonfly  
Jest skrzydlatym strąkiem papryki Is a winged pod of pepper  
U nas oczyma ogromnymi jak żarna Here it is eyes as huge as a quern  
rzucone w trzciny tossed into reeds]

(S. Grochowiak, *Haiku-images*, Warszawa, 1978 [second edition], p. 35). See the discussion in the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

349 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 25.

A fallen flower  
 Returning to the branch?  
 It was a butterfly  
 Moritake<sup>350</sup>

By reversing the structure of the Japanese model, Julka Porajska loses the suspense of Arakida Moritaki’s concept. On top of that, the sensorial detail becomes somewhat pallid (are we still dealing with a perceptual illusion?). In addition, the author excessively “sugarcoats” the image (“rose petal flying towards the sky”), without throwing in any ingredients that would be more original or simply vernacular.<sup>351</sup> The naturalization of a widely known haiku is surely difficult, yet possible. The Mexican avant-garde poet José Juan Tablada writes:

‘Nocturne Mariposa’  
 Devuelve a la desnuda rama  
 Nocturna mariposa  
 Las hojas secas de tus alas.<sup>352</sup>

In Tablada’s rendition, allusions to Bashō (the crow on a bare branch)<sup>353</sup> and to Moritake’s seventeen-syllable poems are still legible. The poet additionally defamiliarizes the scene, creatively imparting sensoriality and sense experiences to it. The wings-dry leaves perfectly convey the appearance and texture of moths’

350 A. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, p. 188.

351 See also this pair (as quoted in *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 15; P. Michałowski, ‘Polskie imitacje haiku,’ p. 169; with a comment on the poem, *P. Michałowski, Polskie...*, pp. 169–70):

summer grass:  
 all that remains  
 of warriors’ dreams  
 as quoted in *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 93.

kołyszące trawy	[swaying grass
legendy usypiają	legends are falling asleep
zapomniane pole bitwy	a forgotten battlefield]
[F. Szuta].	

352 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 160. The English translation: “Returning to the bare branch / the night butterfly / the dried leaves it has four wings” (J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 160). The Polish translation by Piotr Sobolczyk: “Ćma // Zwróć gałęzi ogołoconej / nocą motyłu / suche liście twoich skrzydeł.” The translation by Leszek Engelking (‘Haiku poetów Meksyku,’ *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 1, p. 265): “Ćma // Na gałąź nagą przyleć, / motyłu nocny, / przywróć jej suche liście swych skrzydeł.”

353 on a withered branch  
 a crow has settled—  
 autumn evening  
 as quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku: Selected Poems of Matsuo Bashō*, p. 11.

wings (the multisensory effect is intriguing, we see and hear the flight of the insect-leaf), at the same time nicely tying in with the old but brilliantly refreshed concept.<sup>354</sup>

The authors of the following Polish texts handled the naturalization of the famous poem more successfully than Porajska, although not as brilliantly as Tablada:

mglisty poranek liść na gałęzi rozwija skrzydła J. Małyśz <sup>355</sup>	[foggy morning a leaf on a branch spreads its wings]
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w płatkach jaśminu – motyl to jeszcze czy już kwiat? M. Banaszkiewicz <sup>356</sup>	[in jasmine petals – is it still a butterfly or already a flower?]
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It is not easy to produce a successful paraphrase of such widely known – and ascetic – poems. However, the field of literary allusions is considerably wider. For instance, numerous Polish haiku record perceptual illusions that somewhat resemble the event from Moritaki's poem. Allusions to the old Japanese concept are subtle, dim, perhaps even completely unintentional. Authors describe a variety of perceptual illusions, such as ones concerning flowers, leaves, birds and, frequently and interestingly enough, snow:

Krzak w marcu Tydzień temu cały biały Teraz wróble zakwitły J. Harasymowicz <sup>357</sup>	[A bush in March All white a week ago Now the sparrows have blossomed]
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nadeszła wiosna na drzewach nadal leży biały śnieg kwiatów? W. Kokoszka <sup>358</sup>	[spring has come still covering the trees white snow of flowers?]
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Rudy listek spadł i pokicał po ziemi	[A little russet leaf fell and hopped cross the ground]
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354 See also Antonio Machado's naturalization of a conceptist text by Yamazaki Sōkan, J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 120.

355 See [http://jemallski.blogspot.com/2008\\_06\\_01\\_archive.html](http://jemallski.blogspot.com/2008_06_01_archive.html), accessed June 5, 2012.

356 See <http://haikuwiosenne.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2011-02-01T16:58:00-%2B01:00&max-results=50>, accessed June 4, 2012.

357 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 7.

358 W. Kokoszka, *Haiku*, p. 31.

rudzik mały ptak W. Frąckiewicz <sup>359</sup>	a robin, a little bird]
Zimową nocą tańczą liście na drzewach – czarne gawrony W. Frąckiewicz <sup>360</sup>	[On a winter night leaves are dancing on the trees – black rooks]
Pada śnieg Drzewa kwitną Nawet w zimie A. Regulski <sup>361</sup>	[It’s snowing Trees are blooming Even in winter]
Czy to śnieg wrócił czy jabłoń białą kwiatów okryła ogród? M. Białas <sup>362</sup>	[Is it snow returning or the apple tree covering the garden with white flowers?]

Naturally, this practice is well known to other Western haikuists. For example, Amy Lowell writes:

‘Autumn Haze’

Is it a dragonfly or a maple leaf  
That settles softly down upon the water?<sup>363</sup>

Polish haiku also carry numerous references to Issa’s texts. The modality of the latter’s poems is characterized by the great tenderness and empathy in communing with the most common creatures that exist. Let us have a look at a Japanese pre-text and its Polish realizations:

O little sparrows!  
Mind your place! Be careful there!  
Lord Horse passes through!  
Issa<sup>364</sup>

359 See <http://serwisy.umcs.lublin.pl/w.frackiewicz/KS.htm>, accessed July 27, 2011.

360 As quoted in *Antologia polskiego haiku*, p. 222.

361 A. Regulski, *Haiku, czyli zaśpiewy wyobraźni*, p. 104.

362 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2, p. 12.

363 As quoted in S. Wąciór, *Modernist Mutations – The Morphology of the Imagist Poem: Context – Text – Intertext*, Lublin 2003, p. 33. In Leszek Engelking’s translation: “Jesienna mgielka // Czy to ważka, czy liść klonu / Łagodnie osiada na wodzie?” (as quoted in L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir. Antologia anglo-ametykańskiego imagizmu*, Warszawa, 2016, p. 166). The translation by Sławomir Wąciór: “*petals on a wet black bough.*” *Poezja imagistyczna angielskiego modernizmu*, introduction and translation by S. Wąciór, Lublin, 2002, p. 97.

364 As quoted in K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life*, p. 28.



wróbelku nie chodź  
na jezdnię tam niebo  
w samochodzie pędzi  
A. Afanasjew<sup>365</sup>

[little sparrow, do not enter  
on the road where the sky  
is speeding along in a car]

Jaskółka spuściła z tonu  
będzie deszcz  
uciekaj muszko uciekaj  
U. Koziół<sup>366</sup>

[A swallow came down a peg  
it's going to rain  
run a fly run]

References to Issa's work are especially pronounced in the poetry of Ryszard Krynicki.<sup>367</sup> The following are a handful mutually dialogic textual incarnations of the wandering snail:

O summer snail,  
you climb but slowly, slowly  
to Fuji's summit  
Issa<sup>368</sup>

'Wysoko zaszedłeś'

[YOU'VE CLIMBED HIGH

Wysoko zaszedłeś, mój ślimaczkę,  
na najwyższy liść czarnego bzu!

You've climbed high, my little snail,  
to the black lilac's highest leaf!

Ale pamiętaj: już koniec września  
R. Krynicki<sup>369</sup>

But remember: September's nearly over.]

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365 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2, p. 7.

366 *Pestki deszczu V*, from the collection *Żalnik* (1989); as quoted in U. Koziół, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 253.

367 For haiku in the work of Krynicki, see also A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki Ryszarda Krynickiego*, pp. 163–79. While Świeściak's study is rich in insightful observations, my fundamental reservation concerns the very choice of the poet's alleged haiku. Many works analysed by Świeściak in this context are very far removed from the Western prototype of the genre. See also chapter 3 in Part 2 of this book.

368 Kobayashi Issa, *The Spring of My Life and Selected Haiku*, transl. Sam Hamill, Boston, 1997, p. 127.

369 R. Krynicki, *Magnetic Point*, n.p. (text dated: West Berlin, September 1979).

‘Jak mogłem’

[HOW COULD I

Co robisz, ślimaczku, na moim balkonie,  
 tyle pięter nad ziemią!  
 Czy powracasz z Fudzi?  
 Och, jak mogłem  
 nie poznać cię, Issa, od razu.  
 R. Krynicki<sup>370</sup>

What are you doing, little snail, on my balcony,  
 so many floors above the ground!  
 Are you coming back from Fuji?  
 Oh, how could I  
 not know you, Issa, at once?]

I see the Polish cousins of the Japanese haiku described here as interesting, imaginative, maybe even epiphanic poems recording sensorially experienced reality. Certainly, the impression of their secondariness to old oriental concepts will not spoil the pleasure of reading them.

## 2. In Dialogue with the Occident

It is imperative that we also deal with the other side of Polish haiku intertextuality: the problem of references to texts of Western culture.<sup>371</sup> Once again, I will start with a poem by Leszek Engelking:

Chmurny dzień dzisiaj  
 nawet na stacji metra  
 mroczno i szaro<sup>372</sup>

[Cloudy day today  
 even at the metro station  
 it's gloomy and gray]

In their haiku, the Japanese referred to classical Chinese and vernacular poetry. The Polish poet, fully accepting the Oriental model, is consistently searching for culturally closer jumping-off points. The Polish writer also taps into Japanese and Western traditions. The allusion to Ezra Pound's most famous “*hokku*” here is subtle, but very clear to the readers knowledgeable about the history of haiku in the West:<sup>373</sup>

In a station of the metro  
 The apparition of these faces in the crowd;  
 Petals on a wet, black bough<sup>374</sup>

The Polish poet perversely, perhaps somewhat ironically, referred to the famous couplet and simultaneously to the sensorial assumptions of haiku. Pound discussed

370 R. Krynicki, *Magnetic Point*, n.p.

371 See, e.g. J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*; T. Lynch, *Intersecting Influences*.

372 L. Engelking, *I inne wiersze*, p. 91.

373 For Imagism in the context of haiku (the work of Pound, Lowell, R. Aldington), see Part 2 of the book along with the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’

374 As quoted in ‘*petals on a wet black bough*,’ p. 110. Cf. Engelking’s Polish translation: “Na stacji metra // Te twarze widmowe w tłumie; / Płatki na wilgotnej, czarnej

the epiphany of the experience recorded in “*hokku*.”<sup>375</sup> In Engelking’s metro, there are no equivalents of “sensory flashes,” which the American artist saw on dreamlike faces in the crowd. Everything is dark and grey, even (a meaningful word in the perspective of intertextual references) at the metro station.<sup>376</sup> As a rule, Engelking reproduces in his haiku the figure/ground sensorial imagery typical of this genre. In the poem quoted here, he abandons it in favour of a monochromatic depiction, which stages a dialogue with Pound’s poem and, as it happens, was also not unfamiliar to Japanese seventeen-syllable verses.<sup>377</sup> In any case, this text is closer to the haiku prototype than to Pound’s rather visually incoherent “*hokku*.”<sup>378</sup>

The hidden intercultural discussion here is practically inaudible to readers unfamiliar with haiku’s *Vorgeschichte* in the West, because it takes place only through subtle procedures at the plane of semantics and style. Engelking’s practice is not isolated in comparison to the work of other Western poets, but it seems especially subtle. The following is a poem by Guillermo de Torre, composed several decades earlier, combining plain allusions to the widely known haiku of Bashō<sup>379</sup> and Pound’s *hokku* quoted above:

gałęzi” (As quoted in E. Miner, ‘Pound, haiku i obraz poetycki,’ transl. L. Engelking, *Literatura na Świecie*, 1985, No. 1, p. 105).

375 E. Pound, ‘Vorticism,’ originally in *The Fortnightly Review* (New Series), 96 (1914), No. 573, pp. 461–71.

376 In the context of haiku’s *Vorgeschichte*, it is worthwhile noting the annual competition held since 2008, ‘Wiersze w metrze’ [Poems on the Underground], which included a haiku competition. See <http://www.wierszewmetrze.eu>, accessed July 31, 2016.

377 See Part 1 of the book.

378 The incoherence, of which, incidentally, Pound was aware, arises from the fact that the juxtaposed images do not co-occur in the extra-textual reality. (see, for example, K. Yasuda, *The Japanese Haiku. Its essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English, with Selected Examples*, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1957, p. xviii). Interestingly enough, works (very few) constructed according to a similar principle – and sharing similar subject matter – can also be found among classical Japanese haiku:

My home town –  
People I met, people I touch  
Bramble flowers.

Issa (as quoted in *1020 Haiku in Translation*, p. 123). This bitter reflection, detectable not only in the “impressionistic” view, is grounded in the poet’s biography.

379 clouds of blossoms;

the temple bell:  
Ueno? Asakusa?

(As quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku*, transl. D. L. Barnhill, p. 58.).

La noche tañe sus frondas.  
 No es la campana de Uyeno:  
 Es el jadear del metro.<sup>380</sup>

In comparison with the highly juxtapositional, semantically obvious poem by the Spanish avant-gardist, Engelking’s haiku remains, like haiku do, subdued and clearly mimetically sensorial.

Markedly different intertexts are invoked by Robert Szybiak. His collection *Haiku krymskie* [Crimean Haiku]<sup>381</sup> refers to Adam Mickiewicz’s poetic sequence *Sonety krymskie* [Crimean Sonnets] (tropes, barbarisms, the title). The East-Asian genre form is used to record the experience of Oriental travel (that said, these are two completely different Orients: the Crimea and Japan). It should be reminded that occasionally classical haiku would also be part of poetic and prose itineraries of *haibun* verse.

In the collection we also find such verses:

cicho tak cicho nanizalem na palce szmer Subotchanu <sup>382</sup>	[quiet so quiet I threaded the murmur of the Subothan on my fingers]
chudy ptak w deszczu kołysz Derekojką stadko chryzantem <sup>383</sup>	[a skinny bird in the rain is swaying the Derekoika a flock of chrysanthemums]
zaszczekaj Aju nim się całkiem rozsiąpi wąwóz przede mną <sup>384</sup>	[bark Ayu let the gorge open up wide before me]

In my opinion, these are among the most compelling texts in Szybiak’s book, poems that accord well with haiku poetics (they even follow haiku’s versification guidelines), strongly, mimetically sensorial, metaphorical, synesthetic (“I threaded the murmur on my fingers”), semantically and visually ambiguous (what is it exactly that “is swaying the Derekoika?”). The author explains foreign proper names in the footnotes, but in the poems cited here the context already

380 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 145.

381 R. Szybiak, *Haiku krymskie*, Warszawa, 1993. See the poet’s commentary testifying to considerable awareness of intercultural entanglements of his collection, *Haiku krymskie*, p. 5.

382 R. Szybiak, *Haiku krymskie*, p. 22. The Subothkan is a stream in the massif of Demerdji Yaila (as explained in *Haiku krymskie*). The poem appeared in a haiku anthology, *Haiku World. An International Haiku Almanac*, p. 310.

383 R. Szybiak, *Haiku krymskie*, p. 25. “The Derekoika is a small river in Yalta, literally a settlement in a ravine” (*Haiku krymskie*).

384 R. Szybiak, *Haiku krymskie*, p. 23. “Ayu – here: name of a dog from Simferopol” (*Haiku krymskie*).

reveals the meaning of unfamiliar-sounding words. Occasionally, however, intertextual references deprive Szybiak's poems of sensorial concreteness:

Lubię poglądać  
jadąc na Ajudahu  
wypięty zadek<sup>385</sup>

[Making my way to Ayu-Dag  
I like glancing at  
its butt sticking out]

The poem openly (ironically?) enters into a dialogue with Adam Mickiewicz's poem *Ajudah* [Ayu-Dag] – the incipits of both poems are homophonic. However, the “butt sticking out” turns out to be rather iconoclastic than visual: it is primarily intended to contrast with the semantics and style of a romantic sonnet. It also seems to undermine the haiku decorum. This impression is somewhat erroneous, as among the classical realizations of the genre we also find this poem by Issa (also featuring the time-hallowed mountain in the background):

their buttocks turned  
towards Mount Fuji at nightfall  
a row of frogs croaking<sup>386</sup>

While Issa's poem brings distinct, supremely sensorial concrete detail (image, sound, the surprising juxtaposition), Szybiak's text is limited to a statement engaged in a dialogue with Mickiewicz.<sup>387</sup>

However, Stanisław Cichowicz demonstrates that it is possible to combine (in haiku) a record of rich sensory experience with the intertextuality that is deeply embedded in the indigenous culture:

w podmuchach płonie  
bukowy liść na grobie  
wśród dziennej ciszy<sup>388</sup>

[burning in gusts  
a beech leaf on a grave  
in the stillness of the day]

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385 R. Szybiak, *Haiku krymskie*, p. 25.

386 As quoted in M. Ueda, *Dew on the Grass: The Life and Poetry of Kobayashi Issa*, Leiden, 2004, p. 78.

387 In addition, some of Szybiak's Crimean haiku turn out to be illegible and vague. This primarily stems from semantic ambiguity (compounded by archaisms), the use of peculiar syntax, large lexical and cultural barriers:

liże zranek	[the dawn is licking
mury pana Jajły – psyt	the walls of lord Yaila – shush
żałobny świecie	the mournful world]

(*Haiku krymskie*, p. 6)

biała smoczyca	[the white she-dragon
łowcę cykad pochłania	engulfs the cicada hunter
spokój Akkai	the calm of Akkai]

(*Haiku krymskie*, p. 20).

388 S. Cichowicz, *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku?*, p. 29.

The text echoes an old Polish Christmas carol *Wśród nocnej ciszy* [In the Stillness of the Night], while presenting a situation radically differing from the Nativity scene. In addition to the death–birth antinomy, another one is staged, à rebours: day–night. Cichowicz’s poem “works” like a classical haiku, generating an expressive, distinct sensorial patterning and at the same time triggering an intertextual context deeply rooted in the vernacular culture. In place of the traditional candle on the grave, we have the synesthetically burning (bright-red?) leaf. The scene takes place in stillness (sound) and gusts of wind (tactile and thermal sensations).

The following are two other examples illustrating the use of quotations from texts of Western culture:

“Niebo gwiazdziste  
We mnie.” Po pusty orzech  
Skacze wiewiórka  
A. Tchórzewski<sup>389</sup>

[“The starry heavens  
in me.” A squirrel jumps  
To catch an empty nut.]

jesteśmy trzcina  
na wietrze, kropla rosy  
może nas zabić  
S. Zwierzyński<sup>390</sup>

[we are but a reed  
in the wind, a dew drop  
can kill us]

The poems in question make very obvious references to the widely known dictums of Immanuel Kant and Blaise Pascal. As a result, the challenge for the reader seems negligible. In Zwierzyński’s text, however, the phrase complementing the (shortened) quotation is vague, oddly hyperbolized, practically un-haiku-like. The reed and dewdrop do not make up an image that can be viewed in the perspective of mimetic, sensorial haiku (but they surely could do so). The absence of further interpretative hints deters the reader from seeking any hidden meanings.

Tchórzewski’s poem turns out to be much more interesting. The author employed quotation marks, pointedly emphasizing the cultural borrowing and thus perversely lulling the reader, who at first may overlook a vital change in the quotation. “The starry heavens in me,” states the poem’s speaker, reversing Kant’s order and imparting ambiguity to the poem. This pronouncement is followed by an image of a squirrel and a nut. How are we to connect these two parts of the text? Why is the nut empty? How does the picture stack up against the paraphrase of the philosopher’s statement? Should any references be made here to the Buddhist notion of Emptiness? The poet leaves the reader with these doubts. Such opacity can be irritating, the author does not fulfil haiku’s obligation of intelligibility. Nevertheless, the poem intrigues, drawing the reader’s attention to the semantic-sensorial fissure.

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389 A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*, p. 26.

390 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 3 (4), p. 18.

The following are two other intertextual proposals, reviving Judeo-Christian contexts:

Po morzu czerwonym  
liści  
idzie Chrystus  
z psem  
D. Wawiłow<sup>391</sup>

[On the red sea  
of leaves  
Christ is walking  
with a dog]

We dwoje,  
Przeniesiemy tę górę  
Pod nasz dom  
G. Stańczyk<sup>392</sup>

[You and me, together  
we will move this mountain  
Up to our house.]

Wawiłow simultaneously refers to the Old Testament story of Jews crossing the Red Sea and the parable about Jesus walking on water. The poet modernizes the text through two additions, highlighted on the level of versification, and, consequently, graphic layout.

The Red Sea turns out to be a “the red sea of leaves,” while Christ is walking the dog. The biblical trope was used to craft a textual concept, a play with readers’ expectations. We will not find here any deep dialogue between the transformed haiku form<sup>393</sup> and the religious contexts fundamental to European culture and reactualized in the poem. Maybe what is at stake here is the Christian idea of seeing the divine (or even seeing God) in each human being. Or, alternatively, the poem may deal with the external similarity between the image of Christ preserved in culture and the bearded, long-haired young man having an autumn walk. Most probably the deft concept does not carry any especially deep content.

It seems that more interesting is Stańczyk’s idea of referring to the biblical message that faith can move mountains (Matthew 17: 20). The poet peculiarly materializes the biblical promise: we see “this [specific] mountain” and the effort of two people who most probably are planning for their future together.

Finally, intertextual allusions can be even more subtle than in the case of Engelking’s “haiku in a station of the metro.” Cichowicz writes:

cóż po jabłoni  
gdy wiatr gdy grad kwiat zerwą  
falom strumienia<sup>394</sup>

[what are apples for  
when the wind when hail will pluck the  
flower  
off stream waves]

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391 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 22.

392 G. Stańczyk, *W pejzażu*, p. 25.

393 The metatextual cue – the poem’s publication in the *Haiku* magazine – clearly indicates the literary universe that the author seeks to invoke.

394 ‘Pozostaną same pale. Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Cichowiczem,’ [Only Wooden Posts will Remain. A Conversation with Stanisław Cichowicz], *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 6, p. 234.

In an interview given to the *Literatura na Świecie* magazine, the poet explains that “underlying the first verse is nothing other than Hölderlin’s famous “wozu Dichter.”<sup>395</sup> Without the author’s commentary, the reader was certain to miss this rather unclear allusion in the syntactically tangled text immersed in nature.

Occasionally, however, we find utterly explicit and exquisitely sensorially finished references to Western poetic texts:

‘When the sky is blue’

[WHEN THE SKY IS BLUE

Któregoś popołudnia w zdaniu Reznikoffa:  
*Gdy niebo jest niebieskie, woda ponad  
 Piaszczystym dnem jest zielona!*  
 huśtał się na wietrze  
 trzcinniczek!  
 J. Kornhauser<sup>396</sup>

One afternoon in Reznikoff’s phrase:  
*When the sky is blue the water over  
 the sandy bottom is green!*  
 swaying in the wind  
 was a reed warbler!]

Sometimes allusiveness is revealed only (?) at the level of subtle hints of borrowing from someone else’s poetics:

Tańczyła samą siebie  
 – cmentarnica  
 w koronie gawronów  
 J. Gawroński<sup>397</sup>

[She danced herself  
 – a cemeterywoman  
 in the crown of rooks]

The Leśmianian neologism *cmentarnica*, the strange ontological dance, and the graveyard setting perfectly unify the diametrically distant, as it would seem, literary phenomena: haiku and Bolesław Leśmian’s poetic afterlife.<sup>398</sup>

Lastly, let us have a look at examples of less successful references:

bezradny szczeniak  
 czeka na swego pana  
 który nie żyje  
 U. Zybura<sup>399</sup>

[a helpless puppy  
 waiting for its master  
 who is dead]

395 *Literatura na Świecie*, 1991, No. 6.

396 J. Kornhauser, *Origami*, Kraków, 2007, p. 15. The Polish translation of the quote from Charles Reznikoff by Piotr Sommer.

397 J. Gawroński, *Haiku*, p. 76.

398 See also notes on the validity of linking Leśmian’s work with haiku in Chapter 2, Part 2.

399 U. Zybura, *Haiku*, p. 80.



The poem calls up associations with Wisława Szymborska's poem 'Kot w pustym mieszkaniu' [Cat in an Empty Apartment]. Instead of a cat, however, we see a dog, in place of an extensive, intriguing description of the animal's behaviour we are given two laconic facts: the dog is young and helpless. Urszula Zybur'a's poem pales in comparison with the supposed hypotext. The author does not take advantage of the opportunity to refresh the haiku convention, say something new or at least in a new way. She even eschews expressive sensoriality, which considerably distances the poem from the haiku prototype.

The following poem by Krzysztof Lisowski can also be faulted for derivativeness (the echo of the compositional idea of Szymborska's poem 'Woda' [Water]) and un-haiku-like vagueness (intellectual reflection completely dominating the sensorial experience):

woda pita przez ciebie w skwarne popołudnie	[the water you're drinking on a hot afternoon
w ilu strumykach mieszkała łzach obłokach tchnieniach <sup>400</sup>	in how many streams tears clouds breaths did it live]

Finally, it should be noted that Polish haiku poets (unlike Japanese haikins) rarely make use of ekphrases.<sup>401</sup> In some Polish miniatures, ekphrasis can at best be guessed at. For example, does the following poem by Engelking show Manet's famous 'Bar at the Folies-Bergère'?<sup>402</sup>

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400 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 6.

401 This is one of the few "pure" examples:

gospodyni Vermeera nalewa mleko z dzbana w nieskończoność	[Vermeer's housewife keeps pouring milk from the pitcher ad infinitum]
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M. Pyziak, *Cisza pęka ze śmiechu* [Silence Cracks Up Laughing], Łódź, 1999, p. 40). More frequently the natural world is likened to works of art (J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*, pp. 32–33):

kościół w Tymawie przez drzwi widać traw i zbóż flamandzki arras of	[The church in Tymawa visible through the door is the Flemish tapestry grasses and cereals]
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J. S. Pasierb

winorośl w oknie ruchomy witraż lata świeci zielono	[vines in the window movable stained glass of summer is glowing green]
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J. S. Pasierb

402 The reader particularly sensitive to intertextual dialogues might also hear here a reference to the Tadeusz Różewicz's description of the waitress whose "arse / is more finely moulded / than the dome of that famous / cathedral," from the *poem*

lustro wciąż zimne  
 chociaż odbija tyłek  
 ślicznej kelnerki<sup>403</sup>

[the mirror still cold  
 even though it reflects the butt  
 of a pretty waitress]

The dialogism of “genuine” Polish haiku with other texts of culture is – if we look at it purely statistically (the number of intertextual poems in all texts approximating the prototype of the genre) – relatively insubstantial. However, it is worth calling attention to the very fact of the existence of various intertextual patterns in miniatures commonly seen as ultimately ascetic, completely focused on a stylistically transparent, mimetic description of nature. What seems to be the most interesting here is the creative remodelling of old compositional ideas, the blending of the intertextual and intellectual with the highly sensorial.

It also turns out that Polish authors follow similar paths to those of the Western haijins from the first decades of the twentieth century, incorporating Occidental elements into haiku diction on a cultural, natural, geographical plane, infusing into the (seemingly) culturally hermetic form their own sensorial and affective experiences. The possibility of accomplishing artistic fusions of this kind is a testimony to the existence of authentic transcultural approximations between traditional Japanese aesthetics and that of European modernism. The intertextuality of contemporary Polish haiku can also be seen as a return (perhaps largely unconscious) to what has been present in classical seventeen-syllable verse for centuries: great receptiveness to dialogue.

## V. Autothematism, Autotelism

Polish readers might have a feeling that classical haiku never overtly expressed their literary-critical self-consciousness<sup>404</sup> – to all intents and purposes, no such texts can be found among translations of Japanese miniatures. Yet haiku quite not infrequently would be autothematic. In addition to their self-reflexiveness, however, they always carried a distinct, concrete sensorial stimulus: thus, they were autothematic, but not autotelic (convinced of their self-sufficiency and having a purpose in themselves):<sup>405</sup>

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‘Płytko prędzej,’ [Shallowly, Quicker] (English translation in T. Różewicz, *Poezje wybrane / Selected Poems*, transl. A. Czerniawski, Kraków, 1994, p. 76).

403 As quoted in *Tytuł*, 1995, No. 3/4b (19/20b), p. 347.

404 This subject is touched upon by Michałowski in his analyses (‘Polskie imitacje haiku,’ p. 172).

405 A. Kluba, ‘AUTOTELIZM,’ entry in *Słownik polskiej krytyki literackiej, 1764–1918: pojęcia, terminy, zjawiska, przekroje* [Dictionary of Polish Literary Criticism, 1764–1918: Concepts, Terms, Phenomena, Cross-sections,], eds. J. Bachórz, G. Borkowska, M. Głowiński, T. Kostkiewiczowa, E. Paczoska, M. Strzyżewski, Vol. 1: A-M, Toruń-Warszawa, 2016.

flower buds  
 it's my regret I can't open  
 my bag of poems  
 Bashō<sup>406</sup>

blue flag irises  
 stirring in my mind  
 a *hokku*  
 Bashō<sup>407</sup>

Take a journey  
 And know my haiku  
 Autumn wind.  
 Bashō<sup>408</sup>

Quite numerous Polish texts also turn out to be subtly autothematic, which probably does not result from direct inspiration by Japanese miniatures (dubious in this case). Self-reflexiveness, however, is not the main *raison d'être* for these works. Sometimes autothematism looms only on the surface of a poem and actually is deduced by the reader:

jeszcze dzień błyszczy  
 pamięć uwalnia cienie  
 na śnieżnej karcie  
 E. Tomaszewska<sup>409</sup>

[the day still shining  
 memory releases shadows  
 on a snowy page]

Jesień

[Autumn

Rozproszony  
 jak stado liści  
 cóż napiszę  
 J. Harasymowicz<sup>410</sup>

Scattered  
 like a flock of leaves  
 what can I write]

WIERSZ POD WIECZÓR

[POEM TOWARDS EVENING

już nie widać znaków  
 jeszcze papier świeci  
 K. Miłobędzka<sup>411</sup>

characters no longer visible  
 only the paper still shining]

406 M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 28.

407 M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, transl. D. L. Barnhill, p. 51.

408 *1020 Haiku in Translation*, p. 153.

409 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczy*, p. 91.

410 J. Harasymowicz, *W botanicznym wiersze zen*, p. 18.

411 From the collection *wszystkowiedze* [everythingpoems], 2000, as quoted in K. Miłobędzka, *zbierane, gubione*, p. 268. English translation by E. Wójcik-Leese.

zimowy spacer	[winter walk
na białej kartce śniegu	on a white page of snow
wiersz piszą kroki	steps write the poem]
U. Zybura <sup>412</sup>	

Authematism, autotelism and “haiku-ness” are played out in a particularly interesting way by Krystyna Miłobędzka:<sup>413</sup>

WIERSZ WRÓBEL	[SPARROW POEM
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jednym “ćwiiiirr”	with one chiiirrp
trzyma się	it holds on
tej kartki <sup>414</sup>	to this page]

WIERSZ ŚLIMAK	[SNAIL POEM
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zostawia	it leaves
po sobie	behind
srebrną ścieżeczkę <sup>415</sup>	a little silver trail]

The poet intriguingly suspends the ontological status of her protagonists. Is this a “poem sparrow” or a description of a real bird, “poem snail” or a snail as large as life? A twofold interpretation seems possible. We identify these poems – despite the absence of paratextual cues – as close to haiku; they appear as elusive entities, existing almost beyond words, barely “sticking to the page” (for example with one onomatopoeia). But they also remain “flash-like” descriptions of nature, reflecting its phenomena through expressive, individual sensorial cues.

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412 U. Zybura, *Haiku*, p. 52.

413 Surprising here is the text dedicated to Bashō (included in the collection *wszystkowirsz*, 2000, quoted in K. Miłobędzka, *zbierane, gubione*, p. 267):

WIERSZ DLA BASHŌ	[POEM FOR BASHŌ
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powiedz mnie pięknie	say me beautifully
i bez reszty.	and to the full.]

English transl. E. Wójcik-Leese.

414 English transl. E. Wójcik-Leese.

415 English transl. E. Wójcik-Leese.

However, the close linking of “texts” of nature and culture occurs in Japanese – and Polish – haiku more frequently than “pure” autothematism:

Mount Hiei –  
tracing out a line  
one shred of mist  
Bashō<sup>416</sup>

Into a line they wheel  
the wild geese; at the foothills,  
the moon is put for seal.  
Buson<sup>417</sup>

strużka kadziła  
zapisane powietrze  
próby sumi-e  
H. S. Kreis<sup>418</sup>

[a trickle of incense  
written air  
attempts at sumi-e]

eposy pól  
pocięte w heksametry  
stawiasz im czoła  
U. Koziol<sup>419</sup>

[epic poems of fields  
cut up into hexameters  
you face up to them]

All Polish poems cited so far compellingly reconcile sensoriality with subtle self-reflexivity. Naturally, stereotypical approaches, supported by outdated lexicon and syntax, can represent a deathblow to haiku:

Mam w ręce pióro  
czeka zastygłe w ciszy  
karta wciąż biała  
J. Stańczakowa<sup>420</sup>

[I am holding a pen in my hand  
it's waiting frozen in silence  
the leaf is still blank]

Much more interesting are, for example, metahaiku transgressing the genre's taboo (eroticism):

416 As quoted in Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival*, Leiden–Boston, 2007, p. 260.

417 As quoted in H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, p. 96.

418 H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 20.

419 ‘Pestki deszczu VII,’ the collection *W płynnym stanie*, 1998; as quoted in U. Koziol, *Fuga 1955–2010*, p. 460.

420 As quoted in *Antologia polskiego haiku*, p. 94.

pośpiechem naszych ramion haiku pisane w zimowy świt M. Pyziak <sup>421</sup>	[haiku written with the rush of our arms on a winter dawn]
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Autothematism can, however, move away from haiku. This is the case when haiku is treated therapeutically and substitutively: it exists in place of the sensorially experienced reality. Or, rather, it disappears; deprived of sensorial detail, it loses its genre specificity:

ta książka może cię uleczyć jasne słowa po wieczornej kłótni K. Lisowski <sup>422</sup>	[this book can heal you lucid words after an evening quarrel]
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Wiersz jak ostatni oddech; głoska po głosce pławi się w szczęściu A. Tchórzewski <sup>423</sup>	[A poem like the last a breath; sound after sound it basks in happiness]
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Finally, the following confession is completely un-haiku-like:

gdzie się podziały uczucia myśli nie mogę pisać haiku M. Sudoł <sup>424</sup>	[whatever happened to feelings thoughts I cannot write haiku]
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It is precisely this state thoughtlessness, the emptiness of mind that a haijin from the Bashō School would consider the most appropriate foundation for creativity.<sup>425</sup> As it happens, similar purity of mind is reflected in a poem of Agata Tuszyńska:

jak cicho we mnie znowu słyhać ptaki <sup>426</sup>	[how quiet inside me birds can be heard again]
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421 M. Pyziak, *Cisza pęka ze śmiechu*, p. 18.

422 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku*, p. 27.

423 A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*, p. 35.

424 M. Sudoł, *Haiku*, Kraków 1991, p. 6.

425 Engelking holds the same opinion (‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 131).

426 A. Tuszyńska, *Miejsce przy oknie*, p. 70.

“Describing the initial state ideally suited for poetry, he [Bashō] would say: ‘haiku and no other thoughts.’”<sup>427</sup> And no search for the purpose of the world – and no creativity. This is by no means an easy recipe. Naturally, not only Polish haikuists have difficulties in sticking to it:

Haiku, shmaiku, I can’t  
understand the intention  
Of reality.  
J. Kerouac<sup>428</sup>

## VI. Continuators or Epigones?

The examples of the “most genuine” Polish haiku discussed here essentially fall into two formulas described by Stanisław Balbus – active continuation of old forms and imitation. Balbus refers to the active continuation (citing the example of Jan Kochanowski’s verse and the tradition of antiquity to which the poet referred) as follows:

In the case of [...] [Kochanowski] we are dealing with an active continuation of traditional forms, with their SEAMLESS ADAPTATION IN THE INITIALLY FOREIGN CULTURAL GROUND, and, at the same time, with the ADAPTIVE TRANSFORMATION OF THE LITERARY GROUND INTO WHICH THEY WERE TRANSPLANTED. What results from this are NOT SO MUCH REPLICAS AS CULTURAL EQUIVALENTS OF THESE FORMS; establishing their provenance only heightens the sense of NATURAL CONTINUITY AND AFFINITY. An adaptation of the form not only consists in thorough cultural assimilation of all its re-actualized elements but also in its MODIFICATION AND EXTENSION OF SEMANTIC POSSIBILITIES, ALBEIT INSOFAR AS THESE NEW QUALITIES DO NOT GENERATE COLLISIONAL TENSIONS EITHER WITH RESPECT TO THE PRESENT DAY OR TO TRADITION. THE MODERNIZATION OF THE TRADITIONAL FORM PROCCEEDS INASMUCH AS THE CONTEXT MODERNIZING IT FINDS ITS OWN IDENTITY IN TRADITION.<sup>429</sup>

In turn, Balbus writes about imitation as follows:<sup>430</sup>

Epigonic form reduces [...] the world of meanings into which it is transferred; one way or another it merely repeats, duplicates what it already said, manifests itself in

427 T. Briesławiec, *Poeziia Matsuo Basio*, Moscow, 1981, pp. 27–9; as quoted in L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie,’ p. 115.

428 J. Kerouac, *Book of Haikus*, ed. and with an introduction by R. Weinreich, New York, 2003, p. 71.

429 S. Balbus, ‘Stylizacja i zjawiska pokrewne,’ p. 145; first emphasis S. Babus, subsequent ones B. Ś.

430 The scholar cites the case of Polish prose of the 1950s and vernacular nineteenth-century realism that the former saw as tradition.

almost the same form in which it already appeared. RATHER THAN REVALUATING AND REINVIGORATING ITS SEMANTICS, it reduces it to a sort of arithmetic mean of two different epochs, cultures, and styles. NOR DOES IT GENERATE ANY TENSIONS CHARACTERISTIC OF STYLIZATIONS, AS IT ABOLISHES PRECISELY WHAT IN SEPARATE CULTURAL SYSTEMS COULD BE THEIR FACTOR. In fact, the diachronic perspective on style is alien to imitation. Although it re-actualizes (or rather keeps alive) literary tradition, it is solely a TRADITION OF EPIGONES. The ritual of renewing the defunct form by no means revives it, thus it elevates it to the status of tradition only seemingly. It halts the course of the literary-historical process, simulating its dynamism.<sup>431</sup>

In this part of the book, I have analysed the mechanisms of the production of active Polish continuations of the haiku tradition, genuine cultural equivalents of this form, contrasting them with less creative, usually less artistically successful miniatures, which in this perspective should be deemed as epigonic texts.

Satisfying, innovative haiku – “a pebble thrown into the pool of the listener’s mind”<sup>432</sup> – can be found in various places: in one of the many volumes with “haiku” in the title (but also in a multitude of publications containing no such paratextual cues), on one of the websites devoted to the genre,<sup>433</sup> in fascicles of the monographic *Haiku* magazine.<sup>434</sup> However, this kind of search turns out to be tedious and time-consuming. Good poems are lost in a sea of haiku – and “haiku” – rife with second-rate metaphors, gravitating towards obvious punch lines, heavily “mushy” or gnomic.<sup>435</sup> Some of the most compelling “genuine” Polish haiku were composed by authors who, in addition to their own poetic work, study and translate poetry: Leszek Engelking – a specialist in literature (writing about haiku, among other topics)<sup>436</sup> and translator (for example, of Western haiku into Polish and the work of Pound),<sup>437</sup> Piotr Michałowski – author of studies on poetic

431 S. Balbus, ‘Stylizacja i zjawiska pokrewne,’ p. 147; emphasis added.

432 Alan Watts, ‘Zen in the Arts,’ in *The Way of Zen*, p. 183.

433 On the Internet one can find several Polish websites which are, as it were, haiku anthologies or magazines devoted to this form. It is surprising, however, that websites focusing strictly on haiku are rather small in number (the site of the Polish Haiku Association, founded in September 2015, <http://psh.org.pl/>, accessed July 31, 2016, seems to be the most promising). Moreover, some authors’ names recur across various internet portals, many websites also contain links to blogs and websites of individual authors (there are also forums where authors discuss their texts; this is a sort of an amateur literary workshop – see, for example, <http://forum.haiku.pl/>, accessed July 31, 2016; <http://homohaikus.blox.pl/html>, accessed July 31, 2016). Thus, we are dealing with a rather hermetic milieu.

434 The magazine appeared between 1994–1995.

435 These problems are discussed in part 6, ‘A “Haiku” Miscellany.’

436 L. Engelking, ‘Środkowoeuropejskie pustelnie.’

437 See Part 2 alongside the chapter ‘Grochowiak’s Longest Journey.’



miniatures (including haiku),<sup>438</sup> Ewa Tomaszewska – editor of *Antologia polskiego haiku* and translator of *Antologia haiku kanadyjskiego* [Anthology of Canadian Haiku],<sup>439</sup> Ryszard Krynicki – translator of the four greatest Japanese haiku masters,<sup>440</sup> Wit Jaworski – editor of the magazine *Pismo Literacko-Artystyczne* (1983–1990)<sup>441</sup> or acclaimed Polish poets interested in the Orient (Urszula Koziół, Janusz Stanisław Pasierb, Jan Polkowski, Krzysztof Lisowski, Hieronim Stanisław Kreis). Accordingly, these are “learned” haiku, aware of the East-Asian history of the genre and the diversity of its European and American incarnations. From time to time haiku “nuggets” crop up – brilliant, fresh texts of unknown authorship, often thrown in amid dozens of fair-to-middling or even poorly executed and derivative poems.

How to describe what is essentially “haiku-like,” eye-catching, not amenable to simple explication? In the course of my analyses, I have tried to pin down, at least for a moment, these elusive elements, describing the multifarious revitalizations of the genre’s poetics, heightening (and sometimes even determining) haiku epiphanicity. The group of poems faithfully adhering to the form’s properties includes some original Polish haiku as well as rather inferior imitations of foreign texts. However, I refer to all these poems as haiku, because I cannot – and do not want to – encumber genre qualification with an axiological dimension.

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438 These publications are referenced in this part of the book, among other places.

439 See *Antologia polskiego haiku*; *Antologia haiku kanadyjskiego*, transl. and with an introduction by E. Tomaszewska, Kraków, 1993.

440 R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*.

441 This is all the more important because in 1986 a double issue of the magazine (No. 6/7) saw print, devoted to East-Asian philosophy and culture, containing a selection of haiku of Polish poets.



## Part 6 A “Haiku” Miscellany

This part of the book has been conceived as an extensive, partly analytical annexe to the previous chapters. I want to present here, as synthetically as possible, a vast variety of poems that are paratextually labelled as “haiku” but are very distant from the prototype of the genre and not enter into any deeper discussion with the style as well as aesthetic and ethical premises of the form. I regard these various “quasi-haiku,” which in some cases become simply anti-haiku, as very interesting texts in the perspective of genre studies on the most recent Polish poetry.

According to the diagnosis of Stanisław Balbus, many contemporary poetic works (but also less numerous pre-modern ones) employ genre names or other genological cues (genre indexes, as Balbus writes)<sup>1</sup> not because they realise the paradigm of a given genre, but in order to enter into “sense-making correlations, coincidences, or even collisions, at any rate into a hermeneutic context, to some extent regardless of the nature and quality of their actual artistic structures.”<sup>2</sup> The scholar’s finding is applicable only to some of the miniatures discussed here. Many of them do not keep the genre distance characterising the significant part of contemporary poetry.<sup>3</sup> By all accounts, the numerous poems described here would like to be haiku: despite various genological “frictions,” there are no traces here of a discussion with the East-Asian genre, no intentional, semantically marked “collisions” between forms. More often than not, the haiku prototype and the Polish poems discussed here turn out to be so apart that finding any room for conflict between them is next to impossible. Having said that, in some cases we are puzzled by some “meaningful coincidences” and sense-making divergences between classical haiku and the realization of the genre studied here.

The genological “failures” of the miniatures analysed here can put down to deficient awareness of literary and cultural studies and inadequate technical skills on the part of their authors. However, this diagnosis is insufficient. The texts far removed from the models of the genre and yet labelled with the generic haiku designation would be roundly criticized for “intellectual shallowness, oversimplification, shoddiness and lack of vitality.”<sup>4</sup> Piotr Michałowski went as far as to declare:

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- 1 S. Balbus, ‘Zagłada gatunków,’ in *Polska genologia literacka*, eds. D. Ostaszewska, R. Cudak, Warszawa, 2007, p. 165 (originally published in *Teksty Drugie*, 1999, No. 6).
  - 2 S. Balbus, ‘Zagłada gatunków,’ p. 164.
  - 3 P. Michałowski, ‘Gatunki w poezji nowoczesnej,’ in P. Michałowski, *Głosy, formy, światy. Warianty poezji nowoczesnej*, Kraków, 2008, p. 84.
  - 4 A. Kuik-Kalinowska, D. Kalinowski, ‘From Fascination to Fashion – Reflections on Haiku,’ *Opcje*, 1998, No. 3, p. 13.

The idea of renaming various genres as the fashionable haiku is just a deplorable misunderstanding, as neither the name itself, nor the three-line structure of the poem can decide about this generic qualification.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, neither the name nor the versification determines “haiku-ness.”

However, one cannot assume that all quasi- and anti-haiku are one-dimensional or artistically substandard. Genre misunderstandings are not always worth qualifying as pathetic, as for various reasons – not only in the context of the sociology of literature – they can at times be highly intriguing. Above all, I have in mind here the study of disparate dimensions of contemporary popular literature. However, I will start with an analysis of the texts that in no way can be associated with popular culture.

## I. Orthodoxly Christian “Haiku”

In my opinion, the most interesting phenomenon within the incoherent current of quasi-haiku is religious verse.<sup>6</sup> A literary miniature that is genetically deeply embedded in a religious worldview<sup>7</sup> seeks sacred contexts also on foreign cultural ground. In both cases, these are contexts typical of the poets’ cultures. In Poland, this context is provided primarily by Christianity. The local authors more or less consciously make use of the form marked for unique metaphysical entanglements to formulate a prayer or verbal contemplation. Haiku – and “haiku” are often written by clergymen:<sup>8</sup> Janusz Stanisław Pasierb, Hieronim Stanisław Kreis, Stanisław Kobielus,<sup>9</sup> Antoni Regulski, Mariusz Woźniak. “Professional affiliation,” however, does not automatically mean that their poems will be deeply and nondiscursively embedded in religion. Let us note that only some of the authors referenced in this chapter are clergymen.

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5 P. Michałowski, ‘Polskie imitacje haiku,’ in *Polska genologia. Gatunek w literaturze współczesnej*, ed. R. Cudak, Warszawa, 2009 (originally published in *Teksty Drugie*, 1995, No. 2, p. 52).

6 I discussed haiku addressing religious subjects and approaching to the prototype of the genre in Part 5 of the book. This provides a background for the analyses presented here.

7 For haiku’s links with Zen, as well as Daoism, Shintō and Confucianism, see Part 1.

8 I have already discussed the poems of some of the authors mentioned here (Janusz Stanisław Pasierb, Hieronim Stanisław Kreis, Antoni Regulski) in Part 5 of the book. For the specificity of the verse written by Polish priest-poets and the perception of their work, see B. Chrzęstowska, “‘Wierzę wierszem.’ O poezji kapłańskiej,” [I Believe through Verse], in *Religijne aspekty literatury polskiej XX wieku* [Religious Aspects of 20th-century Polish Literature], eds. M. Jasińska-Wojtkowska, J. Świąch, Lublin, 1997, p. 217, and ff. See also P. Michałowski, *Poezja kapłańska – poza nowoczesnością (Wacław Oszejca)* [Clerical Poetry – Outside Modernity (Wacław Oszejca)], in P. Michałowski, *Głosy, formy, światy*, pp. 225–39.

9 On the surface, many of the poems by Kobielus seem close to haiku, while in fact only some of them exhibit any transcultural kinship with this form. See, for example, S. Kobielus, *Zaśpiewać światłem* [To Sing with Light], Warszawa, 1992, p. 19.

The strong manifestation of religious belief (and especially its orthodox and dogmatic exposition) typically leads to a departure from the prototypical “haikuness,” even in the case of poets who had successfully employed this literary form before. The very limited size of a poem is not a problem. It is worth repeating the question Piotr Michałowski posed a few years ago regarding the so-called clerical poetry (that is one thematizing the problems of faith and the clerical profession)<sup>10</sup> – about “the possibility of expressing any existing idea through the paradigm of modernism.”<sup>11</sup> The scope of my interest is not exhausted merely by priestly lyrics, but the question remains essentially unchanged.

In the first place, I want to carefully analyse the collection *Przed Ikoną* [In front of the Icon] by Kreis.<sup>12</sup> This small book is a surprising and highly isolated experiment in recent Polish poetry. While supremely Catholic, this publication also reveals the author’s great fascination with Japanese miniatures (which he had already proved by publishing numerous haiku approaching the prototype of the genre).<sup>13</sup> Opening the book is an extensive stychic poem ‘medytacja przed Częstochowską Ikoną’ [meditation in front of the Częstochowa Icon],<sup>14</sup> followed by a sequence of poems “inspired by the Icon of the Queen of Jasna Góra”<sup>15</sup> referred to by Kreis as haiku. The volume also includes a sequence of texts (intended, as one can presume, as haiku) dedicated to John Paul II and “a handful of haiku [concerning] the fate of old damaged icons, but still radiating with inner beauty.”<sup>16</sup> As the poet informs, thus demonstrating his acquaintance with Japanese culture, a single-verse lineation predominates in the collection (as in traditional haiku). He adds: “I use the

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- 10 “The cautious designation ‘priest-poets’ refers to this part of religious (but not only religious) poetry that is created in a certain professional environment, while the narrower category of “clerical poetry” denotes within it a relatively small area characterized by the thematization of the priestly vocation.” (P. Michałowski, ‘Poezja kapłańska’ p. 226). Anna Kamińska wrote years ago: “One can speak of poetry created by women, chimney sweeps or priests. One can prepare anthologies of women’s or priests’ poetry, but it doesn’t make much sense” (A. Kamińska, *Od Leśmiana. Najpiękniejsze wiersze polskie*, Warszawa, 2000, p. 54). From the perspective outlined by Michałowski, however, it does make sense (for that matter, if poetic miniatures written by nuns and thematising religion were published, I would also analyse such texts here).
- 11 P. Michałowski, ‘Poezja kapłańska,’ p. 228. Elaborating on this thought, Michałowski writes: “Doubt [...] arises: can we assign to a poem a stamp of modernity while, at the same time, asking about any “worldview of the poet,” reconstructed in the course of the interpretation procedure as a kind of a constant, thoroughly determining the poetics of a particular utterance” (P. Michałowski, ‘Poezja kapłańska,’ p. 228).
- 12 H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikoną* [In Front of the Icon], Kraków, 2007.
- 13 See the texts by Kreis quoted and discussed in Part 5, ‘Originals or Imitations? – around the “Most Genuine” Polish Haiku.’
- 14 Also published in Kreis’ collection *jak leci*, Kraków, 2002, pp. 12–4.
- 15 H. S. Kreis, ‘Od autora’ [Author’s Note], in H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikoną*, p. 5.
- 16 H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikoną*, p. 5.

three-line form whenever a haiku markedly deviates from the standard metre.”<sup>17</sup> One gets the impression that Kreis surprisingly reduced the knowledge of the genre to orthodoxly conceived versification criteria.

The book contains three reproductions of the painting of Our Lady of Częstochowa:<sup>18</sup> on the cover, on a separate bookmark and on the page preceding *medytacja przed Częstochowską Ikoną*. The image on the bookmark “enables a visual contact with the Icon while reading texts related to it,”<sup>19</sup> constituting a sort of movable a *haiga*<sup>20</sup> accompanying all the poems in the collection.

The following is a sequence dealing with the Częstochowa Icon:

oczy ikony nieustannie otwarte oczekiwanie  
 na ufnych ustach Twoje *niech mi się stanie* budzi dzień ósmy  
 trudno oddzielić od ciężkich prac kształt dłoni ach drżenie serca  
*uczynicie wszystko cokolwiek* On *wam powie* a będzie trwało  
 tarcza oblicza ileż odparła ciosów ziemia łaska chleb  
 gwiazda nad czołem pośród ciemności świata dziewicze światło  
 dwie aureole a jedno światło chwały Boga człowieka  
 Córa Syjonu odziana w lilie wonne modlitwa ziemi  
 królewski węzeł myśli serce i czyn łączy Wcielone Słowo  
 testament Syna otwarty głodnym łaski tron Twojej ręki  
 wargi bezgłośnie w oku ciepła obecność chwije się płomień  
 nad niebem płaszcz rozległa zieleń łąki widzieć od środka  
 Twoje spojrzenie klucz do niebieskiej bramy do ciemni serca  
 godzina czarna a Ty stoisz i świecisz lżą ciętą w diament<sup>21</sup>

[eyes of the icon constantly open expectation  
 on trusting lips *be it unto me* rouses the eighth day  
 it is hard to separate the shape of the hand from hard labour oh the tremble of  
 the heart

17 H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikoną*.

18 Verbo-visibility in haiku (for example in books by Kreis) is discussed in Part 7.

19 H. S. Kreis, ‘Od autora,’ p. 5.

20 *Haiga* is a painterly illustration of a haiku poem or a painting executed in the spirit of this poetry. Japanese and Polish *haiga* are discussed in more detail in Part 7 of the book.

21 H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikoną*, pp. 14–9.

*do whatever He tells you and it will endure*  
 the face shield how many blows it parried earth grace bread  
 a star above the forehead amid the world’s darkness virgin light  
 two halos and one light of God-man’s glory  
 Daughter of Zion attired in fragrant lilies, prayer of the earth  
 the royal knot of thoughts the heart and act unified in The Incarnate Word  
 the Son’s testament to the throne of Your hand open to those hungry for grace  
 lips silent in the eye a warm presence the flame is flickering  
 above the mantle’s sky vast greenness of meadow to see from inside  
 Your look key to the blue gate to the darkroom of the heart  
 Black hour and you stand and shine with a tear cut into diamond]

Kreis’ contemplative poems maintaining the rhythmic pattern of the haiku are significantly removed from mimesis and experimental verifiability central to this form. At best, some of them are haiku-like sensorial “flashes” (plain, mimetically sensorial<sup>22</sup> images, for example, the ecphrastic text: “Black hour and you stand and shine with a tear cut into a diamond”). Basically, however, the state of meditation focused on the icon – rather than on the world of fleeting natural phenomena – gives rise to metaphorical, “dark” poetry drawing upon the Judeo-Christian tradition (“daughter of Zion,” “be it unto me”). Those ambiguous, solemn, slightly archaized (inversion, biblical vocabulary), one-line miniatures should better be referred to as verses rather than as haiku. At the same time, the sequence has a litanesque form:<sup>23</sup> it is, essentially, a series of periphrastic descriptions of Mary/the icon, enclosed in an identical version of the verse pattern. While there is no repetition of responses, it can be assumed that the very act of looking at the Czestochowa icon is a sort of response to metaphorical invocations (it should be reminded that the reproduction appears in the collection in three places, for instance on the movable bookmark, whereby the reading of all the texts in the book can be combined with the contemplation of the icon).

The sequence of haiku dedicated to John Paul II is devotional and hagiographic in nature<sup>24</sup> (the poems are supplemented with footnotes explaining biographical and biblical contexts):

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22 See Parts 1 and 5 of the book.

23 See W. Sadowski, *Litania i poezja: na materiale literatury polskiej od XI do XXI wieku* [Litany and Poetry: Based on Source Materials from Polish Literature from the 11th to the 21st century], Warszawa, 2011, pp. 340–83.

24 The book preceded the canonization of Karol Wojtyła by several years, which, however, does not change the hagiographic character of this part of the publication.

tak jak Cię prosił Syna posłałaś przodem a Ty na progę  
 zanim Cię wybrał aż po ostatnie *Amen* był i jest cały *Twój*  
 i wiatr był mocny Ewangelię przetrząsał pieczęć na sercu  
 kroki na wodzie kula w Twojej koronie *nie lękajcie się*  
 i znów Emaus ręce szukają chleba wiara widzenia  
 twarz pochylona w ciszę w światło miękkie i biały powiew  
 życie samo *tajemnice światła* rozsadzają ramki<sup>25</sup>

[just as he asked you, you sent your Son first, and you on the threshold  
 before choosing you until the last *Amen* He was and is all *Yours*  
 and the wind was strong and shook the Gospel shook out the seal on the heart  
 footsteps on the water a bullet in your crown *do not be afraid*  
 and Emmaus again hands seek bread the faith of seeing  
 the face lowered into silence soft light and white breeze  
 life itself, *the mysteries of light* breaks apart the frames]

Biblical allusions and references to the Marian cult are interspersed with echoes, not always clear, of the facts from the life (and funeral) of John Paul II. As it turns out, the elliptical, metaphorical verses are far removed from the spirit of Japanese miniatures. It is hard to explain why the author, aware of the genealogical and cultural aspects of classical haiku, chose this particular form to present a markedly un-haiku-like message.

Kreis' collection also includes a sequence about old icons. It is preceded by a black-and-white photograph of a worn-out picture: the image of Jesus. According to the author, the departure from a consistent one-verse format was intended to indicate the resignation from the haiku metre. Paradoxically, however, precisely these poems, focused on specific icons rather than on considering the sanctity of persons, are closer to sensorial haiku than the two sequences presented above. Moreover, for the Polish reader the multiple-line arrangement<sup>26</sup> is a more distinct mark of kinship with haiku than the rhythm of the graphically unseparated 5- and 7-syllable units:

wieki całe  
 żar świeżego chleba  
 w siatce zmarszczek<sup>27</sup>

[for ages  
 the heat of fresh bread  
 in the net of wrinkles]

25 H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikona*, pp. 23–5.

26 Occurring most frequently are triplets, with occasional two- and one-line texts.

27 H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikona*, p. 29.



zdarty werniks rana aż do drzewa słoje barw <sup>28</sup>	[peeled-off varnish a wound all the way to the tree rings of colour]
obdarte deski Pokój Twego oblicza nowy świat <sup>29</sup>	[ragged boards the Peace of your Face the new world]

It is worth confronting Kreis’ book with two other attempts to use the foreign poetic form or, rather merely its versification backbone, for religious purposes.

The collection *Jaspisowy diadem* [The Jasper Tiara] by Krzysztof Agams<sup>30</sup> (who, incidentally, also authored collections of poems relatively close to the haiku prototype)<sup>31</sup> consists of triplets of 5 + 7 + 5 syllables, which are... a quasi-haiku summary of the Bible. Agams’ texts are a narrative, artificially divided into verses and practically devoid of artistic merit, recapitulating biblical stories and teachings – from the creation of the world to the Apocalypse of John:

Niewiasta zjadła Zakazany owoc, do Czego zwiódł ją wąż... <sup>32</sup>	[The woman ate Forbidden fruit, Tempted by the snake...]
Ziemię Kanaan We władanie od Pana – Dostał Abraham... <sup>33</sup>	[Abraham got the land of Canaan From the Lord...]
Dekalog Siedem – Pamiętaj abyś nie kradł Żadnych przedmiotów... <sup>34</sup>	[Decalogue Seven – You shall not steal Anyone’s possession]
“Świątynia domem Modlitwy” – rzekł Pan waląc, Biczem stragany... <sup>35</sup>	[“The Temple is a house of Prayer,” said the Lord pounding, Stalls with a whip of cords...]

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28 H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikoną*.

29 H. S. Kreis, *Przed Ikoną*, p. 30.

30 K. Agams, *Jaspisowy diadem*, Lublin, 1994.

31 Agams is the author of the volumes *Chorał kniei*, Kraków, 1996, and *Haiku alla Polacca*, vols. 1–2, Lublin 1990. He is one of the authors who consider as haiku texts of very different stylistics.

32 K. Agams, *Jaspisowy diadem*, p. 11.

33 K. Agams, *Jaspisowy diadem*, p. 13.

34 K. Agams, *Jaspisowy diadem*, p. 17.

35 K. Agams, *Jaspisowy diadem*, p. 80.

According to the author, his book was meant as a sort of “mini ‘Haikuesque Evangelization’”<sup>36</sup> conducted “by means of the shortest poetic form, sophisticated and refined, modelled on the Japanese haiku.”<sup>37</sup> Naturally, such “proselytizing” is completely out of keeping with the spirit of Oriental miniatures, as are the “sophistication and refinement” demonstrated in the collection. Squeezing extremely simplified Biblical message into a rigid versification straitjacket, annoyingly and comically accentuated by random enjambments, could be seen as an artistic misunderstanding. Agams’ collection is a reverse of Kreis’s book *Przed ikoną*, the latter collection bringing deeply contemplative works that are, although in a completely different way, distant from haiku.

Dariusz Piasek, an internationally acclaimed haikuist (cited in the *Haiku World* anthology),<sup>38</sup> used the versification model of haiku to compose *Litana świętokrzyska* [Holy Cross Litany]. The poem consists of 42 rhymed seventeen-syllable stanzas, each ending with an apostrophe “dzięki Ci Boże” [thank you, Lord]. The chain of stanzas was linked by the ABC DBC EFC GFC rhymes... Let us have a look at the fragments of the text:

za Raj podziemny  
gdzie trafiają turyści –  
dzięki Ci Boże

[for the underground Paradise  
where the tourists end up –  
thank you Lord

za sen o domu  
– oby się kiedyś ziścił –  
dzięki Ci Boże

for the dream about home  
– may it ever come true –  
thank you Lord

[...]

za Żeromskiego  
– chociaż przynudzał trochę –  
dzięki Ci Boże

thank you Lord  
for Żeromski  
– even though he rambled on at times

za chlebak wspomnień  
i kuropatwy płocze –  
dzięki Ci Boże

for a knapsack of memories  
and flighty partridges –  
thank you Lord

[...]

że byłeś ze mną  
w szumie wiatru i liści  
dzięki Ci Boże

that you were with me  
in the swoosh of wind and leaves  
thank you Lord

36 K. Agams, ‘Słowo wstępne’ [Foreword], in *Jaspisowy diadem*, p. 7. Agams claims that “the transformation of the Holy Bible” took him three years.

37 K. Agams, ‘Słowo wstępne’, p. 7.

38 *Haiku World. An International Haiku Almanac*, ed. W. J. Higginson, Tokyo–New York–London, 1996. For more on this publication see footnote 16 in Part 5 of the book.

żeś o mnie myślał  
i strzegł od nienawiści –  
dzięki Ci Boże

that you thought of me  
protected me against hatred –  
thank you, Lord]<sup>39</sup>

One can imagine a text that is at once litanesque and haiku-like. Haiku originates from longer compositions of linked verse – *renga*.<sup>40</sup> The litanesque conversions of *renga*, in which semantic and stylistic links between stanzas featured prominently, would make a very interesting transcultural modification of the form. However, Piasek has no interest in such procedures. We have an overwhelming impression that the main link between the stanzas is provided by... rhymes. It seems that the acoustic correspondence between words in the middle lines is the only determinant of the poem's semantic (!) fluctuations. Stylistic “irregularities” (“came true,” “flighty” versus “rambled on”) are not artistically “exploited” in any way either. Finally, we won't find any markers of haiku-ness here. Numerous stanzas are devoid of any sense impressions. In others, the sensorially experienced is so unnaturally forced into the rhythmic and litanesque order that it practically disappears from view, having no chance to gain a foothold in the reader's mind and draw him/her into the haiku-esque microcosm.<sup>41</sup>

At this juncture, it is worth harking back to the work of Janusz Stanisław Pasierb.<sup>42</sup> The texts included in the collection *Haiku żarnowieckie* were discussed in the part devoted to the haiku approximating the prototype of the genre (‘Originals or Imitations? On the “Perfectly Genuine” Polish Haiku’), serving as proof of the creative adaptation of the foreign model. However, the collection *Morze, obłok i kamień* [The Sea, Cloud, and Stone],<sup>43</sup> also entirely made up of

39 D. Piasek, ‘Litania świętokrzyska,’ *Haiku*, 1995, No. 3, pp. 3–7.

40 See Part 1 of the book.

41 za Wierną Rzekę  
po której płyną chmury –  
dzięki Ci Boże

[for the Faithful River  
on which clouds float –  
thank you Lord

za stare sztolnie  
u stóp Miedzianej Góry –  
dzięki Ci Boże

for old mine drifts  
at the foot of the Copper Mountain –  
thank you Lord

za noc nad Łośną  
i piekielne komary –  
dzięki Ci Boże”

for the night by the Łośna River  
and hellish mosquitoes –  
thank you Lord]

(D. Piasek, *Litania*, p. 5).

42 See the poems by Pasierb and their analyses in Part 5.

43 S. Pasierb, *Morze, obłok i kamień*, Pelplin, 2001. The selection *Haiku żarnowieckie* (composed mostly of haiku) and the volume *Morze, obłok i kamień* were published posthumously. In *Poezje wybrane* (*Selected Poems*), with an introduction, selected, and ed. by B. Kuczera-Chachulska, Warszawa, 1998 – we won't find any haiku whatsoever (or any one miniature oscillating around the prototype of the genre), instead, however, we will find “religious aphorisms.” The book *Wiersze wybrane* (selected and ed. by Fr. J. Sochoń, illustrations by J. Lebenstein, Warszawa, 1988) includes unpublished sequences of (?) haiku (from the years 1982–1983; pp. 229–44)

triplets obviously evoking associations with haiku, markedly deviates from the assumptions of Japanese seventeen-syllable verse. Each poem deploys themes (one or more) mentioned in the book’s title. The reader is dealing with an ambiguous, symbolic, philosophical repository that is deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition.<sup>44</sup>

obłok Zwiastowanie	[a cloud Annunciation
kamień Wielkanoc	a stone Easter
morze Zielone Świąto <sup>45</sup>	the sea Pentecost]

obłok nadzieja	[a cloud hope
kamień wiara	a stone faith
morze miłość <sup>46</sup>	the sea love]

obłoku Mojżesza	[oh the Cloud of Moses
kamieniu Jakubowy	Jacob’s stone
Morze łaski <sup>47</sup>	Sea of grace]

The following are examples of other religious “haiku” rooted in the word (Word) rather than in the sensorial experience of the world:

Milcząca obecność	[The silent presence
zagubionej drachmy	of the lost drachma
woła w ciemności o światło.	calls for light in the dark.]
M. Woźniak OP <sup>48</sup>	

Zatrzymać perlę	[To keep the pearl
w krwawiących dłoniach,	in bleeding hands,

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along with *morskie tercyny* [marine terza rima] (1983; pp. 245–53). Most of the texts included in *Wiersze wybrane* appear in the two above-mentioned posthumous collections, containing considerably more haiku and “haiku” triplets than any of earlier editions of Pasierb’s poems (*Haiku żarnowieckie* and *Morze, obłok i kamień*).

44 Occasionally, however, religious allusions are very subtle:

niebieski obłok	[a blue cloud
biały kamień	a white stone
czerwone morze	the red sea]

(J. S. Pasierb, *Morze, obłok...*, p. 26).

45 J. S. Pasierb, *Morze, obłok...*, p. 16.

46 J. S. Pasierb, *Morze, obłok...*, p. 17.

47 J. S. Pasierb, *Morze, obłok...*, p. 47.

48 *Metafora haiku*, ed. E. Tomaszewska, Kraków–Warszawa, 1994, p. 48.



As we can see, among the haiku discussed here, we find, despite their significantly narrow thematic scope, poems of highly varying nature and artistic value. Let us return to the question about the modernity of strongly religious poetry. Haiku-writing practice subtly alluding to religion can be examined in terms of the modernist epiphany (as I have argued in the part ‘Originals or Imitations? On the “Perfectly Genuine” Polish Haiku’). Orthodoxly religious texts frequently depart from epiphany perceived in this manner. Their persuasive-dogmatic character and deployment of abstract notions and symbols may limit the scope of subjective – intellectual and sensorial – inquiries of an individual. However, as the examples of (some) poems by Kreis and Pasierb demonstrate,<sup>54</sup> they do not preclude interesting explorations in the sphere of poetics or artistically intriguing recording of individually “framed” experiences. In my opinion, such poems too may remain modern. Naturally, also in cases when, despite authorial pronouncements, they are not haiku at all.

## II. “Haiku-mirohłady,” or a “Library Gloss”

Another modality of “haiku” should be pointed out here. As it turns out, some poems bearing this genre designation simultaneously resemble nonsemantic *mirohłady*<sup>55</sup> and Dadaist poems “pulled out of a hat.” At first, one can get the impression that the author really decided to play at arranging random words and quasi-words into verses or... played the Slavic version of the American game “Haikubes” remade in the vein of post-avant-garde.<sup>56</sup>

The reader (and “viewer”) of the library<sup>57</sup> book by Radosław Nowakowski *Hasa Rapasa*<sup>58</sup> rather unexpectedly (actually it is hard to expect any predictability from

54 See Michałowski’s considerations of the work of Waclaw Oszejca – P. Michałowski, ‘Poezja kapłańska.’

55 See B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu”? *Koncepcje dźwięku w poezji polskiego futuryzmu*, Wrocław, 2008, pp. 194–205.

56 “Haikubes” is a set of 63 cubes bringing to mind traditional dice used in board games. One of them is marked with a word or short phrase. Haikubes are a party game in which participants compose haiku. For further comment, see for instance <http://www.haikubstwo.com/review-haikubes/>, accessed April 25, 2014.

57 For liberature (*liberatura*), see for example K. Bazarnik, Z. Fajfer, *Liberatura czyli Literatura totalna: teksty zebrane z lat 1999–2009* [Liberature or Total Literature. Collected Essays from 1999–2009], Kraków, 2010; A. Przybyszewska, ‘Liberackość dzieła literackiego’ [Liberariness of a Literary Work], Łódź, 2015; A. Przybyszewska, *Liberatura / literatura totalna* [Liberature / total literature], in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, ed. G. Gazda, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 521–26.

58 As the author declares: “This book was conceived-written-drawn by me, Radosław Nowakowski. I printed it in my home on an inkjet printer and bound it on my own. I also did all the translation, editing, and design work.” (R. Nowakowski, *Hasa Rapasa: opis spektaklu niemożliwego / description of a performance impossible*

such a heterogenous work) comes across a part entitled: “Krzysztof Żarnotal,<sup>59</sup> *Haiki-bajki. Very Short Fairy Tales for Polish Speakers Only / fabeletoj nur por la homoj pole parolantaj.*” On the “double-page spread,” two triangular pages carry the following texts in pink – the only such occurrence in *Hasa Rapasa* (I keep the original order of the untranslatable lines).<sup>60</sup>

tadanum odum  
łojisie miska miza  
a juś swe cy co

cisa kandziora  
myziucha mu grzbietula  
buba murduś

odej dydy  
podle muru bururu  
da ele mele

skwirzo skwierczki  
żarotki zółtek żaża  
na – jajaśnica

hajze ino ody  
la cim la sa bysiu  
ciachcim Dady

haż go usia  
nego hego cwajda hucz  
gulusi gulu

kabądz jaw pałęgi  
grygulaszki dropiate  
w szuszuwałkach

neć kieć a owędy  
mętu krętu dżyg myc  
kic da hasa byr

w macierduszce  
bąkolista stydlawy –  
jo tyż niesmieluch

kuciu hysia  
dyc libu haż libusi  
malmalki lu lu

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*/ priskribo de la spektaklo malebla, n.p., n.d., n.p.).* The book is triangle-shaped (42.5 × 30.3 × 30.3 cm), set in a thick green canvas cover and a wooden case, printed in white, black, green, grey, and pink.

- 59 The name of Krzysztof Żarnotal can also be found in the anthology *Strużka piasku w klepsydrze... Haiku*, ed. J. Brzozowski, J. Sikorzanka, Łódź, 2006 (p. 24). I have not managed to determine if it is Nowakowski’s pen name or Nowakowski unusually granted some pages of his book to another author.
- 60 R. Nowakowski, *Hasa Rapasa*, n.p. One should mention the folk “warding off” spell (recorded as Nowakowski informed, in 1937) that was a source of inspiration for the book’s title (and perhaps also for the whole sequence in question): “hasa rapasa / mila parila / / kaśnender kaśnefinder kominder” (as quoted in R. Nowakowski, *Hasa Rapasa*, n.p.). The book also contains texts essentially approaching the haiku prototype: “Cisza. / Głęboka cisza. / Przed burzą? / Po burzy?” [Calm / Deep calm / Before the storm? / After the storm?] (R. Nowakowski, *Hasa Rapasa*, n.p.).

In my discussion of miniatures by Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, I used the term “haiku-blague.”<sup>61</sup> Brzósiewicz often deploys the poetics of the conceptist nonsense, at all times keeping semantic clarity, at least at the level of individual words (at least partial intelligibility of the text determines its nonsensicality).<sup>62</sup> The term “haiku-blague” would also be well-suited to completely other, but no less ludic texts from *Hasa Rapasa*. The collection *Hajki-bajki* is a surprising, “unbridled” (the epithet suggested by the title of the book) game of glossolalia. We find here quasi-dialectical word-formation, pseudo-archaic Slavic ludicity, the artistic embrace of the spontaneous linguistic “primitive.”<sup>63</sup> It is hard to detect here any connections with the haiku tradition – concision (even the three-line structure) is a prerequisite for a more intimate relationship with this form. The poems’ “fragmentariness,” the recording of small, momentary events (of course, one could describe in such terms only those texts of the sequence in question that remain legible) could be seen as the only subtle indicator of haiku in *Hajki-bajki*. In principle, however, the poems cited here are intriguing anti-haiku. One may wonder whether *Hajki-bajki* is not a mockery of all the myriad serious attempts at haiku writing. The potential “polemicity”<sup>64</sup> here largely hinges on pure, unrestrained ludicity.<sup>65</sup>

The author is busy playing with the avant-garde tradition, jumping between the poetics of relatively semantically suggestive *śłopiewnie* (“skwirzo skwierczka”) – “Old-Polish” description of scrambled eggs?; [“w macierduszcze”] – a semantically “nebulous” admission of a shy person?), more ambiguous *namopaniki* (e.g. [“kabądz jaw pałęgi], [“cisa kandziora”) and semantically opaque *mirohlady* (e.g. [“hajze ino ody”], [“haż go usi”).<sup>66</sup> Central to *Hajki-bajki* is the phonetic layer of the utterance,

61 See the chapter ‘Haiku-Blague or “Freestyle Haiku?” – The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.’

62 See B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu”?, pp. 350–2.

63 Mostly in its quasi-folkloric version. See B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu”?, pp 455–7.

64 See Part 3.

65 Providing an interesting intertext here may be the book *Haikais & concretos* by Pedro Xisto (Sao Paulo, 1960), where haiku stanzas (largely adhering to the markers of the genre) smoothly morph into semantically vague echolalic-glossolalic verses, to finally conclude the composition with the haiku text.

66 *Śłopiewnie* is a poetic form taking its name from a cycle of poems by Julian Tuwim *Śłopiewnie*, which are composed in only partly intelligible poetic language, focusing on phonoaesthetic effects like assonance and alliteration and making great use of neologisms (often imitating proto-Slavic words) along with archaic and folk elements. *Namopaniki* is a genre of poetry invented by Alexander Wat and inspired by transrational experiments of Russian Futurism. *Namopaniki* employ impressive sequences of paronomastic coinages deriving from the same stem; the ‘stories’ they tell are barely comprehensible (more asemantic than *śłopiewnie*). *Mirohlady* are poems even less intelligible than the former two, composed mostly of invented words of unclear semantics and morphology and employing a variety of glossolalia. For the distinction between *śłopiewnie*, *mirohlady*, and *namopaniki*, see B. Śniecikowska, “Nuż w uhu”?, pp. 202–4.



just like in numerous non-semantic works of the Dadaists and Futurists. In the poems from the volume *Hasa Rapasa* this, in part, results from the employment of extensive alliterations, sound clusters evoking associations with folk echolalia and interjections (“odej dydy,” “dady,” “hajze,” “haż”). Obviously, in part, this is a consequence of using glossolalic quasi-words that de-familiarize the reception of the text, calling attention to their “unhackneyed” fresh sound contour.

It is no surprise that the author does not translate his cycle into other languages (the remaining units of *Hasa Rapasa* are trilingual: in Polish, English, and Esperanto). However, the translation of the title seems problematic. The poet resigns (understandably so) from the phonostylistically conceptist *Hajki-bajki* phrase (more or less meaning “Haiku-Fables/Haiku Fibs”). However, he explains to English-speaking readers and Esperantists that the presented poems are fables (!) accessible only to Polish-language readers. Thus, from the title evoking connotations with two literary genres, the author chose the fairy tale rather than the haiku. Even here, however, there is no shortage of ambiguity – “fairy-tales” should rather translate as *baśnie* in Polish, while *fabeletoj* as both fairy tales and “classic” moralizing fables. Presumably, the artist resorts here to a very wide, colloquial understanding of the fairy tale as a tale, a fictional story, suggesting a certain barely discernible narrativeness of the text. So is the title *Hajki-bajki* primarily an intriguing concept with no literary-critical justification? It would seem that it is.

### III. “Haiku” Aphorisms, “Haiku” Epigrams, “Haiku” Maxims

The foreign and unknown often tends to be explained by close, intelligible and familiarized forms. Haiku’s simplicity, as we have seen on numerous occasions, is hugely deceptive. Without familiarity with the cultural background of this ascetic and refined art form, it is difficult to enter into a dialogue with it or offer a continuation that goes beyond mere epigonic repetition of the most superficial attributes of the genre.

At this juncture, I am interested in texts labelled as “haiku” that, however, should be legitimately referred to as aphorisms, sentences, apophthegmata, maxims, and sometimes epigrams.<sup>67</sup> This is a common occurrence in Polish “haiku-like” poetic production (it should be mentioned that the previous part of this study discussed religious epigrams as well as the epigram-like “haikuing” of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz).<sup>68</sup> The fashionable etiquette is subservient to old forms that were in

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67 See, for instance, observations of Michałowski (P. Michałowski, ‘Polskie imitacje haiku,’ pp. 173–4). For the sometimes-challenging genre distinctions between small poetic forms, see J. Trzynałowski, *Małe formy literackie* [Small Literary Forms], Wrocław, 1977.

68 See the chapter ‘Haiku-Blague or “Haiku Freeestyle?” – The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.’

no way changed by the reception of the poetry of Matsuo Bashō, Yosa Buson, and Masaoka Shiki. Attaching the “haiku” rubric to these texts reflects rather badly on genealogical, or more generally, literary-critical awareness on the part of the authors.<sup>69</sup> Especially as, as I have mentioned, no traces of a dialogue with East-Asian poetry can be found here. Alina Świeściak’s observations about the differences between haiku and aphorism are well suited to the miniatures in question:

Aphorism [just like the other forms mentioned above] is a closed, impenetrable form, resistant to any attempts at continuation, unlike haiku, which is open to additions, invites continuation [or rather visualization of the entire scene - B. Ś.] [...]. The difference between the two genres also arises from the degree of intellectuality. The fragment-aphorism is wholly subjected to it – it illustrates a thought process that has a beginning and an end. The fragment-haiku minimizes it as much as possible, picturing a reality independent of the laws of the intellect. Similar is the case with the idea of the Whole. Aphorism is a limited whole, as it concerns a concrete aspect of reality that is subject to scrutiny in a poem. It does not claim to capture the principles of reality as such, which is precisely haiku’s premise. Aphorism makes use of intellectual analogues of reality and through intellectualisation (abstraction, induction, inference) establishes truths with a maximum degree of generality. In haiku, generality is attained in a different manner, as it were the other way round. Reality is reflected in detail here. Grasping the laws underpinning it does not require any intellectual operations, it does not go beyond mere visualization, the purely representational effect. The spiritual apperception takes the place here of mental comprehension [...].<sup>70</sup>

One more note. Among classical Japanese haiku, there are very few texts in a gnomic vein.<sup>71</sup> Despite its aphoristic character, a poem of this kind usually does not lose its distinct, clear-cut sensoriality:

with the sun darkening  
on the blossoms, it is lonely—  
a false cypress  
Bashō<sup>72</sup>

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69 One poet introduces the haiku form as follows: “*HAIKAI, HAIKU, HOKKU*. A genre of Japanese syllabic comic verse, which in the seventeenth century emerged from the initial stanza of *renga* and came into its own as an unrhymed three-verse epigram (5 + 7 + 5 syllables): the HINDU master Matsuo Basho, adapted this form to lyric poetry” (J. Janczewski, *171 haiku i 12 limeryków* [171 Haiku and 12 Limericks], Kraków, 2002, p. 5; emphasis added.).

70 A. Świeściak, *Przemiany poetyki Ryszarda Krynickiego*, Kraków, 2004, p. 177.

71 However, in the course of the evolution of the form (before and outside classical haiku) such texts were not infrequent – see Y. Yamada-Bochynek, *Haiku East and West. A Semiogenetic Approach*, Bochum, 1985.

72 M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku*, transl. and with an introduction by D. L. Barnhill, p. 72.

By contrast, Polish artists variously “aphorize” and engage in “epigram-writing.”<sup>73</sup> Some texts rely on concepts relatively close to sensorial haiku:

Między niebem A ziemią Dziurka kornika. G. Stańczyk <sup>74</sup>	[Between the heavens And the earth – Bark beetle’s tiny hole.]
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------

Nawet najwyższe sosny Nie patrzą z pogardą Na mech. G. Stańczyk <sup>75</sup>	[Even the tallest pines Do not look down On the moss.]
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------

Some poems turn out to be highly reflective, meditative, at times oneiric or structured around paradoxes. Compelling examples are provided by Teresa Truszkowska:

Śmierć ;– kryształ co przecina cienką szybę naszej widzialności <sup>76</sup>	[Death – crystal that cuts the thin glass of our visibility]
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------

Ogień i woda wywłaszczają się nawzajem z przeciwieństw ich podobieństwo <sup>77</sup>	[Fire and water dispossess each other from opposites their similarity]
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------

However, the bulk of those poems strive for a conceptist punch line, often graphically highlighted by the rhyme. In the part ‘Originals or Imitations? On the ‘Perfectly Genuine’ Polish Haiku,’ I have presented haiku that creatively reconcile conceptism with the premises of the Oriental miniature. This competency is conspicuously lacking from these poems. Rarely do we come across language games, known, for instance, from the gnomic haiku by Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, such as the use of paronomasia, “distorted” phrasemes and proverbs.<sup>78</sup>

Therefore, I am presenting here – without any further comments – a short selection of aphoristic, “sententious” quasi-haiku authored by Polish poets:

73 For the specificity of genres and their genealogical fuzziness, see, for example, P. Michałowski, ‘Miniatura poetycka i gatunki’ [Poetic Miniature and Genres,’ in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin, 1999, pp. 22–66, 115–6.

74 G. Stańczyk, *W pejzażu. Haiku. Rysunki*, Łódź, 1995, p. 8.

75 G. Stańczyk, *W pejzażu...*, p. 24.

76 T. Truszkowska, *Haiku*, Kraków, 1992, p. 23.

77 T. Truszkowska, *Haiku*, p. 25.

78 See also the section ‘Haiku – Ferment in Language’ in Part 3 of the book.

Poród i śmierć jedyne na tym świecie równości prawa J. Janczewski <sup>79</sup>	[Birth and death the only equalities of law in this world]
Placz mieszam z bólem gdy głupie życie łupie losu cebulę L. Konopiński <sup>80</sup>	[I mix crying with pain when stupid life peels the onion of fate]
rzadko się zdarza na karuzeli chorób wygrać pusty los J. Janczewski <sup>81</sup>	[it is rare that on the carousel of diseases one draws a blank]
Lepiej być ślimakiem niż bezdomnym K. Kmiciek <sup>82</sup>	[It is better to be a snail than homeless]
Dłoń matki Rzeźbiona czułością Tarcza miłości A. Regulski <sup>83</sup>	[Mother's hand Sculpted by tenderness The shield of love]
Jabłko pada Dla pestki A. Regulski <sup>84</sup>	[The apple falls for the sake of the pip]
Gdy przyjdzie wieczór zuchwale chce się znaleźć pochwa przy mieczu L. Konopiński <sup>85</sup>	[When the night comes the sheath daringly wants to find itself by the sword]

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79 J. Janczewski, *171 haiku i 12 limeryków*, p. 52.

80 L. Konopiński, *Haiku bez liku* [No End of Haiku], Poznań, 2007, p. 7.

81 J. Janczewski, *Okruchy codzienności*, Kraków, 2003, p. 123.

82 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 24.

83 A. Regulski, *Haiku, czyli zaśpiewy wyobraźni*, Poznań, 2002, p. 105.

84 A. Regulski, *Haiku, czyli...*, p. 43.

85 L. Konopiński, *Haiku bez liku*, p. 78.

‘Wiara’ Dusza Polski jest Nieśmiertelna. Wierzą w to Też ateści E. Biela <sup>86</sup>	[FAITH The soul of Poland Is eternal. Atheists also Believe in it]
sobie jestem a niebu M. Mruk <sup>87</sup>	[I am for heaven’s own sake]
Życie to otwarty namiot w czasie burzy Fiolka <sup>88</sup>	[Life is an open tent during a storm]
‘Światowa kuchnia’ W książce kucharskiej Stare przepisy: na śmierć, Wojnę i pokój. E. Biela <sup>89</sup>	[WORLD CUISINE In the cookbook Old recipes: for death War and peace.]
słodycz kąpiel z piany powstałam w proch się obróczę N. Usenko <sup>90</sup>	[sweetness of a bath foam I am and unto dust I will return]

Finally, it is worth taking note of the reverse process. Some texts are not termed haiku by their authors yet take the form of three-line miniatures, coming quite close to the epigram form and by far closer to the haiku prototype than most of the verses presented in this part of the book. I chiefly have in mind Andrzej Szuba’s numerous *Postscripta* [Potscripts]:<sup>91</sup>

‘Postscriptum CXLII’  cień liścia	[POSTSCRIPT CXLII  the shadow of a leaf
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86 E. Biela, *Haiku*, p. 43.

87 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 2 (3), p. 24.

88 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1 (2), p. 20.

89 E. Biela, *Haiku*, p. 45.

90 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1 (2), p. 20.

91 A. Szuba, *Postscripta wybrane / Selected Postscripts*, afterword by P. Sarna, English translation J. Ward, Katowice, 2003; and A. Szuba, *Strzępy wybrane*, Kraków, 2011. Szuba’s *Postscripta* as haiku-inspired texts are discussed in A. Dziadek, ‘Haiku,’ *Zeszyty Literackie*, 1994, No. 2 (46), p. 144.

którego lotu nikt nie dostrzegł  
jest wszędzie  
A. Szuba<sup>92</sup>

whose flight no one noticed  
is everywhere]

‘Postscriptum CLXXI’

[POSTSCRIPT CLXXI

*Dorocie*  
z mijającego cię  
po południu cienia  
wyprowadź kobietę<sup>93</sup>

*To Dorota*  
from the shadow  
passing you in the afternoon  
lead a woman out]

#### IV. “Haiku:” Poetic Miniature

Many of the texts labelled by their authors with the generic qualification in question or published in the *Haiku* magazine<sup>94</sup> (thus indirectly claiming to be “haiku-like”) are lyric poems which do not permit a more precise genre qualification.<sup>95</sup> Relatively few of them subtly evoke, through imagery, haiku poetics, although they mainly explore self-centred spaces rather than the sensorially experienced outside world.

W moim sercu burza  
czeka na pierwszą błyskawicę  
nabrziałe niebo  
A. Landzwojczak<sup>96</sup>

[A storm in my heart  
waiting for the first lightning  
the swollen sky]

We also find interesting examples of the Imagist superposition of images, akin, for example, to the famous *hokku* by Ezra Pound about people at the metro station and petals on a wet branch<sup>97</sup> or to some texts by Amy Lowell:<sup>98</sup>

92 A. Szuba, *Postscripta wybrane*, p. 44.

93 A. Szuba, *Postscripta wybrane*, p. 55.

94 In this section, I quote chiefly texts published in Danuta Wawilów’s column “KLAN” (the acronym stands for “The Artistically Unappeased People’s Club”), which on this account are works written by very young people taking their first step into poetry writing.

95 For the non-genre poetic miniature in modern poetry, see P. Michałowski, *Gatunki w poezji nowoczesnej* [Genres in Modern Poetry], pp. 89–90; P. Michałowski, ‘Miniatura poetycka poza gatunkami,’ [Poetic Miniature Outside Genres], in P. Michałowski, *Miniatura poetycka*, pp. 121–91.

96 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 14.

97 Pound’s text in question was discussed in the part ‘Originals or Imitations? – around the “Perfectly Genuine” Polish Haiku.’

98 For Lowell’s poems, see Part 2 of the book.

moje brwi raniona jaskółka K. Bąchor <sup>99</sup>	[my eyebrows a wounded swallow]
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There are numerous poems here that do not share much with the poetics of Oriental miniatures.<sup>100</sup> A great many of them are literary attempts of young artists publishing during the 1990s in the *Haiku* magazine:

Twoje słone wargi popijam wodą I. Nowak <sup>101</sup>	[Your salty lips I wash them down with water]
--------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------

w lesie na mchu siedzi miłość i wypuszcza skowronki A. Cienkosz <sup>102</sup>	[in the forest on the moss love is sitting releasing larks]
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------

Kwitnę jabłonią w twoich ustach M. McGill <sup>103</sup>	[I bloom the apple tree in your mouth]
----------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------

Let us have a look at a handful of lyric quasi-haiku of rather uneven artistic quality:

W moim sercu burza czeka na pierwszą błyskawicę nabrzmiałe niebo A. Landzwójczak <sup>104</sup>	[A storm in my heart waiting for the first lightning the swollen sky]
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

mój przeszły rok jak liść chowam między książki A. Pączka <sup>105</sup>	[I am placing my past year like a leaf between books]
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99 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1 (2), p. 20.

100 Love haiku were discussed in the part ‘Originals or Imitations? – around the “Perfectly Genuine” Polish Haiku.’

101 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1, p. 23.

102 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1, p. 23.

103 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1, p. 24.

104 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 14.

105 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 24.

Mówią że  
dorastam  
– a ja  
umieram  
G. Paciorek<sup>106</sup>

[They say  
I am growing up  
– but I am  
dying]

Wczoraj urodziłam  
cień –  
podobny do ciebie  
L. Szmorąg<sup>107</sup>

[Yesterday I gave birth  
to a shadow –  
resembling you]

między bólem a rozkoszą  
senny kult śmierci  
Święto Kwiatów  
F. Szuta<sup>108</sup>

[between pain and delight  
dreamy death cult  
Feast of Flowers]

tak długo byłeś samotny  
dotyk cię  
skruszy  
marcel<sup>109</sup>

[you have been lonely for so long  
touch will  
soften you up]

Let me conclude this part of my inquiries with a poem composed of symmetrically arranged triplets. The individual units of the composition seem to approximate haiku. The whole, however, generates a kind of mystery suggested by the title, a spell marked by a modality that is as extremely removed from haiku-like simplicity. Clearly evident at the acoustic, articulation and visual plane are repetitions (reproducing human body?), characteristic of ritual texts dealing with the sacred:

#### MISTERIUM

trzy razy lewą dłonią  
dotykam  
białej kory trzech brzóz

trzy razy prawą dłonią  
dotykam  
białej kory trzech brzóz

trzy razy lewą dłonią  
dotykam

trzy razy prawą dłonią  
dotykam

106 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1, p. 20.

107 *Haiku*, 1994, No. 1, p. 11.

108 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 1, p. 29, the sequence *Folk-haiku*.

109 See <http://bezsennik.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00%2B01:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00%2B01:00&max-results=50>, accessed June 5, 2012.



czarnej kory trzech sosen	czarnej kory trzech sosen
	zatętniła żywica
E. Borkowska <sup>110</sup>	
[MYSTERY	
thrice with the left hand	thrice with the right hand
I touch	I touch
the white bark of three birches	the white bark of three birches
thrice with the left hand	thrice with the right hand
I touch	I touch
the black bark of three pines	the black bark of three pines
	resin throbbd]

“Haiku” is a catch-all term that holds the key to numerous styles and semantic fields, a synonym for various works marked by a small size of verses. In Poland, the special potential of the form (or rather its genre designation) is exploited to a considerably lesser extent than in English-speaking countries (mainly in America), where haiku appears to be practically ubiquitous. Such poems may be read during a meal (when they are displayed on a decorative fridge magnet), can function as a stylistic exercise at schools,<sup>111</sup> a social event can be spiced up with a game of “Haikubes”,<sup>112</sup> and the mood can be lifted by reading one of many humorous “haiku guides.” The publications offered to the readers by the American Amazon store include a plethora of haiku-related publications, such as *Pregnancy Haiku: Three Short Lines for Your Nine Long Months*,<sup>113</sup> *Gay Haiku*,<sup>114</sup> *Haiku for Chocolate Lovers*,<sup>115</sup> *Vampire Haiku*,<sup>116</sup> *Petku: Pet Haiku Poems*,<sup>117</sup> *Office Haiku: Poems Inspired by the Daily Grind*,<sup>118</sup> *Hockey Haiku: The Essential Collection*,<sup>119</sup> *Erotiku: Erotic Haiku for the Sensorial Soul*,<sup>120</sup> *Inspirational Haiku for a Recessed Economy*.<sup>121</sup>

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110 *Haiku*, 1995, No. 3 (4), p. 11.

111 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 3.

112 See footnote 56 in this part of the book.

113 E. Olson, *Pregnancy Haiku: Three Short Lines for Your Nine Long Months*, n.p., 2009.

114 J. Derfner, *Gay Haiku*, n.p., 2005.

115 D. Ash, *Haiku for Chocolate Lovers*, n.p., 2007. David Ash authored a whole series of thematic haiku collections (addressed to baseball fans, coffee lovers or... Catholics, published by... Bashō Press).

116 R. Mecum, *Vampire Haiku*, n.p., 2009.

117 D. Grindol, G. Tata-Phillips, *Petku: Pet Haiku Poems*, n.p., 2008.

118 J. Rogauskas, *Office Haiku: Poems Inspired by the Daily Grind*, New York, 2006.

119 J. Poch, Ch. Davidson, *Hockey Haiku: The Essential Collection*, n.p., 2006.

120 L. M. Darlington, *Erotiku: Erotic Haiku for the Sensorial Soul*, n.p., 2008.

121 E. D. Knapps, *Inspirational Haiku for a Recessed Economy*, n.p., 2008.

Authors of a great deal of such publications strip the form of any aesthetic and ethical “redundancies,” supplanting them with purely ludic “content” (this marketing term may most adequately convey the essence of the phenomenon). Let us have a look at examples (relatively the most interesting in terms of literary quality):<sup>122</sup>

“This has to go out?”  
 And I was waiting for desk  
 Fairies to type it.  
  
 I sit wondering;  
 Can someone die of boredom?  
 Only time will tell.

The strategy here is essentially to provide entertainment – and reap profits. Poland is yet to see such thematic collections of “haiku.” One might assume, given the unflagging interest in the miniature bearing the Eastern rubric (for example, many Polish haiku anthologies have been put out in recent years, along with peculiarly thematic ones),<sup>123</sup> that their advent is only a matter of time. So far, haiku in Poland has been a purely artistic phenomenon (perhaps excepting the advertising campaign of *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s “Magazyn Świąteczny” supplement)<sup>124</sup> – trendy,

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122 As quoted in <http://www.amazon.com/Office-Haiku-Poems-Inspired-Daily-ebook/dp/B003E74BY2>, accessed October 20, 2014.

123 See, for example, *Niebieskie trawy. Antologia haiku o roślinach* [Blue Grasses. Anthology of Haiku about Plants], selected by K. Kokot, Poznań, 2012; *Dajmy grać świerszczom. Antologia haiku o zwierzętach* [Let Crickets Play. Anthology of Haiku about Animals], selected by K. Kokot, Poznań, 2013; *Pory roku w polskim haiku* [The Seasons in Polish Haiku], selected by A. Dembończyk, K. Kokot, Poznań, 2015.

124 The large-scale advertising campaign of *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily’s “Magazyn Świąteczny” supplement (August 2014), featured three short, oddly “orientalizing” TV and internet spots as well as photographs alluding to the spots (carrying “haiku” texts) published as press advertisements. In a low-key setting (a garden bench on a white podium, along with a wind-swept tree and three flying wild ducks painted in the background), accompanied by austere “Eastern” music, Polish actor Marcin Perchuć reads one of the three quasi-haiku touching upon current social and political issues (“Haiku on Gender // Ministress / met the doctress. // I don’t understand anything;” “Haiku on Demographics // Poles are dwindling in number. / A crowd on the bus in the morning. / I don’t understand anything;” “Haiku on the Scandal // Shocked Poland, / another scandal. / I don’t understand anything”). The short scene is summed up by a voice-over (in the printed version the text is slightly abridged): “Are short texts not enough? To learn more, read *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s “Magazyn Świąteczny” on Saturday. Nice to read, good to know.” This promotional strategy is a wink to the readers, and on account of

attracting readers, listeners and viewers,<sup>125</sup> but not commercialized as extensively as across the Atlantic.

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its masterful execution, it is also interesting for viewers with a deeper literary awareness.

125 The term “haiku” has been used to refer to relatively numerous visual art undertakings (see Part 7 of the book), multitudinous media activities (see chapter ‘Haiku-Blague or “Haiku Freestyle?” – The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’), and, less frequently, music projects (see footnote 235 in Part 7 of the book).



## Part 7 The Verbo-visibility of Haiku; Haiku and the Visual Arts

In this part of my study, I discuss the relationship between haiku and visual arts. While Japanese culture serves here as the comparative starting point, my considerations chiefly include analyses of activities of Polish poets, painters, graphic, and video artists, and museologists.

### I. Japan: The Visuality of Haiku (Haiku and the Visual Arts)

The question of visibility in classical haiku can be examined on several levels: sensorial imagery inherent in verses, methods of presenting a text on a page, the relationship between a poem and its illustration, links with certain types of Japanese (and Chinese) painting and aesthetics of Zen visual arts, and finally – ekphrasis.

Haiku imagery, most often manifested in the employment of simple, often multi-sensory figure/ground alignments, have already been discussed on numerous occasions in this book.<sup>1</sup> The sense figuring especially prominently in those alignments is sight, and visibility can be treated literally. Depicted scenes can be readily presented graphically or vividly (with imagery remaining in large part parallel to the compositions known from some types of Japanese painting, as discussed in more detail below). While typically not employing names of colours, haiku do convey information about colour by invoking natural phenomena available to ordinary experience. Consequently, they allow for a multi-faceted mental – and material – concretization of an image.

Relatively numerous classical haiku were ekphrases of works of art, in particular of paintings. However, without additional cues,<sup>2</sup> the Western reader (as well as many Japanese ones) is unable to determine that a given poem is a description of an image or a sculpture, especially as ekphrastic haiku tend to be strongly multi-sensory. In the texts themselves, we will not find any signs of their embeddedness in visual arts.<sup>3</sup> From time to time, one may be surprised by the un-haiku-like

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1 See, esp., Part 1 of the monograph.

2 Sometimes this task can be helped by reading *haibun* (prose interwoven with haiku verses, where we can find information about the origin of some poems – see Part 1 of the book) and scholars' comments accompanying critical editions of texts.

3 The following are examples of Matsuo Bashō's ekphrastic haiku (as quoted in M. Bashō, *Bashō's Haiku*, transl. D. L. Barnhill, pp. 90, 122, 87, respectively; the last text: M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, transl., annotated, and with an introduction by J. Reichhold, Tokyo–New York–London, 2008, p. 134; for the scanty information on the ekphrasis in those poems, see J. Reichhold, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, pp. 14, 131, 175, 319, 351).

separation from reality and vagueness of the context, in which the figure or object was foregrounded (disruptions of sensorial mimesis).<sup>4</sup> The ekphrastic potential of haiku has not been rejected by today's artists,<sup>5</sup> yet it is a rather marginal current of haiku-inspired artistic experimentation. Of vital importance here are different types of relationship between visual arts and poetry. This will be my main focus.

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a crane cries—  
that shriek will surely tear  
the banana leaves

mountain roses—  
when tea ovens at Uji  
are so fragrant

no moon, no blossoms,  
just drinking sake  
all alone

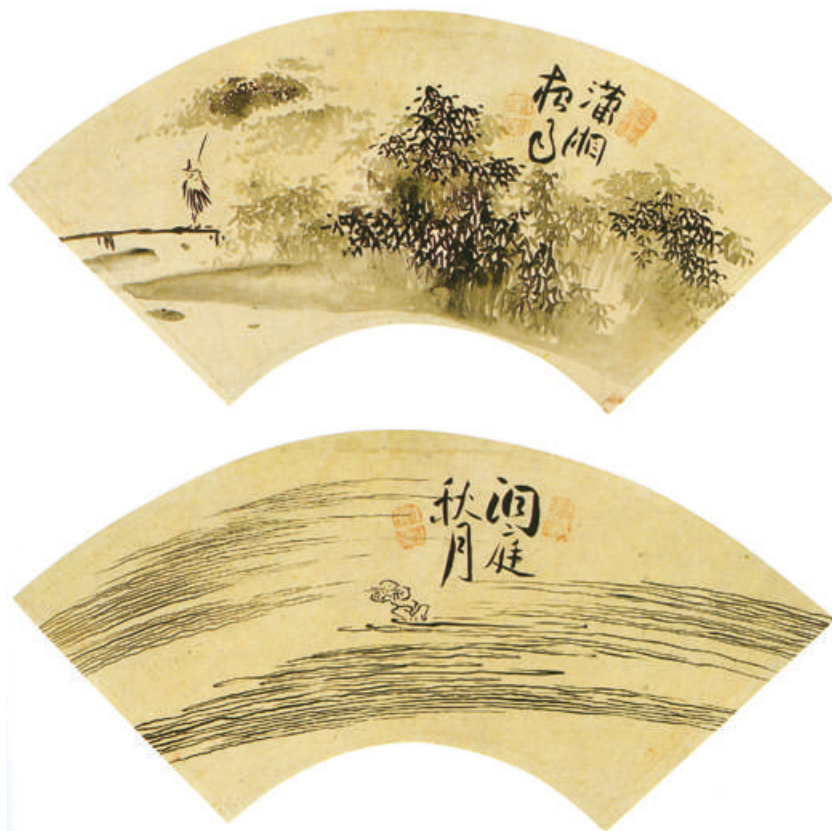
a cool breeze  
the collar of his jacket  
is crooked.

4 See, esp. Parts 1 and 5 of this study.

5 It is worth recalling the ekphrastic poetic dialogue between two Polish haikins. Ewa Tomaszewska's collection *Studnia zakryta kamieniem* [A Well Covered with a Stone] (Kraków, 2000) consists of descriptions of Chinese landscape paintings (ones not using the haiku form). Providing a response to Tomaszewska's texts is the tanka sequence *do studni zakrytej kamieniem* [to the well covered with a stone] by Hieronim Stanisław Kreis (H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku. Haiku. Tanka*, Kraków, 2002, pp. 89–108). See also, e.g., <http://sehaikuan.blogspot.com/>, accessed June 30, 2014.

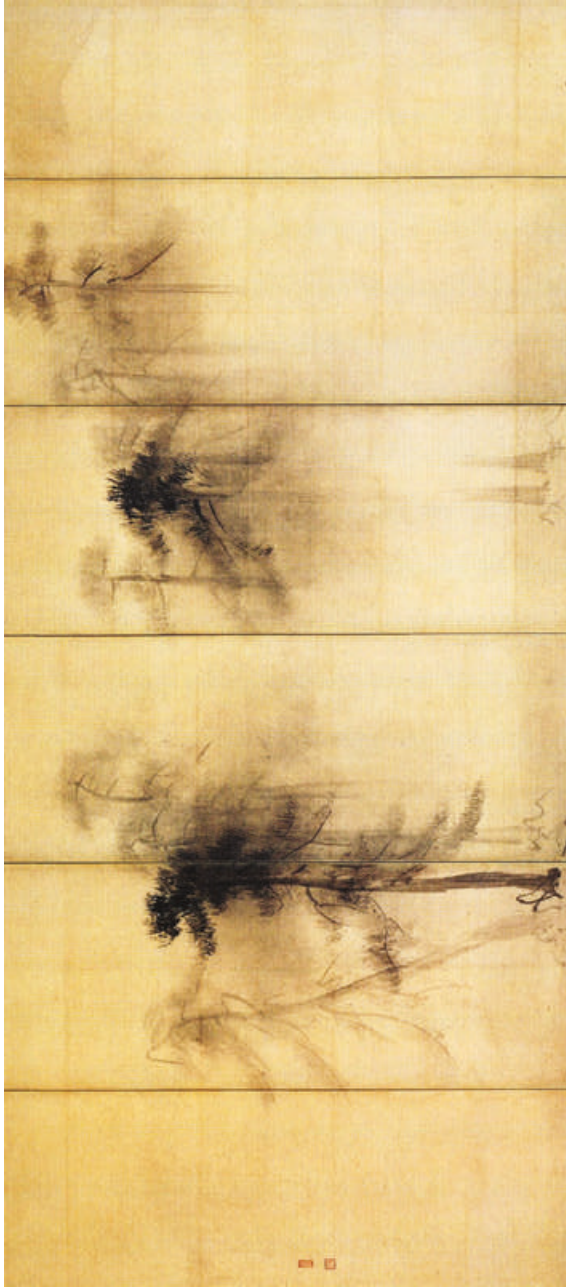


**Illustration 9.** Yosa Buson, 'Ravens,' ca. 1770, ink and watercolour on paper (reproduced in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Universitas, Kraków, 2009)

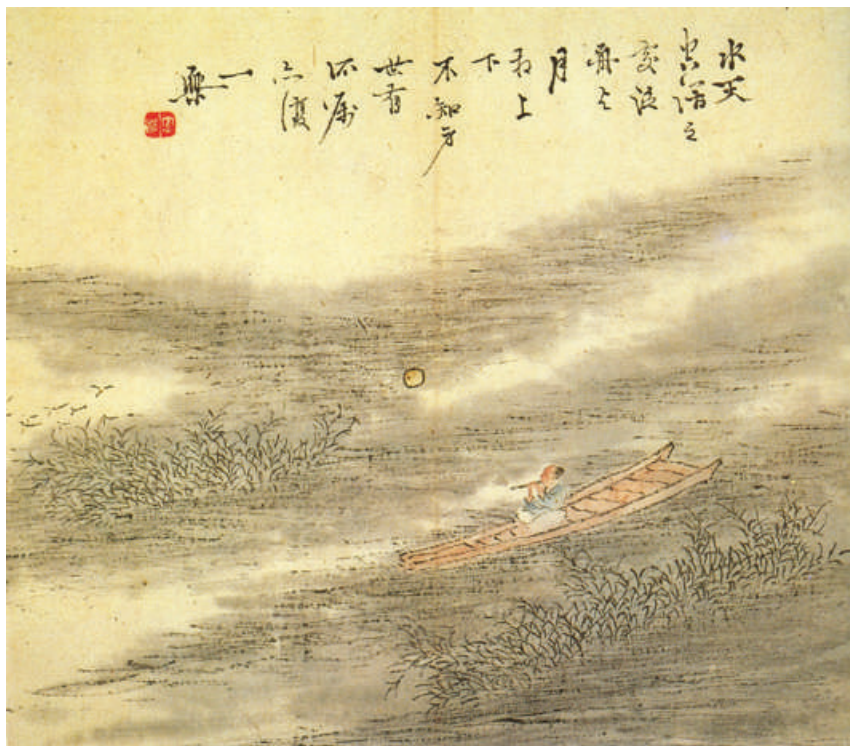


**Illustration 10 a, b.** Ike Taiga (1723–1776), ‘Night Rain on the Xiao and Xiang’ and ‘Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting,’ ink on paper (reproduced in M. Murase, *Sześć wieków malarstwa japońskiego. Od Sesshū do artystów współczesnych* [Six Centuries of Japanese Painting. From Sesshū to Contemporary Artists], Arkady, Warszawa, 1996)





**Illustration 11.** Hasegawa Tōhaku, 'Pines in the Fog,' late 17th c., ink on paper (reproduced in G. C. Calza, *Japan Style*, Phaidon, London–New York, 2007)



**Illustration 12.** Tanomura Chikuden, 'The Expanse of Water and Sky,' 1830–1831, ink and watercolour on paper (reproduced in M. Murase, *Sześć wieków malarstwa japońskiego. Od Sesshū do artystów współczesnych*, Arkady, Warszawa, 1996)

The relationship between literature and painting is deeply embedded in Japanese culture:

Alongside Chinese ideograms, brush painting made its way to the Japanese archipelago [around the sixth century]. [...] The brush and ink were for East-Asian artists the principal way of conveying the experience and vision of the world. Their sensitivity found expression in the harmony of the lines painted on paper or silk, in their adequate arrangement, in the special form that the artist gave his work. The characters calligraphed with a brush and ink went hand in hand with painting [...].<sup>6</sup>

Beginning in the fifteenth century, the term *shi-ga-jiku* (*shinga jiku*) came into being, signifying a scroll with poems and pictures<sup>7</sup> (Europe at the time saw an increasing separation between writing and image).<sup>8</sup> A very wide spectrum of problems is presented by East-Asian calligraphy, which at times was valued more highly than ink painting.<sup>9</sup> It cannot be read without the knowledge of the order of lines and various types of signs, while the very appearance of handwriting can tell a great deal about the character, rhythm, and “melody” of the calligrapher’s hand, as well as what mood (such as purity, peace, hostility, beauty) the artist set out to convey.<sup>10</sup> Calligraphy is often a contemplative art, “a visible expression of

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- 6 B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, Kraków, 2009, p. 109; see also, e.g., K. Wilkoszewska, ‘Wizualna poezja – poetyckie malarstwo’ [Visual Poetry – Poetic Painting], in *Estetyka japońska*, Vol. 2: *Słowa i obrazy*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków, 2005, p. 7.
- 7 P. Trzeciak, *Idea i tusz. Malarstwo w kręgu buddyzmu chan/zen* [Idea and Ink. Chan/Zen Buddhism Painting], Warszawa, 2002, p. 139. *Shi-ga-jiku* literally means “poem-picture scroll” (M. Wawrzyniak, ‘Wprowadzenie do kaligrafii japońskiej: związki z “zen” i “nanga,”’ *Japonica*, 1994, No. 2, p. 121).
- 8 It is worth keeping in mind the richly illuminated medieval and early-modern prayer scrolls (Cf. S. McKendrick, J. Lowden, K. Doyle, *Royal Manuscripts. The Genius of Illumination*, London, 2011, pp. 186–7), which, however, did not determine relationships between literature and visual arts in Europe.
- 9 “As a form of art, calligraphy was in China and Japan by no means inferior to such esteemed artistic fields like painting and sculpture.” (A. Zalewska, ‘Podstawowe informacje o historii pisma i pisania w Japonii’ [The Basics on the History of Writing Systems and Writing in Japan], in *Kaligrafia japońska. Trzy traktaty o drodze pisma* [Japanese Calligraphy. Three Treatises on the Way of Writing], transl., ed. and with a commentary by A. Zalewska, Kraków, 2015, p. 11). See also M. Ueda, ‘Estetyczne walory linii,’ [The Aesthetic Qualities of the Line], transl. B. Romanowicz, in *Estetyka japońska. Słowa i obrazy*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków, 2005, pp. 141–52.
- 10 S.N. Sokolov-Remizov, *Literatura. Kalligrafiya. Zhivopis. K probleme sinteza iskusstv v khudozhestvennoy kul’ture Dal’nego Vostoka*, Moscow, 1985, p. 178.

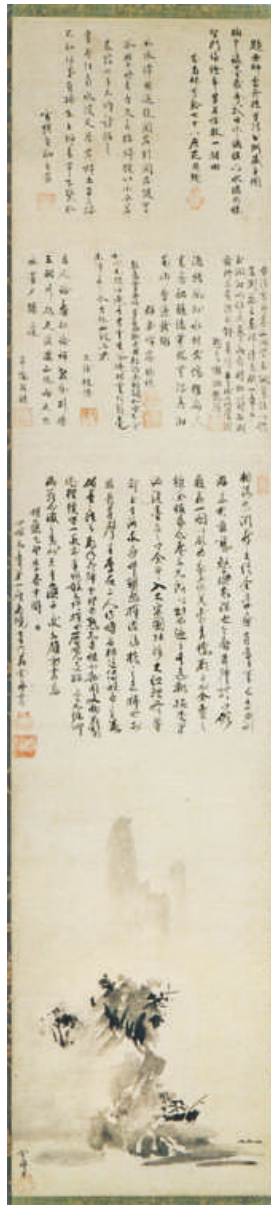
spirituality,”<sup>11</sup> “painting of the mind.”<sup>12</sup> However, its extensive practice necessitates adopting a special attitude:

Zen calligraphy is about writing in the simplest way, as if one were a beginner. It is not about trying to do something skilful or beautiful but writing with undivided attention. [...] As a result, that writing encompasses the writer’s whole nature. This is the way of practising moment by moment.<sup>13</sup>

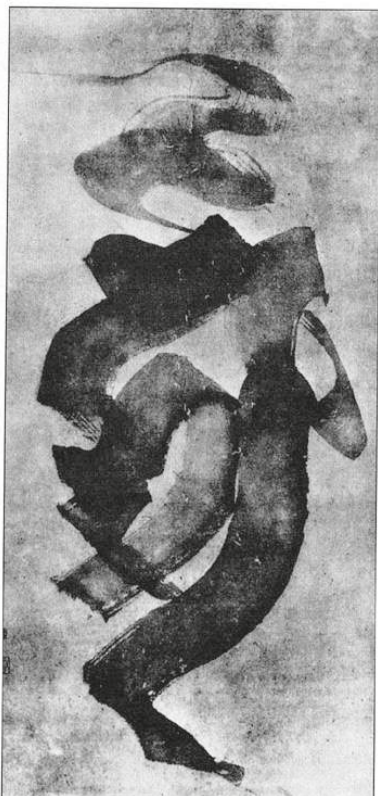
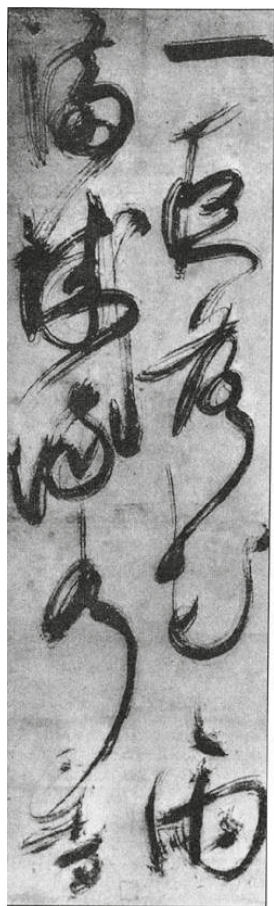
While Zen calligraphy does not always have decorative values, it is distinguished by its “gripping energy of expression, [...] seeking [...] to convey the ugly and unusual.”<sup>14</sup>

The Western understanding of the Japanese writing system (similarly to, for example, the Chinese one) tends to be strongly mythologized. *Kanji*’s pictographic character (*kanji* are Chinese characters that between the fifth and seventh centuries were brought to Japan, and are used alongside *hiragana* and *katakana*, which only have phonetic value) has all but faded away. The search for contours or the visual “essence” of real referents here has little to do with the way everyday users perceive their writing system (essentially treating those signs, so exotic to us, in the same way, we perceive letters and words composed of them). Naturally, this does not mean, that works of masters of calligraphy, or the very perception of their work, do not involve various semantic explorations.<sup>15</sup>

- 11 S. Kato, *Japan – Spirit and Form*, with an introduction by R. Goepfer, transl. J. Abe, L. Lowitz, Rutland, Vermont–Tokyo, Japan, 1994, p. 98.
- 12 An old Chinese proverb, as quoted in M. Wawrzyniak, ‘Wprowadzenie do kaligrafii japońskiej,’ p. 115.
- 13 E. Bańcerowska, M. Markiewicz, ‘Przedmowa do wydania polskiego’ [Preface to the Polish Edition], in S. Suzuki, *Umysł zen, umysł początkującego* [Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind], transl. J. Dobrowolski, A. Sobota, Gdynia, n.d. [1991], p. 13.
- 14 Komatsu, Shigeshi and Wong, Kwan S. (ed.), *Chinese and Japanese Calligraphy: Spanning Two Thousand Years*, Munich, 1989, p. 30.
- 15 See, for example, M. Wawrzyniak, ‘Wprowadzenie do kaligrafii japońskiej,’ pp. 130–1. As Jan Kott notes: “In the Japanese house of my friends [...] there was only one painting decorating a delicate wall: a white rectangle on which two letters of Japanese script were calligraphed in black ink. [...] But the verses of Japanese writing can not only be read and translated into sounds, but one can also read/see graphs in them. Even an Alien, if guided by a Japanese friend, will see in these black marks a man, woman or child, a tree and a river. And Peace of the woman by the tree. And Joy or Delight” (J. Kott, *Haiku Miłosza i Dudzińskiego* [Haiku by Miłosz and Dudziński], in J. Kott, *Nowy Jonaś i inne szkice* [New Jonah and Other Essays], Wrocław, 1994, pp. 138–9.



**Illustration 13.** Tōyō Sesshū, Haboku-style landscape (in “broken” black and grey ink wash), ink on paper, 1495 (reproduced in G. C. Calza, *Japan Style*, Phaidon, London–New York, 2007)



**Illustration 14.** Calligraphy of Zen masters, Ikkyū (late 15th century) and Hakuin (middle 18th century) (reproduced in D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, New York, 1959)



**Illustration 15 a, b.** Yosa Buson, “Young-bamboo!” haiga and haiga accompanying the text (also by Buson): “willow leaves, fallen / clear stream, dried out / stones, here and there” (reproduced in Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival*, Brill, Leiden–Boston, 2007)



**Illustration 16 a.** Haiku and haiga of Inoue Shirō (1742–1812), the painting illustrates the following poem: “throughout centuries / rising above mountains / today’s moon,” and, strangely enough, does not depict moon (reproduced in *Estetyka japońska. Słowa i obrazy. Antologia*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Universitas, Kraków, 2005)



**Illustration 16 b.** Detail of a haibunga scroll painting by Buson (1716–1783) – Buson copied the text of Bashō’s haibun *Oku no hosomichi* [The Narrow Road to Deep North] and illustrated it with his own paintings (reproduced in Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2007)



Matsuo Bashō declared: “Poetry of other schools in like a coloured painting. Poetry of my school should be written as if it were black-ink painting.”<sup>16</sup> It is no wonder, then, that one of the crucial interdisciplinary points of reference for me is *SUMI-E*<sup>17</sup> – contemplative painting on paper and silk, close to calligraphy, employing exclusively shades of black ink.<sup>18</sup> Using the simplest means, artists call into being intriguing and yet mimetic and indeterminate worlds. In a similar vein to haiku authors, they leave an imprint of their experience and vast unpainted space that can be filled with the viewer’s experience and sensorial memory:

One of the most striking features of the Sung landscape,<sup>19</sup> as of *sumi-e* as a whole, is the relative emptiness of the picture – an emptiness which appears, however, however, to be part of the painting and not merely unpainted background [...]. The secret

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- 16 M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 256. Haijins’ interest in ink painting, along with the similarity between haiku imagery and such representations at times would be overtly expressed in poems:

Painting pines	Into a line they wheel	the horse ambling,
On the blue sky	the wilde geese; at the foothills	I see myself in a
The moon tonight.	the moon is put for seal.	painting:
Ransetsu	Buson	summer moon
		Bashō

As quoted in, respectively, Robert M. Torrance (ed.), *Encompassing Nature: A Sourcebook* (Washington, D.C., 1998), p. 264; H. G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki*, New York, 1958, p. 96; M. Bashō, *Bashō’s Haiku*, p. 32.

- 17 This type of painting is also referred to as *suiboku-ga/suibokuga* (see, for example, E. Machotka, ‘Suibokuga,’ in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska*, p. 283 – the entry from *Słownik terminologiczny estetyki i sztuki japońskiej* complementing the study by Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi. Painting of this type and its links with Zen are extensively discussed in A. Kozyra, *Estetyka zen*, pp. 77–140. For techniques of ink painting (*sumi* stands for Chinese ink), see Z. Alberowa, *O sztuce Japonii* [On Japanese Art], Warszawa, 1983, p. 101 and ff.
- 18 See, for example, A. Watts, ‘Zen in the Arts,’ in *The Way of Zen*.
- 19 *Sumi-e* has been derived from traditional Chinese Sung painting (tenth to thirteenth century), depicting elements of majestic nature (more monumental and “more distant” from the viewer than, for example, in haiku) against an empty, monochrome background. Typically, contemplative paintings featured no humans. Sung masters were “creators of a tradition of ‘nature painting’ which has hardly been surpassed anywhere in the world. For it shows us the life of nature – of mountains, waters, mists, rocks, trees, and birds – as felt by Taoism and Zen. It is a world to which man belongs but which he does not dominate; it is sufficient to itself, for it was not ‘made for’ anyone and has no purpose of its own.” (A. Watts, ‘Zen in the Arts,’ pp. 178–9).

lies in knowing how to balance form with emptiness and, above all, in knowing when one has “said” enough. [...] Furthermore, the shapes so integrally interfused with their empty space convey the feeling of the “marvellous Void” out of which an event suddenly appears.<sup>20</sup>

Paradoxically, tonal achromatism is another point of commonality with haiku. *Sumi-e*, excepting some works gravitating towards abstraction, conveys information about colour, as it were, *in absentia*, depicting natural beings associated with specific colours and employing different shades of ink (gradation of the light/dark relationship).

Of all the varieties of *sumi-e*, I am most interested in *HAIGA* /*hai(kai)ga*<sup>21</sup> – pictures illustrating individual haiku poems or painted in the spirit of this poetry (not necessarily faithfully reproducing the world depicted in a given poem), typically accompanied by a calligraphed poem on the same scroll, sheet of paper, screen, or fan. *Haiga*, in common with haiku, make no attempt to produce a “photographic” rendition of details, depicting one or several shapes against a monochrome background, sometimes ones seeming almost abstract. Blending a sense of humour with deep embeddedness in everyday life, they are “something that acts as *haikai*, in the form of a picture.”<sup>22</sup>

The most famous *haiga* practitioner is the outstanding *haijin* and *nanga* painter Yosa Buson (considered by researchers to be the first-ever author of *haiga*).<sup>23</sup> The beginnings of haiku illustrations should, however, be traced to a much earlier time:

The form of poem–painting called *haiga* has been a form of visual–verbal expression almost since the emergence of *haikai* poetry. There is no direct evidence of *haiga*’s first occurrence, but since a great number of *haikai* represent visual images in words, and also considering that poems and images in Japan were created with the same brush and ink, it must have seen a natural step to add paintings to *haikai*.<sup>24</sup>

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20 A. Watts, ‘Zen in the Arts,’ p. 179. See also J. Ślósarska, ‘Manifestacja tao i cz’an w chińskim malarstwie pejzażowym’ [Manifestation of Dao and Ch’an in Chinese Landscape Painting], in *Taoizm*, selected by W. Jaworski, ed. M. Dziwisz, Kraków, 1988, pp. 166–73.

21 The “hai” syllable comes from “haiku,” “ga” means ‘picture, painting’ (S. Addiss, ‘Haiku i Haiga’ [Haiku and *Haiga*], transl. J. Wolska, in *Estetyka japońska*, Vol. 2: *Słowa i obrazy. Antologia*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków, 2005, p. 201).

22 The phrase of Okada Rihei, as quoted in Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “*Haiga*,”’ in Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival*, Leiden–Boston, 2007, p. 186. See also p. 187.

23 A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘O kireji – “sylabie ucinającej” w haiku,’ [On Kireji – the Cutting Syllable in Haiku], *Japonica*, 1994, No. 2, p. 65; M. Takeuchi, ‘Wiersze i obrazy’ [Poems and Pictures], in *Estetyka japońska*, Vol. 2, p. 198.

24 S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text and Image in *Haiga*,’ in *Matsuo Bashō’s Poetic Spaces*, ed. E. Kerkham, New York, 2006, p. 217.

Prior to Buson, *haiga* was practised, among others, by Bashō,<sup>25</sup> Morikawa Kyoriku, Enomoto Kikaku, Nakagawa Otsuyu, Kakujō, Hattori Ransetsu, Kagami Shikō.<sup>26</sup> Early *haiga* have been described as faithfully reproducing poems' imagery without obscuring the calligraphy, and similar in style to the practices of the Kanō school (discussed below).<sup>27</sup> Buson's later verbal-visual compositions became a display of painterly craftsmanship and calligraphic lightness. In his time, the painting component of such works successively gained in importance – *haiga* were increasingly created by non-poets. Finally, the *haibunga* form developed – *haiga*-style paintings illustrating *haibun* poetic prose interwoven with haiku.<sup>28</sup>

Crucial to the reception of works combining haiku and *haiga* are the ways of coupling text and image (their juxtaposition is sometimes viewed as a “two-media” *haikai-no-renga*),<sup>29</sup> as well as the viewer's effort at mentally activating and harmonizing the verbo-visual composition.<sup>30</sup> *Haiga* would often diverge from haiku's semantic field, occasionally expanding or uniquely regulating the avenues of interpretation,<sup>31</sup> sometimes contrasting the visual and verbal components of the utterance,<sup>32</sup> not infrequently bringing to the fore the poet-author at the expense of the poem's “iconographic content.”<sup>33</sup>

I would like to cite two examples of verbal-visual works by authors of classical haiku that are surprising to the Western reader. The first one, from Buson's *haiga*, depicts a thicket of young bamboo obscuring roughly delineated huts looming in the background; in the upper right-hand corner of the composition, we can see the

- 25 The best *haiga* to Bashō's poems, however, are pictures resulting from the poet's collaboration with other artists (Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, p. 197). For reproductions of Bashō's *haiga*, see, for example, D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, New York, 1959.
- 26 S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text and Image in *Haiga*’, pp. 218–24; J. O'Mara, ‘Bashō and the Haiga,’ in *Matsuo Bashō's Poetic Spaces*, pp. 202–14; Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, pp. 197–9. Joan O'Mara also mentions isolated *haiga* in the work of Arakida Moritake, Yamazaki Sōkan, Hinaya Ryūho (J. O'Mara, ‘Bashō and the Haiga,’ p. 214). Cheryl A. Crowley discusses proto-*haiga* by Nonoguchi Ryūhō (Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, p. 197).
- 27 S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text and Image in *Haiga*’, pp. 224–5.
- 28 See S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text.’ Buson copied Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi* several times (see Bashō, ‘The Narrow Road to Deep North,’ in Matsuo Bashō, *Bashō's Journey: The Literary Prose of Matsuo Bashō*, transl. D. L. Barnhill, Albany, 2005, p. 49).
- 29 See J. O'Mara, *Bashō and the Haiga*, pp. 201–2. For *haikai-no-renga*, see Part 1.
- 30 See J. Kacian, *Looking and Seeing: How Haiga Works*, <http://www.gendaihaiku.com/kacian/haiga.html>, accessed May 20, 2014 (originally published in *Simply Haiku*, 2004, Autumn, 2: 5). See also Ch. A. Crowley, *Buson and “Haiga,”* passim.
- 31 S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text and Image in *Haiga*’, pp. 218–9, 234–6.
- 32 Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, pp. 194–7.
- 33 S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text and Image in *Haiga*’, p. 236; J. Kacian, ‘Looking and Seeing.’

expressively handwritten poem balancing out the whole arrangement. The visual layer – the picture along with the incomprehensible (to the lay viewer) calligraphy – accords well with Occidental ideas about technical prowess of Japanese artists and the highly predictable East-Asian iconography. The semantic layer challenges the stereotype:

young bamboo!  
the courtesan of Hashimoto  
is she still there, or not?<sup>34</sup>

Interpreting the composition, one might stress the correspondence between the slender bamboo and the beautiful girl, look for autobiographical and intertextual allusions, and point to the role of femininity, mystery, and longing.<sup>35</sup> However, for the Western viewer, this verbal-visual work is pre-eminently a (semantically) perverse lesson in humility towards art that is not entirely comprehensible.

Let us look at one more example. Kobayashi Issa's *haiga* depicts a thatched hut. The translation of his poem inscribed above the image reads:

Garden butterfly  
as the baby crawls, it flies—  
crawls close, flutters on<sup>36</sup>

Such a composition can be construed as an illustration of the Buddhist precepts of freeing oneself from desire and not clinging to material goods (the stable cottage). Consequently, one can view the calligraphy “drifting up” above the hut then as a visual representation of the desire-butterfly.<sup>37</sup> However, the relationship between the painting and the poem is vague and non-obvious, the juxtaposition might seem accidental. The viewer, especially one not deeply conversant with East-Asian culture, feel clueless in his/her interpretative effort.

The verbal-pictorial interconnections in haiku-*haiga* at times are treated by researchers as a whole, a variety of “wordgraphy”<sup>38</sup> that cannot be separated without

34 As quoted in Ch. A. Crowley, *Haikai Poet Yosa Buson and the Bashō Revival*, Brill, Leiden–Boston, 2007, p. 225). See also J. M. Rosenfield, *Mynah Birds and Flying Rocks. Word and Image in the Art of Yosa Buson*, n.p., 2003, p. 41; J. Kacian, ‘Looking and Seeing.’

35 Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, pp. 225–7.

36 S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text and Image in *Haiga*’, p. 225.

37 S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text’, p. 239.

38 B. Śniecikowska, *Słowo – obraz – dźwięk. Literatura i sztuki wizualne w koncepcjach polskiej awangardy 1918–1939* [Word – Image – Sound. Literature and Visual Arts in the Concepts of the Polish Avant-garde 1918–1939], Kraków, 2005, pp. 79, 83–4, 88; and B. Śniecikowska, ‘Słowografia’ [Wordgraphy], <http://sensualnosc.bn.org.pl/pl/articles/slowografia-657/>, accessed June 24, 2016.

the detriment to the overall work.<sup>39</sup> I essentially follow this path, yet without ignoring the multifarious fissures in compositions of this type, created – recently or centuries ago – by one or more artists. Of primary importance to me is the perceptual perspective of today’s Western viewer.

Another variety of *sumi-e* that is relevant to haiku-related studies is the expressive *ZENGA* painting (thirteenth century – until the present),<sup>40</sup> characterized as the closest to Zen spirituality. *Zenga* practitioners primarily make use of a line, at times highly dynamic, painted with purposeful, vigorous brushstrokes, at other times delicate, thin, barely visible.<sup>41</sup> *Zenga* is far removed from any semblance of regularity and predictability. It can be almost abstract (a commonly used form here is the *ensō* circle – the symbol of unity, void, wholeness), or, alternatively, be practised as the art of calligraphy<sup>42</sup> (*zensho*). Let us note that “Zen artists played as freely with the formal script as Western abstract painters were later to play with objects.”<sup>43</sup> *Zenga* are also asymmetrical, expressive pictures of nature,<sup>44</sup> paintings done by Zen monks and often inspired by poetry and proverbs. Painters often complemented their paintings with prose or verse inscriptions,<sup>45</sup> which is yet another link bringing together writing, calligraphy, and painting. The parallels with haiku here are as distant (the frequent abstractness of *zenga*) as they are deep (the Zenist idea of being true to oneself, the expression of the world in its “suchness,” a measure of unpredictability).

*Sumi-e* is a vital, but not the only painterly point of reference for haiku – it is worth mentioning several other phenomena of Japanese art. Literati painting, *nanga*<sup>46</sup>

39 See S. Addiss, ‘Interactions of Text and Image in Haiga,’ pp. 217–42; Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga,”’ pp. 185, 207; A. W. Watts, ‘Zen in the Arts,’ in *The Way of Zen*; J. Kacian, *Looking and Seeing*, accessed May 20, 2014. The term “*haiga*” is sometimes used with reference to the entire verbal-visual composition, yet I traditionally reserve it for a painting.

40 See P. Trzeciak, *Idea i tusz*, pp. 91–157.

41 P. Trzeciak, *Idea i tusz*, p. 105; A. W. Watts, ‘Zen in the Arts,’ p. 179.

42 P. Trzeciak, *Idea i tusz*, p. 91.

43 N. Wilson Ross, ‘The Art of Zen,’ in N. Wilson Ross, *Three Ways of Asian Wisdom. Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen and Their Significance for the West*, New York, 1966, p. 123.

44 See P. Trzeciak, *Idea i tusz*, p. 91.

45 M. Wawrzyniak, ‘Wprowadzenie do kaligrafii japońskiej,’ p. 139.

46 In Japan the term *literati* referred to intellectuals as well as “courtiers of noble birth, samurai and Buddhist monks” (M. Wawrzyniak, ‘Wprowadzenie do kaligrafii japońskiej,’ p. 127). *Nanga* is sometimes described as the colour version of *sumi-e* (yet frequently these paintings were done exclusively in black ink) – see A. Żuławska-Umeda, ‘Od tłumaczki’ [Translator’s Note], *Literatura na Świecie*, 2002, No. 1/2/3, p. 279.

(*bunjin-ga*; late Edo period, especially the eighteenth century), was not a specific style or artistic school with codified rules.<sup>47</sup>

Its practitioners (such as Tanomura Chikuden, Ike Taiga, Yosa Buson) set great store by simplicity, contemplation, suggesting mood with a few brushstrokes.<sup>48</sup> “The value of [...] [these] paintings lies in [...] treating the form as individually as possible, in painting with ink for one’s own pleasure or for the satisfaction of one’s inner need, spontaneously and freely, without any special concern for technical mastery.”<sup>49</sup>

Similarly to *haijins* and *haiga* authors,<sup>50</sup> *nanga* painters depicted scenes from the natural world, especially selected shapes against a monochrome, often blank background. Finally, their paintings were often accompanied by poetic texts.<sup>51</sup>

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47 M. Wawrzyniak, ‘Wprowadzenie do kaligrafii,’ p. 140 (for *nanga*, see pp. 125–9); Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, pp. 201–6; P. Trzeciak, *Idea i tusz*, p. 140.

48 Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, p. 204.

49 P. Trzeciak, *Idea i tusz*, p. 140.

50 For affinities and dissimilarities between *nanga* and *haiga*, see Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, pp. 204–5.

51 Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga”’, p. 203.



**Illustration 17.** Tōrei Enji, *Enso*, ink on paper, 18th century (as reproduced in G. C. Calza, *Japan Style*, Phaidon, London—New York 2007)



**Illustration 18.** Hasegawa Tōhaku, 'Monkey in Withered Trees,' late 16th century, ink on paper (as reproduced in B. Kubiak Ho-Chi, *Estetyka i sztuka japońska. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Universitas, Kraków, 2009)





**Illustration 19 a.** Woodblock print by Katsusika Hokusai, 'Hydrangeas and Swallow,' 1833–1834 (as reproduced in F. Morena, *Hokusai*, transl. H. Borkowska, eds. J. Gondowicz and K. Maleszko, Warszawa, 2006)



**Illustration 19 b, c.** Woodblock prints by Utagawa Kuniyoshi from 1830–1844: 'Sweetfish Making their Way Upstream under Bush Clover' and 'Catfish' (as reproduced in *Japanese Prints*, ed. G. Fahr-Becker, Taschen, Hong Kong–Köln–London, 2007)



**Illustration 20 a, b.** Two *kachō-ga* studies by Kitagawa Utamaro from *Picture Book of Crawling Insects*, 1788 (as reproduced in A. Król, *Japonizm polski / Polish Japonism*, Manggha, Kraków, 2011)



**Illustration 20 c.** Wojciech Weiss, 'Studium nasturcji' [A Study of Nasturtium], 1905 (as reproduced in A. Król, *Japonizm polski / Polish Japonism*, Manggha, Kraków, 2011)

Examining Japanese art from a broader perspective, one can detect similarities between haiku aesthetics and the work of numerous authors of the Kanō school (fifteenth to nineteenth centuries), combining the influence of traditional ink painting with colour painting. Natural motifs executed with energetic brushstrokes – mountains, trees, birds – would often appear against the background of “mists and humid fumes.”<sup>52</sup>

Prints – vastly time-consuming, precluding any serious spontaneity of artistic procedures – seem to be quite distant from the spirit of haiku and *sumi-e*. This intuitive judgement is not entirely valid. Haiku (and *sumi-e*), concerned with grasping a moment, also require the work of the intellect, a deeper consideration of the composition. On the other hand, among the “pictures of the floating world” – *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints (as well as paintings) – a rather prominent place is occupied by intriguingly framed, realistic images of plants and animals against a uniform, often monochrome background.<sup>53</sup> For example, some of *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*<sup>54</sup> by Utagawa Hiroshige could pass as colour illustrations to haiku. It seems that even closer to haiku aesthetics are woodblock studies of individual elements of the natural world,<sup>55</sup> such as *kachō-ga* (a type of *ukiyo-e*) representing flowers, grasses, fruits, birds, fish.<sup>56</sup>

One could certainly point to more commonalities between haiku and visual arts. Imagery close to images known from lyrical seventeen-syllable verses was deeply established in Japanese art for centuries<sup>57</sup> and was born out of traditional local aesthetics. Frequently, the “frameless” Japanese painting “is merely a tiny fragment of the world and can be freely extended beyond its limits. Unlike in European art, where the image is a deliberately selected and closed fragment of

52 M. Murase, *Sześć wieków malarstwa japońskiego* [Six Centuries of Japanese Painting], Warszawa, 1996, p. 31.

53 See C. David, *Japanese Prints*, Paris, 2010, pp. 9–135.

54 See the excellent edition U. Hiroshige, *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, with a text by M. Trede and L. Bichler, n.p., 2015 (esp. pp. 90–1, 98–9, 158–59, 202–03, 208–09, 218–9, 244–5, 266–7).

55 See C. David, *Japanese Prints*, pp. 100–5, 120–9, 131–5. Also interesting in the context of my considerations is the work of designers of woodblock prints such as Utagawa Kunisada, Katasushika Hokusai, Kitagawa Utamaro, Totoya Hokkei, Kubo Shunman, Sakai Oho, Sakai Hoitsu, Shibata Zeshin, Utagawa Kunisada, Utagawa Kunyoshi (see, for example, U. Hiroshige, *One Hundred...*, passim; *Japanese Prints*, ed. G. Fahr-Becker, Hong Kong–Köln–London–Los Angeles–Madrid–Paris–Tokyo 2007, passim).

56 Works of this type are also represented in Polish collections – see A. Król, *Obraz świata, który przemija. Inspiracje sztuką Japonii w malarstwie Jana Stanisławskiego i jego uczniów / An Image of a Floating World in the Paintings of Jan Stanisławski and his Students*, Kraków, 2007, p. 110 and ff.; A. Król, *Wyciół w Japonii. Inspiracje japońskie w twórczości Leona Wyczółkowskiego / Wyciół in Japan. Japanese Inspirations in the Work of Leon Wyczółkowski*, Kraków, 2012, p. 47 and ff., 161 and ff. These pictures would often be possessed of symbolic overtones.

57 It is worth emphasizing here that many Western artists intuitively grasp clear sensorial schemes of East-Asian painting (similarly to the sensorial patterning of haiku, which I discussed earlier in the book). This is illustrated, even if somewhat ironically, by

reality.”<sup>58</sup> However, it would be simplistic to assert that affinities with haiku aesthetics can be traced in all of Japanese painting and print (or even in a significant part thereof). It is worth having one more glance at the Japanese “everyday aesthetics.”

The simplicity and elegance of the traditional aesthetics of Japan,<sup>59</sup> originating from Zen, Daoism and Shintō, is clearly seen in the monochromatism frequently occurring in Japanese art, in the simplicity of composition, the rawness of materials, and the economy of expression. These are the features characterizing not only the so-called fine arts but also manifest in interior decoration or in the subtlety of flavours of traditional cuisine.<sup>60</sup> The culture of Japan teaches us to appreciate everything that is impermanent, shows the signs of wear and tear, perishable, as transitoriness is a natural property of things and a necessary condition for beauty. “If man were never to fade away like dews of Adashino, never to vanish like the smoke over Toribeyama, but lingered on forever in this world, how things would lose their power to move us! The most precious thing in life is uncertainty.”<sup>61</sup>

a poem of Jerzy Harasymowicz describing several Eastern images (or frames of the same scene), the last one disrupted by an unforeseen additional element:

Chiński malarz	[Chinese painter
Z mgły	A peak emerges
wynurza się szczyt	From the fog
jak palec Buddy	Like Buddha’s finger
wiem	I know
Z mgły	Emerging from the fog
wynurza się drzewo	A tree
syple piórka wiatru	scattering feathers of wind
wiem	I know
Nad kwitnącym lotosem	[Above a blooming lotus
lata motyl	butterfly is flying
wiem	I know
Lecz przylatuje drugi motyl	But the second butterfly arrives
niczego nieświadom	unaware of anything
i wszystko na nic”	All came to nought]

(J. Harasymowicz, *Polska weranda* [A Polish Veranda], Kraków, 1973, p. 50).

58 Z. Kempf, *Orientalizm Wacława Sieroszewskiego. Wątki japońskie* [Wacław Sieroszewski’s Orientalism, Japanese Motifs], Warszawa-Wrocław, 1982, p. 93.

59 For Japanese aesthetic categories, see Part I of the book.

60 See, for example, J. Tubielewicz, *Kultura Japonii. Słownik*, Warszawa, 1996; L. Hájek, *Japanische Graphik*, Prague, 1990; S. Hibi, *Japanese Detail Cuisine*, San Francisco, 1989; G. Nitschke, *Japanische Gärten*, Köln, 1993; G. C. Calza, *Japan Style*, London–New York, 2007.

61 Quote from a medieval Japanese Buddhist monk, Yoshida Kenkō, in D. Keene, *The Pleasures of Japanese Literature*, New York, 1988, p. 20.

Finally, it is easy to detect a semantic – and “iconographic” – link between haiku and numerous Japanese (and, more generally, East-Asian) visual representations employing the same motifs from the natural world. These include a mountain, tree (often pine, cherry, plum), flowers, lightning, lake, bird, vast, empty spaces, natural elements seen with the sky in the background.<sup>62</sup> In haiku and Japanese visual arts, special attention is also given to the changes in the cycle of seasons (cycles of pictures abound depicting the same places at different times of the year).<sup>63</sup>

More parallels of varying proximity could certainly be pointed out, but the most intimate and obvious is, of course, the link between haiku and *haiga*.

## II. The Aesthetics of Haiku: The Aesthetics of the Occident

### 1. Antilaocoönism

Haiku generates verbal-visual relationships on multiple levels. To a very limited extent, it is affected by the distinctions between painting and poetry that are so vital to early-modern European thought.<sup>64</sup> As Gotthold Ephraim Lessing writes in his seminal treatise *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766):

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62 The focus on these elements of nature seems to be the hallmark of the entire East-Asian culture. For example, the trigrams from the Chinese *Book of Changes* corresponded to images of heaven, earth, lightning, water, mountain, wind (tree), fire, lake. Chinese painting is in ways dissimilar to Japanese, but even here we can find many points of commonality, including favourite themes of artists: the sky, earth, wind (tree), fire (lightening, sun), lake, fog (water, cloud), mountain. See J. Ślósarska, ‘Manifestacja tao i cz’an,’ p. 167.

63 We should not try to trace closer parallels here with Impressionism in Western painting, because Japanese visual representations tended to be highly conventionalized. For instance, Tōyō Sesshū (1420–1506) “developed a type of painting decoration on screens and sliding wall panels, using motifs of birds, flowers, and the four seasons, repeated later throughout centuries” (M. Murase, *Sześć wieków*, p. 37).

64 See, for example, J. Maurin-Białostocka, ‘Lessing i sztuki plastyczne’ [Lessing and Visual Arts], in G. E. Lessing, *Laokoon, czyli o granicach malarstwa i poezji* [Laocoön, or the Limits of Painting and Poetry], part 1, ed. J. Maurin-Białostocka, transl. H. Zymon-Dębicki, Wrocław, 1962, p. XXV. The “communion” of the arts was questioned already in antiquity. One of the first early-modern authors to analyse the differences between them was Leonardo da Vinci, but the influence of his treatise turned out to be negligible, and it remained in manuscript form until the beginning of the nineteenth century (see W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki* [History of Aesthetics], Vol. 3: *Estetyka nowożytna* [Early Modern-Aesthetics], Wrocław, 1967, p. 154; H. Markiewicz, ‘Obrazowość a ikoniczność literatury’ [The Pictoriality and Iconicity of Literature], in H. Markiewicz, *Wymiary dzieła literackiego* [Dimensions of a Literary Work], Kraków–Wrocław, 1984, p. 14; H. Markiewicz, ‘UT PICTURA POESIS... Dzieje toposu i problemu’ [UT PICTURA POESIS... History of the Topos and the Problem], in *Tessera. Sztuka jako przedmiot badań* [Tessera. Art as a Subject of Research], Kraków, 1981, pp. 156–9).

if it is true that in its imitations painting uses completely different means and signs, namely figures and colours in space rather than articulated sounds in time, and if these signs must indisputably bear a suitable relation to the thing signified, then signs existing in space can express only objects whose wholes or parts coexist, while signs that follow one another can express only objects whose wholes or parts are consecutive.<sup>65</sup>

After Lessing, the treatment of literature and painting as incompatible disciplines found numerous supporters. In spite of all reservations<sup>66</sup> – disqualifying, as it might seem, such deep divisions – echoes of Lessing's thought can also be heard in contemporary humanities.<sup>67</sup> In haiku, however, distinctions of this kind lose their raison d'être at the very level of the most fundamental premises of the genre. In the light of Lessing's form of description, one would have to assert that haiku "grasps" time and space in a way closer to painting or sculpture than to linear literature. The following are the most vital "antilaocoönian" features of this form:<sup>68</sup>

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- 65 G. E. Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, transl. E. A. McCormick, Indianapolis, 1962, p. 70.
- 66 See, for example, R. Jakobson, 'On the Relation between Visual and Auditory Signs,' in *Proceedings, AFCRL Symposium on Models for the Perception of Speech and Visual Form*, reprinted in *Selected Writings 2: Word and Language*, The Hague – Paris, 1971, pp. 338–344; A. Kwiatkowska, 'Język i prezentacje wizualne' [Language and Visual Presentations], in *Językoznawstwo kognitywne III. Kognitywizm w świetle innych teorii* [Cognitive Linguistics 3. Cognitivism in the Light of Other Theories], eds. D. Stanulewicz, O. Sokołowska, Gdańsk, 2006, pp. 342–55; A. Rossa, *Impresjonistyczny świat wyobraźni. Poetycka i malarska kreacja pejzażu* [The Impressionist World of Imagination. Creation of Poetic and Painterly Landscape], Kraków, 2003, p. 23; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics in Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Poetry*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–Toronto–Plymouth, 2011, p. 48.
- 67 See, for example, M. Davidson, 'Ekphrasis and the Postmodern Painter Poem,' in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Autumn, 1983), pp. 69–79; O. Kryszewski, 'Literatura i malarstwo w badaniach porównawczych' [Literature and Painting in Comparative Research], in *Komparatystyka dzisiaj*, Vol. 1: *Problemy teoretyczne* [Comparative Studies Today, vol 1: Theoretical Problems], eds. E. Szczęśna, E. Kasperski, Kraków, 2010, pp. 166–7.
- 68 An interesting intertext may be found in the following passage from Mariusz Wilk's book *Dom nad Oniegiem* [The House on Lake Onega]: "Haiku [...] is, as it were, the first three lines of *waka*: 5, 7, 5. Such compression of both genres gives us the sense of each of these poems at once, as an image. The time usually required to read a text is here suspended (or frozen...). Both *waka* and haiku poems are perceived in space, not in time, so they are not subject to the traditional European division of arts into spatial and temporal ones. And at the same time, what is most important in them is not said to the fullest extent. As if the brush was stopped in mid-air at a decisive moment ..." (M. Wilk, *Dom nad Oniegiem*, Warszawa, 2006, p. 162). See also J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 24–5, 48.

1. Expressive, readily discernible, sensorial schemas captured in a “frame” (often visual or having a distinctive visual component), embedding the world presented in the poem.
2. “Momentariness” – the poem’s action lasts but a brief moment, its visualization (conceptualization) is also immediate.
3. Maximum concision and presentation of a single event – the linearity of the presentation is reduced to a minimum.
4. Close, multi-layered links with various types of painting and calligraphy, common aesthetic underpinnings shared with haiku.

## 2. *Gesamtkunstwerk*?

It is worth asking one more comparative question regarding haiku aesthetics. I have in mind a comparison with the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the vision of a total work of art combining art forms with various types of sensory perceptions and requiring a deep involvement of the viewer.<sup>69</sup> The extremely limited size and austerity of utterance place haiku at the opposite extreme of this European “post-romantic utopia of art.”<sup>70</sup> That said, haiku are poems variously interrelated with visual arts, multi-sensory, frequently synaesthetic, in a way that has so far been unknown in Western literature, consistently “spacializing [...] temporal sequences and temporalizing spatial ones.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, despite the occasional fissures,<sup>72</sup> they are “synthetic on the artistic plane, and [do] not [constitute] a medley of various genres of art/components of a work.”<sup>73</sup> Finally, these are deeply philosophical texts, testifying to “the intimate connection of the artistic concept with the superior metaphysical one”<sup>74</sup> (however variegated these metaphysical concepts can be in the case of Japanese poetic miniatures and, for example, ideas of Richard Wagner). Momentary haiku, especially when occurring in their verbal-visual wholeness (calligraphically

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69 I have in mind here the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* derived from Richard Wagner’s concept, subsequently taken up (in various conceptual configurations) by art history and philosophy, also for the purpose of describing phenomena preceding and succeeding nineteenth-century works of art. My point of reference are the findings of Elżbieta Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, whom I view as the most important voice in contemporary Polish reflection on the problems of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. E. Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, ‘W obronie “całościowości.” Pojęcie Gesamtkunstwerk’ [The Defense of “Totality.” The Concept of Gesamtkunstwerk], *Kultura Współczesna*, 1995, No. 3/4, pp. 78–83.

70 E. Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, ‘W obronie “całościowości”’, p. 74.

71 E. Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, ‘W obronie “całościowości”’, p. 84. I deliberately quote Gieysztor-Miłobędzka out of context here – she discussed Baroque churches and rituals (e.g. processional ones).

72 Especially from the point of view of ‘Western audience – I have in mind, for instance, the sometimes-vague relations between haiku and *haiga*.

73 E. Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, ‘W obronie “całościowości”’, p. 74.

74 E. Gieysztor-Miłobędzka, ‘W obronie “całościowości”’, p. 74.

written and blended with *haiga*), can be seen as a type of a smallest, “quietest” total work of art, manifestly realizing in its modest form the most important assumptions of the correspondence between arts.

### 3. Haiku and Aesthetics of Modernism

It is no accident that haiku made its way to the West at the time of the broadly conceived modernism. During the preceding centuries, contact between distant cultures was naturally markedly less intense; Europe would certainly not be ready to take in a poetic import that was so alien to it. Modernism turned out to be an extremely fertile ground for transcultural exchange. The transformations that facilitated the assimilation of haiku in the West should be connected not only with the very revaluations in literature and philosophy (such as the impact Zen Buddhism),<sup>75</sup> but also with changes in the visual arts.

In pre-modern Western visual arts, we will not find any works approaching *haiga* or *zenga*. Naturally, small everyday objects, individual plants or animals would be portrayed in old European prints and paintings (as manifestly exemplified by the seventeenth-century Dutch painting). These representations, however, were intended to convey pre-eminently symbolic content, to refer far beyond the “life” of an ordinary lemon, mirror, fish, or jug. These images necessitate time-consuming decoding, one possible only with the knowledge of the code of signs underpinning a given composition. It might also be noted that, for example, Dutch painting can also be interpreted as a testimony to the contemplation of the sensorially perceived world and an invitation to similar communing with art and extra-artistic reality. It is especially tempting in today’s mode of experiencing this art, grown out of the spirit of modernism.<sup>76</sup> Selected early-modern visual representations of landscape can be seen in a similar manner.

Sketches done by European artists could also be placed in the context of haiku. Naturally, the numerous instances of monochrome drawings of “ordinary” shapes placed against an empty background do not have to point to closer parallels with the types of Japanese painting in question. These sketches can manifest a fascination with the visible world down to its smallest detail. First and foremost, however, they are technical exercises, preparatory studies of the actual finished work.

One could point to many more analogical seeming convergences between Japanese painting and Western art. Deeper parallels do not appear until the second half of the nineteenth century and have been in evidence practically throughout

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75 See, for example, *Zen und die westliche Kunst*, hrsg. H.-G. Golinski, S. Hiekisch-Picard, Köln, 2000.

76 See, for example, Cz. Miłosz, J. Illg, ‘Miłosza księga olśnień’ [Miłosz’s Book of Epiphanies], in Cz. Miłosz, *Rozmowy polskie 1979–1998*, Kraków, 2006, p. 422; Cz. Miłosz, ‘Przedmowa’ [Foreword], in Cz. Miłosz, *Wypisy z ksiąg użytecznych*, Kraków 1994, p. 13 (cf. the English edition, Cz. Miłosz (ed.), *A Book of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry*, New York, 1996).



the entire twentieth century (to this day). Most generally, I will only mention the most crucial phenomena that contributed to a re-evaluation of Western art.

Naturally, the key issue here is the very interest in the art of China, Japan, and India in the second half of the nineteenth century, one that predates literary fascinations.<sup>77</sup> The increasing knowledge of Oriental painting (however, the contemplative *sumi-e* was not an essential part of the erstwhile Western paradigm of eastern-ness), woodblock print, and small sculpture opened the audience to aesthetics different from the one of the Occident.<sup>78</sup> One of the turning points, also in the context of East-Asian borrowings, was the work of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. These artists, heavily drawing on Japanese graphic art, demonstrated that the painter does not have to depict spectacular events, important personages, or scenes significant from a historical or historiosophical perspective. What used to be an iconographic periphery or a pretext for symbolic codes, became in their hands the main theme of artistic endeavour. As a result, they recorded small changes in nature, casual snapshots of everyday reality, commonplace objects.

Polish art joined in the current of the processes in question with a substantial delay.<sup>79</sup> The changes bringing the aesthetics of local paintings closer (albeit at times

77 “Europe was excited about Japanese prints, lacquerware, and pottery long before it knew anything about the poetry. Almost always the poet came to know the prints before the poetry, and this priority meant that his ideas about the nature of Japanese poetry were shaped, probably unconsciously, by his previous impressions of the wood block print.” E. Miner, ‘Pound, Haiku, and the Image,’ *Hudson Review* 9 (1956–57), p. 575. Interest in the visual arts of the Orient and attempts at drawing on foreign aesthetics in the works of European artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not have a direct interdisciplinary counterpart in literary production. Imitations of foreign poetic genres were often mere exotic “masks” for the forms of Western poetics.

78 See, for example, L. Lambourne, *Japanism. Cultural Crossings between Japan and the West*, London, 2005; G. C. Calza, *Japan Style; Japanese Prints*, ed. G. Fahr-Becker, pp. 30–3; M. Rzepińska, *Historia koloru w dziejach malarstwa europejskiego* [The History of Colour in the History of European Painting], Vol. 2, Warszawa, 1989, pp. 540–1; M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie w literaturze Młodej Polski. Rekonesans,’ *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1983, No. 2, pp. 61–82.

79 Following the Great London Exposition in 1862, where Japanese art was exhibited, it makes its way, via Paris, through collector’s passion of Feliks Jasiński, to Poland. In 1881, it is shown in Cracow, and in 1901 at the Zachęta Gallery in Warszawa (A. Strumiłło, ‘Pomiędzy ascezą a żywiołem – inspiracje i echa sztuki azjatyckiej w twórczości współczesnych artystów polskich’ [Between Asceticism and Natural Forces – the Inspirations and Echoes of Asian Art in the Work of Contemporary Polish Artists], in *Orient w kulturze polskiej. Materiały z sesji jubileuszowej z okazji 25-lecia Muzeum Azji i Pacyfiku w Warszawie 15–16 października 1998* [The Orient in Polish Culture, Proceedings of the Jubilee Session Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Asia and Pacific Museum in Warszawa, held in October 1998],

quite superficially)<sup>80</sup> to the work of Japanese artists that interest me here, began at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They were influenced by the interest in the Orient,<sup>81</sup> including the art of Japan,<sup>82</sup> but also independently from these fascinations:

For these were not only various tendencies – Secession and Symbolism, Intensivism and Proto-expressionism – that came to the fore, but first and foremost the encounter of many artistic individualities and the proliferation of programmatic works. On this account, Polish Japonism was always an authentic dialogue with another culture and spirituality rather than mere “quotation” of Japanese attributes or an interpretation of the compositional principles of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints.<sup>83</sup>

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Polish artists applied the *pars pro toto* principle to the natural world they painted. They would always see a fragment of nature as part of a larger whole. Such perception of reality derived from pansychism, the view that all nature is a living homogeneous being and has

Warszawa, 2000, p. 72). Polish artists came into contact with East-Asian art also during their travels around Europe in the 1880s and 1890s. The only painter of the Young Poland period to have visited Japan was Julian Fałat – see, for example, A. Król, *Japonizm polski / Polish Japonism*, Kraków, 2011, pp. 43–53; Ł. Kossowski, *Japonizm / Japonism*, in *Manggha Boznańskiej. Inspiracje sztuką Japonii w malarstwie Olgi Boznańskiej / Boznańska & Manggha. Japanese Art Inspirations in Olga Boznańska's Painting*, Kraków, 2006, pp. 32–3; A. Król, *Podróż do Japonii. Inspiracje sztuką Japonii w twórczości Juliana Fałata / A Journey to Japan. Japanese Art Inspirations in the Work of Julian Fałat*, Kraków, 2009. See also T. Grzybkowska, ‘Pseudojaponizm modernistów’ [Pseudojapanism of the Modernists], in *Orient i orientalizm w sztuce* [The Orient and Orientalism in Art], Warszawa, 1986, pp. 81–100.

80 T. Grzybkowska, *Pseudojaponizm modernistów*.

81 See, for example, E. Kuźma, *Mit Orientu i kultury Zachodu w literaturze XIX i XX wieku*, Szczecin, 1980, p. 202.

82 See, for example, A. Król, *Japonizm polski*; Ł. Kossowski, M. Martini, *Wielka Fala. Inspiracje sztuką Japonii w polskim malarstwie i grafice* [The Great Wave. Inspiration with the Art of Japan in the Polish Painting and Graphic Arts], Warszawa-Toruń 2016; Z. Alberowa, Ł. Kossowski, *Inspiracje sztuką Japonii w malarstwie i grafice polskich modernistów* [Inspiration with the Art of Japan in the Painting and Graphic Art. Of the Polish Modernists], Kielce-Kraków 1981; Ł. Kossowski, *Japonizm*, pp. 29–40; M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, ‘Inspiracje japońskie,’ pp. 61–82; *Chopin – Polska – Japonia. Wystawa z okazji 80 rocznicy nawiązania stosunków oficjalnych między Polską a Japonią oraz Roku Chopinowskiego* [Chopin – Poland – Japan. Exhibition Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and Japan and the Chopin Year], Warszawa, 1999, pp. 94–5, 148–150; I. Kossowska, Ł. Kossowski, *Malarstwo polskie. Symbolizm i Młoda Polska* [Polish Painting. Symbolism and Young Poland], Warszawa, 2011. See also works cited in the following footnotes in this subsection.

83 A. Król, *Japonizm polski*, p. 37.

a material and spiritual structure. This attitude was consonant with the treatment of nature by Japanese art masters as a living being. ... For Japanese and Polish artists, nature appears to be an inscrutable creation. It is beyond its material form that the Mystery appears. Therefore, there is only one attitude that can be adopted towards it – one of attentive empathy or prayerful contemplation. This convergence of attitudes created favourable conditions for Polish artists to be inspired by the fragmentariness of compositions of Japanese woodblock prints.<sup>84</sup>

Japanism in the art of Jan Stanisławski,<sup>85</sup> Wojciech Weiss,<sup>86</sup> Olga Boznańska,<sup>87</sup> Stanisław Wyspiański,<sup>88</sup> Julian Fałat,<sup>89</sup> and Leon Wyczółkowski<sup>90</sup> has already been discussed extensively. Detailed literary-historical diagnoses would be out of place here. Crucial from the perspective of my research is the aesthetic ferment itself bringing about artistic re-evaluations that subsequently would exert influence on art throughout the entire twentieth century (easel painting, but naturally also the art of illustration).<sup>91</sup> In this context, one should mention the following features:<sup>92</sup>

- the focus on “ordinary” landscape, also one that is the most commonplace,
- presentation of details abstracted from reality (especially natural motifs), often set against a neutral background,

84 Ł. Kossowski, ‘O inspiracjach japońskich,’ p. 149.

85 A. Król, *Obraz świata, który przemija*.

86 *Ten krakowski Japończyk... Inspiracje sztuką Japonii w twórczości Wojciecha Weissa / That Krakow Japonist. Japanese Art Inspirations in the Work of Wojciech Weiss*, Kraków, 2008.

87 *Manggha Boznańskiej*.

88 *Widok z okna pracowni artysty na Kopiec Kościuszki. Inspiracje sztuką Japonii w twórczości Stanisława Wyspiańskiego / View of Kościuszko Mound from the Artist's Study Window. Japanese Art Inspirations in the Work of Stanisław Wyspiański*, Kraków, 2007. See also I. Kossowska, Ł. Kossowski, *Malarstwo polskie* [Polish Painting] (esp. the chapter “Pejzaż rodzimy, religijny rytuał” [Local Landscape, Religious Ritual], pp. 326–427).

89 A. Król, *Podróż do Japonii*; J. Malinowski, ‘Podróż Juliana Fałata do Chin i Japonii w 1885’ [Julian Fałat's Journey to China and Japan in 1885], in *Orient w kulturze polskiej*, pp. 75–83.

90 A. Król, *Wyczół w Japonii*.

91 As might be expected, Japanese influences can be clearly seen in the illustrations of the Young Poland period – see, for example, J. Bajda, “Poeci – to są słów malarze ...” *Typy relacji między słowem a obrazem w książkach poetyckich okresu Młodej Polski* [“Poets are Painters of Words...” Types of Relations between Words and Images in Poetry Books of the Young Poland Period], Wrocław, 2010, p. 318.

92 I rely on findings presented in the following studies: A. Król, ‘Uniwersum interpretacji – Wyspiański i japonizm’ [The Universe of Interpretation – Wyspiański and Japanism], in *Widok z okna pracowni*, pp. 14–6; A. Król, *Obraz świata*, p. 16 and ff., 110; A. Król, *Japonizm polski*, p. 31; A. Król, *Podróż do Japonii*, p. 30; A. Król, *Wyczół w Japonii*, p. 123 and ff.; R. Weiss, ‘Inspiracje sztuką japońską w twórczości Wojciecha Weiss’a’ [Japanese Art Inspirations in the Work of Wojciech Weiss], in *Ten krakowski*

- synthetic treatment, simplified form, the emancipation of lines (flexuous, smooth) and patches of colour (flat, often arranged horizontally),
- inclination towards asymmetry,
- use of blank space in the composition,
- close cropping (a fragment instead of a whole),
- changes in the use of perspective
- different, often less “calculated” angles of vision: views from below, above and a side,
- non-obvious angles (e.g. the “gridding” of the foreground),<sup>93</sup>
- recording the impermanent and instantaneous,
- capturing the mood of nature.

In the visual arts of the Young Poland period, East-Asian inspirations seem much more vital and distinct than in the logorrhoeic literature of the time.<sup>94</sup> *Tacet pictor*. “Painting of few words”<sup>95</sup> at the turn of the century is already liberated from the burden of historiosophy and not yet dragged into meta-artistic contexts of the avant-garde. It brings the viewer face to face with an austere, atmospheric scene immersed in nature.

We could reconstruct further lines of inspiration exerted by Japanese art, ones running from Young Poland to the present day.<sup>96</sup> At this point, however, I wish to accentuate only the beginning of artistic transformation relevant to my research; later in this chapter, I will spotlight only selected haiku-related references in Polish visual arts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Neither is there room here for detailed discussions of subsequent European re-evaluations in visual arts that brought Occidental art closer to certain currents of East-Asian aesthetics. Again, I will confine myself to pointing to the most vital phenomena. Impressionism, with its focus on capturing the moment, making open-endedness and incompleteness vital features of painting, played a significant part in re-orienting Western understanding of art (and, subsequently, the art of writing).<sup>97</sup> While putting forward various departures from mimesis, various avant-garde movements declared keen interest in what is commonplace

*Japończyk*, pp. 41–2, 54, 86; Ł. Kossowski, ‘O największym polskim Japończyku’ [On Poland’s Greatest Japanese], in *Orient i orientalizm*, pp. 101–6.

93 “Obscuring the main subject of the composition with a mesh made [for instance] of tree branches and trunks placed in the foreground” (A. Król, *Podróż do Japonii*, p. 24).

94 See the section ‘Young-Poland Haiku?’ in Part 2.

95 M. Poprzęcka, ‘*Tacet pictor?*’, in *Czas i wyobraźnia. Studia nad plastyczną i literacką interpretacją dziejów* [Time and Imagination. Studies on the Artistic and Literary Interpretation of History], eds. M. Kitowska-Lysiak, E. Wolicka, Lublin, 1995, p. 47 and ff.

96 Ł. Kossowski, ‘O inspiracjach japońskich,’ pp. 149–150; A. Strumiłło, ‘Pomiędzy ascezą a żywiołem,’ pp. 72–3.

97 See, for example, R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman I et II. Cours et séminaires au Collège de France (1978–1979 et 1979–1980)*, texte établi, annoté et présenté par N. Léger, Paris, 2003, p. 116.

and ordinary, and sometimes also worn-out, damaged, superfluous (this interest was revived, for instance, in the post-war Arte Povera movement, also linked to haiku).<sup>98</sup> Likewise, abstract painting taught the viewer to appreciate the value and beauty of colours and shapes not subject to figuration, utterly liberated from narrativeness.<sup>99</sup> Constructivism demonstrated the appeal of simple, minimalist compositions. It also stands to reason that certain links have been traced between brief, juxtapositional haiku and collage and montage techniques (including cinematic one) as well as the procedures of Cubist painting that broke up an object. In this particular case, I see the identification of close interdisciplinary parallels as unwarranted, as it is only at the most general level that one can link the “montage-like” character of Japanese miniatures, very popular in Western Europe during the first decades of the twentieth century,<sup>100</sup> with Cubist techniques or practices of avant-garde cinema.

Jan Walsh Hokenson and Jeffrey Johnson argue for great affinities, or even interrelationships, between the poetics of Japanese haiku and the fundamental reconsiderations occurring in modern European visual arts.<sup>101</sup> There is no way one could accept such an interpretation of literary- historical and art-historical affiliations (another thing is the otherwise profound impact of Japanese art on painting in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). In the context of haiku, however, the twentieth-century explosive rise of photography is mentioned surprisingly rarely. The camera made it possible to record arbitrarily composed scenes of reality and turn them into art. Likewise, one can “photograph” the world through haiku, and it is not without reason that twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists often create photographic *haiga*.<sup>102</sup>

The changes that have occurred in the modern imagination, the great variety of artistic offerings, and new ways of representing the world – all this inevitably had to bring about an increased openness on the part of artists and their audience to previously unknown or poorly known aesthetics. From this perspective, *sumi-e* or *nanga* are by no means difficult to accept. While the image here is raw, at times surprisingly cropped, focused on detail, austere, it is typically still mimetic and within widely conceived bounds of realism, and as such closer (!) and more accessible to the viewer than, say, conceptual art or certain types of abstraction.<sup>103</sup> Most likely,

98 J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre. Fellow-Traveler of Modernism,’ in *Modernism*, Vol. 2, eds. A. Eysteinson, V. Liska, Amsterdam–Philadelphia 2007, p. 704; J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 11.

99 See *Zen und die westliche Kunst*. Zen art is also compared, not without justification, with the compositions of John Cage or Tachist painting – see, for example, (P.) R. Kapleau, ‘Kilka uwag o sztuce i zen’ [A Few Notes of Art and Zen], *Droga Zen*, 1987, No. 2, p. 2; S. Piskor, W. Paźniewski, ‘W poszukiwaniu siebie,’ *Poezja*, 1975, No. 1, p. 43.

100 See Part 2.

101 J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 49; J. W. Hokenson, ‘Haiku as a Western Genre,’ p. 704 and ff.

102 See the subsequent sections of this part of the book.

103 The diagnoses offered here may be complemented by reflections of Tomasz Bilczewski on “literary adventures of an object in European literature starting much later than

however, “if it hadn’t been for the experience of modern art, we would not be able to properly read and embrace the unique code of Japanese aesthetics today.”<sup>104</sup>

### III. Polish Artists on the Verbo-visibility of the Orient

Of interest to me in this part of the book is the processing by Polish artists of inspirations drawn from old Eastern verbal-visual forms, evident in the graphic design of poetry collections, art books, exhibition space and internet-based art. I chiefly refer here to haiku, various currents of *sumi-e* (mainly *haiga*), as well as *haibun*. Naturally, the genre that connects all of them is haiku. In the new cultural environment, these Japanese verses (along with texts inspired by them) interact with the visual arts: at the level of typography and book illustration,<sup>105</sup> but also in patterns that are more complex in terms of space, senses, and media. Assuredly, the transplantation of this genre to the Occident also signifies the expansion of verbo-visibility.<sup>106</sup>

#### 1. Books

According to some, luckily few, researchers, dealing with haiku outside of its home culture, “we must forget about graphic design.”<sup>107</sup> Nothing could be further from the truth. The visibility of haiku outside the Orient must be considered at the most basic, typographic level. Roland Barthes rightly argues for the relevance of the substantial white space employed in the notation of lyrical miniatures in Western publications.<sup>108</sup> “Its [haiku’s] solitude on the page”<sup>109</sup> helps to identify a poem as a single character, ideogram, word.<sup>110</sup>

its painterly adventures” (T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja. Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii*, Kraków, 2010, p. 356).

- 104 B. Dziechciaruk-Maj, ‘Japonica, japonica,’ *Literatura na Świecie*, 2002, No. 1/2/3, p. 352.
- 105 B. Śniecikowska, ‘Between Poem and Painting, between Individual and Common Experience – The Art of Haiku in Japan and in Poland,’ *Art Inquiry. Recherches sur les Arts*, 2007, Vol. 9 (18), pp. 255–62.
- 106 The phenomena in question are also peculiar to the culture of other Western countries (the finest example being America’s verbo-visual “haiku-ness”). See also footnote in this section.
- 107 M. Kotlarek, ‘Haiku – Akunin – Przekład,’ [Haiku – Akunin – Translation], in *Między oryginałem a przekładem* [Between the Original and the Translation], Vol. 15: *Obcość kulturowa jako wyzwanie dla tłumacza* [Cultural Otherness as a Challenge for the Translator], eds. J. Brzozowski, M. Filipowicz-Rudek, Kraków, 2009, p. 440.
- 108 R. Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel: Lecture Courses and Seminars at the Collège De France, 1978–1979 and 1979–1980*, ed. N. Léger, transl. K. Briggs, New York, 2011, p. 26.
- 109 R. Barthes, *The Preparation...*, p. 26. Typically, between one and three lines are placed on a single page.
- 110 R. Barthes, *The Preparation...*, p. 26.



**Illustration 21 a.** Leon Wyczółkowski, 'Złamana sosna we mgle' (z *Teki litewskiej*) [Broken Pine in the Fog (from The Lithuanian Portfolio)], 1907 (as reproduced in A. Król, *Wyczół w Japonii / Wyczół in Japan*, Manggha, Kraków, 2012)



**Illustration 21 b.** Wojciech Weiss, 'Klasztor we mgle' [A Monastery Wrapped in the Fog], 1913 (as reproduced in *Ten krakowski Japonczyk... / That Krakow Japonist...*, Manggha, Kraków, 2008)



**Illustration 21 c.** Leon Wyczółkowski, 'Zakopane – zadyмка' [Zakopane, a Blizzard], 1908 (as reproduced in A. Król, *Wyczół w Japonii. Inspiracje japońskie w twórczości Leona Wyczółkowskiego / Wyczół in Japan. Japanese Inspirations in the Work of Leon Wyczółkowski*, Manggha, Kraków, 2012)



**Illustration 22.** Ferdynand Ruszczyk, 'Obłok' [Cloud], 1904 (as reproduced in A. Król, *Japonizm polski / Polish Japonism*, Manggha, Kraków, 2011)





**Illustration 23.** Fragments of endpaper in an anthology of Japanese lyric poetry edited by Aleksander Janta (*Godzina dzikiej kaczki. Mała antologia poezji japońskiej*, with an introduction by J. Miś, Oficyna Stanisława Gliwy, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, 1966)



**Illustration 24.** Illustrations and typographic vignettes in the anthology edited by Aleksander Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczki. Mała antologia poezji japońskiej* (with an introduction by J. Miś, Oficyna Stanisława Giliwy, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, 1966)

Barthes asserts that typography can be regarded as a factor determining the reading of poems, if not one constitutive of haiku.<sup>111</sup> However, he failed to see the multiplicity of ways of typographic treatment of haiku in the West. One of the two extremes is the typographic austerity highly valued by the writer, the other is the aggressive banal orientalizing (quasi-calligraphy, ornaments fashioned from ideograms, etc.).<sup>112</sup> In between these extremes are found numerous, frequently highly interesting publications.

At this point, I will analyse widely available<sup>113</sup> printed poetry collections: Polish editions of translations of Japanese haiku as well as original Polish poetry books inspired by this form. Of utmost interest to me are the findings regarding the graphic design and layout of these publications (which aspects determine the internal text layout), but I do not lose sight of the issues of relations between lines, typography, and illustrations.

### A. Anthologies

I will start with books which for numerous reasons are the most important: Polish anthologies of classical haiku. While frequently seen here – and fully understandable – is a striving for imparting the Far-Eastern character to the visual layer, the ways of japanising typography turn out to be highly variegated.

In the first place, we should discuss the selection of Japanese poetry *Godzina dzikiej kaczki* [The Hour of Wild Duck], published in the United Kingdom and edited by Aleksander Janta,<sup>114</sup> containing translations of seventy-four haiku.<sup>115</sup> The reader is presented with a small, hardbound volume. The honey-coloured cover carries an intricate embossed golden drawing depicting butterflies seen from an unusual angle. We open the book to a two-colour illustration depicting bamboo trees and a flying butterfly (the front endpaper before the title page), and on the following page, we reach yellowish leaves with the texture resembling handmade paper, on which lines separated by ornaments are printed.

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111 R. Barthes, *The Preparation...*, p. 26.

112 See B. Śniecikowska, 'Between Poem and Painting,' pp. 256–7, 260–62, along with considerations later in this chapter.

113 Later in this chapter, I describe art books executed in various techniques, available in one or several copies.

114 A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczki. Mała antologia poezji japońskiej*, with an introduction by J. Miś, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, 1966. As Janta informs, "the collection of translations and samples selected for this volume traces back to the time when I lived in Japan between 1936 and 38" (A. Janta, *Godzina*, p. IX).

115 Sixty-four texts in the chapter 'Haiku,' and ten haiku, including one by Shiki, in the chapter 'Ostatnie stulecie' [The Last Century]. Janta's translations are discussed in the chapter of this monograph 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'

The colophon informs that in our hands we are holding:

The first de-luxe edition of a small anthology of Japanese poetry in the history of Polish literature. *GODZINA DZIKIEJ KACZKI* [THE HOUR OF THE WILD DUCK] edited and translated by ALEKSANDER JANTA, with a foreword by the excellent polyglot Jan Miś (PhD) and the translator's preface, illustrated with reproductions of Japanese woodblock prints from the mid-nineteenth century and numerous typographic vignettes. [...] The typographic vignettes used in the titles and throughout the text (all in the form of typeface casts) are unique items found in old printing houses. [...] Modern casts of old Monotype typefaces have also been used. The title vignette on page 9 was pressed from an old woodblock, while on pages 39 and 43 reproductions of Japanese woodblock prints have been used. The Japanese character signifying the word "end" was hand-drawn by Jan Miś. The text has been set in Plantin II / 13 monotype, 8 points and 14 points. The limited print run of 444 de-luxe copies, numbered by hand with types, was issued in two colours on special yellow paper bearing "Tosa Büthen" watermarks. In addition, we have pressed eight author's copies on hand-made French rag papers from Auvergne and Italian ones from Pescia and Fabriano, including two copies on the paper bearing the watermark of Stanisław Tyszkiewicz's Florentine Stamperia Polacca. [...] The design of the cover and endpapers, linocut, and all graphic and printing works was done by Stanisław Gliwa.<sup>116</sup>

Symptomatic of *Godzina dzikiej kaczk* is an attempt (successful) to blend the Eastern visibility dominating here (the key compositional features are large reproductions of Japanese woodblock prints with natural motifs and a distinctly japanizing endpaper) with elements of European typographic tradition. Fittingly, the focus was on the intricate Occidental minutiae – old typographic ornaments depicting more or less simplified natural forms (leaves, flowers, insects) were used to separate texts. Despite a certain heterogeneity of the graphical layout, the concentration on tiny detail singled out from nature (and dug up from junk rooms of old printing houses), along with the "material" perfection give the volume a very Japanese appearance.<sup>117</sup> Interestingly enough, some graphic elements in *Godzina dzikiej kaczk* lose all traces of their origin – we cannot know, for example, whether the linear, curved-line depiction of irises at the water's edge or one of a heron peeking out from behind a clump of flowering plants were done in ancient Japan or in Europe of the Art Nouveau era (that said, Art Nouveau was largely indebted to Japanese art). In this discreet, perhaps unintentional, way, the correspondences between culturally and geographically distant aesthetics are brought to light.

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116 A. Janta, *Godzina dzikiej kaczk*, p. 53, emphasis in the original.

117 Interesting in this context are remarks of Wolfgang Welsch concerning the incorporation of genetically alien elements into one's culture. See footnote 34 in the Introduction to this book.

In comparison to Janta's publication, two sizeable haiku anthologies (the first one with 121 poems, the second one with 166),<sup>118</sup> featuring masterly translations by Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda had a much wider impact in Poland.<sup>119</sup> Especially vital for the reception of haiku in Poland – and for original Polish poetic production inspired by Japanese miniatures – was the 1983 publication with japanological commentary by the translator Professor Mikołaj Melanowicz.<sup>120</sup> Both books were meticulously designed, using rather traditional Oriental and orientaling drawings, illustrations, and calligraphy. Erudition combined with a measure of aestheticization are already manifest in the notation of poems. Each haiku has a threefold form: an “ordinary” triplet in Polish, Japanese calligraphy, and the Romanized transcription giving an idea of the sound contour of the original. Below a given poem, information was provided about kigo (in the 1983 anthology), the source of a quotation (in the publication from 2006), as well as, in the case of selected poems (in both publications), notes on the poem's background or relevant cultural contexts. Such an arrangement, comprehensive linguistically and aesthetically, accords closely with the literary content: texts of the old masters of the genre from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Both anthologies are not only a valuable source of knowledge, but also simple, yet exquisite orientaling objects. The older volume is a small-format book (12 x 16.9 cm), in yellow hardcover decorated with a synthetic, black drawing, most likely in ink, of two ducks in flight, black Japanese calligraphy (“haiku”) and a red title in Latin alphabet. The last page of the cover is filled with black-and-red calligraphy of one of the poems. The more recent volume seems even more refined visually. It has the form of a horizontally elongated rectangle (21.5 x 15.4 cm), while its cover – also hard, successfully suggesting classic, timeless content – is decorated with a graphic work by Ewa Kutylak-Katamay (a dragonfly on a blade of grass). The latter artist's works also make their appearance inside the book, opening the sections devoted to the seasons. Thus, both anthologies of Żuławska-Umeda's translations are strongly, orthodoxly “japanized” in terms of their visuality. Their makers did not intend to achieve any contrasting of Eastern and

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118 While a significant part of these Japanese lyrics overlaps, some of their translations changed.

119 *Haiku*, transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda, afterword by M. Melanowicz, Wrocław, 1983 (henceforward: *Haiku*, [1983], calligraphy – Yukio Kudō, graphic design – Leon Urbański; according to the translator – *Haiku*, p. 264 – the translation was completed in May 1978); *Haiku*, [2006] (illustrations: Ewa Kutylak-Katamay; online version, displaying selected texts and a selection of graphical elements of the books: <http://www.haiku.art.pl>, accessed July 25, 2016). Umeda's translations are discussed in the chapter ‘Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.’

120 In the book from 2006 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2010), the reader will also find erudite japanological sketches (authored by the translator) – however, the impact of texts of this type at the beginning of the twenty-first century can in no way be compared to their culture-forming influence at the beginning of the 1980s.

Occidental elements. The only signs of “western-ness” are the horizontally oriented calligraphy and the original modification of *sumi-e* models in graphic works featured in the more recent publication.

Another volume of Żuławska-Umeda’s translations of haiku deserves a different description. It is again an intriguing verbo-visual object; its garish orange and turquoise cover clearly indicates a considerably less ‘orthodox’ approach to classical Japanese poetry. This mini-anthology with the English-sounding title *Be Haiku*<sup>121</sup> contains only twenty poems by Bashō, Buson and Issa (translations by Żuławska-Umeda, the same as in the anthology published by ELAY in 2006 / 2010). The rich, eye-catching layout of the book seems to be very far from the japanizing verbo-visual compositions discussed above (each spread has a whole page illustration on one side, and on the other the Polish translation accompanied by a vertical line of the Japanese original, while the background features a light grey shape corresponding to the colourful picture). The illustrator, Ryszard Kajzer, and the author of the book’s concept, Beata Jewiarz, decided on aggressive, bright colours and semi-abstract forms; thick lines and very simple shapes (sometimes resembling objects drawn by small children) bear no resemblance to subtle *sumi-e* or expressive calligraphy. Still, some features of the pictures may be linked to East-Asian aesthetics underpinning classical haiku (figure-ground patterning, flat colour patches).

What I find most intriguing about the book is its visual conceptism. Haiku poems usually present two sensorial images – one of them serving as a (back) ground for the other. Kajzer cleverly combines the images from the text, providing a single puzzling shape related to the two depicted in the poem. What was supposed to co-exist as two parts of the presentation becomes one inseparable image or even one object. Let me illustrate it with the examples employing the motif of the moon:

Into a line they wheel  
the wild geese; at the foothills,  
the moon is put for seal  
Buson<sup>122</sup>

cats in love  
in the bedroom when they stop  
is a hazy moon  
Bashō<sup>123</sup>

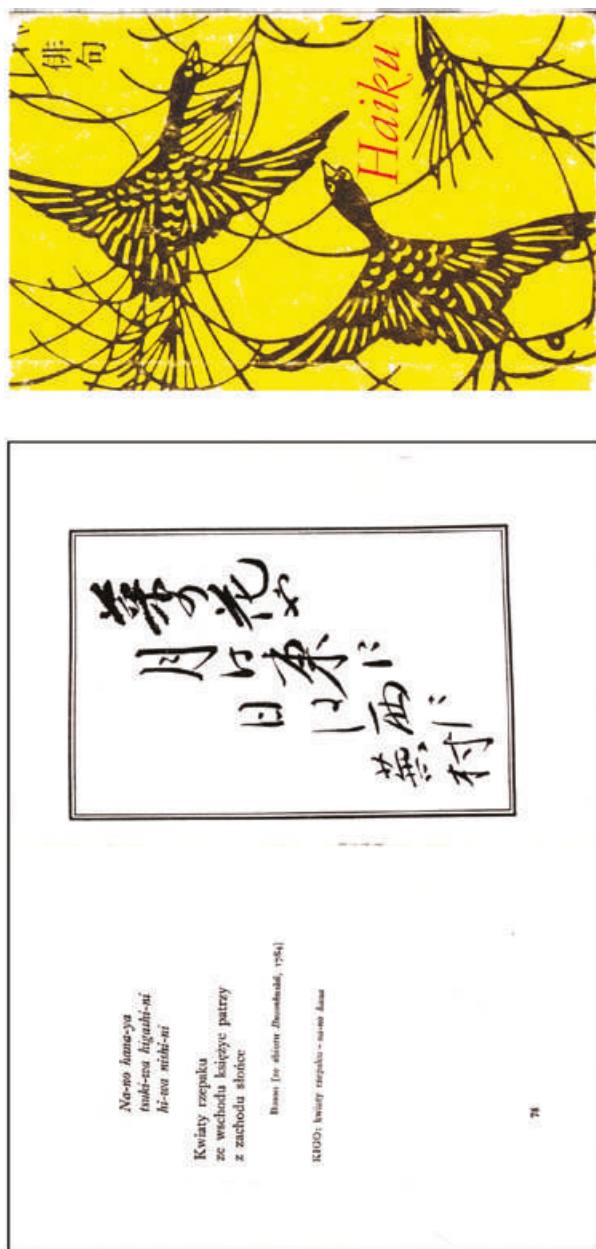
The illustration to the first poem took the form of three green (!) birds in the navy-blue sky. The spread wings of one of them mimic the shape of a crescent moon, the other two look like shining stars. The picture is a visual variation on Buson’s poem where the moon and the line of geese are separate parts of the

121 *Be Haiku*, transl. A. Żuławska-Umeda, concept B. Jewiarz, Warszawa, 2017.

122 As quoted in Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku*, p. 96. Żuławska-Umeda’s translation published in *Be Haiku* (n.p.): “Sznur dzikich gęsi / a księżyc nad wierchami / jak sygnatura.”

123 Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*, p. 192. Żuławska-Umeda’s translation from *Be Haiku* (n.p.): “Marcowe koty / ucihły – w tej alkwie / księżyc za mgłą.”

image. Furthermore, the haiku most probably refers to a full moon as the shape was supposed to act as a signature (a square sign, often with rounded vertices, occurs in Japanese artworks). Kajzer's illustration is a kind of a visual riddle that may be solved only after reading the poem. It is very far from being illustrative and easily mimetic (the use of colour). The same may be said about the picture accompanying the second haiku. The work presents a bright crescent moon against the dark sky. Upon closer scrutiny, it turns out that the moon is one cat clinging close to another one. It is again a visual concept, a puzzle rather than a more or less detailed depiction of the real world.



**Illustration 25.** Cover and pages of the *Haiku* anthology published by Ossolineum in 1983 (poems translated by Agnieszka Żulawska-Umeda, calligraphy: Yukio Kudō, graphic design: Leon Urbanński)

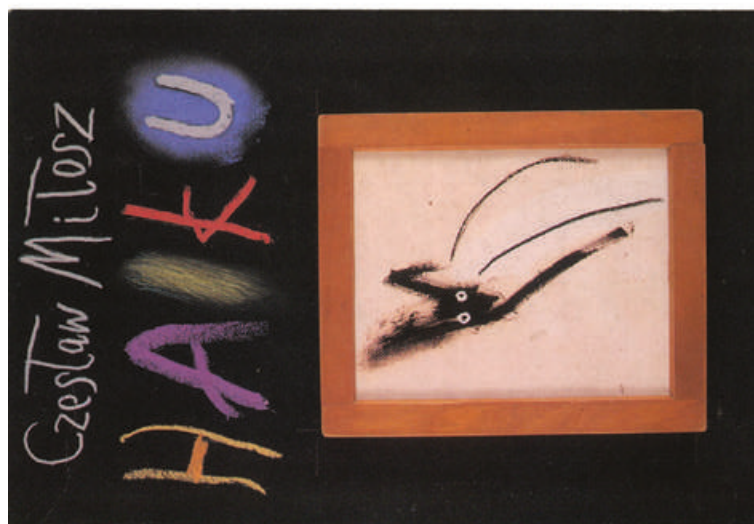




**Illustration 26 a.** *Haiku* collection, with an introduction and transl. A. Żulawska-Umeda, illustrations E. Kutyłak-Katamay, ELAY, Bielsko-Biała, 2006



**Illustration 26 b, c.** Two spreads from *Be Haiku* – a mini-anthology of haiku translations by A. Żuławska-Umeda, with illustrations by R. Kajzer (the book's concept B. Jewiarz, Blue Bird, Warszawa, 2017)



**Illustration 27 a, b.** Covers of the haiku anthologies: Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, illustrations A. Dudziński. Kraków, Wydawnictwo M, 1992; R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*. Kraków: a5, 2014 (reproduced on the cover is Sengai Gibon's painting 'The Universe (The Circle, Triangle, and Square)')



**Illustration 28 a, b.** Andrzej Dudziński's illustrations in Miłosz's collection of haiku translations (Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 1992)

The anthology of Czesław Miłosz's translations with illustrations by Andrzej Dudziński has a different graphic and, to a certain extent, literary character.<sup>124</sup> This small (11.9 x 16.5 cm), visually intriguing book is composed of translations of Japanese haiku (167 texts) along with poems by contemporary poets from the United States and Canada (sixty-eight pieces). The soft graphite cover bears a handwritten name of the translator along with colour letters of the title, uneven, probably drawn in dry pastel, bringing to mind children's chalk drawings on the asphalt. Below is a wooden frame with one of Dudziński's graphic works: a strange, scared black little creature painted in a few brushstrokes.<sup>125</sup> While one can detect here indebtedness to the expressive *sumi-e* ink painting art, orientalism is not the predominant association evoked by the cover, which otherwise gives a good indication of the book's overall artworks (and the style of translations).<sup>126</sup> Dudziński's works, not completely straightforward in terms of iconography, often verging on figuration, are not subservient to haiku,<sup>127</sup> instead, they engage the audience in a curious interdisciplinary game. At first glance, the reader tries to match an almost abstract depiction to one of the three poems accompanying it. Arriving at the proper combination (not always can one be sure it has been achieved) allows us to suffuse the depiction with meaning; the juxtaposition of texts marked by surprisingly modern poetics with modern, elliptical, unconventional, often witty illustrations seems to recreate some non-obvious (though deep) relationships between haiku a *haiga*.

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124 Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, with an introduction by Cz. Miłosz, Kraków, 1992.

125 This is an illustration to one of Buson's poems: "The bat / Lives hidden / Under the broken umbrella" (Cz. Miłosz, *Haiku*, p. 68, English translation as quoted in R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 4, p. 1256). Jan Kott described it as follows: "Dudziński's bat is rendered with a single brushstroke; it has pointed ears, a black, cunning, almost fox-like little snout and white, round eyes. And further – it seems to disappear in the whiteness among the contour of two lines." (English translation as quoted in Jan Kott, 'Haiku Miłosza i Dudzińskiego' / 'Miłosz and Dudziński's Haiku,' transl. M. B. Guzowska, *Projekt*, No. 204–207, (1997), p. 47.

126 Miłosz's translations are discussed in the chapters 'The Poetry of Mindfulness – Czesław Miłosz and Haiku' and 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'

127 As Kott writes: "Letters / characters in the ceremonial calligraphic writing are in black ink. Dudziński tackled the art of calligraphy in his 'illustrations' to haiku. Perhaps the name 'calligrams' would be the most suitable for them. [this is not a most fortunate qualification, as "calligram" is a specific term referring to a type of visual poetry]. He probably painted them with two brushes, as Japanese masters do: a big brush with hair cut like a sweeping brush and the other brush – sharpened to make the network of lines look as tiny as a cobweb. [...] The art of calligraphy knows no corrections. The patch and line are as final as the leap of a trapeze acrobat; therefore, perhaps, the Ultimate appears in Dudziński's calligrams, both the Ultimate and the indeterminate." English translation as quoted in J. Kott, 'Miłosz and Dudziński's Haiku,' *Projekt*, transl. M. B. Guzowska, p. 47.

A significant part of Ryszard Krynicki's volume *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*<sup>128</sup> is also devoted to a mini-anthology of classical haiku. The first two parts of the book include poems by Krynicki himself (the sequences: *Prawie haiku* [Almost Haiku] with twenty-six miniatures of varying syllable counts, and *Haiku z minionej zimy* [Last Winter's Haiku] featuring twenty-nine poems of the 5-7-5 syllable pattern).<sup>129</sup> Part 3 is entitled *Haiku mistrzów* [Haiku of the Masters], with poems by Bashō (thirty-three texts), Buson (twenty-four miniatures), Krynicki's favourite haijin Issa (fifty pieces), and the last of the great four haiku masters, Masaoka Shiki (forty poems), who had been poorly represented in Polish. Krynicki used as a basis for his haiku translations into German, Czech, Russian and English,<sup>130</sup> and nearly always followed the 5-7-5 syllabic format. His texts come across as supremely meticulous and carefully balanced – they are juxtapositional, yet not disjointed; make use of colloquial language, yet do not shock with colloquiality.

The book fits well with Zen aesthetics. Small in size (12 x 16.3 cm), uniform in colour (the same slightly creamy colour of the cover and leaves), with a black-and-brown *sumi-e* rectangle in the upper part of the first page of the cover (work by Sengai Gibon: 'The Universe (The Circle, Triangle, and Square)'). Printed on each page are three haiku (or, alternatively, a single "almost-haiku" in Part One). The composition is very simple, harmonious, it seems that traces of decoration are almost undetectable. Were it not for the "window" with *sumi-e* and the calligraphy on the cover, a certain Japanese character of the visual layout could be easily missed. While the volume accords perfectly with European publishing conventions, an attentive reader will find that subtle East Asian cues remain legible.<sup>131</sup>

Finally, another important, albeit small-scale (small print-runs) phenomenon to be mentioned are the publications of Miniatura, a publishing house that is well-known to Polish "Orientophiles," and specializes in translations of East-Asian literatures and Polish poetry inspired by them. In my opinion, the anthologies produced by this publishing house<sup>132</sup> are highly incongruous and uneven artistically.

128 R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, Kraków, 2014. Graphic design and typography, Frakcja R.

129 Originally published in *Kwartalnik Artystyczny*, 2010, No. 4, p. 41, dated December 2009–January–March 2010. See also Part 5 of this study.

130 R. Krynicki, 'Zamiast posłowania,' in R. Krynicki, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, p. 122–3.

131 The same can be said of *Antologia polskiego haiku* (ed. and with an introduction by E. Tomaszewska, Warszawa, 2001), containing subtle painterly *sumi-e* "interludes" by Lidia Rozmus.

132 Miniatura has published numerous collections of Polish haijins (often in hard-cover and – as the name of the imprint suggests – small format). See, for example, E. Tomaszewska, *Jeszcze dzień błyszczy. the day still shining. haiku*, Kraków, 2005; L. Engelking, *Haiku własne i cudze*; L. Engelking, *I inne wiersze (utwory wybrane i nowe)*, Kraków, 2000; J. Brzozowski, E. Ledóchowicz, *Łódka z papieru. Haiku*, Kraków 1996 (poems from these collections are discussed in Part 5). Other Miniatura's publications include *Antologia haiku kanadyjskiego* [Canadian Haiku Anthology, transl.

*Japońskie wiersze śmierci* [Japanese Death Poems] translated and with an introduction by Marek Has<sup>133</sup> is a small hard-bound volume (blue imitation leather with an embossed frame, golden letters, size of 10.6 x 14.5 cm) containing sixty-six death haiku (last poems of poets or texts prepared in advance as a sort of a poetic testament). The texts featured in the publication are by poets completely unknown in Poland. The book's designer, Anna Maria Bugaj-Janczarska, gave individual leaves a uniform look: after opening the book, we always see a pair of almost identical pages: the upper section of each page is decorated with the same rectangle with a colour print depicting bent pines and containing orientalized letters of the poets' names. The bottom of the page always contains a centred haiku triplet. Large reproductions of the above-mentioned prints and calligraphy by Manabu Teramoto appear at the volume's beginning and end. Despite all reservations (unification of a page layout, repetition of a single illustration, "rough-hewn" cover), the book is nevertheless an interesting bibliophile object d'art. Has' translations are satisfying in terms of literary quality – restrained, giving the impression of modern poetry.

We are all the more surprised, then, comparing this volume with a Miniatura's more recent publication, similar in length (seventy-eight translations) and format, predominantly consisting of diametrically different translations (the translator's name was not given!) of the same poems, preceded by a surprising introduction that has absolutely nothing to do with the field of literary studies.<sup>134</sup> The book's graphic concept and design, while also "Eastern," is different as well. Each poem in *Japońskie haiku śmierci*<sup>135</sup> is preceded by the author's handwritten name (in black ink) or pseudonym. Decorating the book's cover and numerous pages are paintings by Norbert Skupniewicz: black and white, focused on elements of nature, at times pushing the limits of figuration. While these *haiga* cannot be faulted for being derivative of Japanese models, they suffer from a certain technical ineptitude and a slavish adherence to the poems' semantic layer. Compared to the homogeneous graphic design of *Japońskie haiku śmierci*, the composition nevertheless appears to be more individualized, less predictable, and as such closer to the spirit of haiku.

and with an introduction by E. Tomaszewska, Krakow, 1993, as well as an interestingly designed (turquoise leaves, delicate floral ornament on each leaf) bilingual anthology *Ślady stóp wiatru. Haiku z Niemiec, Austrii i Szwajcarii*, with an introduction by F. Heller, selected, transl. and ed. by P. W. Lorkowski, Kraków, 1996.

133 *Japońskie wiersze śmierci*, transl. and with an introduction by M. Has, Kraków, 2003.

134 "When at last man opens wide within himself the lenticel of insights into the Nature of Things – instinct, telepathy, intuition will help him take a step towards opening the Awareness of Being;" "The Biblical image of the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah is a sign of the community's erosion of understanding life, as well as the loss of freedom – as right action. For this community, the Great Determinations did not acknowledge any chance other than the initiation of new incarnations" (N. Skupniewicz, 'Młodsza siostra życia' [Life's Younger Sister], in *Japońskie haiku śmierci*, with an introduction and drawings by N. Skupniewicz, ed. Ł. Górnikowski, Kraków, 2007, pp. 6–7, 10–12).

135 *Japońskie haiku śmierci*.

The reading and viewing experience, however, is spoiled by some translations: verbose, linguistically anachronistic, bathetic. The following are two translations of a poem by Koraku, the first one by Has, the other one from *Japońskie haiku śmierci*:

Radość rosy rozpuszczającej się w mgłę <sup>136</sup>	[The joy of the dew dissolving into the mist]
jakże się cieszy rosa z wniebowstąpienia ze świetlistych traw przez mgłę <sup>137</sup>	[how happy the dew is with its Ascension from luminous grasses through the mist]

Another of Miniatura's publication (similar in format), Bashō's *140 haiku*, compiled and translated by Piotr Madej, could be characterized similarly to the collection of Has' translations.<sup>138</sup> Orientalizing procedures, albeit slightly different, are strongly in evidence in this publication as well. On the one hand, one could fault it for a certain verbal-visual incoherence, and, on the other, graphic uniformization. This publication was not given an elegant hardcover. Its cover depicts one of Hiroshige's views of Edo (*Suruga-chō*) – the view of a crowded street does not accord too well with Bashō's poetry. Each of the cream-coloured pages features two poems separated by the identical calligraphy printed in between. The translations, like those of Has, are syntactically and lexically simple (Madej translates poems that are well-known to Polish readers along with works hitherto unavailable in Polish).<sup>139</sup>

Another of Miniatura's haiku anthologies had a print-run of seven (!) copies. The book *100 klasycznych haiku* [100 Classic Haiku], translated by Ewa Tomaszewska,<sup>140</sup> is a fine de-luxe edition, with a brown imitation-leather hard binding (10.7 x 14.6 cm), a small rectangular sheet pasted on it (depicting the orientalizing upper-case book title and the name of the publishing house, along with a reproduction of Nishikawa Sukenobu's artwork 'Clock and the Beauty'). The volume's unifying graphic motif is a detail of colour reproduction of a painting of ravens on the branches of a flowering tree. The reproduction (probably deliberately a bit out of focus) decorates all the pages of the book; on the pages featuring poems, it is partially obscured by smooth rectangles of the text background, while on opening

136 *Japońskie haiku śmierci*, p. 11.

137 *Japońskie haiku śmierci*, p. 109.

138 M. Bashō, *140 haiku*, selected and transl. by P. Madej, Kraków, 2008. No mention was made of the language that served as a basis for the translations.

139 Madej's translations are quoted and analysed in the chapter 'Amongst Polish Translations of Haiku.'

140 *100 klasycznych haiku*, ed. Y. Miura, transl. E. Tomaszewska, Kraków, 2010. The publication is a translation of *Classic Haiku: A Master's Selection*, selected and transl. Y. Miura, Boston–Tokyo, 1991 (this information, however, is not provided in Miniatura's publication).



pages of sections devoted to the seasons it is enriched with additional, half-abstract compositions. This, again, is an example of visual uniformization, all the more unpalatable when we see the image with flowering branches “against the background” of winter or autumn haiku. The volume’s title is misleading – the book’s significant part is not composed of haiku by Bashō, Buson, Issa, and Shiki (opening successive chapters corresponding to the seasons), but of poems of contemporary Japanese *haijins* (completely unknown in Poland), actually approximating the classical seventeen-syllable models. This is a great advantage of this publication, which, unfortunately, is almost completely absent from readers’ awareness.

Most anthologies of translations of Japanese haiku in question are in some measure invariably marked by orientalization. Which is not surprising – these publications are intended to give an idea of the semantics and aesthetics of translated poetry as fully as possible. The extremes of verbal-visual activities of editors, graphic designers, and publishers are clearly in evidence. At one end of the spectrum, we have the two orthodoxly japanizing volumes by Żuławska-Umeda, while at the opposite end stands the compelling fusion of modified “Japanness” and witty “Occidentality” in the work of Miłosz and Dudziński and in the mini-anthology made by Żuławska-Umeda, Kajzer and Jewiarz. Between these extremes lies the design of Krynicki’s volume, mimetically related to the traditions of the East (Zen aesthetics) and editorial practices of the West (ordinariness, visual “transparency”), along with the publication by Janta (and Gliwa) discreetly blending various aesthetics, and, finally, the inconsistent, at times seemingly random practices of the *Miniatura* publishing house.

However, our considerations have so far been limited to editions of haiku translations.<sup>141</sup> Now it is time to look at original poetry.

### B. *Haiku Collections*

A great many Polish authors and publishers in various ways use graphic design to highlight Eastern inspirations of their poetry publications. Most commonly,

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141 Foreign-language editions also exhibit a great concern with graphic design, typically alluding to the aesthetics of Zen visual arts. See, e.g. M. Bashō, *Bashō. The Complete Haiku*; M. Bashō, *The Narrow Road; 1020 Haiku in Translation. The Heart of Basho, Buson and Issa*, transl. T. Saito, W. R. Nelson, North Charleston, South Carolina, 2006; K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life and Selected Haiku by Kobayashi Issa*, transl. S. Hamill, illustrated by K. Aso, Boston–London, 1997. On occasion, Japanese inspirations are expressed in a very subtle way – through ascetic, “aerated” notation” of texts on the page and reproductions of Eastern paintings or motifs and patterns on covers – see, for example, M. Shiki, *Selected Poems*, transl. B. Watson, New York, 1997; *Far Beyond the Field. Haiku by Japanese Women*, compiled, transl. and with an introduction by M. Ueda, New York, 2003; *Haiku Master Buson. Translations from the Writings of Yosa Buson – Poet and Artist – with Related Materials*, transl. Y. Sawa, E. Marcombe Shiffert, Buffalo–New York, 2007. See also J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 163–4.

illustrations in haiku volumes and books with “haiku” in the title<sup>142</sup> are relatively few in number, while their colour palette is reduced – as in ink painting – to various shades of non-colour: white, black, gray. On occasion, the very layout of texts on the page is meaningful, just as, naturally, is the relationship between poems’ typographic design and their style and semantics. I shall limit myself to describing a handful of the most representative examples, starting with the least complicated compositions.

### B.1. *As Simple as Possible*

The haiku part of Leszek Engelking’s volume *I inne wiersze* [And Other Poems],<sup>143</sup> is made up of very simple typographic designs, well-suited to the poems’ poetics (and to Barthes’ enunciations discussed above). No illustrations can be found here, the pages are almost blank. Each page features three stars (instead of the title) in the bottom right corner, along with the poem’s text in the bottom left corner (only one poem per page). Initial letters of the first lines are highlighted with much larger boldface, which on almost empty pages has an almost decorative look. One could detect here subtle allusions to both East-Asian calligraphy and the European tradition of ornately decorated initials in manuscripts. Texts written in the style slightly differing from that of the vast majority of today’s poems (re)gain physicality and materiality, becoming intriguing shapes against a blank white background.<sup>144</sup> The typographic design subtly suggests affinities with East-Asian visual arts, while the poems themselves serve to further corroborate that the links with Japanese aesthetics are not accidental or superficial:<sup>145</sup>

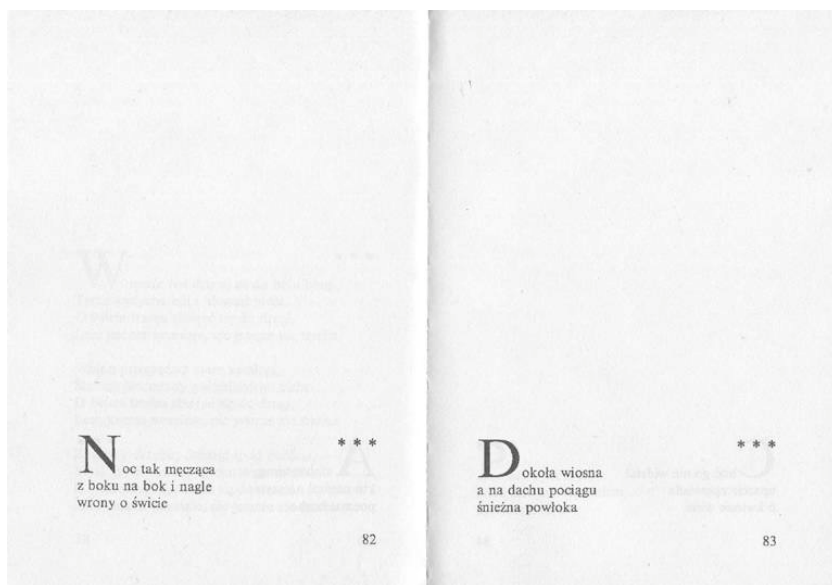
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142 At this point, I do not analyse in detail publications not labelled as “haiku,” where only a small proportion of the texts can be interpreted as close to the Japanese seventeen-syllable verse.

143 L. Engelking, *I inne wiersze*, pp. 81–105.

144 The other poems in the collection *I inne wiersze* were printed in a similar way (ones without a title are marked with three asterisks). In the case of short haiku, however, this simple design is especially distinctive and at the same time strikingly close to Japanese haiku-related aesthetics.

145 See the quotations and analyses in Part 5 of the monograph. Similar graphic design was used in Janusz Stanisław Pasierb’s posthumously published volumes *Haiku żarnowieckie* (selected and ed. by M. Wilczek, Pelplin 2003) and *Morze, obłok i kamień* (Pelplin, 2001), as well as in *Łódka z papieru* by Jacek Brzozowski and Ewa Ledóchowicz. However, they are lacking in finesse and subtle diversification of individual elements of typographic composition. Excellent, tasteful, and simple graphic design is the distinctive feature of the recently published collection of Jadwiga Stańczakowa’s haiku. Its texts, numbering up to four per page, written in the subtly



It might seem that simple, transparent graphic design is the safest and most reliable way to design publications consisting of poems referring to haiku. Yet the volume *Haiku Brzóska*<sup>146</sup> proves that this is not always the case.

Its reader is presented with a thick volume (367 pages) bound in white hardcover with a centrally located red dot (an allusion to the flag of Japan). The volume's pages were carefully designed, also somehow in a "Japanese" fashion: every single page features one poem, while page numbers were placed in small grey circles referring to the visual (and semantic) composition of the cover. The graphic design suggests a text that is contemplative and somewhat classic (hardcover, restrained aesthetics, impressive size). The visual framework reinforces the genre promise made by the title, contrary to the expectations of those readers who were attracted to the volume by the author known for his unique uncanonical style of haiku-writing.<sup>147</sup> Despite everything, I see the book's tasteful design as an editorial misunderstanding and fail to find in it any interpretive impulses that could

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ornamental, slightly orientalizing font (typeface: Josefin Sans) are scattered across white pages. The volume features a white cover and a black, double-sided dust jacket (the front makes use of the Braille alphabet, on the reverse selected haiku triplets were printed in white font). See J. Stańczakowa, *Haiku*, ed. J. Borowiec, Wrocław 2016 (graphic design, cover, and typesetting by Maria Bukowska).

146 D. Brzóska-Brzósiewicz, *Haiku Brzóska*, afterword M. Świetlicki, Gdańsk, 2007. Graphic design Michał Krasodomski and Wojciech Radtke.

147 Brzóska-Brzósiewicz's work is treated extensively in the chapter 'Haiku-Blague or "Freestyle Haiku?" – The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.'

flow from the strong tension between the poems' visual promise and their actual modality (they frequently are aphorisms or nonsense jokes).<sup>148</sup> It seems that the authors of the graphic concept, Michał Krasodomski and Wojciech Radtke, did not read the texts with proper (genre) understanding. Which is a pity.

Let us have a look at yet another example of a plain, albeit more decorative design of pages of a poetry book. In Ewa Tomaszewska's volume *jeszcze dzień błyszczy* [the day still shining]<sup>149</sup> only four ornaments were employed – these are vegetal motifs linked to the seasons. The centre of each page is filled with precisely this visual *kigo*, accompanied by one or two haiku. While one might complain about image quality (pixelation), I essentially find the simple design successful, creatively simplifying and “occidentalizing” a foreign tradition of mandatory references to specific seasons.

## B.2. Illustrations: Between the Orient and the Occident

The graphic design of the great part of Polish collections of haiku – and “haiku” – turns out to be considerably less austere. Among its significant elements are illustrations, which are linked to poems through various verbal and pictorial interrelationships. While artistic techniques employed by artists will serve as an organizing principle of the discussion, I am mostly interested in the ways of blending East-Asian and Occidental inspirations as well as the very search for transcultural commonalities.<sup>150</sup>

### B.2.1. Script

Japanese characters are the most common motif put into use in haiku collections as a special type of illustration. Calligraphy also adorned the pages of the above-discussed anthologies of classical haiku. In the case of low-circulation books by Polish poets, however, we are typically dealing with rather unsuccessful imitations of East-Asian calligraphy, and sometimes even with poor-quality computer graphics. They may be intended to play the role of signs-ornaments: mysterious, illegible to the lay reader, suggesting the depth of Eastern spirituality. Many texts illustrated with such quasi-ideograms are miniatures in which echoes of symbolism resound, at times quite discordantly. As in the following poem by Grzegorz T. Dziwota (the text is accompanied by the character signifying “border”):

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148 See the chapter ‘Haiku-Blague or “Freestyle Haiku?” – The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.’

149 E. Tomaszewska, *jeszcze dzień błyszczy*.

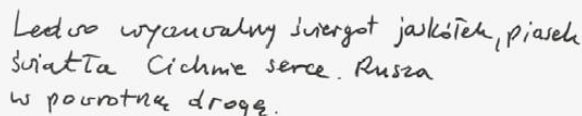
150 I refer here to the concept of transculturality formulated by Wolfgang Welsch. See ‘Introduction.’

Tam zrodził się czas –  
Lustro zbudzone ze snu  
Płonie milczeniem...<sup>151</sup>

[Time was born there –  
A mirror roused from sleep  
Burns with silence...]

In Dziwota's collection, we also find an unintended caricature of *ensō* – a low-quality reproduction of computer graphics depicting a black circle. This is in complete contradiction with expressive contemplative *zen* paintings that convey the duct of a hand.

In place of Oriental calligraphy, however, an entirely native “technique” can be used. An interesting, extremely simple visual procedure recording, just like calligraphy, hand movement and emotional expression, can include... a handwritten notation of a poem.<sup>152</sup> The finely designed volume by Jan Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór*,<sup>153</sup> features a manuscript version of a poem that perfectly rounds out the book's composition:<sup>154</sup>



Ledwo wyauwalny luterget jaskółek, piasek  
Światła Cichnie serce. Rusza  
w powrotną drogę.

The text appears in the book only in the handwritten version. Unlike the calligraphy incomprehensible to the Polish reader or, for example, almost illegible manuscripts occasionally reproduced in volumes next to their printed counterparts, the handwritten notation of Polkowski's poem is not an illustration in a strict sense (as it happens, the poem is accompanied by Jerzy Dmitruk's artwork that is not linked to it via a straightforward illustrative relationship). This solution, however, is an interesting counterpoint to various calligraphic ornaments superficially echoing the fundamental values of Eastern culture.

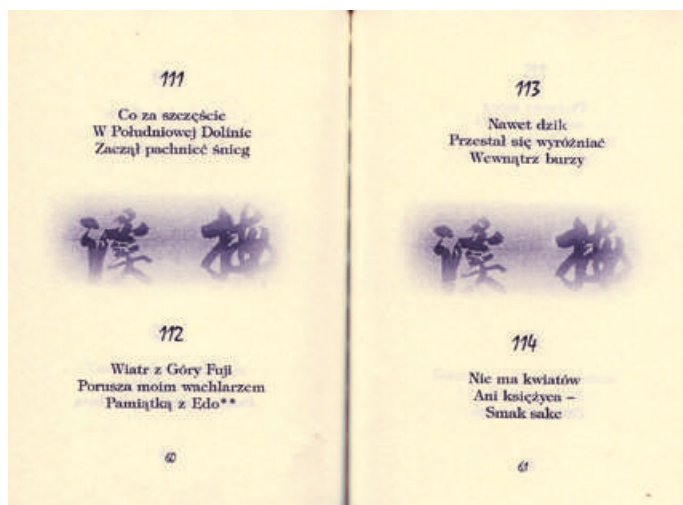
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151 G. T. Dziwota, *Haiku*, Szczecin, 2004, p. 21.

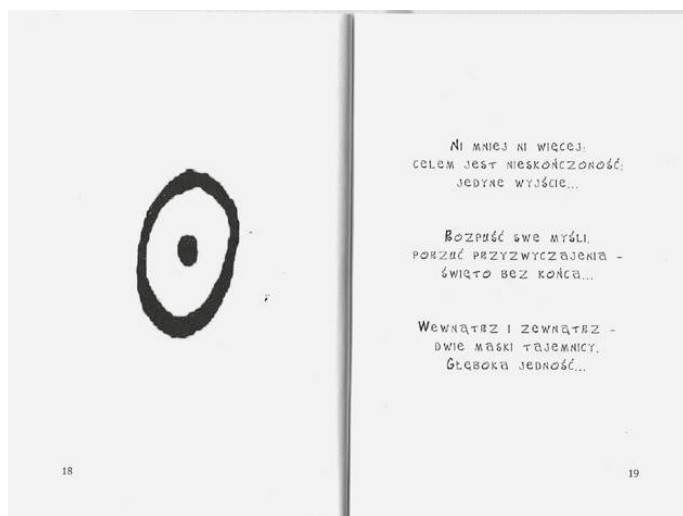
152 It is worth adding that in Japan, a given *haijin*'s manuscripts were highly regarded, even if the poet was not an accomplished calligrapher – see Ch. A. Crowley, ‘Buson and “Haiga,”’ p. 185.

153 The first edition of the sequence (containing 12 poems less) – *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór i inne wiersze*, Kraków, 1990 – did not have a particularly appealing (typo)graphic design (“ordinary” layout of texts, no illustrations).

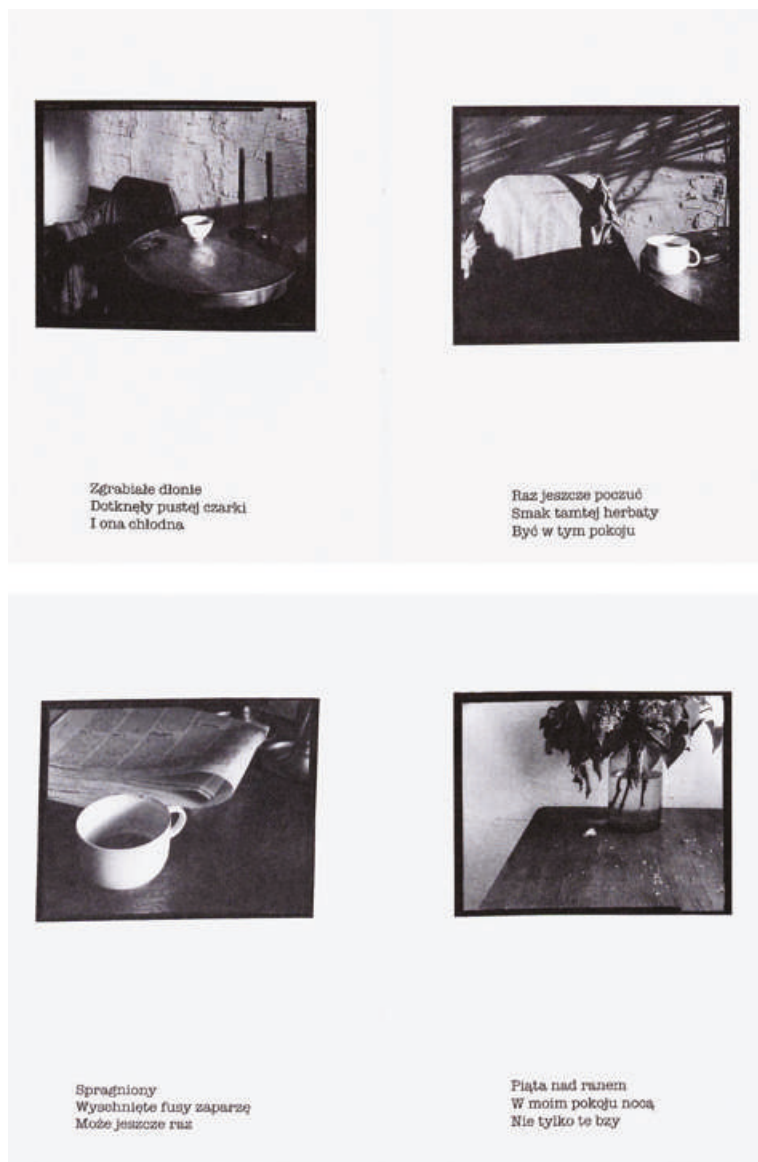
154 J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór*, Kraków, 2008, p. 76 (the text absent from the volume's original edition – *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór i inne wiersze*, Kraków, 1990). Poems' manuscripts serve as the book's visual frame, the volume opening with another poem represented in this way (however, one quite removed from the haiku poetics).



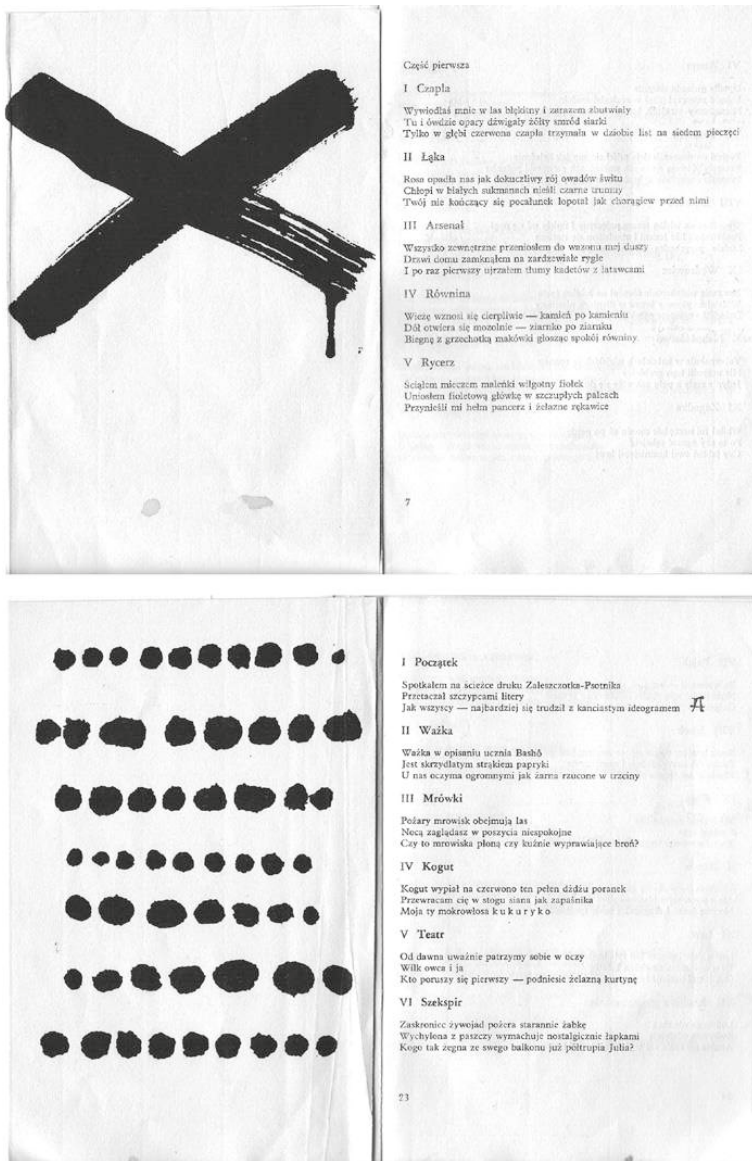
**Illustration 29 a.** Pages of Matsuo Bashō's collection, *140 haiku*, comp. and transl. P. Madej. Kraków: Miniatura, 2008



**Illustration 29 b.** Grzegorz T. Dziwota, *Haiku*, graphic design G. T. Dziwota. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo FOKA, 2004

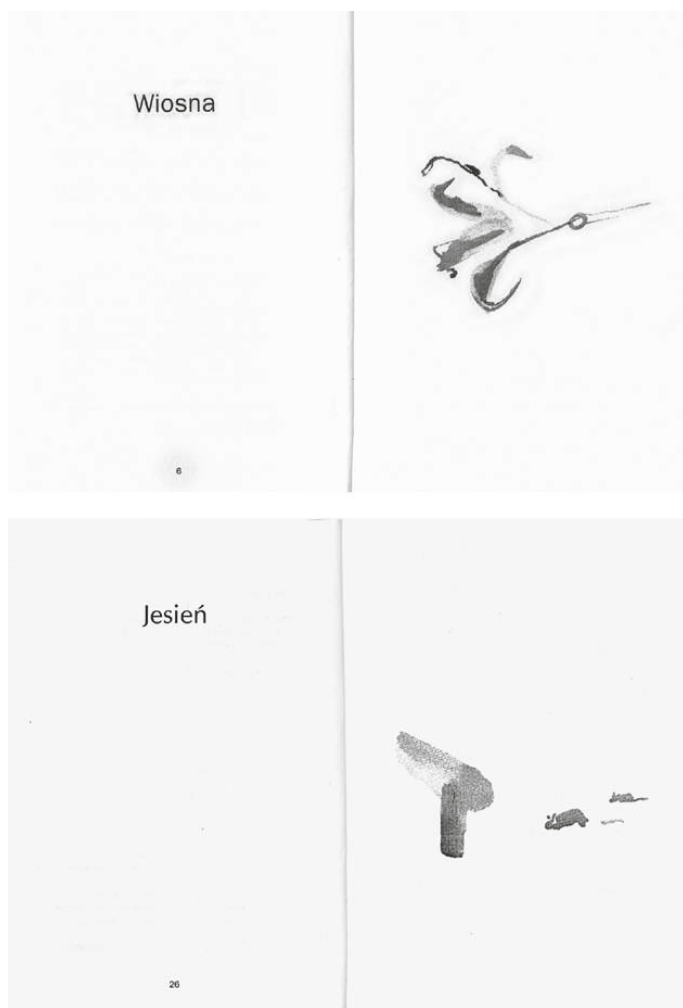


**Illustration 30 a, b.** Pages of Marek Szyryk's collection *fotografia, haiku i inne* [photography, haiku and others] (Wrocław: Typoscript, 2000)



**Illustration 31 a, b.** Jan Bokiewicz, illustrations in Stanisław Grochowiak's collection *Haiku-images* (Warszawa, PIW, 1978, second edition)





**Illustration 32 a, b.** Works by Koji Kamoji in Stanisław Cichowicz's collection *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku? 67 haiku* [Is it Possible to Transplant a Rape Flower? 67 Haiku] (Warszawa Galeria Rzeźby Stołecznego Biura Wystaw Artystycznych, 1997)

B.2.2. *Photography*

Photographs are relatively rarely used as *haiga* in Polish publications, which should probably be put down to technical and financial issues (in the case of internet publications, the opposite trend is in evidence).<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, the few existing examples turn out to be very pleasing aesthetically. In Agnieszka Szczepaniak's volume *Drżenie cięciwy* [The Quiver of a Bowstring]<sup>156</sup> a visual break in the sequence of pages with poems (one poem per page) is introduced by iconographically non-obvious, black-and-white nature photographs by Monika Kocot (two inside the book, one on the cover). The austere graphic design throws into relief Szczepaniak's ambiguous poems:

z próżnego w puste  
księżyc jak pory roku  
plecie kołyskę<sup>157</sup>

[the moon's Sisyphean task  
the weaving of a cradle  
like the seasons]

przejeżdża tramwaj  
okrzyki – z rąk do rąk  
kwitną azalie<sup>158</sup>

[a tram passes  
cheers – from hand to hand  
azaleas are blooming]

In turn, Marek Szyryk's volume *fotografia, haiku i inne*,<sup>159</sup> is an example of tastefully printed *silvae rerum* (in miniature form – the volume is made up of 14 leaves, 10.1 x 14.1 cm in size). The book contains haiku, photographic *haiga* (black-and-white photographs strongly illustrative of the poems, depicting objects such as a table, cup, chair, vase) along with a variation on *haibunga* (snapshots of everyday objects interwoven with prose fragments by Miłosz and Julio Cortázar and the text of a private letter "To Tomek S."). Poetry, photographs and prose excerpts alike are perfectly in keeping with traditional Japanese aesthetic categories of *sabi*, *wabi*, *aware*.<sup>160</sup>

W te dni deszczowe  
Myślę czy wszystko musi  
Odejść w niepamięć<sup>161</sup>

[On these rainy days  
I wonder if everything has to  
Sink into oblivion]

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155 See section 3.A in this part of the book.

156 A. Szczepaniak, *Drżenie cięciwy*, ed. and illustrations M. Kocot, typographic design E. Górniak, Łódź, 2008.

157 A. Szczepaniak, *Drżenie cięciwy*, p. 20.

158 A. Szczepaniak, *Drżenie cięciwy*, p. 18.

159 M. Szyryk, *fotografia, haiku i inne*, Wrocław, 2000.

160 See Part 1 of the book.

161 M. Szyryk, *fotografia*, n.p.

Zgrabiałe dłonie  
Dotknęły pustej czarki  
I ona chłodna<sup>162</sup>

[Numb hands  
Touched an empty cup  
It is also cold]

### B.2.3. *Graphics, Drawing, Painting*

Graphics, drawings, and paintings illustrating collections of haiku turn out to exhibit remarkable diversity. It is precisely here that attempts to reconcile aesthetics, to combine East-Asian inspirations with European tradition, are the most evident.

Let me start with the most rarely occurring compositions – abstract *haiga*.<sup>163</sup> Jan Bokiewicz's illustrations to Stanisław Grochowiak's *Haiku-images* deserve special attention.<sup>164</sup> Grochowiak explored the possibilities of bringing into contact the aesthetics of the West and that of Zen,<sup>165</sup> whereas Bokiewicz (more clearly than Dudziński in Miłosz's anthology)<sup>166</sup> does something similar on the visual plane. The latter does not imitate the characters of Japanese script or East-Asian graphic motifs. His works bring to mind *sumi-e* (especially *zenga*), and at the same time, precisely just like *zenga*, are far removed from any formal orthodoxy and do not provoke the viewer with cultural otherness. The three ink-based<sup>167</sup> black-and-white "illustrations" in the collection are: a slanting cross executed in bold brushstrokes, from which paint is dripping (the sign of the unknown: x? A reference to the form of St. Andrew's Cross?); seven rows of uneven, expressively painted dots (a multiplied European *ensō*?) and, finally, an ordered, geometrized, though not perfect, gridiron accompanying the more restrained, affirmative *Haiku dla Kinga* (a sign of order, calmness?).<sup>168</sup> Bokiewicz's works are not a simple, decorative complement to the volume – they overlay the stylistic and semantic fissures in Grochowiak's poetry with characteristic "dark" visual contexts.

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162 M. Szyryk, *fotografia*, n.p.

163 In Polish *haiga*, all manner of figuration is preponderant. Achromatic colours (black, white, grey) may suggest a link to Japanese ink painting, but the more frequent motivation for this choice of colour might be the limited budget.

164 S. Grochowiak, *Haiku-images*, Warszawa, 1978. This is the book's second edition (both appeared in 1978).

165 Poems from *Haiku-images* are discussed in detail in the chapter *Grochowiak's Longest Journey*.

166 However, the volume of Miłosz and Dudziński first and foremost includes classical haiku and Western verses approaching the prototype of the genre.

167 I classify Bokiewicz's technique as ink painting, but it is conceivable (though not too likely) that his artwork imitates expressive paintings.

168 While a religious iconographic reference could be provided by the sign of the martyrdom of St. Lawrence (gridiron), such an interpretation seems off the mark.

The illustrations by Koji Kamoji in the collection of Stanisław Cichowicz *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku?* should also be linked to *sumi-e*.<sup>169</sup> The book contains six pieces: four of them open haiku sequences devoted to specific seasons of the year, one precedes “all-season” poems, and the cover is adorned with calligraphy. Clearly evident here are connections with Zen ink painting, especially with *zenga*, as is conceptism, unknown in *sumi-e* and more likely to be seen as an Occidental element (and absent from Bokiewicz’s book!). Kamoji’s expressive artworks occupy the middle ground between abstraction and figuration. In the depiction of spring, we can see both a flower in bloom and a flying bird. The autumn part of the volume opens with a piece drawn in several brush strokes in various hues of black – a discerning viewer will, however, notice in the painting two mice scurrying towards a roofed shelter. The volume’s most obvious iconographic representation, a snail shell, is a sign of winter hibernation. The next work, expressive (though not necessarily decorative) calligraphy in various shades of black, is illegible to a viewer unfamiliar with Japanese characters.<sup>170</sup>

Cichowicz’s haiku – vague syntactically (which is also the feature of classic seventeen-syllable verses)<sup>171</sup> and semantically – interestingly correspond to the convolutions of Kamoji’s works:

*dla Koji Kamoji*

kłósy lany ich  
i maków przy miedzy kot  
przystanął czarny<sup>172</sup>

[for Koji Kamoji

grain ears whole fields of them  
and poppies by the balk a black  
cat stopped]

The graphic design of Andrzej Tchórzewski’s collection *Haiku* can serve as a counterpoint to Bokiewicz’s and Kamoji’s compositions that enter into an interesting in dialogue with the poetry they illustrate.<sup>173</sup> At first glance, the artworks (by Marta Tchórzewska) resemble East-Asian painting and graphic art: we see mountain landscapes, solitary trees, twisted branches. However, the illustrations do not add anything original to the obvious iconographic and compositional borrowings. Moreover, these subtle works done in thin lines, and decent technically, are at odds with the unsophisticated, “obtrusive” notation of the poems (large font, titles in bold capitals, considerably dense letter-spacing). The eclectic, incoherent

169 S. Cichowicz, *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku? 67 haiku*, Warszawa, 1997.

170 The graphic design of Kreis’ volume, *Strumień żółtego piasku* (graphic design H. S. Kreis, Japanese calligraphy M. Miyanaga, can be described in a similar fashion.

171 For haiku’s ambiguities, see Parts 1 and 5 of the book.

172 S. Cichowicz, *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku?*, p. 19.

173 A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*, artworks by M. Tchórzewska, cover design and the graphic layout by A. Tchórzewska, Warszawa, 1999.

whole is completed by photographs on the cover – mountain pastures on the first page and a full-page portrait of the author with a mocking smile (in a carelessly unbuttoned shirt showing a hairy torso) – along with, as could be expected – artistically heterogeneous and uneven poems:

NA GROBLI  
Wierzbowe nici  
wodę z wodą zszywają –  
Tak roślinie bezmiar.<sup>174</sup>

[ON THE CAUSEWAY  
Willow threads  
stitch together water with water –  
This is how immensity grows.]

PRYSZNIC  
Kiedy zabrakło  
knuta – mądry pogłupieli...  
Trwaj farso, płyn forso!<sup>175</sup>

[SHOWER  
When the whip  
was gone – the wise became stupid...  
Farce, do not go away, dosh, keep flowing]

MEDYTACJA  
Lotos bezradny  
na łące udeptanej  
przez słonie – człowiek<sup>176</sup>

[MEDITATION  
Helpless lotus  
in a meadow trampled  
by elephants – man.]

The illustrations discussed above made reference to East-Asian visual arts on various levels, calling up the spirit of spontaneous, expressive ink painting or copying Oriental iconographic models. Highly interesting in this context are Jerzy Dmitruk's illustrations to the poems of Jan Polkowski oscillating around the haiku prototype.<sup>177</sup> While not all drawings and graphics have a clear connection with the poems (sometimes it is difficult to detect the plane of verbal-visual agreement), in several combinations the semantic and iconographic connections turn out to be rather obvious (yet what is intriguing is the diverse style of the poems' visualization). All illustrations are black and white, each time the "double-page spread" is treated as a verbal-graphic whole (the poem is placed on the right-hand side, while the illustration covers the left-hand side, in places "annexing" a part of the page with the text). The following are two already discussed poems from the volume:<sup>178</sup>

174 A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*, p. 39.

175 A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*, p. 38.

176 A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*, p. 34.

177 J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór* [2008]. The collection contains texts far removed from haiku.

178 They are discussed in Part 5 of the book.

Smak ziemi. Przylepione do nieboskłonu  
szybują kruki. Siwieje  
powracam.  
J. Polkowski<sup>179</sup>

[The taste of earth. Stuck to the horizon  
ravens are gliding. I turn grey,  
return.]

Rośnie noc. Rozkwita w łoscocie  
przelatujących gęsi. Piją korzenie,  
prostują się konary.  
J. Polkowski<sup>180</sup>

[Night is growing. Blooming in the clatter  
of flying geese. The roots are drinking  
the limbs are straightening up.]

The illustration of the first text may appear stereotypical: we see a hunched wanderer heading home. However, this scene is presented in an intriguing way – it features a simplified drawing of an angular figure moving along a black line-road towards a structure with one window and no door. Above the composition, a strange shape resembling a leaf (or a mouth) hangs like the sun; at the bottom of the right-hand side of the “double-page spread,” we can see another, small, hardly identifiable form (an open window? a cabinet with an open door?). In Dmitruk’s hands, the gliding ravens turned into little black birds seated on the page with the text. Completing the composition is the printed version of the poem. The composition’s dominant element is the void. The artist employs an iconographic scheme that is obvious to a Westerner (which, as it happens, seems to be quite universal), yet complements it with considerably less legible elements. The simplicity of imagery (the main character is brought clearly to the fore), expressiveness of the line, and monochromatism point to Zen aesthetics. It should be noted that if the poems did not display affinities with haiku, we might not detect references of this kind.

Dmitruk offered a completely different style in his illustration of the second piece. On the *haiga* page, no blank unpainted space was left. The poem’s night corresponds to an inky black background. The centre of the composition features by a huge stalk – a visual metonymy of the natural beings described in the poem. Setting the scale are small plants (simplified trees?) in a strange landscape. The surrealising scene is complemented by non-obvious, geometric, organic<sup>181</sup> rhomboid shape at the top of the page opposite the illustration (an allusion to the Eye of Providence?), and a small, simplified drawing of a bird at the bottom of this page. Both elements are not entirely consonant with the full-page illustration. The foregrounding of the shape is strongly linked to the imagery employed in haiku and *sumi-e*. The linearity and flatness of the

179 J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór* [2008], p. 43 (the text appeared in the original 1990 edition).

180 J. Polkowski, *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór* p. 45 (the text was not included in the collection’s original edition from 1990).

181 See W. Kazimierska-Jerzyk, *Abstrakcja a cielesność* [Abstraction and Corporeality], <http://sensualnosc.bn.org.pl/pl//articles/abstrakcja-a-cielesnosc-382/>, accessed March 5, 2015.

colour patch can also be linked to traditional Japanese aesthetics. The dense, glossy blackness of the background is somehow the reverse of the emptiness of ink painting. The surreal landscape compels us to look for connections with European avant-garde tradition (e.g. with the landscapes of Max Ernst). This is a highly interesting blending of influences and aesthetics.

At this juncture, it is worth mentioning Antoni Regulski's collection *Haiku, czyli zaśpiewy wyobraźni* [Haiku, or Songs of Imagination] designed by Magdalena Siudzińska.<sup>182</sup> The visual composition of this small book calls up strong associations with scrolls of East-Asian ink painting. Running across the centre of each page is a wide strip of pale pink colour, subtly differentiated in tonal value, flanked by large white margins. This provides a background for delicate grey shadows forming a drawing of bamboo leaves. The strips composed in this manner were printed with poems (several per page); the initials of each miniature are marked in bold, imitating the expressive brushstroke of East-Asian calligraphy. Some of the pages contain exclusively ink paintings depicting shapes abstracted from the natural world (branches, grasses) against the background of pale pink stripes. Siudzińska executed successful orientalizing compositions – her employment of an unusual colour can be viewed as an attempt to overcome simple imitativeness. Unfortunately, some of Regulski's poems are disappointing. One can also get the impression that the graphic artist conceived a backdrop (as her graphic forms did not dominate the volume) for a poetry closer to Eastern models of poetry. For example, the following "haiku" is completely incongruous with them:

Dzieci	[Children
Nie zabijajcie kurczęcia	Do not kill the chicken
Kto wam jajko zniesie	Who will lay eggs for you]
A. Regulski <sup>183</sup>	

Thus, as I have demonstrated in the Part A "*Haiku*" *Miscellany*, Polish poems referred to as haiku can be complete genological and artistic misunderstandings. Often these texts are accompanied by surprising, completely un-haiku-like illustrations, at times perhaps unintentionally comic. Seeing the collection *Promienie życia. Poezja haiku* [Rays of Life. Haiku Poetry] by Tamar (Tadeusz Józef Maryniak),

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182 A. Regulski, *Haiku, czyli zaśpiewy wyobraźni*, Poznań, 2002.

183 A. Regulski, *Haiku, czyli...*, p. 61. Regulski's poetry is also discussed in Parts 5 and 6 of the book.

illustrated by Piotr Szalkowski,<sup>184</sup> for the first time, we can get the impression that it is a postmodern joke, or that we have accidentally opened a colouring book for nursery-school pupils. In one of the illustrations (all of them are invariably black-and-white, with thickly outlined shapes) we see a dwarf sitting under a mushroom, in another one – a vase and flowers styled after pre-war tapestries. Admittedly, the illustrations in question accord quite well with the alleged haiku:

Pod grzybem krasnal  
nowobogacki patron  
strażnik nadziei<sup>185</sup>

[A gnome under the mushroom  
nouveau riche patron saint  
guardian of hope]

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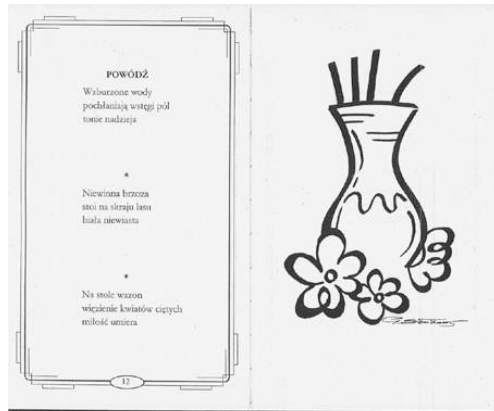
184 Tamar (T. J. Maryniak), *Promienie życia. Poezja haiku*, introduction Z. Jerzyna, illustrations P. Szalkowski, Warszawa, 2004.

185 Tamar (T. J. Maryniak), *Promienie życia...*, p. 30.





**Illustration 33 a, b.** Pages of Jan Polkowski's collection *Elegie z Tymowskich Gór*, with artworks by Jerzy Dmitruk (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2008)



**Illustration 34 a, b, c.** Piotr Szałkowski's illustrations to a collection by Tamar (Tadeusz Józef Maryniak), *Promienie życia. Poezja haiku*, with an introduction by Z. Jerzyna. Warszawa, Wydawnictwo "Tamar," 2004



**Illustration 35 a.** Urszula Zybura, *Haiku*. Kalisz: Kropka, 1998, illustrations – Katarzyna Fijołek

**Illustration 35 b.** *Japońskie haiku śmierci* [Japanese Death Haiku], introduction and drawings N. Skupniewicz, ed. L. Górnikowski. Kraków: Miniatura, 2007



**Illustration 36.** Pages of the collection *Haiku bez liku* [No End of Haiku] by Lech Konopiński, designed by Jarosław Mugał (Poznań: Wielkopolska Agencja Literacka WAL, 2007)

In one of the illustrations in the volume, one can detect a surprising fusion of aesthetics. Tamar writes:

Spadająca wrona  
czarna smuga rozpaczy  
niespełniony lot<sup>186</sup>

[A falling crow  
black streak of despair  
unfulfilled flight]

The poem is accompanied by a zigzag somewhat resembling abstract, expressive *zenga*. However, the illustrator could not resist making the form more polite and legible, supplementing it with additional contours of the shape which probably were meant to be decorative. He also added... a bird's head to the black zigzag – again in the style of rather unsuccessful pictures in children's books.

#### B.2.4. Collage

Collage is a technique that is seldom used by haiku illustrators. These complex, heterogeneous forms may not correspond well with the style of these poetic miniatures. However, this is not always the case.

Two of the achromatic illustrations by Katarzyna Fijolek to Urszula Zybura's book *Haiku*<sup>187</sup> take the form of unique collages. They are compositions somewhat suspended between cultures, works whose materiality is given particularly strong (though ambivalent) emphasis.<sup>188</sup> The combinations of written-down scraps of paper create "mountains" in an indeterminate landscape. The compositions call to mind Pieter Breugel's unstable "layered" *Tower of Babel* but can also be associated with Japanese graphic art that makes use of a flat colour patch and, quite perversely, with the art of calligraphy. The connection with the poems is not obvious. One of the collage "stacks" could be a *haiga* accompanying each of the poems printed on the opposite page (in capital letters subtly imitating a handwritten, angular – akin to Oriental characters – script):<sup>189</sup>

W JASNYM POKOJU  
CAŁE STOSY TWYCH LISTÓW  
CIEMNO OD LITER

SŁOWA JAK MRÓWKI  
BUDUJĄ LABIRYNTY  
DLA KIJA KPINY

[IN A BRIGHT ROOM  
WHOLE PILES OF YOUR LETTERS  
IT IS DARK FROM LETTERS

WORDS LIKE ANTS  
BUILD LABYRINTHS  
FOR MOCKERY'S STICK]

186 Tamar (T. J. Maryniak), *Promienie życia...*, p. 40.

187 U. Zybura, *Haiku*, Kalisz, 1998.

188 it is hard to tell whether the collage technique was actually used here, or we see a reproduction of a drawing or an artwork imitating a collage.

189 See U. Zybura, *Haiku*, pp. 22–3, 44–5.

One of the most curious Polish verbal-visual compositions is the volume *Haiku bez liku* by Lech Konopiński,<sup>190</sup> designed by Jarosław Mugaj. Konopiński's poems are completely at odds with haiku aesthetics,<sup>191</sup> if anything, one could remotely associate them with *zappai* and *senryū* tradition:<sup>192</sup>

Dokoła urny  
polityk tworzy mity  
dla ludzi durnych<sup>193</sup>

[Around the ballot box  
the politician invents myths  
for stupid folks]

Łkają ramole  
a dziatwie nie jest łatwiej  
na łez padole<sup>194</sup>

[Old crocks are sobbing  
and it is none the easier for kids  
in this vale of tears]

By contrast, the visual layout impresses the reader with its eclectic richness, and not infrequently also with its finesse. In his collage compositions, Mugaj employed editions of Japanese postage stamps. His ingenious idea was to create a “spread,” where both the stamps and the poems written on white “slips of paper” are inserted in the painted strips of foil in a “stock book” with black pages. Other ideas include the use of old Japanese postcards surrounded by Polish triplets or a geometrical achromatic composition with a tree motif, echoing Zen painting (the arrangement serves as a backdrop for Konopiński's second-rate poetry). The artist also makes use of fragments of *ukiyo-e* reproductions (the figures abstracted from the scenes seem to be engaged in a dialogue with each other) or photos of more useful Japanese artefacts (e.g. a sword), finally, he taps into the colour scheme and iconography of the Japanese flag.

Mugaj's compositions emphatically confirm the above-mentioned diagnosis of the frequent incongruity between the text and visual composition in verbal and graphic arrangements of haiku (and “haiku”) collections. One often gets the impression that visual artists fail to read the poems that make up a given book. Working on (typo)graphic compositions, they more or less successfully resort to various emblems of Japaneseness, frequently conforming to prevalent stereotypes. However, the weakest point of numerous books is precisely literary texts.

### B.3. Visual Poetry

The verbo-visuality of Polish haiku is seldom realized in conceptist arrangements of visual and concrete poetry.<sup>195</sup> The incidental use of solutions of this type is probably devoid of any deeper connection with East-Asian verbo-visuality, instead one

190 L. Konopiński, *Haiku bez liku*, Poznań, 2007.

191 See Part 6 of the book.

192 See Part 1 of the book.

193 L. Konopiński, *Haiku bez liku*, p. 35.

194 L. Konopiński, *Haiku bez liku*, p. 39.

195 For haiku-related visual and sound experiments in the West, see J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, pp. 7, 146–8, 183–4, 214.

can hear here distinct, yet faint echoes of twentieth-century practices of Occidental artists. The devices used by haikuists are very subtle, and their visual procedures do not obscure the meanings of the few words:<sup>196</sup>

kropla z nieba celuje  
w wąską kałużę  
trafia  
K. Lisowski<sup>197</sup>

[a drop from the sky aims  
at a narrow puddle  
it hits the bull's eye]

pomarańczowy  
księżyc ponad drzewami  
przez całą noc  
D. Adamowski<sup>198</sup>

[orange  
moon above trees  
all through the night]

At times visual composition's sole purpose is to de-automatize the interpretation of poems (which to some extent approach haiku):

WIELKIE CAŁOWANIE  
na gałęziach drze  
wa zamiast liści  
wisi czerwona chm  
ura. Zaraz z niej  
narodzi się słońce.  
Ze lewej Tatry,  
z prawej Babia Gó  
ra. Ojcowie chrze  
stni naszej miłoś  
ci. Piękne było w  
ielkie całowanie  
nieba z ziemią i  
naszeeeeeeeee  
E. Biela<sup>199</sup>

[THE GREAT KISSING  
on the branches of a tr  
ee instead of leaves  
a red cloud han  
gs. Soon the sun  
will be born out of i  
t. The Tatra Mountains to the left  
Babia Góra to the ri  
ght. Godfa  
thers of our lov  
e. How beautiful was the g  
reat kissing of  
heaven with earth and  
ourssssssssssssss]

196 In a largely similar way, I describe "sound" haiku – see Part 5 of the monograph.

197 K. Lisowski, *99 haiku. Inne wiersze*, Kraków, 1993, p. 15.

198 D. Adamowski, *Adamowo*, Łódź, 2006, p. 37.

199 E. Biela, *Niedziela. Dzień Jastrzębiaaa* [The Days of the Haaawk], Łódź, 1995, p. 50.

## DZIECI BURZY

burza przed  
 nami czarno  
 wrze w prze  
 wróconej wa  
 zie nieba w  
 racamy jedz  
 iemy dalej  
 przeczekamy  
 wjeżdżamy w  
 czarną chmu  
 rę. Kto z n  
 ami? Sami. P  
 elni odważnego lękuuuu  
 E. Biela<sup>200</sup>

## [CHILDREN OF THE STORM

the storm in front  
 of us rages  
 in black in the knock  
 ed-over va  
 se of the sky we c  
 ome back mo  
 ve on  
 we'll wait it out  
 entering into  
 a black cl  
 oud. Who with u  
 s? Alone. F  
 ull of brave fearrrrr]

As it turns out, works found on the Internet (especially Rafał Zabratyński's *grafiku*)<sup>201</sup> – which, however, are derived entirely from “paper” literature, reducing the web's creative potential merely to the possibility of immediate publication – are more conceptist and at the same time do not eclipse the meaning with the exuberant play of fonts:<sup>202</sup>

świe      śnieg    prz[y]    ność    ta    nia    dów  
           ży           \*\*\*            jem    zos    wia    śła    stóp

[fre            snow            plea            of lea            foot  
           sh            \*\*\*            sure            ving            prints]

R. Zabratyński<sup>203</sup>

200 E. Biela, *Niedziela...*, p. 31.

201 Rafał Zabratyński uses the term *grafiku* to describe haiku poems that intensely play with the weight and form of fonts, methods of notation, colour (<http://rav.haiku.pl/grafiku.php>, accessed May 16, 2014).

202 See the section *Multimedia Haiku?* in this part of the book.

203 See <http://rav.haiku.pl/haiku.php#48>, accessed June 13, 2012.



c	s
i	i
s	l
z	e
a	n
z	c
j	e
a	o
k	f
ą	f
p	e
i	a
ó	t
r	h
k	e
o	r
dotyka ziemi	touching the ground]
R. Zabratyński <sup>204</sup>	

ściskwautobusie—  
nazakręciewszyscy  
wtęsamąstronę  
R. Zabratyński<sup>205</sup>

[crowdedbus—  
atthebendeverbody  
inthesamedirection]

w emg le  
roz wieszona sieć  
wężełkikropelki  
J. Wnorowski<sup>206</sup>

[anetsuspended  
inthefog  
nodesdroplets]

An interesting context for the work of Polish authors can be found in E. E. Cummings' poems<sup>207</sup> compared to haiku, which visually de-automatize perception much more strongly than the Polish verses in question, necessitating intensive decoding of meaning, often eliminating the "flash-like" haiku epiphany in the process:

204 See <http://rav.haiku.pl/grafiku.php>, accessed April 25, 2014.

205 See <http://rav.haiku.pl/haiku.php#48>, accessed April 13, 2012.

206 See <http://haiku-jul.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2010-02-16T07:04:00-08:00&max-results=10&start=10&by-date=false>, accessed June 13, 2012.

207 See R. Császár, *Fusion of Zen and Cubism in E. E. Cummings's Poetry. Haiku Pictures in Cubist Frame*, Saarbrücken, 2008.

l(a  
 le  
 af  
 fa  
 ll  
 s)  
 one  
 l  
 iness<sup>208</sup>

Cummings' text is practically untranslatable. "The poem only says this (after restoring the "normal" word order): 'loneliness (a leaf falls).' That's it."<sup>209</sup> At the same time, however, it conveys the leaf's downward motion, its spinning and turning upside down. It also contains a variety of linguistic footholds," provoking semantic inquiries (the prominent "one," meaningful in the context of loneliness and "oneness," the solitary "l" resembling number one, but possibly also alluding to French articles "la," "le"). However, the decoding of meanings takes time and, despite the simplicity of the message, a great deal of intellectual effort.

Cummings's un-haiku-like, "visual-verbal verse machinery"<sup>210</sup> is also clearly apparent in the text below. The image presented in it perfectly accords with the iconographic patterns of haiku (and, for example, *sumi-e*), but its construction precludes the momentary perception characteristic of haiku:

!blac  
 k  
 agains  
 t  
 (whi)  
 te sky  
 ?t  
 rees whic  
 h fr  
 om droppe

---

208 As quoted in S. Barańczak, 'e. e. cummings: instynkt, ironia, indywidualizm' [e. e. cummings: instinct, irony, individualism], in E. E. Cummings, *150 wierszy* [150 Poems], comp, transl. and introduction by S. Barańczak, Kraków, 1994, p. 7. See also R. Császár, *Fusion of Zen and Cubism*.

209 S. Barańczak, *e. e. cummings*.

210 Some of the poet's technically simpler poems are indeed much closer to Japanese miniatures – see, for example, the text 'D-re-A-mi-N-gl-Y' (R. Császár, *Fusion of Zen and Cubism*, pp. 36–7).

d  
,  
le  
af  
  
a::go  
  
e  
s wh  
IriI  
n  
  
.g<sup>211</sup>

Against this background, the practices of Polish artists turn out to be very simple, sometimes to the point of being mechanical (as in the case of Biela). The American poet's "verbo-graphies,"<sup>212</sup> which balance the visual and linguistic message, generate sense in various linguistic and graphic ways. Polish authors do not try such experiments, thus remaining closer to the perceptual patterns of haiku, but, on the other hand, also risking the viewer's boredom.

Haiku-like visual poetry, the one published online and the "paper" one, devoted surprisingly little attention to phonostylistics and sound in general (after all, the internet is the perfect medium for presenting multimedia works). I mention texts of this kind as an astonishingly marginal current of haiku's "materializations."

#### B.4. Book Covers

Covers of haiku and "haiku" volumes display surprisingly numerous similarities. Even if they did not flaunt titles suggesting a contemplative-lyrical content, readers could easily spot in bookshops publications that interest them. Haikuists and their publishers have adopted a handful of fundamental cover design strategies. Their covers usually include:

- Japanese characters,<sup>213</sup>
- photographs of nature<sup>214</sup> or reproductions of paintings, graphics, drawings from the Far East or echoing Occidental styles, depicting natural motifs (typically a shape against a uniform background),<sup>215</sup>

211 From the collection *50 POEMS* (1940), as quoted in E. E. Cummings, *150 wierszy*, p. 209.

212 See B. Śniecikowska, *Słowo – obraz – dźwięk*, pp. 79, 83–4, 88; B. Śniecikowska, <http://sensualnosc.bn.org.pl/pl/articles/slowografia-657/>, accessed June 24, 2016.

213 See, for example, S. Cichowicz, *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku?*; U. Zybura, *Haiku*; J. Tylus, *Haiku*, Kalisz, 2004; G. T. Dziwota, *Haiku*; K. Agams, *Chorał kniei*, Kraków, 1996.

214 L. L. Szkutnik, *W konwencji haiku*, Warszawa, 2011; J. S. Pasierb, *Haiku żarnowieckie*; J. S. Pasierb, *Morze, obłok i kamień*; A. Tchórzewski, *Haiku*; A. Szczepaniak, *Drzenie cięciwy*; E. Biela, *Haiku*, Warszawa, 2000.

215 See, for example, H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*; A. Regulski, *Haiku, czyli zaśpiewy wyobraźni*; W. Jaworski, *Kropla. Haiku. Wiersze nowe i dawne* [A Drop.

- only letters of the title and the author's name, often gold, silver or embossed without additional colour. In such cases, covers are typically hardbound, highly textured (canvas, imitation leather, etc.).

The iconographic choices made by authors seem obvious. As it happens, a similar idea can lead to a wide variety of executions. For example, the cover of the posthumous poetry collection of Janusz Stanisław Pasierb, *Morze, obłok i kamień* [The Sea, Cloud, and Stone], features... a colour photograph of the sea, stone, and clouds. It is a very nice (which probably is the most fitting way of describing this compositionally and technically satisfactory depiction) photograph, where the illustratively literal treatment of the title will discourage rather than intrigue a potential reader. By contrast, with the black-and-white photograph by Monika Kocot, Agnieszka Szczepaniak's cover of *Drzenie cięciwy* seems almost haptic, porous, intriguingly unobvious (probably depicting a tree trunk, but is it not an illusion?). This is, naturally, a more intriguing method of a specific visual externalization of the volume's semantics (and style!).<sup>216</sup>

\*

The practices of poets, book illustrators and publishers demonstrate the intensity and variety of Polish artists' efforts to bring native haiku into the orbit of visual

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Haiku. New and Old Poems], Kraków, 1998; J. Stańczakowa, *Japońska wiśnia: haiku dla Michi Tsukada* [Japanese Cherry: Haiku for Michi Tsukada], Warszawa, 1992; *Pory roku w polskim haiku*, selected by A. Dembończyk, K. Kokot, Poznań, 2015; *Dajmy grać świerszczom. Antologia haiku o zwierzętach*, selected by K. Kokot, Poznań, 2013.

216 See also the section dealing with photography in collections of haiku poetry.

<p>Zycia ma nie lam nie gwałt miernemu gdy lichsze się jego dzieła</p>	<p>Drowięc się nie waż a gorzeć się nie drow że się odmowa</p>			
<p>Zły ze mnie sługa lecz nim piwem zostanę szarżam stragan</p>	<p>Z tłumowem się pełnog gdy nadermic oczerść to co szałczanie</p>			
<p>Na tram się przesiadli gdy chosn bliźniac spowatrzał słobcy przez miesiąc</p>	<p>Dowcipu ostrzem liczta bryłę nurkora czy kłui mnie dostregł</p>	<p>Mr. Lech Konopiński Poznań, ul. Mickiewicza 4/5 POLAND</p>		
<p>Rzeczta zgłodniała smędnęła w głuchzi swy bodecia do kramowych drzałki</p>	<p>Kty mnie wyśmiali na wlości przywiość słona karwały</p>		<p>Nasz świat się zepuł jajogłowi stanosic chcąc prawa plibno</p>	<p>Rzekł tymś ende kark z dybami zbitany a z nogi kalc</p>

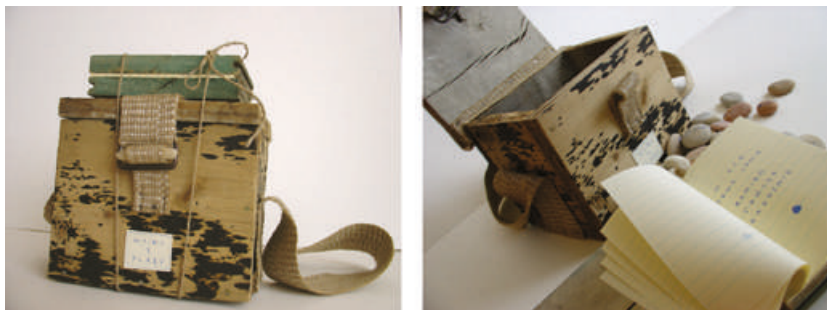
  

			<p>Doszeć się bery kiedy białak cześć sprzeła zostanie z niezam</p>	<p>Wierząc ofery gdy wleża zkojęców zdraźni jest wierna wiotnym</p>
			<p>Odrzucać bliźni dokonalu rnych zalet wartości ukrytą</p>	<p>Chcę wydać wszystkie na postacie w wymi fantez na postawiewo</p>
<p>Zyskać mnie licha lecz choć nie jom poznoście karmić się pycha</p>	<p>Las mieni się stopo dlatego nie czyni ełgry dlań swą drogą</p>			

<p>Idon zera kto mu w rękę da wstęp tego popera</p>	<p>Rozmają śmieki lecz nie licz na twarżikli wyrazamiokół</p>	<p>Przed zycim koczem sare jefana kuc kaiz półki gorce</p>	<p>U krosa wiosem jak psułek bogate trunki twoi nioce</p>
<p>Gdzie tkwi przycyna że na szczycie chwalcicie życie w dolinach</p>	<p>Klas wydegnęły na Parosie w szkie jone (i sie smozia)</p>	<p>Na złość młodzieży stary piowik w cukarni przy babce leży</p>	<p>Plan kark swój magne do obrzoły lub wloz bo nie ma praznosc</p>
<p>Nie go nie trzymaj więc przywał do swych przywał jak do sekla filimak</p>	<p>Na co nam koczem kiedy koczem odlaty by znowi dawa</p>	<p>Prawdą a Bogiem w dobrozycie jest życie bardzo ubogie</p>	<p>Na nie postacie obłuda zym tuda w klym na warty</p>
<p>Uważaj ślępcze bo zkożczy w tym ogrozie wszystko podopiecz</p>	<p>Nam w ten woszczy owadobowczy przyklatnia jak wale wrym</p>	<p>Nawet po smacie nie unikaj ryzyka życiem się nacieta</p>	<p>Nie martw się niczym za głuchy do on prochty pawo gorczy</p>
<p>Kto drabów wygrzył we współnotach się mieda jak w kłacie tygrys</p>	<p>Starciey tuda na koch ludu nie buda niej stawy wloz</p>	<p>Wielkość prawdziwa swazy chwały dla mych pragnie zdobywać</p>	<p>Nie wzdaj się kler to głow tuda stawa nieprzynoza</p>
<p>Gdy las ich zeltkie siodowga i lajaki współżyją świetnie</p>	<p>Wyżni woszczy z dawa razaj w bogosy ogony swoje matroz</p>	<p>Modli się pleban by apostoł szofł prosto do brany sieta</p>	<p>Strazy to zarza że się wiewerza urzadzona na dzieł smontara</p>
<p>Kto się wywyższa temu stawa w awanosa przypada niuza</p>	<p>Sosnuta to sprawa gdy korek się lakami na głuchy karwał</p>	<p>Spójez w imierci lico i boezost przejdzi z wioj nicole granica</p>	<p>Przed wybomni polityk tworzy miły marnąz mami</p>

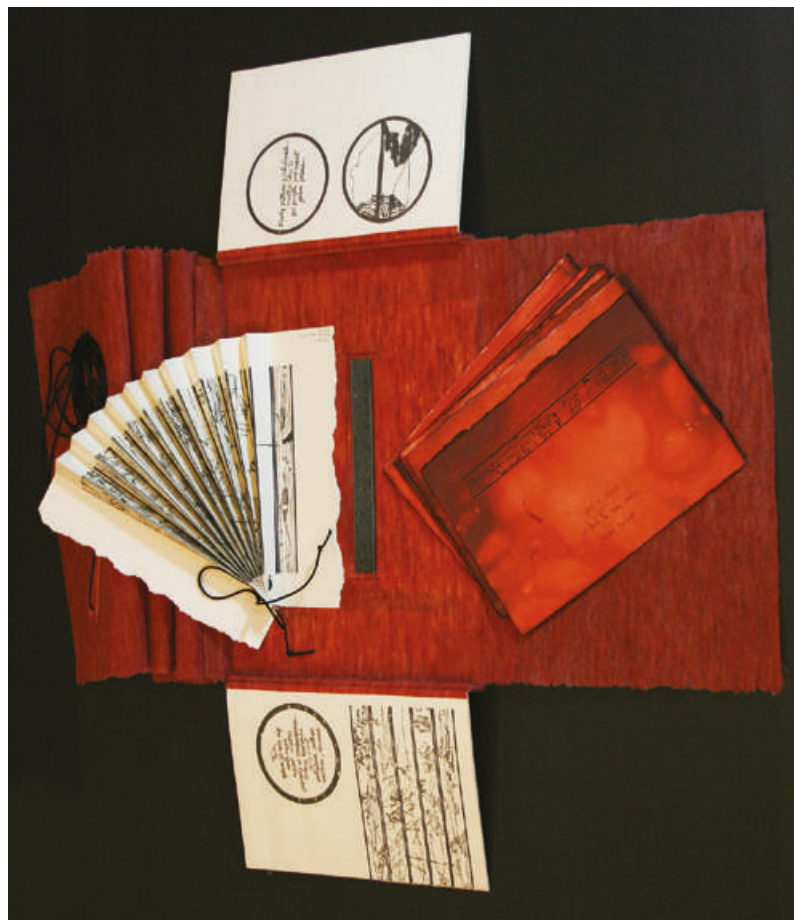
Illustration 37. Pages of Lech Konopiński's collection *Haiku bez liku*, designed by Jarosław Mugaj (Poznań: Wielkopolska Agencja Literacka WAL, 2007)



**Illustration 38 a, b.** Katarzyna Szpillkowska (Samosiej), 'Haiku z plaży' [Beach Haiku], photo Katarzyna Szpillkowska (Samosiej) (reproduced by kind permission of the artist)



**Illustration 38 c.** Franciszek Bunsch, 'Motyle' [Butterflies], photo Franciszek Bunsch (reproduced by kind permission of the artist)



**Illustration 39.** Marek Gajewski, 'Haiku III,' 2000, linoleum, hand-coloured paper, boiled, canvas, wood, leather; print-run of 1 copy, photo Marek Gajewski (reproduced by kind permission of the artist)



**Illustration 40 a.** Fragment of a *haibun* "scroll" by Lidia Rozmus, *W podróży* [Travelling]. Evanston: Deep North Press, 2005.  
**Illustration 40 b.** Fragment of Bogdan DREADY Prawdzik's collection *Dni spokojnych szukatem o zmroku* [I Sought Quiet Days at Nightfall], graphic design and illustrations by P. Narołewska-Taborowska. Łódź: Kwadratura, n.d. – single-leaf book unfolded into a quasi-scroll (red on the reverse)



arts. While there is no shortage of graphic misunderstandings here, numerous works and ideas are highly creative and simply excellent. The key to the originality and expressiveness of depictions is the analytical, critical, dialogical exploration of the themes and techniques of East-Asian art and the search within one's own cultural tradition for elements that are somehow compatible (or in an interesting dialogue) with the Other.

## IV. Beyond Two Dimensions

The haiku-related visuality sometimes pushes the limits of the page, demanding three-dimensional completion and concretization. At this point, I am interested in the transfer of haiku beyond the two dimensions of the page, related to the very intensive process of incorporating this poetry into the sphere of visual arts.

### 1. Haiku and Artists' Books

To begin with, I would like to focus on several initiatives in the area of the so-called book arts – artefacts unavailable to a wider audience, executed by hand in a small number of copies.<sup>217</sup> What happens to haiku in such artistic incarnations? What is the cultural underpinning of these activities?

Katarzyna Szpilkowska's (known also as Samosiej) assemblage 'Haiku z plaży' [Beach Haiku]<sup>218</sup> is made up of a dilapidated wooden box, oval stones with single words written on them, and a small-lined notebook bound in thick boards. The notebook consists of 19 poems, each with an irregular ink dot underneath (which is also present on the interleaves separating the pages with the texts). These expressive, fingerprint-like blots can be viewed as an Occidental reference to Japanese calligraphy (possibly to the *ensō* circle painted in a single brushstroke). Finally, it seems that the blue colour of the ink is meaningful – both the blots and letters (the handwritten majuscule that exceeds the lines) appear to be a bit clumsy,

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217 The books discussed here are part of the collection of Muzeum Książki Artystycznej (Book Art Museum) in Łódź.

218 See <http://www.kolekcja.bookart.pl/info/viewpub/tid/4/pid/317>, accessed April 25, 2014. Own technique, handwriting. The book has been shown at the following exhibitions: "Contemporary Polish Book Arts," Tokyo (October 21 – November 19, 2011), "Książki artystów Polski Środkowej zgłoszone do kolekcji »Polska książka artystyczna z przełomu XX i XXI wieku«" ["Books by Artists of Central Poland submitted to the collection 'Polish Book Art from the Turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries'"] (Library of the University of Łódź – June 2 – June 30 2009, The National Library in Warszawa – 20 October – 20 November 2009). See <http://www.kolekcja.bookart.pl/info/viewpub/tid/1/pid/6> (accessed April 25, 2014); <http://www.kolekcja.bookart.pl/info/viewpub/tid/2/pid/16> (accessed April 25, 2014); <http://www.kolekcja.bookart.pl/info/viewpub/tid/2/pid/15> (accessed April 25, 2014).

schoolboy-like. The connection between the poems and words made of pebbles soon becomes clear: the miniatures were made from lexemes written on pebbles. Some poems – full of tenderness for the world, testifying to attempts at empathizing with other beings and at the same time linguistically refreshing – are close to prototypical Western haiku (“KAMIEN TRWA. / MORZE / ODDYCHA / NIEBIESKO,” “PTAK PŁAŚA – / WIATR / PEŁZA / BEZTROSKO [THE STONE LINGERS. / THE SEA / BREATHE / BLUE,” “THE BIRD IS ROMPING ABOUT / THE WIND / IS CREEPING / LIGHT-HEARTEDLY”). Some of them, however, are evidently inconsistent, as if they were created according to a slightly modified (repetitive syntactic units) Dadaist method of pulling words, or rather stones with words, out of a post-avant-garde hat<sup>219</sup> (“SZUMNIE PARSKA / UŚMIECH / RYBA TRWA / PIESZCZOTLIWIE,” “UŚMIECH / ODDYCHA / ZIARNIŚCIE / RYBA / TRWA / SZUMNIE”). [“SNORTING SONOROUSLY / SMILE / FISH LINGERS / TENDERLY” / “SMILE / BREATHE GRAINILY / FISH / LINGERS / SONOROUSLY”].

While the relationship between the poems and the objects juxtaposed with them is not obvious, a certain semantic affinity remains apparent. The composition holds the viewer’s attention for a long time. Szpilkowska manages to strike a balance between the strongly sensual and the intellectual. Her assemblage is indeed linked to haiku and Zen aesthetics via the liking for commonplace things bearing traces of wear and tear, drawn from nature. The title haiku has been visualized, concretized and “sensualised” by natural ready-mades (pebbles) and simple objects from the human world.<sup>220</sup> The author combines East-Asian inspirations with familiar but at the same time de-automatized attributes of everyday life and childhood (notebook, ink). And the ability to look at the world in a non-judgmental, fresh, and child-like way is precisely the key premise of Zen. The cultural diversity is also visible in the poems’ poetics, oscillating between contemplative simplicity and subtle nonsense.

A completely different way of concretizing haiku can be found in Marek Gajewski’s work. His ‘Haiku III’<sup>221</sup> is a composition prepared with extraordinary

219 There is also an analogy to the American party game ‘Haikubes’ (a set of 63 dice for composing haiku, each with a word or a short phrase written on it) and to the computer program Hitch Haiku (which generates random choices).

220 The travel-related aspect of haiku and *haibun* remains clear here (an old box / small suitcase – perhaps brought from a journey in time and space, the notebook – a holiday journal?).

221 See [http://www.vebsoft.pl/mgajewski/display\\_gallery.php?SectionID=4&GalleryID==3&Lang=PL](http://www.vebsoft.pl/mgajewski/display_gallery.php?SectionID=4&GalleryID==3&Lang=PL), accessed July 29, 2012. The book was made in the years 1985–2009 with a print-run of a single copy, and was shown, among other places, at the exhibition “Contemporary Polish Book Art” in Tokyo and at exhibitions at the National Library and the Library of the University of Lodz. During the 1970s (!), the artist worked on *Haiku I* but dissatisfied with the result, destroyed the composition (which he made in one copy). Subsequently, Gajewski started preparing ‘Haiku II,’ yet when this work too did not live up to his expectations, he used some of its matrices to make *Haiku III*. As the artist admits, he has been interested, already in the 1970s,

meticulousness and great care for the material. The work resembles a small portable triptych, enveloped in red-dyed interlining. The side panels of the “altar” are made from thick sheets of cream paper (three double leaves on each side) on which two short Buddhist meditation texts and one haiku are written.<sup>222</sup> The work also includes the artist’s linocuts – graphics occupying the middle ground between abstraction and figuration, arranged in stripes or inscribed in thick black circles (tondos constituting another reminder of *ensō*?). These compositions bring to mind at the same time East-Asian ink landscape painting and, at least at first glance, strip compositions of Egyptian reliefs or... comic books.

The middle section of Gajewski’s composition consists of a fan adorned with linocut strips known from the side panels of the “triptych,” an oblong plate tucked away in a small recess – a matrix (one of many used in ‘Haiku III’), along with eight loose leaves carrying the haiku of Bashō, Buson, and Issa translated by Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda. Gajewski used hand-painted, boiled, thick paper with slightly ragged edges. The coloured paper (monochromatic, softly spreading colour patches) seems to hold hidden (fogged?) landscapes, demanding only a stronger figurative accent. Gajewski opts for a twofold accent – textual and strictly graphic. He constructs intriguing horizontal arrangements: at the bottom of the pages he transcribes haiku poems in a neat, but in no way orientalist hand, at the top, he prints the already familiar strips of linocuts. When viewed yet another time, these compositions assume an additional dimension: they seem to be an original, Occidental variation on Japanese calligraphy (the linear notation inspires attempts to decipher the ornament).<sup>223</sup> At the same time, abstract graphics begin to play the role of unsettling – because incomprehensible – *haiga* illustrations.

Complementing the rich composition is a text about “The Great Man,” whose “name I Don’t Know” – a poem with a distinctly Zenist/Daoist twist written (hidden) on the back wall of the “altar.”

The composition crafted by the artist may seem very distant from haiku’s simplicity and traditional Japanese aesthetics – and from those elements of Occidental culture that share certain affinities with them. Assuredly, Gajewski’s work reflects the strong belief on the part of Western Orientophile artists that art inspired by the Far East must have strong support in the “noble” physicality that relies on unique materials, generating strong visual and haptic experiences (even if the touch is

in Grochowiak’s poetry and Eastern spirituality (information obtained from the author).

222 None of the texts bear the author’s name, the note describing the work provides only the authors’ names or pen names – Bashō (incorrectly spelt “Basko”), Buson, Issa, Rajneesh (Osho), Seung Sahn, and Gajewski himself – without assigning individual literary works to them.

223 A possible intertext here may be the haiku anthology from which the texts were drawn (*Haiku*, [1983]), published with great attention to graphic design, where calligraphy served as a sort of an illustration. See the section ‘Anthologies’ in this part of the book.

somehow mediated by sight). However, 'Haiku III' is a coherent, well-thought-out composition (executed over the course of twenty years!), deeply meditative. The carefully selected poetry and prose works are unified – despite the centuries separating their creation – by the common contemplative basis. The visual level is more eclectic, yet it combines techniques and forms that are close to the Western artist (triptych, strip composition, tondo) with Eastern inspirations. The name of this lyrical miniature becomes a synecdoche (*pars pro toto*) for a wider verbal-graphic composition, constructed on similar aesthetic and philosophical foundations. Despite all the parallels, it is hard to resist the impression that the work contrived in such a way loses any connection with the “flash-like” quality instrumental to haiku (which, naturally, is not tantamount to complete creative spontaneity).<sup>224</sup>

The art books described above demonstrate that transferring haiku beyond the two dimensions of the page may involve various re-contextualizations of this poetry. The creators go beyond Japanese genre conventions, attempting to concretize miniatures of Eastern origin by combining them with familiar forms of their culture and sensory experience. Despite everything, these works may, however, remain very close to the “haiku spirit.”

It would be worthwhile juxtaposing both artists' books with “haiku” in the title with the work by Franciszek Bunsch 'Motyle' [Butterflies],<sup>225</sup> simpler in terms of composition and less homogeneous. It is a one-sided printed/written accordion book – when folded it becomes a small hardcover booklet – but is not an ordinary *leporello* (a strip of paper folded in numerous places). With the geometric shapes glued to the edges of the pages (which as a result are extended), the book becomes three-dimensional when unfolded. Among the colourful figures bordering on abstraction and figuration (butterflies? a spider's web?) haiku and haiku-esque texts were placed. The form may allude to verbal-pictorial *shi-ga-jiku*. Aside from haiku, the composition also includes poems that do not have much in common with Japanese miniatures and humorous “new genres” (entomological and social rather than literary): the names of “butterflies” scattered across the extended surface of the leaves – “noble little bigot,” “blue little tamper” and others. The multi-formity, graphic and genological heterogeneity, and, finally, the book's unusual, “jagged” format strongly draw the viewer's attention away from the Japanese-inspired lyrical miniatures. Visual forms far removed from Zen aesthetics shift the focus from poems to graphic oddities, disrupting the synergy of haiku and alleged *haiga*. Most likely, however, Bunsch, differently from Szpilowska and Gajewski,

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224 See Part 1 of the book.

225 Executed in 2007, print run of two copies (variants), linocut, typewriter, printer. See <http://www.kolekcja.bookart.pl/info/viewpub/tid/4/pid/120>, accessed June 10, 2012. The book was presented at the exhibition “Contemporary Polish Book Art” in Tokyo (October 21 – November 19, 2011) and at the exhibition of Polish art book from the collection of the Book Art Museum in April 2010 at the Library of the University of Lodz.

did not want to place haiku at the centre of his work (as evidenced, for example, by the title). A search for deep transcultural relations was probably not the artist's intention either.

A counterpoint to the described artbooks may be offered by a composition of the haiku poet and *sumi-e* painter Lidia Rozmus<sup>226</sup> – still two-dimensional, yet clearly annexing the space. *W Podróży* [Travelling]<sup>227</sup> is a book published by a “regular” publishing house, available on the book market. Still, I consider it an experimental artefact. In common with many Japanese artists, Rozmus is the author of all the aspects of this rich literary and graphic work. The volume is encased in an elegant, oriental little “box” – a small (10.9 x 22.2 cm) cardboard case in austere colours, depicting, among other things, expressive, formally pure *ensō*. The book is in the form of a long, two-sided strip of layered paper folded into accordion pleats (*leporello*). It can be easily unfolded – like Japanese scrolls (or... precisely *leporello*). It is an artefact intended to be read and viewed in equal measure, as the visual and literary layers seamlessly blend, complementing each other.<sup>228</sup>

The volume's title evokes associations with travelling *haibuns* executed by classic haijins, at times pictorially enriched.<sup>229</sup> Its “pages” carry prose pieces dealing with various places and events. Prose is interwoven with haiku poems that are thematically related to it – as in Japanese *haibuns*, where epic passages illuminate the inspiration behind individual poems. In Rozmus' work, the text is complemented by asymmetrically placed black-and-white photographs. An additional graphic element is the expressively painted *sumi-e* running along the entire “scroll,” forming a strip of various hues of black and grey, with a clear trace of a thin brush (resembling an electrocardiogram). The photos accompanying the texts usually depict – in the manner of classical haiku and numerous paintings of

226 For Rozmus' artworks, see, for example, <http://www.brooksbookshaiku.com/LidiaRozmus/haiga.html>, accessed May 13, 2014.

227 L. Rozmus, *W podróży*, Evanston, 2005.

228 To some extent, Bogdan DREADY Prawdzik's volume (B. DREADY Prawdzik, *Dni spokojnych szukałem o zmroku*, designed and illustrated by P. Narolewska-Taborowska, Łódź, n.d.) could be described in a similar way. The verses (making references to haiku, but quite distant from prototypical realizations of the genre) are accompanied by abstract, monochrome or two- or three-colour artworks. One of the leaves – which in the closed book stands out with the intense red of its reverse – unfolds into a long strip (quasi-scroll) replete with poems and pictures, which can be analysed both in the context of a semi-abstract landscape painting and expressive *sumi-e*. In turn, the volume by Ewa Tomaszewska, *Zwoje podróże (Haibun)* [Traveling Scrolls (*Haibun*)], (Kraków, 2012), is a composition far more literary than visual. The title “scrolls” take the form of an “ordinary” book, containing primarily text pages (as in classic *haibun*: prose describing the journey and recording reflections inspired by the journey and haiku poems). The book is decorated with Ilona Sawicka's black-and-white works verging on abstraction.

229 See footnote 28 in this part of the book.

old Japanese masters – details from the natural world, most frequently strongly highlighted single shapes.<sup>230</sup> Thus in Rozmus' *haibunga*,<sup>231</sup> *haibun* forms interfuse with photographic and painterly *haiga*. While the author follows in the footsteps of old Japanese artists, her innovations are at the same time insignificant and significant: next to the *sumi-e* she places photographs, while the unfolded concertina of leaves evokes Eastern associations, despite the fact it is not a rarity in editorial practices of the Occident. The haiku themselves – just like the graphic dimension of *W podróży* – quite faithfully follow Oriental precepts but are far from being Polish-language imitations of foreign texts.<sup>232</sup>

While *W podróży*, a work that among those described so far is the purest instance of the genre, can be defined as an active continuation of old forms,<sup>233</sup> books by Szpilkowska, Gajewski, and Bunsch escape such an unequivocal qualification. Naturally, this does not mean that three-dimensionality must automatically generate formal richness, but it certainly entails greater heterogeneity of compositions (especially if the artist decides to use the assemblage technique) along with their more multisensory perception. These works are somehow bolder, carrying a greater risk of misunderstanding, and more uncompromising. 'Motyle' is a loose artistic variation on Eastern motifs. Gajewski's composition is an attempt to supplement haiku (also literally!) with graphic forms as well as philosophical and literary contexts that evoke various associations with this art. Szpilkowska, as it were, translates haiku into objects and then reassembles them in verse form. The ontic status of the three art books in question is in a way parallel to the material existence of classical haiku and *haiga* compositions (a whole made up of words and visual forms existing in one copy / few copies), which, of course, is not sufficient to talk about manifestations of transculturality. By contrast, the transcultural approximation is evidenced by the coherent, creative fusing of artistic – and non-artistic – forms derived from different cultural universes. Undoubtedly, the necessary basis is an in-depth knowledge of the Other (who in some respects is the Similar One) as well as... a clear distribution of emphasis (unlike in the above-discussed 'Motyle'). As a result, it is possible to coherently record the experience of the Western man via modified forms of Oriental origin.

230 Interestingly enough, Rozmus did not want to "pollute" the scroll with excessive (from the perspective of the Eastern pre-texts) paratextuality – she printed acknowledgements and a glossary on a separate leaf, folded in half, enclosed to the volume.

231 The artist refers to her compositions as *haibun-ga*. See H. S. Kreis, 'Od autora,' in H. S. Kreis, *Strumień żółtego piasku*, p. 8; see also S. Addiss, *Interactions of Text and Image in Haiga*, p. 225.

232 Within a strictly defined genre framework, modern epiphany is carefully introduced, e.g. through the de-automatization of perception. Selected poems of Rozmus are discussed in Part 5 of the monograph.

233 See S. Balbus, 'Stylizacja i zjawiska pokrewne w procesie historycznoliterackim,' *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1983, No. 2, p. 145.

## 2. Exhibitions with “Haiku” in the Title

Numerous painting and installation exhibitions held in Poland in recent years and featuring “haiku” in their title are a phenomenon that also calls for closer examination.<sup>234</sup> Artists, museologists, and gallerists sense a very strong visual potential in Japanese poetic miniatures. On occasion, juxtapositions with haiku are made *ex post facto* by the decision of curators searching for transcultural affinities where

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234 The following are selected exhibitions (not discussed in detail in this book):

- ‘Strumień żółtego piasku’ [Stream of Yellow Sand], The Manggha Center of Japanese Art and Technology, September 2001 (haiku: Fr. Hieronim Stanisław Kreis, calligraphy: Riseki Hashimoto, sumi-e painting and bonsai art – exhibition description: H. S. Kreis, *Od autora*, pp. 7–10).
- Paula Rettinger, ‘Haiku,’ Cień Klub, Krakow, 2003.
- Janina Kraupe, ‘Haiku,’ Artidotuum Gallery, Kraków, May 2007 (see <http://artidotuum.pl/wystawy/?-h3-janina-kraupe-h3-haiku-.78>, accessed May 16, 2014).
- Lech Żurkowski, ‘Przekaz’ [Message], Stara Prochownia Gallery, Warszawa, July – September, 2008.
- Wystawa Haiku [The Haiku Exhibition], Japanese Language and Culture Centre in Łódź, Łódź, 2010.
- ‘Haiku i Wachlarze’ [Haiku and Fans], Branch No. 29 of the City Public Library, Lublin, October/November, 2010. – Włodzimierz Witalis Tyc, ‘Podszepty monsunu albo haiku o zakochanych’ [Monsoon’s Whispers or Haiku about Lovers], Chłodna 20 Gallery, Suwałki, November 2010 – January 2011.
- ‘Sen o Japonii’ [Dream of Japan] (haiku by Dorota Pyra, photos by Artur Łazarz, Henryk Wieniawski Philharmonic Orchestra in Lublin in Lublin, August – September 2011 (see M. Wielgosz, ‘Medytacyjny odbiór rzeczywistości w polskiej literaturze i fotografii,’ [Meditative Reception of Reality in Polish Literature and Photography], in *Obrazy dookoła świata* [Paintings around the World], eds. J. Bielska-Krawczyk, S. Kołos, M. Mateja, Toruń, 2013, pp. 305–307, 311).
- Lidia Rozmus, ‘Sumi-e i *haiga*’ [Sumi-e and *Haiga*], ARTzona of The C. K. Norwid Culture Centre, Kraków, May 2015 (see [http://www.artzona.okn.edu.pl/?d=czytaj&m=projects&id=115&W\\_podrozy\\_z\\_haiku\\_haiga\\_i\\_sumi-e](http://www.artzona.okn.edu.pl/?d=czytaj&m=projects&id=115&W_podrozy_z_haiku_haiga_i_sumi-e), accessed July 31, 2016).

It is also worth mentioning two initiatives of a slightly different nature: HiQ – “an audiovisual performance project combining the ideas of Japanese haiku poetry, contemporary visual arts, and intuitive musical improvisation” (<http://hiq.com.pl/#>, accessed on November 19, 2013), and Aleksander Janicki’s installation *Haiku*, executed in conjunction the centennial of Czesław Miłosz’s birth in front of the Main Building of the National Museum in Kraków. The work consisted of “three spheres (each from 1.5 to 2.5 m in size) made from steel and painted white, with a structure resembling a crumpled piece of paper, set on small grey pebbles resembling the surface of a Zen garden.” ([http://www.muzeum.krakow.pl/NewsItem.107.0.html?&no\\_cache=1&tx\\_tnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=4062&cHash=7808cff938517a7cdccf51a76024200f](http://www.muzeum.krakow.pl/NewsItem.107.0.html?&no_cache=1&tx_tnews%5Btt_news%5D=4062&cHash=7808cff938517a7cdccf51a76024200f), accessed April 25, 2014). See also A. Olędzka-Frybesowa, ‘Przeciw czemu protestują haiku,’ *Teksty Drugie*, 1994, No. 2, pp. 116–7.

these seem to be the least expected. This gives rise to unexpected encounters of very heterogeneous works, which for various – not always obvious – reasons are associated with the poetics of Japanese verses.<sup>235</sup>

The largest Polish haiku-related exhibition project was the show ‘Czy można przesadzać kwiaty rzepaku? Twórczość mistrzów haiku’ [Is it Possible to Transplant Rape Flowers? The Work of Haiku Masters] at the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warszawa (15 February – 15 March 2002) – a unique undertaking aimed not only at bringing to light the convergence of forms but also at creating a space for transculturalism. The exhibition included translations of classical Japanese haiku and verses of Polish poets (Stanisław Cichowicz, Janusz Stanisław Pasierb, Jerzy Harasymowicz, Hieronim Stanisław Kreis) along with paintings and installations by Polish artists or ones connected with Poland – overall, almost 160 paintings and graphics by Adam Bunsch, Jerzy Stajuda, Teresa Pałowska, and Koji Kamoji.<sup>236</sup> Accordingly, works from different periods and universes were gathered together and invited to engage in a mutual dialogue. The visual artworks of individual authors were also arbitrarily assigned to a particular season (a vital trait of haiku). It is a situation somewhat envisioned by Wolfgang Iser<sup>237</sup> – artefacts that are not necessarily aware of each other suddenly engage in a conversation.

At the heart of classical haiku lay the perception of reality – especially of the natural world – in terms close to Zen philosophy. Łukasz Kossowski, the curator and author of the concept of the exhibition, asserts that this contemplative way of experiencing the world does not have to emanate from deep Buddhist roots, especially in the modern day:

For the four artists participating in our exhibition, it is the contact with living nature, treated as a Mystery put in front of the artist, that seems to be the crucial source of inspiration. And the characteristic attitude towards nature is attentiveness and empathy. In Bunsch’s work, this will take the form of an exploration of nature’s microcosm. For Teresa Pałowska or Koji Kamoji, it is the recording of afterimages of specific events. For Stajuda – a contemplation of quiet landscapes.<sup>238</sup>

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235 It is symptomatic that the term haiku is used to describe musical works combining native and Oriental inspirations, but not necessarily closely related to haiku poetry itself – e.g. A. M. Jopek, M. Ozon, *Haiku*, Music, 2011; Brzóska (D. Brzósiewicz), Emce Kwadrat (M. Adamowicz), Sójka (S. Sojka), Samplaire (W. Chołasiński), *Haiku fristajl*, Polskie Radio, 2006. For haiku’s influence on works of Igor Stravinsky, see J. W. Hokenson, *Haiku as a Western Genre*, p. 707.

236 Information based on ‘Nowa wystawa w Muzeum Literatury’ [New Exhibition at the Museum of Literature], *Biuletyn Kulturalny*, February 28, 2002, [www.msz.gov.pl/files/file\\_library/42/20020225p\\_6978.doc](http://www.msz.gov.pl/files/file_library/42/20020225p_6978.doc), accessed October 30, 2007.

237 Iser’s idea of transculturality is discussed in more detail in ‘Introduction.’

238 Ł. Kossowski, *Czy można przesadzać kwiaty rzepaku? Twórczość mistrzów haiku (2002)*, brochure accompanying the exhibition at the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warszawa, February 15 – March 15, 2002, Warszawa, 2002, n.p.



It seems that the diagnoses concerning interdisciplinary relationships are likewise correct:

An interval, a moment of silence between lines, plays a hugely important role in haiku. In painting and graphic arts, this role is played by the “empty,” unfilled space of a composition. This is a field left for the viewer to concretize. The rawness of materials (unprimed canvas in Pagowska’s paintings, simple plywood in Kamoji’s compositions, tracing papers, Japanese or handmade papers in the works of Stajuda and Bunsch) fully accords with haiku’s formal simplicity and “roughness.”<sup>239</sup>

The juxtapositions of paintings, graphics, and poems (and, in some measure, the artists themselves) made by the curator reveal vital parallels between arts and cultures. Interdisciplinary links here include: meditative focus on detail, absorption in everyday life, and “ordinariness,” focus on the material (also in its raw state), the affirmation of emptiness, narrowing down of the colour palette.<sup>240</sup> Each artist subtly and uniquely demonstrated links between haiku, Zen, and contemporary visual arts.

Bunsch’s colour artworks – inspired by *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, focused on single objects, faithful to old Japanese materials and techniques – make clear reference to the aesthetics that has become haiku’s underpinning. Likewise, the linking of the artist’s works to spring does not raise any major objections (especially as the exhibition includes graphics depicting flowering apple branches).<sup>241</sup> Kossowski writes about Bunsch:

Following in the footsteps of the masters of Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints and using its traditional technology – printing with watercolours based on a starch binder – he discovered the down-to-earth microcosm of nature, changing and throbbing with life, in tune with the rhythm of the seasons. Using different types of paper, he created numerous colour and textural variants of the motif, bringing out the richness of moods and penetrating its symbolic essence. These small masterpieces are also an overt manifestation of East-Asian aesthetics with its fundamental principles: compositional asymmetry, the active role of blank space, and the general principle of presenting a fragment of nature always as representative of the universe.<sup>242</sup>

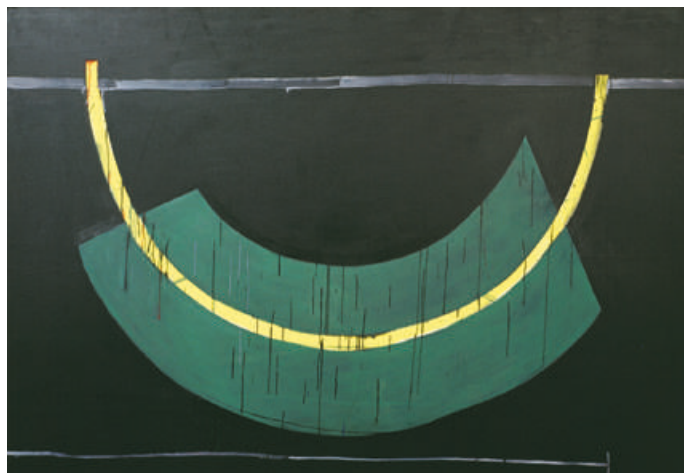
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239 Ł. Kossowski, *Czy można...*, n.p.

240 See also M. Hniedziewicz, ‘Haiku w poezji i w obrazach’ [Haiku in Poetry and Pictures], *Pismo Krytyki Artystycznej*, 2001, No. 35, <http://free.art.pl/pokazpismo/nr35/tekst3.html>, accessed October 30, 2007.

241 It should be kept in mind that Bunsch also painted Christian religious scenes (quite distant from Eastern aesthetics) and wrote plays dealing with similar themes. Such a fusion of interests is the hallmark of many Polish haikuists (exemplified by the work of Catholic priests, such as Janusz Stanisław Pasierb and Hieronim Stanisław Kreis – see Part 5 and 6 of the book). It seems that haiku (in different cultures) gravitate strongly towards religion(s). See also ‘A “Haiku” Miscellany.’

242 Ł. Kossowski, *Czy można ...*, n.p.



**Illustration 41 a.** Koji Kamoji, *Nocny deszcz* [Night Rain], 1992, acrylic on canvas (140 cm x 200 cm), photo Hans-Wulf Kunze (property of The Upper-Silesian Museum in Bytom, reproduced by kind permission of Koji Kamoji).



**Illustration 41 b.** Koji Kamoji, *Haiku Woda* [Haiku Water], 1994, photo Tadeusz Rolke (reproduced by kind permission of Koji Kamoji)



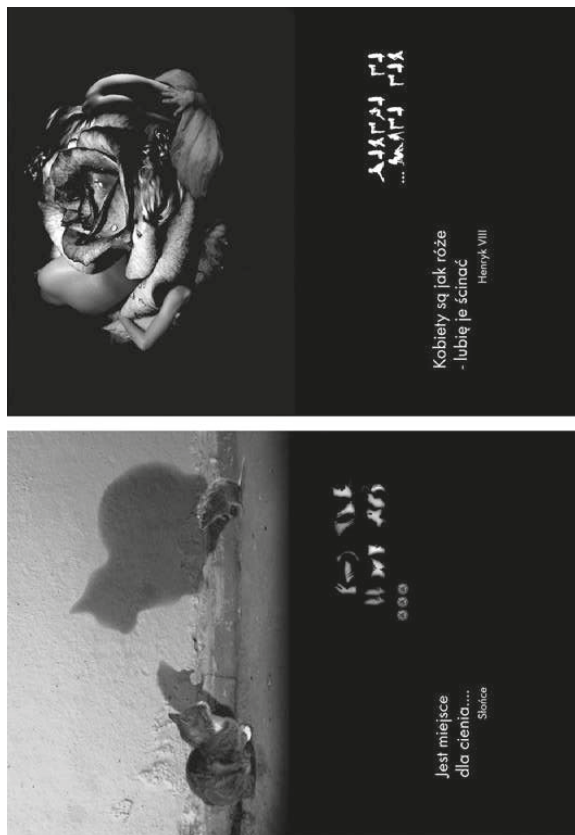
**Illustration 42 a.** Adam Bunsch, *Szczygły na gałęzi* [Goldfinches on a Branch], 1946 (reproduced by kind permission of Adam Bunsch, the artist's grandson)



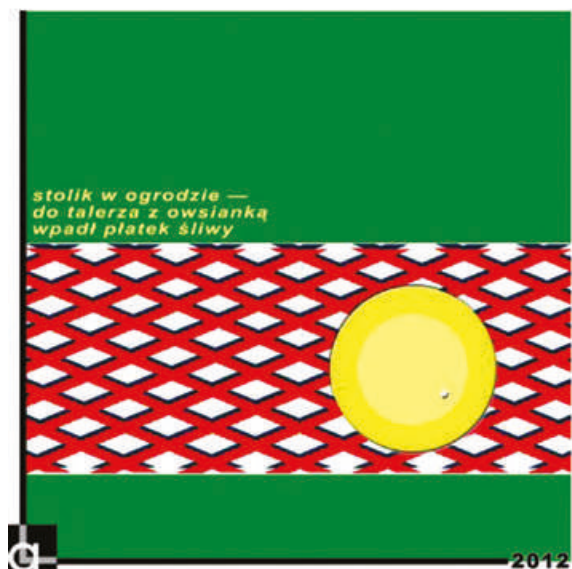
**Illustration 42 b.** Adam Bunsch, *Kot* [A Cat], 1951 (reproduced by kind permission of Adam Bunsch, the artist's grandson)



**Illustration 43.** Adam Bunsch, *Pszczoty na gałęzi* [Bees on a Branch], 1946 (reproduced by kind permission of Adam Bunsch, the artist's grandson)



**Illustration 44 a, b.** Malwina Hryńczak-Kluba, works from the sequence *Haiku*, <http://www.isp.uz.zgora.pl/malwina-hryczak.html>, accessed May 15, 2015



**Illustration 45 a, b.** Haiku i haiga [Haiku and *Haiga*], Aleksander Litowczak, <http://haiga-budzenie.blogspot.com>, accessed May 15, 2015

The links between haiku poetry and paintings by Teresa Pałowska seem to be less clear. Their non-obvious nature, however, does not preclude authentic affinities. As Kossowski writes:

Of paramount importance to Pałowska's paintings is mood: intimate, replete with erotic tension, understated. Many of the artist's works bring to mind the synthetic and disciplined, and at the same time impressionistic form of a Japanese haiku poem. [...] This poetics emanates not only from painted objects. [...] Everything that is redundant is rejected: imitation of three-dimensional space, the extravagance of colour, rich textures, intellectual speculations.<sup>243</sup>

The mood of concentration emanating from canvases, the contemplation of the "quiet life" of almost haptically depicted objects, defamiliarized visual representations of objects still treated mimetically – all this may indeed bring to mind good, refined haiku (however, the ultimate simplicity of Oriental miniatures is a myth).<sup>244</sup> Haiku spirit is also observable in the unique cheerfulness of Pałowska's works, in a way akin to the delicate, affirmative humour of Japanese verse<sup>245</sup> and the very personal tone of her paintings.<sup>246</sup> And finally (in her late works), in the use of unprimed support, on which the artist draws, in the manner of a *sumi-e* artist, "painterly signs in just a few brushstrokes."<sup>247</sup> However, the radical abstraction of the presented phenomena from reality (for instance from a background drawn from nature) clearly distances these representations from haiku aesthetics. Just like in the case of the eroticism introduced by Kossowski.<sup>248</sup> Interestingly enough, in the case of the exhibition in question, the point is not the ostensible equivalence of images and poems (which after all is impossible), the bringing to light of certain not always obvious, parallels.<sup>249</sup> And one more thing – should Pałowska be linked to summer? This, to some extent, is the question of the iconography of some of the paintings on display. The artist's versatility and the huge variety of subjects she touched on additionally validate this metaphorical pairing.

More obvious, it seems, was the pairing of autumn with Stajuda, author of the subtle, "understated" landscapes presented at the exhibition, verging on exteriority and self-reflexiveness. This juxtaposition too may seem somewhat controversial.

243 Ł. Kossowski, *Czy można...*, n.p.

244 See Part 1 of the book.

245 See Part 1 of the book.

246 See M. Hniedziewicz, 'Haiku w poezji.'

247 M. Kitowska-Łysiak, 'Teresa Pałowska,' [http://www.culture.pl/baza-sztuki-pelna-tresc/-/eo\\_event\\_asset\\_publisher/eAN5/content/teresa-palowska](http://www.culture.pl/baza-sztuki-pelna-tresc/-/eo_event_asset_publisher/eAN5/content/teresa-palowska), accessed September 2, 2012.

248 The twentieth-century, "reformed" haiku in Japan and haiku in the West do not always eschew eroticism. The exhibition at the Museum of Literature, however, clearly favoured classical haiku models. See also Parts 1 and 5 of the book.

249 While Teresa Pałowska responded positively to the idea of the exhibition (information obtained from Łukasz Kossowski), the search for connections with haiku was not the motivation behind her work.

Haiku poems are markedly mimetic, while Stajuda's works clearly transform and deform the visible reality. However, it should be noted again that simple equivalence is not at stake here.

The last, "winter" part of the exhibition is visually organized by the works of Koji Kamoji, a Japanese who has lived in Poland for decades and who, somehow "ex officio," is licenced to take a stand on painterly "haikuing." As it happens, Kamoji is known for his works directly referring to haiku (*Haiku Deszcz* [Haiku Rain], *Haiku Woda* [Haiku Water]) and comments about this poetry.<sup>250</sup> In my opinion, *Haiku Woda* (1994, Galeria Biblioteka in Legionowo) is his most uncompromising work, one which most vividly fuses art with nature under the banner of haiku. The artist decided to dig a real-life well. By destroying the parquet of the gallery floor, installing a casing running down two floors of the building, he achieved the intended effect – water glistening at the bottom of the well. The casing itself "looked at itself" in a sheet of aluminium suspended on a white wall. The windows of the gallery hall were covered with sheets of white fabric. Unique and absolute simplicity.<sup>251</sup> The exhibition at the Museum of Literature also made use of strong contrasts between materials, colours, and textures. Intriguing, wordless tensions of forms and meanings were successfully created here.

Magdalena Hniedziewicz describes this part of the 2002 exhibition as follows:

We enter the room, in which against the black background of the walls a metaphysical landscape of *Night Rain* opens before our eyes with simple, strongly delineated forms, abstract ones and at the same time marking some [...] space, suggestively drawing the viewer's eyes deep into blackness. In front of it, on the floor, [...] an installation [...]: a sheet of silvery metal with a glass of water standing in the middle. It is hard to tell how the artist produced this tension between the dark image, solid in its forms, and the evanescence of a silvery-transparent installation; there is some inexpressible metaphysics to it [...]. Pictures on the side walls. White surfaces seem to exist only by virtue of the points and lines placed on them, discrete, almost invisible from the distance. [...] Koji Kamoji's paintings seem to perfectly implement what Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda [...] said [...] about haiku: that words seem to only exist so we could feel the space / silence extending between them.<sup>252</sup>

250 See, for example, K. Kamoji, \*\*\*, in *Haiku*, [2006], p. 29.

251 See, for example, E. Gorządek, 'Koji Kamoji,' [http://www.culture.pl/web/guest/baza-sztuki-pelna-tresc/-/eo\\_event\\_asset\\_publisher/eAN5/content/koji-kamoji](http://www.culture.pl/web/guest/baza-sztuki-pelna-tresc/-/eo_event_asset_publisher/eAN5/content/koji-kamoji), accessed September 13, 2012; M. Kitowska-Łysiak, 'Haiku-Melancholia' [Haiku-Melancholy], *Znak*, 1998, No. 7, pp. 169–72, online version: [http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/I/IS/rec\\_kamoji.html](http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/I/IS/rec_kamoji.html), accessed February 26, 2016; P. Moźdzynski, 'Mistycy, jogini, szamani. O poszukiwaniach sacrum w polu sztuki XX i XXI wieku' [Mystics, Yogis, Shamans. On the Search for the Sacred in 20th- and 21st-century Art], *Przegląd Religioznawczy*, 2012, p. 113. See also excellent photographs of Tadeusz Rolke: <http://artmuseum.pl/pl/archiwum/archiwum-tadeusza-rolke/2225>, accessed February 25, 2016.

252 M. Hniedziewicz, 'Haiku w poezji.'



Kamoji's works convey the essence of winter in an intriguing, and at the same time tangible and inexpressible way. Emptiness, rejection of artistic expressiveness, narrowing down of the colour range, a sort of hibernation – all this also fits well with winter poetry miniatures. Naturally, Kamoji went much further than classical haijins in the process of abstracting, concentrating, and transposing meanings. However, aesthetic connections remain very strong.

It is interesting, by the way, that Kossowski, an expert on Symbolist painting, did not decide to juxtapose haiku with the canvases of Wojciech Weiss, Jan Stanisławski or Julian Fałat strongly corresponding to Japanese or even haiku aesthetics.<sup>253</sup> The curator looks for more recent, less obvious, sometimes more allusive connections both in the realm of visual arts and literature (haiku written by contemporary Polish authors and far from simple imitations). However, one should recall the above-discussed changes in Polish art at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. All the visual artists exhibited at the Museum of Literature learned this historical lesson. Kamoji could arrive at similar results via different cultural and geographic routes. The exhibition really shows vital approximations of traditional Japanese aesthetics and broadly conceived modernism. In this way, essential, though sometimes imperceptible common ground is discovered and – to some extent – also created.

Finally, it is worth asking about the accuracy of the exhibition's subtitle: 'Twórczość mistrzów haiku' [The Work of Haiku Masters]. The presented poems are classic haiku or works close to the Western prototype of the genre, while the artworks cannot be unambiguously evaluated in this context. The title strongly provokes the reader to address to this familiar, domesticated art questions about non-obvious transcultural relations. The exhibition can be judged as debatable or, at least, bold. Yet the point of examining and presenting artistic phenomena is precisely to provoke important, often surprising diagnoses.

Sławomir Brzoska's exhibition, 'Płynna tożsamość – haiku' [Liquid Identity – Haiku (July 6– August 27, 2011, "Imaginarium" Gallery in Łódź, curator: Magdalena Świątczak) can provide a counterpoint to the previously described show. At the Museum of Literature, poetic miniatures were a vital element of the presentation, entering into a relatively concordant, yet multilingual dialogue with twentieth-century painting and graphic art. Visitors to Brzoska's exhibition need some time to answer the question about the visual works' links with haiku, and if it was not for the leaflet with the artist's statement accompanying the exhibition, they might not notice any parallels whatsoever.

The exhibition is divided into two complementary – according to the artist – parts. The first room houses an installation consisting of three chairs and strands of red and blue wool. The red threads radiate upwards from two chairs, while the blue yarn extends from the third chair. Lying on the "red" chairs are shapes wrapped in

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253 See, for example, Ł. Kossowski, 'O inspiracjach japońskich,' A. Król, *Japonizm polski*; A. Król, *Obraz świata*; A. Król, *Ten krakowski Japończyk*.

blue wool and resembling stones, on the “blue” one – a cuboid twined in red wool (a large book?). The whole brings to mind sophisticated avant-garde compositions of Naum Gabo. Its relationship with haiku, however, is something of a quandary. As the author explains (in the aforementioned leaflet), the installation

through the rhythms of parallel lines will evoke the idea of travel. Creating, pulling out and then coiling up the wool into a ball after the exhibition is a process in the course of which I try to be fully aware of each step and line stress. In my understanding, the process of creation and destruction is identical to breathing. This way I refer to archaic intuitions into the existence of the Universe.

Thus, the exhibition room became for the artist a place of total absorption in an artistic activity. The mere meditateness of the act of creation (not being a contemplation of external reality) is not enough to look for relevant connections with haiku. The same applies to the enigmatic “idea of travel.”

The second part of the exhibition is completely baffling in the context of the literary term used in the title of the exhibition. In a separate room, on opposite walls, two films are screened engaged in a silent dialogue. The only sound in the room is the throbbing music imitating the rhythm of breath (“archaic intuition into the existence of the Universe?”), slightly changing during the screening. Screened on the wall opposite the entrance is a film showing scenes from the life of contemporary Papuans, while on the wall facing it the visitors can see a video of the changing face of a 40-year-old white man (the artist). The viewer easily detects the link between the films.

At first, the white man has closed eyes and a plain leather necklace on his bare chest. Young Papuans observe him (or rather the scene in front of them during the filming) with attention. As the man’s face begins to change, the Papuan boys become animated, pointing their fingers at something. The man’s face is getting darker, his features sharpen, his simple leather string begins to resemble a colourful tribal pendant. His transformation is watched not only by children but also by adults. As the tension reaches its peak when the white man becomes a spitting image of the tribesmen, one of the Papuans plays a primitive instrument held in his mouth. However, viewers still hear the same throbbing sound. The transformation is reversed. The video from the opposite wall shows Papuans going about their daily activities. At the end, one of the “savages” takes out a mummy of his ancestor in front of the hut and places it by the table. The face on the opposite wall is white again, the man’s eyes are open, nothing adorns his neck anymore. Did everyone go back to their roots? Even though we are actually very similar? In this context, the title “fluid identity” becomes obvious. But what about haiku?

The mention of the Eastern genre does not produce any result – perhaps apart from the irritation on the part of the exhibition visitor. Unlike in Gajewski’s work, haiku does not serve here as a synecdoche for a broader yet coherent conglomeration of phenomena. Probably it is meant to function as a suggestion of deep, meditative experience, a journey understood as a search for bridges between cultures. The analogy between Japanese seventeen-verse poems, the installation with wool

and chairs, and films inspired by the life of the Papuans, however, has exceptionally little validity. We will not find here any traces of artistic provocation. The artist completely disregarded haiku's immense cultural background. Was it his lack of knowledge? Or maybe haiku was intended as a fashionable bait to lure viewers to the exhibition?

A still different kind of an undertaking is Malwina Hryńczak-Kluba's exhibition 'Wampiry / Haiku' [Vampires / Haiku] (Galeria Twórców Galera, Piekarnia Cichej Kobiety, Zielona Góra, October – November 2010).<sup>254</sup> The shocking juxtaposition in the title is explained in the simplest way possible – *Wampiry* and *Haiku* are the two cycles on display. They share common colour range (black-and-white), characteristic imagery (surprising framing, the haptic quality of the detail brought out by chiaroscuro) and the very use of photomontage techniques in computer graphics. The first cycle deals with various forms of social exclusion (homosexuality, HIV disease, mental illness, ethnic otherness, etc.).<sup>255</sup> The second cycle offers a more ambiguous play with stereotypes and icons of culture. The exhibition's thematic incoherence is the first signal of its stylistic fissures.

Each work in the *Haiku* cycle consists of three basic components: pictorial, "ideogrammic," and verbal. We see unexpectedly juxtaposed or surprisingly framed figures, objects, and animals. Supplementing these figurative systems, and at the same time providing a sort of quasi-translation thereof, are pseudo-ideograms made of bones, symbols, figures, etc. And finally, the texts, the supposed haiku poems, which should rather be considered as aphorisms: humorous, reflective, but also provocative, disturbing, banal.

The first "haiku" reads as follows: "Jest miejsce / dla cienia" [There is room / for shadow]. The text is titled "The Sun." The photomontage depicts a cat, a mouse and their shadows on the wall – the mouse's and cat's shadow got mixed up. There are also quasi-ideograms resembling semi-abstract avant-garde photographs. Subsequent pieces were assigned to specific characters. Thus, for example, Henry VIII "writes:" "Kobiety są jak róże / – lubię je ścinać" [Women are like roses / I like cutting them off]. This "haiku" is accompanied by a photomontage with a fragmented female nude inscribed in a rose flower and two rows of "ideograms" made of a figure of a naked woman in various poses. The photomontage with the smiling face of Princess Diana looking from behind the car wheel is accompanied by the text: "Pokrętnie / są ścieżki Pana / Diana" [Lord / Moves in Mysterious Ways / Diana] along with "ideograms" of quasi-road signs. The disturbing distich "W słońcu południa / domek z kart" [In the midday sun / a house of cards] (visible nearby is a house of cards in the desert and quasi-ideograms stylized as a playing cards) was "signed" by Osama bin Laden. Hitler (accompanied by a fiend) looks

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254 Based on the presentation on this webpage: <http://www.isp.uz.zgora.pl/malwina-hrynczak.html>, accessed May 13, 2015.

255 These issues are interestingly thrown into relief by the grotesque exaggeration and expressionist stylization.

at spotlighted crowds and “says:” “Zaczarowana historia... Przywołuję te chwile.” “The enchanted story... [I’m calling up those moments]. Accompanying this is an ideogrammic “translation” from tanks, missiles, a helmet, skull, swastika. And finally, a rather trivial text: “Zgubiłam się... / Na ścieżkach Życia” [I got lost... / On the paths of Life], concluding with the unexpected word “Śmierć” [Death]. Next to it are “ideograms” made of bones along with a photomontage: the contour of the Grim Reaper filled with a photograph depicting a street and a figure walking along it.

As a result, we see visually appealing, inventive, verbal-visual compositions that at times are shocking or push the bounds of good taste. To a certain extent, they bring to mind... the old European form of emblems with an allegorical representation of people or phenomena, a lemma (inscription, motto) explaining the meaning of an image, and a subscription (usually an epigram) explaining the relationship between the image and the motto.<sup>256</sup> Naturally, functioning as a lemma here would be visual quasi-ideograms.

Hryńczak-Kluba’s intertextual compositions are very distantly related to haiku (and consequently to *haiga*). For the artist, haiku is a synonym of a poetic miniature with a peculiarly humorous undertone.<sup>257</sup> She does not follow any crucial, prototypical features of the genre (apart from brevity), and understands humour differently from authors of classic seventeen-syllable verses.<sup>258</sup> The strongest parallel with Oriental forms here is the verbal-visual nature of the composition. Much more conspicuous are affinities with European epigrams and verbal-visual emblems— despite the presence of “ideograms” imitating Orientality. In this manner, the Eastern inspiration, unsupported by deeper studies, led to the enrichment of... Occidental forms (epigram, emblem). The transposition of haiku to a different artistic plane turned out to be unsuccessful, which, however, as we have seen, does not detract from the work itself.

I have described three completely different exhibitions with titles making references to haiku. It turns out that (as in the case of the artists’ books discussed above) the most interesting, truly transcultural proximities occur when artistic or curatorial activity is supported by knowledge and preceded by in-depth reflection.<sup>259</sup> Only such artistic practice can guarantee that interesting, non-obvious

256 Hryńczak-Kluba’s compositions are distantly related to Gajewski’s ‘Haiku III’ (I have in mind the hand-coloured leaves containing haiku and quasi-ideogrammic graphic layouts). However, in Gajewski’s work, deeply delving into Buddhist aesthetics, we will not find any affinities with emblems.

257 See the artist’s statement – <http://cojestgrane.pl/wydarzenie/66718/>, accessed October 2, 2012.

258 See Part 1 of the book.

259 The term “haiku” is also something of a temptation to art critics. Its use, however, can be purely intuitive and metaphorical; it enshrouds the works analysed here with an air of quasi-Eastern mysticism. For example, Peter Schjeldahl titled his text on the work of Mirosław Bałka ‘Polish Haiku.’ However, nowhere does he explicate

common ground is brought to light. However, despite everything, even superficial, shallow, somewhat stereotypical references demonstrate parallels between the forms derived from traditional Japanese aesthetics and the probings of modern and post-modern Polish art. The key issues remain: the emphasis on accentuating the materiality and “materiality” of artworks and the strong push towards verbo-visuality.

### 3. Multimedia Haiku?

Browsing Polish websites devoted to haiku, one can very quickly come across forms described as *digital art haiga* (or *digital haiga*), *photo-haiga*, *photo-cinematic haiga*, haiku photography, digital *haibun*.<sup>260</sup> Naturally, essential questions that should be asked about these works concern the degree of their innovativeness. What changes in a work of art transferred to another medium in comparison with its primary pre-text – its “analogue” Oriental form? How do online compositions stack up against Polish works on paper (mainly printed books) and three-dimensional works? To what extent do artists make use of internet’s interactivity, hypertextuality, and broadly conceived multimedia? In other words, are we dealing here with a substantial modification of traditional compositions, or are we merely reading a differently orientalisised “internet paper?”

It is surprising (at least at first glance) that so many artists employ the blog form. Their choice might be dictated by practical considerations:<sup>261</sup> the ease of setting up and running a blog and of communication within an online community of haikins and *haiga* creators. Haiku-related blogs typically fulfil several functions at the same time (e.g. a diary, an intimate journal, a filter).<sup>262</sup> Individual posts (entries) – containing haiku or *haiga* – are arranged chronologically, readers can comment on texts, display the author’s profile and, most importantly, use links to websites of other “Orientophiles.” In this way, it is possible to quickly familiarize oneself with extensive Polish blogosphere focused around

the alleged “haiku-ness” of the artist’s practice, and one can guess that he sees haiku connections in the simplicity of Bałka’s art, its rawness, and embrace of the ordinary. See Peter Schjeldahl, ‘Polish Haiku,’ *The Renaissance Society*, 1992.

260 For contemporary verbal-visual and visual incarnations of American haiku, see A. Kwiatkowska, ‘American Haiku: A Photographic Genre?’, in A. Kwiatkowska, *Interfaces, Interspaces. Image – Language – Cognition*, Piotrków Trybunalski, 2013, pp. 145–62.

261 See, for example, M. Hopfinger, *Literatura i media po 1989 roku* [Literature and the Media after 1989], Warszawa, 2010, pp. 183–4.

262 A. Gumkowska, ‘Blogi wobec tradycji diarystycznej. Nowe gatunki w nowych mediach’ [Blogs vis-à-vis the Diary-writing Tradition], in *Tekst (w) sieci*, Vol. 1: *Tekst. Język. Gatunki* [The Text in/of the Web, Vol. 1: Text. Language, Genres], ed. D. Ulicka, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 240–1.

the concept of haiku.<sup>263</sup> From the perspective of online literary life, this is a vital, albeit practically non-artistic, use of the internet.<sup>264</sup>

The blogs that are of interest to me can be described as vast virtual “open notebooks,” where authors store and at the same time publish literary texts along with related (as well as unrelated) images and photographs, write down their reflections, reports from literary competitions or poetry events, post book reviews, and, finally, upload music and videos files which do not have to be mere moving *haiga* images.<sup>265</sup> Authors also frequently take advantage of the incomplete and unfinished nature of messages that is characteristic of the internet.<sup>266</sup> They submit their poems for evaluation, often modifying them according to comments or allowing other bloggers to change them. The internet also provides a platform for unique interpersonal intermedia activities – Internet users co-create *haiga*, pairing artworks (usually photographs) with someone else’s poems, sometimes strongly modifying, in the process, their poems’ message.<sup>267</sup>

Some blogs can be seen as open works *in statu nascendi*. For obvious (ontic) reasons, they are not closed, finely wrought, well-thought-out wholes. However,

263 As it happens, it is surprising that almost all comments posted on haiku and *haiga*-related webpages (including forums) are highly positive, and any criticism is always rather restrained. Poets form a sort of a literary club, where generous support of works of fellow bloggers is one of the unwritten rules. However, these bloggers are at the same time readers, reviewers, and authors – probably explicit criticism could lead to ostracism.

264 See, for example, M. Cywińska-Milonas, ‘Blogi (ujęcie psychologiczne)’ [Blogs (A Psychological Perspective)], in *Liternet*, ed. P. Marecki, Kraków, 2002, pp. 96–7.

265 See, for example, <http://rozsypany-czas.blogspot.com/>, accessed October 14, 2012; <http://eddie-ad.blogspot.com/>, accessed September 15, 2012; <http://haiassne.g.blogspot.com/>, accessed September 19, 2012; <http://travellingbetweentheworlds.blox.pl/html>, accessed September 1, 2012; <http://haikuworld.blox.pl/html/1310721,262146,14,15.html?3,2011>, accessed September 3, 2012; <http://haiku2009-publikacje.blogspot.com/>, accessed September 30, 2012.

266 E. Szczęsna, ‘Dyskurs internetowy a literacki’ [Internet Discourse vs. Literary Discourse], in *Komparatystyka dzisiaj*, Vol. 2: *Interpretacje* [Comparative Studies Today, Vol. 2: Interpretations], eds. E. Kasperski, E. Szczęsna, Warszawa, 2011, p. 200; E. Szczęsna, ‘Wprowadzenie do poetyki tekstu sieciowego’ [Introduction to the Poetics of the Web Text], in *Tekst (w) sieci*, Vol. 1, p. 68.

267 For example, the juxtaposition of Magdalena Banaszekiewicz’s poem: “późna jesień / w opuszczonym ogrodzie / rdzewieje kwiat” [late autumn / in an abandoned garden / a flower is rusting] with a photograph by Joanna Lewandowska depicting an old rusty bannister with a flower motif cancels the compelling metaphor. See <http://magdajasna.blogspot.com>, accessed September 24, 2012. See also <http://joo-dailyhaiku.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00%2B01:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00%2B01:00&max-results=50>, accessed September 2, 2012.

neither are they are totally random literary and artistic digital junkyards.<sup>268</sup> So are we dealing here with the “latter-day” *silvae rerum*?<sup>269</sup> Anna Gumkowska rightly declared that “in the context of multimedia forms, which by nature belong to heterogeneous semantic systems, the term *sylwiczność* [“sylvicness,” from *silvae rerum*] “loses its meaning.”<sup>270</sup> However, haiku-centred blogs are “sylvic” already at the plane of their literary content – in many respects they come close to the traditional *silvae rerum*, as well as to some incarnations of contemporary *silvae rerum*.<sup>271</sup>

Moreover, despite the rather modest visual framework (defined, for example, by the standard blog format), haiku-themed webpages are sometimes treated by their authors as a sort of verbal-visual aesthetic objects, and even – *toutes proportions gardées* – some kind of multimedia total artworks. This is, naturally, a fusion of contradictions – “blog-like-ness” entails constant changeability, the very existence of blogs also depends on various, completely extra-artistic factors.

As it happens, the very intensity of “blog-like-ness” varies – some webpages tend towards formal and functional austerity, with authors keeping down the number of external links, blocking the comment option, ensuring consistent visual layouts, and as a result approximating their blogs (usually set up from a ready-made freely available template) to an originally designed website or even a paper publication. However, numerous Polish webpages turn out to be unremarkable, and even visually slipshod. Blogs’ multifunctionality generates an aesthetic mess, although it does not have to do so.

### A. *Orientalization: Haiku and Photography on the Internet*

A significant part of webpages presenting haiku and *haiga* is marked by expressive, imitative Orientalization of the visual and verbal message. Authors attempt to recreate old modes of expression using a new, egalitarian medium. They usually use an equally egalitarian medium of photography. This is in inverse proportion to paper publications, where the role of illustrations is typically played by reproductions of drawings, graphics, and paintings. However, the primacy of photography on the Internet is not in the least surprising – it stems from the ease of taking and processing photos and of publishing them on the web.

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268 See, for example, <http://haiassne.g.blogspot.com/>, accessed September 19, 2012; <http://haikuofplanet.blogspot.com/>, accessed October 4, 2012.

269 A. Gumkowska, ‘Blogi wobec tradycji,’ p. 231.

270 A. Gumkowska, ‘Blogi wobec tradycji,’ pp. 231–2.

271 See A. M. Szczepan-Wojnarska, ‘Sylwiczny i intymistyczny charakter blogów’ [Sylvic and Intimist Nature of Blogs], in *Język @ multimedia* [Language @ Multimedia], eds. A. Dytman-Stasienko, J. Stasienko, Wrocław, 2005, pp. 76–7; R. Nycz, *Sylwy współczesne: problem konstrukcji tekstu*, Wrocław, 1984.

As a rule, the literary content of webpages devoted to haiku is usually relatively conservative, rehashing foreign models known at second-hand, without offering any deeper Occidental “interpolations” at the plane of poetics. This is significantly different from the works disseminated via traditional methods. One gets the impression that authors concentrating primarily on modelling the textual layer are less interested in the “multimediality” of their poems, while those who publish online (with no time and financial constraints involved in the preparation of paper publications) are more eager to experiment with multiple materials. However, as I will demonstrate, this rule is not without exceptions.

Waldemar Frąckiewicz’s work (also in print version)<sup>272</sup> *Krople słońca* [Drops of Sun], consisting of poems and photographs, is, in my opinion, one of the most finely wrought verbal-visual compositions available online.<sup>273</sup> As it turns out, this internet-based volume of poetry or, more precisely, a sort of an unfolding scroll featuring texts and photos, is, at the same time, very close to haiku and *haiga* and quite distant from the spirit of these arts. The composition is highly consistent and visually clear, employing solely white, black, and grey. Frąckiewicz’s moving, understated haiku accord well with photographs of nature, although the images and poems are not linked by a mere function of illustrativeness. Understatements abound here – both in the texts themselves<sup>274</sup> and in non-obvious photographs complemented by blank white spaces.<sup>275</sup> The work evokes very strong associations with old verbal-visual *shi-ga-jiku*, even though photography is a modern means of capturing the world, and the digital “scroll” itself is, naturally, technologically advanced to an even larger degree. Frąckiewicz imbued his *photo-haiga* with the spirit of Japanese paintings and graphic works that correspond well with haiku: we see images of nature, most frequently depicting one or two distinct shapes against a relatively uniform background, also drawn from nature. These are, however, more unusual forms, more conceptist systems than those portrayed by Japanese painters (which one could probably ascribe, for example, to the change of medium: photography captures everything, imparting an original art form to the message must entail a certain de-automatization of perception).

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272 Fifty-two pages, sized 20 x 20 cm (W. Frąckiewicz, *Krople słońca. Fotografia. Haiku*, Lublin, 2002). Such a composition means that the viewer misses hidden exegeses and loses the impression of the scroll’s unfolding.

273 See <http://serwisy.umcs.lublin.pl/w.frackiewicz/KS.htm>, accessed May 19, 2014. In addition, Frąckiewicz offers a composition of other haiku and photos, but their juxtaposition does not produce a form equally well-executed and close to East-Asian aesthetics. See <http://serwisy.umcs.lublin.pl/w.frackiewicz/haiku.htm>, accessed August 20, 2012; <http://serwisy.umcs.lublin.pl/w.frackiewicz/hieroglify.htm>, accessed June 2, 2012.

274 See analyses of selected poems in the Part ‘Originals or Imitations? – around the Perfectly Genuine Polish Haiku.’

275 R. Barthes, *La préparation du roman*, p. 57.



Frąckiewicz's online volume is possessed of an additional, hidden dimension. By clicking on a photo, we see its detailed, personal description (by way of reminder: not each of them can be easily linked to the accompanying haiku), complemented by an explanation of the circumstances of the photo's creation, and sometimes also a ready-made interpretation, often extensive and immersed in various currents of East-Asian and Occidental philosophy. Suddenly all aesthetic clarity and understatement vanish, the viewer's space for an interpretation or even co-creation of the work diminishes. Does it mean that any link with haiku is obliterated?

Japanese *haibun* once again turn out to provide a vital point of reference. Frąckiewicz's descriptions substantially differ from those known, for example, from Bashō's or Issa's journals<sup>276</sup> – his explanations are closer to a treatise, a scholarly exegesis. Nevertheless, the link remains visible. As a result, we are dealing here with a compelling literary and cross-media hybrid,<sup>277</sup> a contemporary online equivalent of two forms related to haiku – primarily a scroll with poems and images, secondarily a text (related to *haibun*) providing facts, impressions, and interpretations connected to specific photos and, indirectly, poems. The viewer is thus confronted with contemporary haiku, *haiga*, and *haibun* (but not *haibunga* – the part devoted to descriptions of photographs, with one exception, does not include photographs themselves). With the use of the internet, shifts between genres become possible.

Frąckiewicz's work – with its “*haiga-haibun-like*” form – has its paper counterpart. However, it is not the book version of *Krople słońca*,<sup>278</sup> but the already discussed volume of Lidia Rozmus, *W podróży*.<sup>279</sup> With the use of the medium of the internet, Frąckiewicz's composition – in contradistinction to Rozmus' *haibunga* – successfully retains the full aesthetic purity of *haiga*.

Frąckiewicz created a total work of art, composed down to the smallest verbal and graphic detail. Without employing the blog form, he constructed a closed, peculiarly self-centred and self-reflexive composition, which at the same time did not constitute a link in a tightly hyperlinked “pulsating” haiku-centred blogosphere.

276 See, for example, Matsuo Bashō, *Knapsack Notebook, The Narrow Road to the Deep North, Sarashina Journal*, in M. Bashō, *Bashō's Journey: The Literary Prose of Matsuo Bashō*, transl. D. L. Barnhill, Albany, 2005; K. Issa, *The Spring of My Life and Selected Haiku*, transl. S. Hamill, Boston–London, 1997.

277 G. Grochowski, *Tekstowe hybrydy. Literackość i jej pogranicza* [Textual Hybrids. Literariness and its Frontiers], Wrocław, 2000; M. A. Szura, ‘Czy blog może być literaturą?’ [Can a Blog be Literature?], in *Liternet.pl*, ed. P. Marecki, Kraków, 2003, p. 173.

278 See the explanation in footnote 272 in this part of the study.

279 The form of prose notes situates Rozmus's work closer to traditional *haibun*, yet both *W podróży* and *Krople słońca* are an active continuation of haiku (see S. Balbus, ‘Stylizacja i zjawiska pokrewne,’ p. 145).

Numerous other Polish websites have also been subjected to visual and literary Orientalization. Not surprisingly, ones that are the most interesting artistically either abandon the blog form altogether or, as we have seen, consciously reduce the blog-like interactivity (the graphic template is highly personalized, the comment option is blocked, as exemplified by Dorota Pyra's photo-*haiga*).<sup>280</sup> Most authors, however, have no idea how to creatively put to use the possibilities offered by the internet. The East-Asian references in numerous online *haiga* are easily overlooked at first glance. The aesthetics of contemporary colour photography, which does not always exhibit a subtle use of the depth of focus, significantly departs from, for example, *sumi-e* aesthetics. However, in many cases some approximations are generated by framing: the foregrounding of detail picked out from reality, even if the background is not completely visually "muted" (Urszula Wielanowska's blog,<sup>281</sup> works of Grażyna Kaźmierczak<sup>282</sup> and Jadwiga Gala Miemus<sup>283</sup>). Moreover, no other artistic points of reference (apart from the East-Asian ones) are detectable here. In the online deluge of second-rate photographic *haiga*, where kitschy landscape photos are accompanied by imitations of haiku written in wavy fonts, what stands out are compositions that are merely artistically decent. Kaźmierczak's *photo-haiga* are distinguished by the very use of different lettering reflecting the semantics and style of individual haiku. These compositions also point to something quite obvious, but unknown in Polish paper *haiga*: the choice of an image to accompany a text (the artist sometimes juxtaposes the same poems with different photographs)<sup>284</sup> clearly changes the perception of the entire verbal-visual composition. Miemus even goes a step further – some of her poetic concepts are completely impenetrable without photography (for example, one can hardly associate "rungs to eternity" with the shadows of tree trunks on the footpath to the cemetery, and "the birth of a star" with a polygonal cross-section of a cut tree trunk overgrown with moss).

On websites devoted to haiku the visual element can also be merely an ornament. It can "non-invasively" decorate a webpage with verses<sup>285</sup> or contrivedly unify the composition, for example with a multiplied Oriental or quasi-Oriental motif.<sup>286</sup>

One more time it turns out that one of the indispensable keys to artistic success (regardless of the medium used) is simply the knowledge supporting creative

280 See <http://rozsypany-czas.blogspot.com/search/label/haiga>, accessed October 14, 2012 – February 26, 2016.

281 See <http://jasminum72.blox.pl/html>, accessed September 15, 2012.

282 See <https://plus.google.com/photos/108591924668579813559/albums/527269024630-2443393?banner=pwa>, accessed September 3, 2012.

283 See <http://poezja.com.pl/?q=node/625>, accessed October 14, 2012.

284 Naturally, this procedure can be easily used on the internet.

285 See <http://zimowehaiku.blogspot.com/>, accessed September 15, 2012.

286 See <http://entuzjazm.blox.pl/html/1310721,262146,21.html?157645>, accessed August 2, 2012.

intuitions, making it possible to join variously similar or complementary literary and visual links.

*B. Naturalization of Otherness: “Unity in Multiplicity” or Incoherent Eclecticism?*

What I find the most interesting in the study of the online forms in question are the processes of their strong acculturation on the new cultural ground:<sup>287</sup> the incorporation of elements of Western culture into the works inspired by Japanese art, the integration of equally valid “fabrics,” foreign and native, and finally – the identification or even creation of transcultural spaces.<sup>288</sup>

I want to find out whether artists manage to achieve a version of “unity in multiplicity” (all the more complex because *haiga* or photo-video *haiga* include various media), or rather do not go beyond incoherent eclecticism. It is easy to guess that different artefacts give different answers to this question.

In his art blog,<sup>289</sup> Marek Domagała (Marek Haik) used a simple graphic layout: individual *haiga* are quasi-postcards appearing against an abstract background covered with watercolour “stains.”<sup>290</sup> The “postcards” imitate thick, run-down handmade sepia paper; the clear-cut lines, as if drawn with a pencil, serve to delimit the areas for illustrations to poems. This is a subtle dialogue with the aesthetics of the East – the “paper” structure suggests great care for the material, yet the perfectly straight pencil lines are a considerable departure from the expressive brushwork in Zen painting or calligraphy.<sup>291</sup> The digital images themselves walk a fine line between figuration and abstraction. They deploy or imitate various artistic techniques that are well-established in the West (apart from pencil drawing and digitally processed photography, dry pastel and watercolour), explicitly referring also to traditional Japanese aesthetics (the foregrounding of detail, the role of background, the focus on “materiality”). Domagała effects subtle, well-thought-out naturalization of *haiga*, without blurring the form’s origin. The iconography of his images is subordinated to the texts’ semantic content. For example, one of the “postcards” depicts non-obvious, half-blurred characters (of an East-Asian script?) or animal traces. Everything is explained in the poem below (the context of illegible foreign writing, however, remains valid):

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287 See J. Johnson, *Haiku Poetics*, p. 130.

288 In the case of online incarnations of *haiga* (and related forms), the acculturation understood in this way concerns first and foremost the visual aspect.

289 See <http://haikuofplanet.blogspot.com>, accessed July 3, 2014 – March 21, 2016.

290 The wallpaper itself was selected – very accurately – from the templates available on the “blog-spot” platform.

291 In many respects, these compositions are similar to the leaves on which haiku are written in Gajewski’s art book.

wyblakłe haiku  
na rozpalonym piasku  
ślady jaszczurki

[faded haiku  
on hot sand  
lizard's footprints]

The most interesting artefact available on the blog in question, however, is a video (a film *haiga*)<sup>292</sup> – a light étude with an excellent, disturbing soundtrack, illustrating or actually constructing the haiku text (words appear on the screen in a telling sequence): “neon snakes / dig in the moonlight / tunnel dreams.” The small work overtly references the tradition of avant-garde film, evoking strong associations with, for example, Len Lye’s work from the 1930s. At the same time, the neon snakes flashing on the screen can be linked with “flash-like,” expressive, almost abstract forms of *sumi-e*. Eastern connotations are also called up by the Moon’s disk appearing in the film. The poem itself is also the boldest literary experiment in the entire blog – the most metaphorical, the most removed from the prototype of the genre. This is (so far) one of the most interesting points of convergence of haiku and *haiga* on the Internet – a highly imaginative work exploiting the web’s potential to a larger extent than most online artefacts, and at the same time testifying to the possibility of an inspiring encounter of cultures or, to use Welschian terms, of bringing out transcultural common ground.<sup>293</sup>

As a rule, the naturalization of haiku, *haiga*, and *haibun* is a much less smooth process – the “seams” between forms and traditions are plainly visible, while the incoherent, extravagant eclecticism cannot be redefined in postmodern terms.<sup>294</sup>

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292 See <http://haikuofplanet.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2011-10-09T21:59:00%2B02:00&max-results=10>, accessed June 2, 2014.

293 Domagała’s experimentation is best seen in juxtaposition with the “rough-hewn” works of Jadwiga Gala Miemus (<http://poezja.com.pl/?cat=10>, accessed June 8, 2014), defined by the author as *film-photo haiga* or *photo-film haiga* (a series of video and photographic images of nature with rather inexpressive background music and texts moving in the viewer’s direction; the mode of presenting the verbal-visual material spoils the beauty of landscape photos, dulling the sometimes interesting tensions between the text and the image). The multimedia works of Halina Szczecińska (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jO-1GaSnm04>, accessed March 23, 2016) also turn out to be much more compelling than the works of Miemus. Providing a background for the author’s decent “orthodox” haiku – displayed for a moment in the lineated form and read by Włodzimierz Szczeciński – are short films and nature photos (by Szczecińska) accompanied by sounds of nature (birds, rain). Another point of reference can be offered by film adaptations of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz’s haiku – see the chapter ‘Haiku-Blague or “Freestyle Haiku”? – The Work of Dariusz Brzóska-Brzósiewicz.’

294 See, for example, W. Kazimierska-Jerzyk, “Strategia rewaloryzacji” we współczesnej refleksji nad sztuką. Piękno, eklektyzm, epigonizm, infantylnizm [“The Strategy of Re-evaluation” in Contemporary Reflection on Art. Beauty, Eclecticism, Epigonism, Infantilism], Kraków, 2008, pp. 94–140.

Among the numerous, rather uninventive compositions, one can find interesting verbal-visual juxtapositions, transcultural “flashes” demonstrating that one can reconcile different poetics without resorting to imitation. For instance, Mariusz Ogryzko<sup>295</sup> (who, in common with many other Polish haikins, publishes his poems in English)<sup>296</sup> combines the aesthetics of Surrealism with the haiku that perfectly captures Japanese *sabi* (solitariness, emotional distance, acceptance of the inevitable).<sup>297</sup> The sepia-coloured photograph of various kinds of chairs chaotically arranged on snow (sand?) illustrates the poem “winter cemetery / i sit near the smallest grave / the brightest.” At the opposite end of the scale of experimentation stands the creation of haiku ekphrases of works of Western art (including old art). While the dialogue between distant forms frequently turns out to be a feigned conversation, some poems and artefacts seem to illuminate each other compellingly (as in the case of some works of Western painting, for instance, ones by Edvard Munch, John Everett Millais, Marc Chagall, Piotr Konczalowski, and their ekphrases written in haiku).<sup>298</sup>

Finally, also noteworthy are photographs and computer graphics by Aleksander Litowczak,<sup>299</sup> drawing on a wide variety of inspirations, preserving some traces of Zen aesthetics, yet far removed from its aesthetic refinement (a parade of wavy fonts, at times sharp colour contrasts). In my opinion, the artist’s most compelling

295 See <http://haiga.pl/2.html>, accessed October 6, 2012.

296 In this book, I have been interested mainly in haiku composed in Polish, but it is worth noting that Polish haikuists are not averse to publishing English (and not only English) translations of their texts – both in online and paper editions. See, for example, <http://rozsypany-czas.blogspot.com/>, accessed March 21, 2016; *Wiśnie i wierzyby / Cherry Trees and Willows / Sakura to yanagi. Antologia polskiej szkoły klasycznego haiku* [Anthology of the Polish School of Classical Haiku], ed. A. Żuławska-Umeda, Warszawa, 2015; R. Kania, *39 haiku*, Poznań, 2015; K. Kokot, *Haiku time*, Nowy Targ–Poznań, 2012 (the edition featured translations into languages such as English, German, Lithuanian, Bulgarian, French, Russian, Italian, Romanian, and other); *Niebieskie trawy. Antologia haiku o roślinach*, selected by K. Kokot, Poznań, 2012. See also R. Zabratyński, *A Brief History of Polish Haiku*, <http://shamrockhaiku.webs.com/shamrockno9.htm>, accessed February 24, 2015. In this context, it is also worth mentioning the multilingual (albeit only fifty-eight-page-long) publication *Antologia haiku. Druga Międzynarodowa Konferencja Haiku / Haiku Anthology. Second International Haiku Conference*, eds. R. Kania and others, Kraków, 2015, and “Polski międzynarodowy konkurs haiku” [Polish International Haiku Competition] (<http://polish.international.competition.haiku.pl/pmkh.php>, accessed June 25, 2016).

297 For more on this topic, see Part 1 of the book.

298 See <http://sehaikuan.blogspot.com/>, accessed October 13, 2012.

299 See <http://haiga-budzenie.blogspot.com>, accessed October 2, 2012. I find that the more homogeneous of Litowczak’s graphics published on the website <http://burzenie-jasna.blogspot.com/> are considerably less interesting – accessed September 12, 2012.

works are his simple geometric abstractions, ones not pretending to be Oriental compositions and at the same time fitting well with clear image schemas of *haiga* and haiku. For example, Litowczak's poem "południowy wiatr / jasna wieża kościoła / tnie szarą chmurę" [south wind / bright church tower / cuts a grey cloud] is accompanied by a composition depicting two geometric figures: an elongated white rectangle cutting into a grey circle.<sup>300</sup> However, imagery is often impaired by "thick" lettering and, above all, "disarming" literalness of the message.<sup>301</sup> I find this fusion of geometric abstraction and haiku to be successful (or, perhaps, potentially successful). Also interesting in Litowczak's work is the striving to graphically reproduce the texture of described materials<sup>302</sup> – another incarnation of the interest, observable in numerous works discussed above, in widely-conceived materiality.

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300 See <http://haiga-budzenie.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2012-05-25T12:01:00%2B02:00&max-results=10&start=10&by-date=false>, accessed June 2, 2014.

301 For instance, the poem: "stolik w ogrodzie – / do talerza z owsianką / wpadł płatek śliwy" [table in the garden – / a plum petal fell into / a plate with porridge] is illustrated as follows: against a green background there is a horizontal strip of whiteness with a checkered red pattern (probably a tablecloth or oilcloth), on it stands a yellow circle with a clear-cut border (a plate) and a white speck inside (a petal). In another *haiga*, the artist opts for artistic restraint – a fragment of a rhombus touching a horizontal straight line is a sign of... a tram ("piąta nad ranem – / w śnieżnej zady mce znika / trzeszczący tramwaj" [five in the morning – / a crackling tram / disappears in a snow blizzard]). The ascetic, suspense imagery, however, is spoiled by the star at the junction of the rhombus-pantograph and the line, which literalizes the message (see <http://haiga-burzenie.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2012-05-25T12:01:00%2B02:00&max-results=10&start=10&by-date=false>, <http://haiga-burzenie.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2012-02-15T00:01:00%2B01:00&max-results=10&start=30&by-date=false> – accessed June 2, 2014).

302 For instance, the viewer sees an almost haptic close-up of a sheepskin coat ("tłok na przystanku – / wiatr wciska się pod kożuch / wraz z lekkim mrozem"), [the crowd at the stop – / the wind penetrates under the sheepskin coat / along with slight frost], imagines the softness of long wool fibres in almost abstract weaves of a shawl ("czapka i szalik / kalendarzowa wiosna / właśnie nadeszła" [a hat and a scarf / spring / has just come]), "recognizes" a gust of wind in a multiple-plane, monochrome computer graphic image playing with chiaroscuro ("szósta nad ranem – / wiatr wpada do tramwaju / przed grupką ludzi") [six in the morning – / the wind bursts into the tram / in front of a group of people]. See <http://haiga-budzenie.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2012-04-05T00:01:00%2B02:00&max-results=10&start=20&by-date=false>; <http://haiga-budzenie.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2012-02-15T00:01:00%2B01:00&max-results=10&start=30&by-date=false> – accessed June 2, 2014.

For all intents and purposes, the work of Polish authors of haiku, *haiga*, and *haibun* published on the internet can be seen as... printed publications. Artists hardly go beyond the models of poems' visual design known from printed poetry books. They merely resort to other techniques, mostly egalitarian, and easily uploadable photography. As a result, the digital message becomes similar to the traditional one, while the very style of texts and graphic design in most cases echoes Eastern models, or rather haikuists' and "*haigaists*" idea of those models. Despite the interesting exceptions discussed here, the internet is dominated by haiku that are less sophisticated in terms of literary quality. The major vehicle of experimentation in the art of writing are still printed collections (although even in their case artistically compelling texts are but a tiny minority).

Almost all digital *haiga* and *haibun* are, however, media hybrids – their authors do not want to abandon simple functions of the internet that transform the message. Nor are they, as it turns out, particularly eager to artistically exploit multimediality, interactivity, and hypertextuality. Only few imaginatively mix media. Is it the peculiar desire to reduce stimuli, stylistic asceticism or rather a certain carelessness, a matter of convenience, the use of webpages as a sort of a memorandum book? The second answer seems more plausible.

## V. Transcultural Verbo-visibility?

I have described various dimensions of the inspiration that eastern haiku-related verbo-visibility has exerted in Poland, showing more and less successful attempts at transplanting foreign genres onto new cultural and media settings. To what extent do these activities relate to transculturality? Let us recall, once again, the pronouncements of Wolfgang Iser based, among other things, on his observation of Japanese culture:

To the Japanese the foreign-own distinction or, to be more precise, the foreign-own distinction with respect to origin is not relevant at all. Their basic perspective is that of proximity. If something fits neatly it is Japanese – no matter where it comes from. This is why things foreign can be considered the own as a matter of course.<sup>303</sup>

To what extent can this description be applied to the works discussed above? In other words, have haiku, *haiga*, and *haibun* become Polish? To a certain degree, I believe so. Especially as in their new cultural and media setting, Japanese genres (re-profiled during the process of genre transplantation) turn out to be surprisingly similar to old Occidental forms, such as *silvae rerum*, diaries, emblems, and, finally, simply illustrations. The compositions in which various East-West links are consciously foregrounded seem to be the most interesting. They can lead to

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303 W. Iser, 'Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization: A Transcultural Perspective.' *Aesthetics & Art Science* 1 (2002).

active continuations<sup>304</sup> of Oriental genres, complementing Eastern recipes with various ingredients from Western culture. Even works integrating what is seemingly utterly incompatible – haiku with the poetics of surrealism or the tradition of abstract avant-garde film – can reveal surprising common points of encounter, understanding, and similarities in thinking and feeling about art. Naturally, this does not mean that surrealism or the 1930s cinema had much in common with the style and worldview of the Eastern forms that have been of interest me here. An artist open to various stimuli can, however, make use of highly variegated inspirations for which, as we have seen, a common denominator can be found. The necessary minimum condition is a little deeper knowledge of the Other.<sup>305</sup>

Finally, it should be emphasized once again that what remains an important (also in the context of transculturality) link between traditions is the strong tendency to unite words and images, to transcend and blur boundaries of arts. The latter has been deeply embedded in Japanese cultural universe, supported, for instance, by centuries-old practices of calligraphers or *sumi-e* painters, while in Occidental culture it clearly grew in importance during modernity.<sup>306</sup> The above-discussed phenomena of Polish art certainly arise from the spirit of modernism, and for the most part, do not take root into postmodernism. Technological development made it possible for them to occur in new media contexts without blurring the origin of these phenomena. This viewpoint makes it easy to see numerous approximations between modern Western art and artistic practices of the Far East – ones that can be viewed as a unique, broadly conceived space of transculturality. Suffice it to mention, in addition to the striving to blend various art forms, the following: fragmentariness, the unique framing of the presentation, the interest in details of everyday life and an individual's sensory experience, "poor" aesthetics, the artistically processed capturing of "flash-like" epiphanies. And, finally, the very openness to cultural otherness, which, on closer inspection, may turn out to be surprisingly familiar.

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304 See S. Balbus, 'Stylizacja i zjawiska pokrewne,' p. 145.

305 See, for example, E. W. Said, *Orientalism*, London, 1978.

306 The unity of aspirations is evidenced by, among other things, parallels between avant-garde "wordgraphy" and some Japanese (old) and Polish (twentieth-twenty-first century) haiku-*haiga* compositions. An interesting context here can also be provided, for example, by the contemporary current of liberature (see, for example, K. Bazarnik, Z. Fajfer, *Liberatura czyli Literatura totalna: teksty zebrane z lat 1999–2009*, Kraków, 2010; A. Przybyszewska, 'Liberatura / literatura totalna' [Liberature / Total Literature], in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, ed. G. Gazda, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 521–6).



## CONCLUSION

*A summer storm-wind;  
The white papers on the desk,  
All blown off.*

*Shiki*<sup>1</sup>

*The sparrow hops  
Along the verandah,  
With wet feet*

*Shiki*<sup>2</sup>

In this book, I tried to show, in the most comprehensive and interesting way possible, the Polish history of haiku and the forms associated with this poetic genre – in the art of writing and visual arts. I scrutinized the problems of transculturality in many ways, describing various artistic entanglements on the plane of poetics, aesthetics, and ethics. The haiku perspective affords a unique panoramic view of Polish poetry of the last hundred years. It also facilitates original analyses of the relationship between literature and art – in the field of book art, curatorship, and in various multimedia projects.

The career of haiku in the West can hardly be compared to that of any other “imported” literary genre.<sup>3</sup> Neither can we talk about a single haiku trend in the Polish poetry of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The oscillations around the prototype of haiku, the attempts at an orthodox reproduction of the poetics of the genre, the artistic polemics with this form (one full of apparent contradictions), and even its negations concealed under the genre label, provide a highly diverse research material that in my view is fascinating.

I do not wish to repeat numerous partial diagnoses here, nor do I want to formulate far-reaching conclusions. From today’s perspective, the influence of haiku, along with the distinct, not necessarily “influencological” convergence of forms and aesthetics are enduring and significant phenomena of Polish culture. One cannot predict how enduring and vigorous the poetry approaching the Western

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1 R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, Vol. 3, Tokyo 1952, p. 39.

2 As quoted in Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, New York, 1958, p. 59.

3 The comparisons with the sonnet, which often turn up in haiku research, seem to be fundamentally inaccurate, for instance on account of completely different markers of the genre, different cultural background of the two forms, and virtually incomparable literary-historical conditions.

prototype of the form will be in Poland. Most certainly, however, the haikems appearing in Polish poetry collections, so strongly in evidence in the works of Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, Grochowiak, Miłosz, Białoszewski, Koziół, Krynicki, Harasymowicz, Pasierb, Polkowski, Miłobędzka, Tuszyńska, Lisowski, Engelking and many, many other, are bound to remain vital and compelling.

Finally, I wish to emphasize once again that the aesthetic and philosophical appeal of Japanese miniatures is intimately bound up with to the broadly conceived movement of modernism.<sup>4</sup> (It is not without reason that there have been relatively few, at least so far, activities associated with haiku that can be defined as postmodern). It was modernism that brought the form from geographic and cultural antipodes. Modernity in various ways was favourably inclined to the aesthetics and philosophy of art close to haiku. In this monograph, I tried to reconstruct these ways, pointing to various Occidental (mainly Polish) poetic methods of de-automatizing perception and expanding (or even redefining) the boundaries of aesthetics, of capturing and artistically processing moments of illumination (via the category of modern epiphany, crucial to many analyses), and finally, somewhat paradoxically from the perspective of the seeming affective transparency of haiku, the role of an individual's feeling and perceiving. The haiku-centric examination of modern literature and art reveals many other ostensible paradoxes. One of them is the haiku humour nicely tying in with the seriousness of specific and culture-wide diagnoses of modernism.

The analyses carried out in his book have demonstrated the expressive and artistic power of unusual transcultural encounters. As it turned out, the analytical appeal and artistic freshness were at their greatest in texts and artefacts drawing on Eastern models, but also deeply embedded in the traditions of European culture (Symbolism, Futurism, Constructivism, Surrealism, and even the Baroque or folklore). Sometimes, direct Eastern stimuli were by no means necessary to give rise to truly transcultural works employing a variety of haikemes.

Finally, I want to focus on two poems that I made the motto of the last part of my monograph. A truly interpretive reading of haiku invariably calls for perceptual freshness, responsiveness to smallest epiphanies, and sometimes also removing the heaps of "papers" accumulated on our desks – and in our heads.

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4 See Footnote 2 in 'Introduction.'

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Figure/Ground Sensory Segregation in Japanese and non-Oriental Haiku,' in *Texts and Minds. Papers in Cognitive Poetics and Rhetoric*, ed. A. Kwiatkowska, Frankfurt am Main: 2012, pp. 139–54.

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I have returned to haiku research after many years; my (unpublished) Master's thesis defended in 2000 at the University of Lodz was devoted to haiku in Poland. These early investigations laid the groundwork for this monograph.

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\* In this index, the transcription of Japanese surnames, first names, and pen names is intentionally inconsistent. In Japanese family names traditionally come first and are followed by first names. In numerous Western publications this order is reversed (it is often difficult for Westerners to establish which part of a given proper name should be identified as a family name). Moreover, old Japan authors would frequently be better known by their pen names than by their family names. In order to help the reader identify a given author in this index, I try to put first the element of a proper name that is the most recognizable in the West: it can be a pen name (as in the case of numerous *haijins*), surname (mostly in the case of the Japanese scholars cited in the book) or first name (in the case of some old authors).

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