

CROSS-ROADS. POLISH STUDIES IN CULTURE,
LITERARY THEORY, AND HISTORY 21

Kamila Budrowska

Writers, Literature and Censorship in Poland. 1948–1958



PETER LANG

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Writers, Literature and Censorship in Poland. 1948–1958

The book describes the system of communist censorship in Poland in the years 1948–1958, as well as its effects on the development of literature. It is the first literary studies work which takes up the subject in such broad and systematic terms.

The book is divided into three main parts: *an attempt at synthesis* (theory and practice of censorship), *special cases* (censorship of specific writers), *authorial strategies* (the authors' ways of dealing with censorship) and *contexts*.

The most important conclusion which can be drawn from the research is that out of many small changes emerges an image of a very significant one. Numerous small cuts and alterations build up to an image of Polish literature of the 1940s and 1950s as a whole. A whole that was always dependant on and subservient to politics.

The Author

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Writers, Literature and Censorship in Poland. 1948–1958

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Contents

Preface	9
Introduction	13
1 Research objectives	13
2 The state of the archives	23
Part 1: Towards a synthesis	33
1 Censorship theory	33
Arguments in relation to literature	44
Arguments relating to censors' work	45
2 Content-related censorship	46
3 Author-related censorship	75
Accounting for the author	79
Authors viewed positively	81
Authors viewed negatively	86
Blacklisting, or the non-existent author	91
4 Publishers	95
5 Readers	104
6 The poetics of censors' reviews	110
7 A few words on censors in communist Poland: Towards a portrait	127
Working conditions	128
Social background and education	131
Errors and oversights	133
Personality	135
Part 2: Case studies	137
1 Between accommodation and resistance. Jerzy Andrzejewski	137

	<i>Popiół i diament</i> (Ashes and Diamonds)	137
	Short stories	140
	<i>Bramy raju</i> (The Gates of Paradise)	143
	<i>Idzie skacząc po górach</i> (He cometh leaping upon the mountains)	150
	The missing 'opening night' scene	150
	'Cuts' made on political and moral grounds	159
2	Stanisław Lem as a writer for young readers?	166
	<i>Wywiad i atomy</i> (Intelligence services and atoms)	166
	<i>Człowiek z Marsa</i> (The Man from Mars)	175
	<i>Szpital Przemienienia</i> (Hospital of the Transfiguration)	180
	<i>Astronauci</i> (The Astronauts)	189
	<i>Sezam i inne opowiadania</i> (Sesame and other stories)	192
	<i>Obłok Magellana</i> (The Magellanic Cloud)	194
3	Władysław Broniewski uncensored. 1949–1955	199
	<i>Wiersze zebrane</i> (Collected poems), 1949	202
	<i>Wiersze zebrane</i> (Collected poems), 1952	203
	<i>Wybór poezji</i> (Selected poems), 1950	206
	<i>Wiersze zebrane</i> (Collected poems), 1955	209
	<i>Wiersze warszawskie</i> (Warsaw poems) 1948, 1952	210
	<i>Nadzieja. Poezje</i> (The Hope. Poems), 1951	211
	<i>Mazowsze i inne wiersze</i> (Mazowsze and other poems), 1952	213
	<i>Młodym do lotu. Wybór wierszy</i> (Poems for Youth. Selected poems), 1952	215
4	Jan Brzechwa, Irena Jurgielewiczowa and others. Children's and youth literature	221
	The Case of Jan Brzechwa	222
	The Case of Irena Jurgielewiczowa	230
	Others	235
	Children's literature and youth literature	241
	A positive programme	244

Part 3: Authors' strategies	253
1 A model response. Tsarist censorship and censorship in the People's Republic of Poland	253
2 Aesopic language and porcelain puppies. Authors' strategies for dealing with censorship	266
Jerzy Andrzejewski	272
Stanisław Lem	275
Władysław Broniewski	278
Jan Brzechwa and other children's authors	281
 Part 4: Contexts	 287
Context 1: Literary studies	287
Wiedza Powszechna 1947–1950	294
Ossolineum 1948–1951	295
Książka i Wiedza, 1948–1950	298
Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1948	301
Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe 1948–1951	303
Wydawnictwa różne na T 1948–1956	304
Context 2. Ilya Ehrenburg's <i>The Thaw</i> and Polish censorship	314
 Conclusion	 329
 Afterword. Ten years later	 335
 Bibliography	 341
 Index	 373

Preface¹

The workings of key institutions remained a closely guarded secret in totalitarian systems. The concept of ‘official secrets’ was taken to absurd lengths, with the Soviet Union even classifying the telephone book of ordinary citizens’ numbers as such. As far as any reasonably intelligent and interested person living under such conditions was concerned however, the situation was, broadly speaking, transparent enough. The average participant in literary and cultural life, even during the most repressive period of Stalinism, was well-informed both as to what could and could not be written about at a given point in time and as to who was ultimately responsible for deciding whether or not questionable materials could be published. Responsibility, of course, did lie with the security service. Since the impact of censorship was visible to all in the form and quality of works that were published, even hidden procedures ultimately proved easily decipherable. It is for this reason that insightful descriptions of the workings of censorship appeared even before the archives were officially opened.

However, it was only after 1989 that researchers could seek to supplement the widely-available interpretations with source materials illustrating the detailed work undertaken by censorship officials while also demonstrating how their approach shifted over time. Research on censorship in the communist People’s Republic of Poland (PRL) has become an established field. Among the existing literature, there are not only purely conceptual outlines of the nature and functions of the censorship authorities but also extensive studies based on archival sources. Kamila Budrowska, the author of this book, thus did not have to start from scratch. Nevertheless, her study offers an outstanding contribution to the field.

Firstly, she has examined all the available sources relevant to the subject of her book – literally thousands of pages of materials. Secondly, she has used the empirical data and the existing literature to develop a conceptual framework that is sufficiently neutral in methodological terms to enable its use in diverse future research projects. What is particularly useful for specialists is that Budrowska has highlighted gaps, both in the archival sources and in the existing literature. She offers multiple pointers as to what is required of future research and what is likely to prove impossible for future research.

1 This preface to the English translation of this study is taken from Prof. dr. hab. Zdzisław Łapiński’s review written in 2009 before the publication of the Polish version.

As a result, this work is essential reading for anyone interested in the culture of communist Poland. Furthermore, this is a work that particularly sounds methodologically, meaning that it should be of interest to anyone working on various forms of political restriction and repression of literature during other periods. The chapter comparing communist-era and tsarist censorship is particularly significant in this respect. This book also provides readers with insight into the everyday life and work of censors, thus offering, indirectly, an illustration of the standard of living in post-war Poland. The image of the world of censorship that emerges from this study underlines the 'banality of evil' that was fundamental to the communist system. The majority of people serving in the Polish censorship office (GUKPPiW) were not demonic individuals but ordinary people, often intelligent and endowed with a sense of humour. While they sometimes did work in authors' favour, censorship officials were nevertheless fundamental to the overall existence of the repressive regime.

Authors' attempts to outsmart censors were destined to fail because the main method of communicating forbidden content was 'Aesopic language'. This was generally something that more insightful readers picked up on – with this group necessarily also including censors, who were, after all, trained to receive such messages. It is for this reason that 'GUKPPiW officials were surprisingly often fully aware of the strategies that authors had adopted' (p. 284). Thus, if texts that employed allusions did indeed make it through the censors' filter, then this fact is to be interpreted first and foremost as an indicator of the Party's prevailing cultural policy.

It thus comes as no surprise that during the Stalinist period, almost no author sought to adopt the strategy of using Aesopic language, because doing so could easily have landed the author in trouble with the security service. That authors did face the threat of being reported is evident in this telling note from July 1950, cited in the book: 'It would be worthwhile to not only deny approval to publish the yearbook, but also to inform the security service and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of this matter' (p. 306).

Following the breakthrough in October 1956, when a government led by Władysław Gomułka took control, such severe sanctions were no longer applied and writers again started playing little games with the censorship office. However, the outcomes of such efforts were, at best, ambivalent. As Budrowska notes, 'each author always employed some form of self-censorship' (p. 285).

Despite the wealth of available sources, which in themselves are undeniably quite monotonous, this book in no way leaves readers weary. It gives a general impression of the institutional mechanisms that were in place during the period from 1948 to 1958 alongside detailed descriptions of individual cases

that confirm the broader sociological truths that Budrowska seeks to outline, while also giving an indication of the human agency that sometimes modified the course that these processes took.

Alongside such structural and human factors, what Budrowska also shows is the significance of historical factors. Literary censorship during the Stalinist era was in total effect, as it affected both literary works themselves (their subject matter, ideology and poetics) and their reception. After October 1956, the authorities attached less significance to controlling poetics. However, their attitude towards subject matter and ideology, as well as to the potential scale of reception of questionable or controversial works, did fluctuate. Generally, though, these shifts tended towards permitting authors greater freedom of expression.

Budrowska is aware of the transformations to which censorship was subject as a result of political changes taking place not only in the decade that she studies, but also in the periods on either side of it. Thanks to the fact that she examines issues that were crucial to life in Poland beyond the period from 1948 to 1958, her book presents a panoramic image of an institution that was certainly dynamic but ultimately maintained a strong core identity throughout its existence.

At one point in her book, Budrowska cites what she considers to be a prevailing opinion in existing research while also adding her own comment that it is necessary to add a more nuanced perspective. This is something that, I believe, gives an impression of the overall significance of her study. *Writers, Literature and Censorship in Poland. 1948–1958* is a work that does not seek to turn the fairly substantial body of existing knowledge in this field on its head. However, it does cast this knowledge in a more nuanced light. There are many examples where she offers a corrective to previous findings. I will highlight just two examples here. The first is ‘that there is no evidence that censors altered canonical Polish texts between 1948 and 1950 (of course, this does not rule out such cases occurring later)’ (p. 310). The second relates to texts towards which censors were ‘indifferent’ or had no interest in. The category of texts that were ‘equivocal from a censorship perspective’, she argues, ‘did not exist in the context of books aimed at adults. It was thus something that was exclusive to children’s and youth literature’ (p. 250). As a result, she finds, ‘works thus classified could remain on the market but they could not be given new editions nor could they be recommended for school libraries’ (p. 247). What this means in the broader context is that ‘[t]he prevailing view that censorship treated children’s literature as strictly as works aimed at adults between 1948 and 1958 can thus be questioned’ (p. 251).

Her book thus offers various correctives to claims that prevail not only in broader discourse but also in specialist literature on communist-era censorship. The most impressive contribution offered by Budrowska’s study, however, is that

she has turned to previously unused sources to support the central thesis of the work. Her key argument is that ‘taking all literary works published in Poland between 1944 and 1989 as a whole, they could be defined as *editio purificata*’ (p. 333). Literature produced during the communist era emerged at a time when the shadow of the notorious censorship office loomed large over each work at every stage from its conception to its reception. This is an argument that can be supported wholeheartedly and is proven in the study.

In conclusion, I would like to add that the term ‘definitive work’ is often misplaced in the context of contributions to literary studies. However, having read Kamila Budrowska’s work, I have no hesitation in applying the term in this case, despite the author’s own reluctance. *Writers, Literature and Censorship in Poland. 1948–1958* is indeed a definitive work in its field.

Zdzisław Łapiński

Introduction

1 Research objectives

This study aims to describe the impact of censorship in communist Poland (known as the People's Republic of Poland – Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, abbreviated as PRL²) on the development of Polish literature in the 1940s and 1950s. My interest does not lie in the organization of Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk (GUKPPiW; the Central Office for the Control of the Press, Publications and Performances) and the systems that shaped how it functioned, since they have already been described in depth by historians.³ Instead, my focus is on its specific activities in relation to literature – interventions in literary works, the pressures and official directives issued to blacklist a work or an author (*zapis*), and bans on publication resulting from preventative censorship – and the traces these measures left on texts. In contrast to a number of other works, my research seeks to produce philological interpretations and literary-historical findings, rather than contribute to the historiography of the period.

My aims and research strategies were determined by the scope of the available sources. Material relating to the restrictions imposed on writing before 1948 is very limited. There are evidently significant gaps in the records available at Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN; the Central Archive of Modern Records). There are no personal records, while the materials on the majority of texts are incomplete, with draft editions of publications rarely available. There are also few registers of proposed changes. I have therefore focused my analysis, out of necessity, on the most common type of document found in the files, namely censors' reviews. These materials thus encourage a number of assumptions

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- 2 Since 1944 the official name of the Polish state was *Polska Ludowa* (People's Poland). The name *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa* (People's Republic of Poland; PRL) was in use from 1952 until 1989. However, in many unofficial statements, as well as official ones, such as censors' reviews, the older shorter name continued to be used.
 - 3 See, for example: *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL. Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy 1945–1949*, vol. 6, ed. by Daria Nałęcz, Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 1994; Andrzej Paczkowski, *Cenzura 1946–1949: statystyka działalności. Zeszyty Historyczne*, vol. 116, 1996, pp. 22–57; Andrzej Krawczyk, *Pierwsza próba indoktrynacji. Działalność MliP (1944–1947)*, Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 1994; Aleksander Pawlicki, *Kompletna szarość. Cenzura w latach 1965–1972. Instytucja i ludzie*, Warszawa: Trio, 2001.

and hypotheses, while also inspiring further research on the broader questions addressed here.

I can thus propose the cautious hypothesis that it is relatively unlikely that the set of sources covering the period from 1948 to 1958 will lack any references to particular key works of literature. In cases where the primary review is not available, there are usually secondary reviews, letters from publishers or references to these works in highly detailed descriptive reports. However, the fact that the complete documentation is missing means that definitive statements are not always possible, meaning that imprecise claims or overinterpretation is a risk. In order to avoid making unsubstantiated claims in my research, I have avoided overstating the applicability of my findings. There is significant scope here for others who might later seek to verify my findings.

This work is based on archival research conducted over several years. My goal was to access all available materials relating to literature in the 1940s and 1950s. I read all the documentation pertaining to the period from 1945, establishing that the oldest materials relating to non-periodical writing come from 1948. This is the reason for the temporal framework for the study, whose findings are based on the sources relating to the period from 1948 to 1958. Any archival material predating that period is used to provide context. Historically speaking, my study could establish three distinct sub-periods: 1944 (1945)–1948, 1949–1955 and 1956–1958. I am more interested, however, in the continuities evident in processes and practices.

The archives hold 1330 files relating to the ten-year period from 1948 to 1958. Three hundred of them contain references to literary censorship. My study is based on a reading of *all* the documents relating to literature – some 45,000 source documents in total. I have attempted to use as much of this material as possible, while remaining as close to the archival materials as possible in my readings.

The limited scope of the research is deliberate and results from both empirical and methodological factors. It would not be possible to present in a single book all the material relating to the entire period from 1945 to 1990, since the available documentation is too broad and the differences between the contents of particular files are too significant. Comparing materials from significantly diverse historical periods while at the same time producing meaningful generalizations would be no simple task. Indeed, such a study would be beyond the means of a single researcher, as is evident in the works produced by others working on the issue of literary censorship.⁴ It thus seemed that limiting my study to the selected period was the most sensible option.

4 Aleksander Pawlicki, *Kompletna szarość*, op. cit.

The majority of my findings relate to censorship during the period from 1948 to 1958, although it seems that many of my claims could be generalized and applied to the period beyond 1958. I have always sought to clearly differentiate such claims.

The period explored here does not fit neatly with the commonly recognized turning points in literary history. My choice was shaped by the nature of the available sources. Relatively complete (and preserved) traces of literary censorship are available for the period from 1948, while 1958 can be seen as the point by which the reformist spirit of the Polish October of 1956 had dissipated. In order to offer a comparative perspective, I have drawn on materials from later periods in order to trace the fate of particular texts in the context of the most significant variable – namely the oscillation between liberalization and clampdowns in politics.

My exploration of the earliest available sources relating to the activities of GUKPPIW is justified for many reasons. Firstly, this was a time when the political situation was still very fluid, with various fissures in the system evident as the new order was installed in a manner that can hardly be described as precise. What becomes evident in the course of my study, then, are the ways in which Polish literature adapted to the new realities. In this relatively short, ten-year period the political situation also shifted dramatically, as did the ways in which culture was treated and created. This is explicitly evident in the changing directives regarding interventions in literary texts. It is worth noting that in the periods 1948–1949 and 1956–1958 controls were less strict than during the period of socialist realism.

The records of GUKPPIW show that censorship restrictions intensified towards the end of 1948. Previous studies have written of a turning point in either 1948, marked by the formation of the Book Popularization Committee (Komitet Upowszechniania Książki) and of the Department of Press and Publications (Wydział Prasy i Wydawnictw) within the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR), or 1949, which saw the Szczecin Congress – which declared socialist realism as the only legitimate mode of art – and the formation of the Polish Library Book Selection Commission (Komisja Selekcji Książek w Bibliotekach Polskich).⁵ A more moderate approach to censorship started to emerge in early 1955. The greatest liberalization came between October 1956 and October 1957.⁶ Censorship did not disappear – it was simply

5 Stanisław Adam Kondak, *Papierowa rewolucja. Oficjalny obieg książek w Polsce w latach 1948–1955*, Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1999.

6 Jerzy Eisler, *List 34*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993.

less invasive than before. While these turning points are familiar from the existing literature, my primary aim is to demonstrate their presence and impact on the basis of archival evidence. Nevertheless, the vast divergences of readings of the same work are quite surprising. What is also interesting is the transition from a degree of certain liberalism towards stricter controls during Stalinism. Tracing this shift allows us to establish the forms that the Stalinization of Polish culture took before this trend was reversed in the period around the Polish October of 1956.

During the initial post-war period, representatives of the interwar literary milieu, accustomed to freer conditions for expression and publication, were still active. They were socialized in conditions that were based on different principles and trends to those served up by communist rule. The clash between their personalities and talents and the vulgar demands of the censorship authorities gave rise to various strategies for dealing with what was ultimately a stalemate situation. There are numerous cases that can be used to describe and trace this process. Many younger writers who had never known creative freedom also made their debuts between 1948 and 1958. Both the 'old masters' and the 'young pups' applied various strategies for circumventing censors' demands, including stalling, disguises, camouflage, Aesopic language and 'porcelain puppies', i.e. deliberate red herrings used to distract censors. Over the course of this book, I will attempt to establish whether or not particular approaches were more typical of a particular generation or whether the strategies adopted tended instead to reflect individual creative preferences.

Owing to my research interests, I would like to focus on literary fiction, paying particular attention to interventions into texts that can be considered to be of particularly significant artistic value. I will dedicate the least amount of attention to dramas and plays owing to the specific nature of such texts and the significantly different restrictions which such texts faced (with censorship affecting both the written texts and the performances). My investigation will concentrate primarily on new literary works submitted for publication for the first time. This set of works includes both works that were created 'freely' before 1944, which were confronted with censorship for the first time during the post-war publication process, and those that were written with censors, and the pressure they exerted, in mind.⁷ The period examined here is, ultimately, the final time

7 For more on this subject, see: Hanna Gosk, *W kręgu „Kuznicy“: Dyskusje krytycznoliterackie lat 1945–1948*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985.

that works written without the awareness of the political changes, that would affect post-war Poland, were published in significant numbers. The encounters of such works with GUKPPiW were quite specific and their path to publication was often very long and winding.

Suggestions for further research using the same documents are worth noting at this point. A different perspective could be achieved through systematic exploration of subsequent editions of existing works, thus raising questions relating to selection criteria, changes in texts and outright bans on publication.⁸ Investigating the censorship of foreign literature and comparing assessments of different works could also offer an interesting angle on the activities of GUKPPiW.⁹ In order to offer more context, I will address the fate of works in literary studies, thus enabling me to consider the question of reissues of classics, as well as Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Thaw*, a famous work of foreign literature that exposed one of the most significant errors made by censors during the period under investigation.

In her study of Russian censorship during the period that Poland was under partition (1772/1794–1918), Maria Prussak states that the archival sources are highly particular and difficult to interpret. 'The documents reveal, above all, the censor's consciousness, his sensitivity to possible codes, and the current strategies of the authorities, while revealing very little about the issues related to the text itself'.¹⁰ There are similar difficulties involved in interpreting censorship documents from communist Poland. Establishing the truth about the control exerted over literature demands in-depth insight into the content of documents, while always retaining a degree of scepticism towards them. It is crucial to read against the authors' apparent intentions, thus conducting a quasi-deconstruction of the statements, seeking instead ruptures, gaps in logic, and mistakes.

A work based on GUKPPiW sources, thus relating to just one of the parties involved in the conflict, is limited in many respects. The image that emerges

8 Stanisław Adam Kondek, *Papierowa rewolucja*, explores this from the perspective of library studies.

9 For more on this subject, see: John M. Bates, *Cenzura wobec problemu niemieckiego w Polsce (1948–1955)*, in: *Presja i ekspresja. Zjazd szczeciński i socrealizm*, ed. by Danuta Dąbrowska, Piotr Michałowski, Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2002.

10 Maria Prussak, *Warianty utworów literackich zachowane w archiwach cenzury rosyjskiej*, in: *Autor, tekst, cenzura. Prace na Kongres Słowistów w Krakowie*, ed. by Janusz Pelc, Marek Prejs, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1998, p. 248.

from analysing such sources is distorted, since the documents follow their own logic. It is thus always necessary to bear in mind that the censorship office was not an authority in itself, but merely carried out orders. Thus any conclusions and findings must be stated cautiously here.

There is relatively little philological research on censorship in the People's Republic of Poland. Given the vast amount of archival material available at the Archive of New Records, the number of books and archives based on them seems quite modest. Literary historians have tended to explore the sources selectively, usually seeking information about a particular author or text, often in connection with editorial work, as was the case with Tadeusz Drewnowski and Sławomir Buryła's preparation of Tadeusz Borowski's *Pisma* (Collected writings) for publication. The same applies to Alina Molisak's monograph on Bogdan Wojdowski. Dariusz Jarosz, meanwhile, edited a collection of some thirty censorship office reviews of artistically significant works submitted for publication between 1948 and 1955, contributing a short introduction.¹¹ It is worth remembering that the archive of GUKPPiW materials was made available for the first time only in 1990 and it would seem that scholars have yet to establish how best to work with this resource. Recently, researchers in Polish studies have showed greater interest in working with the archives of the censorship office, with my book seeking to contribute to this growing body of scholarship.

In writing this book, I have drawn on many existing studies on the broad subject of literary censorship and restrictions on literary expression. Here I would like to limit my attention only to those pioneering works that established the standards of scholarship, developed methods for working with sources and laid the foundations of knowledge on the subject of GUKPPiW's activities in relation to literature. This group includes studies by Marta Fik, Tadeusz Drewnowski, John M. Bates, Joanna Hobot and Piotr Perkowski. I will refer to these works on numerous occasions. Here I will outline their key ideas that have served as the starting point for my research.

In her article *Cenzor jako współautor* (The censor as co-author), Marta Fik established an important principle guiding the work of censorship in Poland – namely, its secrecy.¹² Given the strict confidentiality clauses that were invoked,

11 *Zapisy cenzury z lat 1948–1955*, sources collected and ed. by Dariusz Jarosz. *Regiony*, vol. 3, 1996, pp. 2–27.

12 Marta Fik, *Cenzor jako współautor*, in: *Literatura i władza*, ed. by Elżbieta Sarnowska–Temeriusz, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Badań Literackich PAN, 1996, pp. 131–147.

censors had a significant influence on the final form of a book, film or performance. This influence, we should add, was imperceptible to the recipients of a work.

In his articles *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej* (Censorship under Stalinism)¹³ and *Cenzura wobec problem niemieckiego w Polsce* (1948–1955) (Censorship and the German question in Poland),¹⁴ John M. Bates examines two fundamental questions: the intensification of censorship in the period between 1949 and 1954 and the servility of GUKPPiW in relation to the Party's other organs of control. Examining censorship records relating to over a dozen literary works that were submitted to the censorship office during the Stalinist era, Bates offers an analysis of the entire system of exerting control over literature. His studies are thus genuinely pioneering and I will draw on their findings at several points throughout this book.

The most substantial study drawing on the archives of GUKPPiW, which I have encountered, is Joanna Hobot's book *Gra z cenzurą w poezji Nowej Fali* (Playing with the censors in New Wave poetry).¹⁵ Her work features numerous important statements and examples, with the most interesting, including her description of the strategies, employed by New Wave poets in their struggle against censorship. Hobot's study found analogies between the structures of censorship in People's Poland and the tsarist period, while also presenting an important argument relating to de-actualization, which was the price that had to be paid for the complex and multifarious operations carried out on one's own texts.

In an extensive article that is a fragment of a larger unpublished work titled *Pół wieku z cenzurą: Przypadek Tadeusza Konwickiego* (Half a century with censors: The case of Tadeusz Konwicki),¹⁶ Piotr Perkowski offers a detailed account of the publication history of that author's works. Perkowski highlights the

13 John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej. Teksty Drugie*, vol. 1–2, 2000, pp. 95–120.

14 John M. Bates, *Cenzura wobec problemu niemieckiego w Polsce*, op. cit.

15 Joanna: Hobot, *Gra z cenzurą w poezji Nowej Fali* (1968–1976) Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000.

16 Piotr Perkowski, *Pół wieku z cenzurą. Przypadek Tadeusza Konwickiego. Pamiętnik Literacki*, vol. 2, 2006, pp. 75–95. I would like to thank the author for giving me access to his unpublished Master's thesis, *Cenzura jako źródło cierpień? Powieści Tadeusza Konwickiego w obliczu kontroli słowa* (Censorship as a source of suffering? Tadeusz Konwicki's novels in the context of restrictions on freedom of expression), supervised by Prof. Małgorzata Czermińska in Gdańsk (2004). I am also grateful for him giving me access to the abovementioned article prior to its publication.

editor's constant presence in Konwicki's literary consciousness that meant that he shaped his texts in a permanent dialogue with editors. The editor acts as the most detailed (and perhaps thus the ideal) reader. Perkowski's innovative findings can be applied to other authors, as my study of the archives suggests, thus enabling us to consider the universality of the findings presented here.

I also owe an intellectual debt to many historical studies, with the works of Daria Nałęcz and Aleksander Pawlicki deserving special mention. The study *Kompletna szarość: Cenzura w latach 1965–1972 – Instytucja i ludzie* (Total greyness: Censorship between 1965 and 1972, institutions and people)¹⁷ is particularly worthy of attention given its completeness (it goes significantly beyond the timeframe outlined in its title) and breadth of its research, which proves its worth in relation to materials from a significantly earlier period.

My study is divided into four parts: 1. Towards a synthesis; 2. Case studies; 3. Authors' strategies and 4. Contexts.¹⁸ There is also an introduction and brief conclusion. The first part presents the theory and practice behind the activities of GUKPPIW, describing the mechanisms at work both when the institution was working successfully and when it was facing ruptures and uncertainties. The case studies focus on the censorship of particular authors, works or literary forms. The selection of the cases was shaped by the facts emerging from the study of available materials. I wanted to avoid creating models and have instead sought simply to describe the most interesting situations present in archival sources. In the third part I seek to outline authors' strategies for dealing with oppression. This section puts to the test findings from numerous other studies on the response of Polish literature to institutional controls over freedom of expression, including Tadeusz Drewnowski's notion of a retreat into the private realm,¹⁹ Stanisław Siekierski's argument that 'second circulation' or underground publishing was a response to censorship,²⁰ Leszek Szaruga's claim that the development of realist prose about contemporary life was stunted,²¹ Ryszard Nycz's thesis that the 'Aesopic' became

17 Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit.

18 This structure refers to Zbigniew Jarosiński's outstanding study, *Nadwiślański socrealizm*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Badań Literackich PAN, 1999.

19 Tadeusz Drewnowski, *Cenzura w PRL a współczesne edytorstwo*, in: *Autor, tekst, cenzura*, op. cit., pp. 13–23.

20 Stanisław Siekierski, *Drugi obieg jako efekt działania cenzury?*, in: *Autor, tekst, cenzura*, op. cit., pp. 25–38.

21 Leszek Szaruga, *Wobec totalitaryzmu. Kostium kościelny w prozie polskiej. Wobec cenzury*, Szczecin: Ottonianum, 1994.

the dominant style in Polish literature, leading to hermetic content²² and Jerzy Smulski's idea that there was a particular mode of reaching an understanding with the readers.²³ I would also like to test the hypothesis that there were similarities in the response of Polish writers to censorship under both tsarist and communist rule by examining the strategies employed by particular authors.

This book examines censorship and ways of avoiding it, as well as self-censorship, treating the latter as a mode of anticipating and replacing the censor's pencil. I am thus interested in both sides: the authors, their internal strategies (as documented in the archival record and their works) and their external practices adopted in light of the presence and inevitability of control, on the one hand, and censors as thinking individuals, as agents and as state functionaries, on the other. Ultimately, there were other parties involved in this bloodless conflict. Indeed, the role of publishers and readers cannot be overlooked. I will examine the crucial role of the former at several points in this study. Readers, I argue, sometimes were very much aware of the efforts to efface authors' intentions (the agonistic reader), while at other times they proved completely powerless in the face of these procedures (the naïve reader).

It is thus necessary to ask what is central: the construction of a text or its reception? The most interesting approach for a work based on describing GUKPPIW and its agenda as co-creators of the construct known as 'contemporary Polish literature' would be to explore the intersection of the creative process and reception. The methodology I have adopted is thus typical both for research employing textual analysis and for reception studies. More specifically, I will concentrate on analysing censors' reports because they illustrate the reasons used to justify arguments and judgments relating to particular texts. It would also be worthwhile to conduct textual analysis of the most significant works mentioned in this study, supplementing the findings with archival materials. However, this would be beyond the scope of a single monograph. I will, however, attempt a small-scale application of this approach in the subchapter on Jerzy Andrzejewski's prose.

The central focus of this study, then, involves examining the processes involved in the creation of high-brow literature in the late 1940s and 1950s. They

22 Ryszard Nycz, *Literatura polska w cieniu cenzury (Wykład). Teksty Drugie*, vol. 3, 1998, pp. 5–25.

23 Jerzy Smulski, *Jak niewyraźalne staje się wyraźalne? O języku ezopowym w prozie polskiej lat pięćdziesiątych*, in: *Literatura wobec niewyraźalnego*, ed. by Włodzimierz Bolecki and Erazm. Kuźma, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 1998, pp. 145–164.

always took place in the shadow of the censor. Since this work is based on an analysis of archival materials, one of its innovative aspects is that it attempts to offer a systemic perspective that transcends the particular timeframe.

At this point, I would like to present a personal anecdote. This book emerged as a result of a misunderstanding. My aim had been to investigate how works that had been cut by censors were reissued after 1989. I worked under the assumption that someone would have produced new editions. Beyond a few exceptions,²⁴ however, it turned out that the full texts were rarely restored. This gave rise to the idea of reading the original versions.

The argument that texts should be restored to their canonical form is becoming increasingly prevalent in Polish scholarship. Tadeusz Drewnowski suggested something similar at the Slavic Studies Congress in Krakow in 1998.

Polish textual studies and editorial practice enjoy a high degree of theoretical sophistication which is nevertheless not entirely suited to the previous era. [...] As regards literature produced during that time, the key category has to be that of the integral text, i.e. restoring – if, of course, possible – the full, authentic authorial text.²⁵

This is an important finding as far as the impact of the activities of GUKPPiW are concerned: we simply do not have access to the majority of texts in their integral form, with thousands of cut works constituting a lasting reminder of People's Poland.²⁶ Drewnowski's paper sets out the horizon for further research and activities which would suffice for an entire generation of researchers. My own book, too, provides the foundations for future editorial work. I readily admit that rather than discouraging me because of the gaps in the documents, spending several years in the archive in fact proved overwhelming because of the wealth of material encountered. There are genuine 'pearls' among seemingly less interesting material. The gaps in the archive that many researchers have highlighted are undoubtedly significant, yet what there is should keep philologists going for many years to come.

Given that GUKPPiW materials are difficult to access and locating specific documents is highly time-consuming, I have opted not only to refer to particular sources but also to present some of them.

24 Tadeusz Drewnowski, *op. cit.*, p. 20, states that Tadeusz Rózewicz, Zbigniew Herbert, Ryszard Krynicki and Julian Kornhauser restored their texts to their original form.

25 Tadeusz Drewnowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.

26 Aleksnader Pawlicki, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

2 The state of the archives

The records of GUKPPiW are held in a collection at the Central Archives of Modern Records (AAN) in Warsaw. Researchers have variously estimated its size. Marta Fik has stated that there are several thousand files (3361 inventory numbers),²⁷ while Daria Nałęcz suggests a figure of 4000.²⁸ An estimate based on the old catalogue of call numbers gives a total of 4982 files. The catalogue presents a much larger total of 7,867 call numbers, although it includes the previously inaccessible and unavailable personnel files of censorship officials, of which there are 3,881.

During the entire period of its existence, censorship in People's Poland worked on the basis of prevention, which meant controlling texts before they were published. Archival materials confirm this fact.

The GUKPPiW files were catalogued and ordered during the institution's glory days (or, indeed, most inglorious period). The files were arranged by year, with an alphabetical approach adopted based on the name of the submitting institution (the journal or publisher). In some cases, the place where the document was produced (i.e. the regional office) was the determining factor. The archiving method reflects the censorship office's institutional logic whereby publishing houses submitted books together with a letter recommending the work for censorship control. Contrary to common claims, there are no separate files containing materials relating to particular authors. It is worth stating explicitly that after 1990 these materials were incorporated into the Archives using the system devised by GUKPPiW.

In 2012, AAN started working on a new way of ordering and cataloguing the files produced by the censorship office, with the new catalogue being published in January 2019. I would like to note, however, that my archival research and the findings presented in this book were conducted on the basis of the old and 'original' ordering and description of the files. I was thus able to investigate not only the contents of the sources but also consider the significance of their original classification and arrangement. The new catalogue does enable identification of the old call numbers, meaning that research produced and published before 2019 can be verified by readers turning to the archival sources.

The records of the censorship office are incomplete and in all likelihood anything missing cannot be restored. It is accepted that part of the materials were deliberately destroyed around 1989, with the censors' personnel files specifically

27 Marta Fik, *Cenzor jako współautor*, op. cit.,

28 *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL*, op. cit.,

targeted.²⁹ Most probably, part of the materials already suffered significant damage much earlier on as a result of negligence, of which the Supreme Audit Office (NIK) was already aware in 1966.³⁰ The materials could have been subject to segregation both for serious reasons, such as political changes, as well as quite banal reasons, such as moving offices, documents going missing in the post and mechanical destruction. Printers' drafts were targeted for destruction,³¹ with records of a meeting in 1951 mentioning orders for such measures being issued.³² A small portion of the records were taken out of Poland and published abroad (*Czarna księga cenzury/ The Black Book of Polish Censorship*).³³ Crucial directives were also issued by telephone, meaning that they were lost for posterity; the reduction in the number of written materials as telephones became widespread is evident in the collection. The gaps in the record do not impact the significance of the available sources, since even incomplete data can provide the basis for research questions and descriptions. An outstanding example of this is Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa's book *Cenzura w dawnej Polsce*.³⁴ And, after all, the number of files relating to GUKPPiW is hardly insignificant, while many of them contain hundreds of pages of documents.

The state of the documents gives no reason to believe that the records were stored with great care over the years. After all, nobody assumed that they would become sources for standard research. Many pages are filed wrongly as far as alphabetical or chronological order is concerned, or they have been mistakenly included among records relating to the wrong publishers. Some files have pages that have been numbered twice or even three times, while some pages are crumpled, ripped or blurred. The paper seems to have been exposed to moisture. Reports and reviews were often written on poor quality acidic paper using the

29 *Ibid.*; Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit., p. 17. Today it is known that copies of personnel files were deposited in the collections of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) and have now been transferred to AAN where they have been incorporated into the GUKPPiW collection.

30 Cited in: Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit., p. 30.

31 See: Tadeusz Drewnowski, op. cit.

32 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/5, p. 116.

33 *Czarna księga cenzury PRL*, Londyn 1977, vols. 1–2, no author given. English version: *Black Book of Polish Censorship*, translated by Aleksander Niczow, South Bend, Indiana 1982. Where English translations are available, these will be given throughout the work in footnotes and in the bibliography.

34 Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa, *Cenzura w dawnej Polsce. Między prasą drukarską a stosem*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SBP, 1997.

(infamous!) pencil and red crayon, meaning that many of them are now barely legible. Within the next fifty years, most of the documents are likely to become illegible.

There are few materials relating to the earliest period (1945–1947), with only several dozen files available and some individual documents located among later records. It is worth remembering that the system of restrictions was only beginning to emerge in those years as the censorship office laid the foundations for its activities. There are some touching accounts from those tough early years, calling for more butter and for more straw to be placed in mattresses. The most interesting surviving materials, relating to the initial post-war period, include interesting reports from trips around the country (the oldest documents are from May 1945), as well as traces of interventions affecting the newspaper *Gazeta Ludowa*, the Catholic weekly *Dziś i Jutro*, and official journals. However, there are no sources relating to censorship restrictions on literature predating 1948. I had hoped that five files mysteriously titled ‘Permissions to publish (1946–1948)’ would prove to be an exception, but they are also related to the daily press. Likewise, the 48 files indicated by the descriptions of the collections (in reality 47, but a surprisingly large number nonetheless), catalogued as ‘Plays removed – various (1947–1950)’ turned out to be a record of a ‘purge’ of libraries, whereby a selection of plays first published before the war (or even the First World War) were removed from the libraries. Some new texts submitted to GUKPPiW are also mentioned in these files and scattered among the collections.

None of the documents for the period from 1948 to 1958 remain classified, with this information confirmed in the then new catalogue.³⁵ The GUKPPiW collection at AAN holds around 1330 files on the period from 1948 to 1958. Over 300 of them include some assessments relating to literature (not including literary periodicals). One hundred and sixty files relate to specialist publishers (on forestry, agriculture, maritime matters, technical matters, etc.). The rest of the materials relate to press censorship. These numbers should be treated as rough estimates, as the catalogues feature misnomers, while the files themselves can contain documents that do not match the descriptions. My calculations are far from exact but they do give a rough indication of the state of the archives. There are disproportionately more materials relating to periodicals than to non-periodical publications. While this could be a consequence of deliberate distortion, the more likely explanation is that it reflects the fact that there were more press titles than literary works on the market. As various people have claimed,

35 Aleksander Pawlicki (p. 39) has claimed otherwise.

and the archival sources confirm, GUKPPiW attached much greater significance to censoring the press. There are tonnes of documents, often outlining very specific interventions, relating to these time-consuming procedures that were even more challenging for censors owing to the number of publications and issues (it was the daily press, after all) and the ever-changing nature of official directives. Given its less extensive social reach and relevance, literary censorship was, from a political perspective, of less pressing significance, particularly in the first years of GUKPPiW's existence. It is also worth repeating, following Hanna Gosk, that in the first years after the war, literature was published almost exclusively in journals.³⁶ With the expansion of Poland's book market on the one hand, and the growing specialization of the censorship authorities on the other, literary censorship became increasingly precise and significant.

GUKPPiW received only a part of the materials produced in regional censorship offices. A large portion of the records of Voivodeship Censorship Offices (WUKPPiW) is located in state archives around the country. Given the centralization of publishing in People's Poland, however, it is highly likely that a significant majority of literary works submitted for publication were on some level dealt with by censors working on Mysia Street in Warsaw. Regional offices largely focused on controlling the press, works submitted by local publishers and less significant texts, such as brochures, posters and announcements. They were obliged to send documents relating to literature to the Department of Non-Periodical Publications. More important texts should, therefore, have always reached Warsaw. Given the often negligent management of the censorship office, however, proving this would require checking whether or not some materials survive only outside the capital. In some cases, Warsaw censors would delegate work to regional officials. The collection contains significant numbers of reviews written in offices in Krakow, Poznań and Toruń, for example that were then sent back to Warsaw.

Let us now turn to the actual materials from 1948–1958. Analysing the contents of such a significant number of sources will inevitably pose difficulties. It is worth taking the risk as a researcher and attempt to classify these materials, particularly since I have been faced with numerous questions relating to this matter. It should be noted, however, that my systematization of the sources applies only to the question of literary censorship.

Several common types of documents can be established on the basis of an analysis of the files:

36 Hanna Gosk, *op. cit.*

- Manuscripts and typescripts of literary texts featuring censors' corrections (in full or excerpts),
- Portions of text that were deemed debatable,
- Excerpts of proposed changes,
- Primary reviews permitting a work for typesetting and print,
- Secondary reviews written after a work had been published,
- Summary reports and overviews of interventions,
- Documents relating to the organization and functioning of the censorship office: minutes of meetings and financial tables,
- Miscellaneous documents: correspondence with publishers, authors' complaints, clarifications and others.

Only descriptive reports and documents relating to organizational matters were filed in separate marked files. The rest of the documents can be found under the call numbers of particular publishing houses arranged (usually) by year. The majority of materials relating to literary censorship are primary and secondary reviews. According to my calculations, they constitute around 70 % of the material analysed for this study. Another common misconception can thus be allayed, namely that the archive contains a mass of complete texts marked with red pencil that were ready to print 'in accordance with the author's intentions'. A researcher entering the archive with such expectations will greatly be disappointed.

Many documents feature handwritten summaries and notes that are often more interesting than the contents of the document themselves. Some were written on the back of the printed papers to save resources or even, immediately after the war, on papers from the occupying Nazi authorities. As is suggested by information contained in many documents, such as the *Biuletyn Informacyjno-Instrukcyjny* (Informational-Instructional Bulletin),³⁷ there was a strict directive to save paper. The archives also indicate that the censorship office sent paper for recycling.

From a literary studies perspective, the most significant materials are complete manuscripts and typescripts of literary works where proposed corrections are marked. These sources could serve as the basis for re-editions and reinterpretations. During my archival research I came across numerous interventions of this kind, but they always related to short texts: individual poems, short stories extracted from collections and one-act plays, with the most interesting one, given the status of the author, being by Zofia Kossak. The apparent 'completeness' of texts extracted from volumes should be approached

37 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420.

cautiously, since these works functioned differently once removed from their context.

I will explore these materials in detail in later sections of this book. At this point, I would like to address the issue of the absence of complete versions of longer works, particularly novels. This can be explained by the practice of destroying versions submitted to censors (perhaps for recycling), as this served the intention of camouflaging the existence of the censorship office, even if this only makes sense according to an aberrant logic. If this indeed was the case, though, then how would we explain the existence of the significant number of original versions of short stories, poems and short dramas, as mentioned above? On the basis of my archival research, I would cautiously suggest the following hypotheses that at the same time do not call into question the findings of other researchers: GUKPPiW sought to avoid storing long texts because it lacked space, while publishers submitted fewer copies of longer texts than they did shorter ones (partly to save paper). Furthermore, the texts of novels were sent to publishers or authors who resubmitted them, as research suggests, with minor corrections. It can also be assumed that manuscripts featuring corrections made by censors, now dispersed and incomplete, could be found among the personal papers of particular authors, publishers' archives or in other ministerial departments and party archives. Daria Nałęcz argues that fuller knowledge of Polish censorship can only be achieved by exploring Soviet archives and materials relating to the Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza – PPR), the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – PZPR), the Ministry of Information and Propaganda, the Ministry of Defence and the Security Office.³⁸ While this is certainly true, it would nevertheless result in listening to only one side of the story, namely that of the authorities. Tracing all aspects of literary censorship would entail drawing on sources produced by authors, such as their manuscripts, letters and memoirs. Anna Bikont and Joanna Szczęsna's study *Lawina i kamienie. Pisarze wobec komunizmu* (The avalanche and the stones: Writers' attitudes towards communism) has successfully illustrated this side of the story.³⁹

It is also necessary to remain aware of the fact that the activities of GUKPPiW were typically chaotic and changeable, since they were determined by political currents and other party authorities; hence, the regular deviations in its work

38 *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL*, op. cit., p. 6.

39 Anna Bikont, Joanna Szczęsna, *Lawina i kamienie. Pisarze wobec komunizmu*, Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka, 2006.

from established principles. Finding complete versions of texts in the course of further archival research cannot thus be ruled out. John M. Bates states that the typescripts of many novels and plays can be found in the archives of the Ministry of Culture and Art as part of the collections of the Department Twórczości Artystycznej (Department of Artistic Work).⁴⁰ My investigations suggest that these materials contain the typescripts of novels, dramatic texts and volumes of poetry, and academic studies that were sent for assessment before being submitted to GUKPPIW. These materials thus do not feature corrections made by censors. Some of these 154 works were published, while some have never seen the light of day, including texts that are not mentioned in bibliographies, such as Roman Bratny's drama *Za godzinę koniec* (An hour to the end), Magdalena Samozwaniec's *Kim jesteś Anno? Komedia współczesna* (Who are you Anna? A contemporary comedy), Wiktor Woroszyński's drama *Tymon Grudziel*, and an unknown version of Gustaw Morcinek's humorous piece for the stage *O tym, jak rębacz Bulanda kramarzył ze skarbnikiem* (How the hewer Bulanda haggled with the treasurer) The GUKPPIW materials include significant numbers of excerpts from works featuring censors' cuts and proposed changes. These sources are of primary significance for this study. The majority of these materials date from 1955 onwards, which was when censors began working on typeset rushes rather than on typescripts.⁴¹ By comparing published versions with authors' manuscripts it is thus possible to present arguments relating to the changes forced upon texts, the degree of compromise and the strategies adopted by authors to defend the integrity of a text. These sources also open the way to re-editions that would be in accordance with the author's intentions.

Another type of document that can be found in the files are summaries of proposed changes. Paragraphs, sentences or parts of sentences (removed from their context) are juxtaposed with censors' proposed versions. Such summaries took the form of either stand-alone texts or (most commonly) provided the conclusion to a review. Reaching firm conclusions on the basis of such summaries is, however, very difficult because there are many abbreviations, as well as imprecise references to page numbers and lines, meaning that it is easy to make a mistake or over-interpret a source. Not all of the changes suggested were ultimately implemented, while other alterations that were not suggested were also made. Nevertheless, this kind of material also provides the basis for philological findings, with close reading making it possible to establish the extent of changes

40 John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., p. 98.

41 Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit., p. 105.

forced upon a text, while also suggesting what a canonical version of it would look like.

The most common type of source emerging from archival research on the GUKPPiW files is reviews, i.e. syntheses of a work containing an assessment.

Usually, each work submitted to the censorship office received two primary reviews written by two different censors around the same time. My research suggests that in many cases there was consultation over the summaries. More controversial texts, including those by more renowned authors, for example, or works on unwelcome subjects and those that had already been queried, could expect to receive more primary reviews. Certain 'record holders' received over a dozen reviews.

The form for primary reviews contained the following sections: title and subtitle, author, publishing house, print run, new book/re-edition, original/translation, language of the source text, date received by reviewer, review text, suggested interventions and short justification, reviewer's verdict (delete as appropriate): accept for publication, reject for publication, accept for publication following changes, date, signature and decision of superior. Many reviews were written by hand and they could vary in length from just several words to several typed pages. Most also feature hand-written remarks from superiors giving their approval for typesetting and printing or, instead, withholding a work. Sometimes the review documents would become a forum for an exchange of opinions between censors on various levels of the hierarchy. It is worth underlining that it was on the basis of this document that approval would be given, separately, for typesetting and printing. The primary review was, from the perspective of the publishing industry, the most important document issued by the censorship office even if, as archival research shows, it was often neglected and undermined by censors themselves.

Secondary reviews were written once a book had been published. This form was titled 'secondary review' and contained the same sections as the primary review, as well as additional information about the publication and on the preventative censorship it had faced (the number of primary reviews and any oversights in preventative censorship). The censor writing secondary reviews had two tasks; firstly, to decide whether further editions should be published (reviewer's opinion – delete as appropriate: the book is suitable for further editions, without changes, following certain changes, the book is not suitable for further editions, the book is suitable for school libraries and the book is suitable for public libraries). Secondly, the secondary review assessed the work of preventative censorship, offering praise or admonishment. The secondary review could thus be seen as repressive censorship, influencing the fate of books following publication. My research shows that a negative secondary review rarely led to the

destruction of a print run. This would require agreement of the upper echelons in power.

What might we hypothesize on the basis of the primary and secondary reviews? First of all, it is worth noting just how numerous they are. I would like to stress again that the parts of my study that offer syntheses are based to a large extent on findings established on the basis of this kind of source. Given that ‘texts in accordance with the author’s intentions’, i.e. original versions where the censors’ pencil markings are visible, are few and far between, they can only serve as supplementary evidence for my arguments on particular authors, even if these sources are indeed more interesting for literary studies.

The combined reviews and overviews of censors’ interventions were created by the Department of Non-Periodical Publications. This is another highly interesting category of sources, as they feature monthly reports on publishers’ activities and an index of all interventions. The reports note the overall number of publications in a given period, dividing them into subjects and genres: general interest, philosophy, history, literature (poetry, plays, memoir, novels and short stories), children’s and youth literature, political and social issues, mathematics and natural sciences, medical science and technology. The reports offer clearly written assessments of the work of various publishers, employing interesting arguments and observations. The reports comment on texts that were published and also, more importantly, on texts submitted by publishers but held back by censors. Each and every work submitted to GUKPPiW for assessment is recorded in them. Unfortunately, though, the records are incomplete and it is not certain that they had ever been complete. The available documents relevant to my period are descriptive reports from 1949–1950 and 1959 (including for that year a partial record of interventions) and also overviews of interventions (which were given various names) from 1957 to 1958. The descriptive reports and indexes of interventions serve in my study primarily as a source confirming my hypotheses. These documents are sometimes the only evidence of the existence of a publication. I turn to them less often given the focus of my study, but they nevertheless seem to offer ideal source material that supplements knowledge on the publishing market in Poland. They could provide the basis for further research in book studies.⁴²

Relatively well preserved in the collections are the documents on the way GUKPPiW and its regional units organized their work. They are all typewritten with no pages missing and are organized in strict chronological order, while

42 Andrzej Paczkowski has presented some statistics on this, together with an analysis.

the catalogue includes clear descriptions. Minutes of meetings and extracts describing the work of the regional units, as well as materials on the funding of the Office, also offer insights on the organization. For research in literary studies, the most significant sources of this kind are the minutes of meetings because they offer insight into the 'positive programme' and 'negative programme' conducted by censors. These materials also provide interesting information on the subject of the GUKPPiW's staff, thus they could provide insight into its particular 'institutional psychology'.

Unusual sources, such as correspondence with the Office, authors' complaints, clarifications and other materials dispersed throughout the collections, usually arranged by year or included alongside the particular text they refer to, offer the clearest insight, it would seem, into the 'human element' and present the complexity of relations between censors and the outside world.

Finally, it is worth listing all the documents that the censorship office tended to create in relation to a particular text. A full set of records for a text that passed without reservations would be the publishers' letter submitting the text for assessment, two primary reviews, approval for typesetting, approval for printing, approval for distribution, a secondary review and approval for further editions or extended print runs. For texts that censors questioned, the list of documents would also include a copy of the text with censors' markings, an index of suggested changes (also included in the review text), and an entry into the summary of interventions for a given year. In each case, the text would then be included in the report describing the activities of particular publishers.

Such complete sets of documents relating to particular texts are exceptionally rare in the GUKPPiW collection. It is difficult to establish why this is the case. Beyond the selection processes affecting the archive, this might also be down to censors' heavy workload. Facing constant deadlines and significant demands, the officials might simply not have managed to keep up with the absurd amount of paperwork required of them, hence the numerous simplifications, handwritten notes, abbreviations and decisions taken in person or over the telephone. Any 'complete sets' might therefore have never existed from the outset, with GUKPPiW tacitly accepting this state of affairs.

The censorship archive contains tonnes of meaningless, general documents, and it is only by examining a significant portion of the collections that we can produce a deeper insight into matters of significance. Archival research shows, furthermore, that the documents relating to small, relatively unknown and often private publishers are very interesting because the authors writing for them often submitted less 'politically correct' texts and sometimes even works that were rejected outright.

Part 1: Towards a synthesis

1 Censorship theory

The official cultural policy of the state in the realm of literary works was expressed in speeches and publications issued by the state and party authorities, as well as in the press.⁴³ More detailed recommendations and directives were contained in guidelines that were not made public but were instead targeted at various executive agencies. Under such conditions they became operative programmes that then gradually trickled down through the hierarchy, ultimately finding their way into recommendations given to individual functionaries.

The minutes of national conferences and meetings offer direct insight into GUKPPIW's guidelines on publishing literature. I am most interested in the content of the norms applied at the censorship office, whether the censorship office itself produced them or merely disseminated them.⁴⁴ Held at least once a year, these gatherings brought together delegates from all regional offices. The conferences were usually very general but had a practical element as programmes were presented there, while they also offered an opportunity to discuss particular interventions and omissions. These discussions then provided the basis for the collections of records and recommendations that provided rank and file censors with a set of regulations.

The Archive of Modern Records (AAN) holds materials relating to several such meetings held between 1945 and 1954. All of these materials (except one set) are part of the series 'Odprawy krajowe' (National conferences).⁴⁵ The minutes of the June 1953 conference are available only as a text reprinted in the Informational-Instructional Bulletin.⁴⁶ It is far from certain that the materials

43 See: Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka. Potrzeby społeczne i ich realizacja w latach 1944–1986*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1992, particularly the chapter 'Zadania literatury' (Literature's tasks), pp. 27–87; Hanna Gosk, *W kręgu Kuźnicy*, op. cit.

44 This question was outlined by Andrzej Urbański, *Cenzura – kontrola kontroli (system lat siedemdziesiątych)*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli – obiegi alternatywne*, ed. by Janusz Kostecki and Alina Brodzka, vol. 2, Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1992, pp. 251–265.

45 AAN, GUKPPIW, 421. Part of these materials has been published by Daria Nałęcz, in: *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL*, op. cit.

46 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420, teczka 165/2, p. 354–438 (no. 6/1953).

from all meetings have been kept, because the rather imprecise pagination suggests gaps in the record. Further research could make interesting use of the rich contents of these minutes. Here I will focus on the guidelines that are taken together and formed the system of literary censorship. However, they reflect the typical style of the time, with specificity overwhelmed by generalizations, ideological clichés and empty statements.

John M. Bates argues that ‘it was only after the Szczecin Congress that censors developed a literary programme to which officials could refer to when reviewing works of literature.’⁴⁷ I would assert, however, that such a programme was formed earlier as a practical necessity in the course of censors’ work. Its principles can be pieced together on the basis of information contained in the margins of statements relating to press censorship.

The first national conference took place on 23–25 May 1945 and it focused on regulating press publications, which was the key task of the new institution.⁴⁸ The agenda for the meeting was as follows: a talk by Jakub Berman (the minister responsible for both censorship and security) on the political situation in the country; reports on the organization of regional offices; discussion; training seminars; assessment of the work of regional offices and guidance on further work. While the meeting considered only press censorship, the discussions addressed issues that were relevant to any attempts to control freedom of expression. I will cite a typical passage from Berman’s speech which was underlined in red pencil by an unknown individual (meaning that it was considered particularly significant):

For you, as press control employees, it is important to have a sense of the limits to criticism, the limits of acceptable criticism, of the limits as something that cannot be crossed as you defend them. [...] I wish for all of you to avoid acquiring a reputation as troubling censors, burdensome censors, that you are true assistants of a free, democratic press while at the same time serving as vigilant guardians of democracy contributing to the general victory of Democratic Poland.⁴⁹

47 John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, p. 100. Speaking to the author, I learned that he did not have access to all of the minutes from the meetings and conferences, because the materials had not yet been released, owing to the legal waiting period.

48 These materials have been published by Daria Nałęcz, in: *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL*, op. cit., pp. 29–78.

49 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/1, p. 8. In this work, I have cited archival materials in their original forms, although in some cases I have corrected spelling and punctuation. Where the materials were not clear, I have inserted an asterisk.

Behind the façade of grandiloquent clichés, there are traces here of the two difficulties outlined above: establishing the acceptable level of intervention and authors' dislike of having their statements altered.

I would also like to draw attention to another important statement that was made elsewhere at this conference, namely that there was *generally* no need to falsify reality, as providing a record of the facts was deemed a necessity, although it was permissible to influence its interpretation through the framing of the news. This clearly expresses the principle of offering a false interpretation of the facts, thus one that ultimately deforms the intentions behind a statement. While the statement here applied to press censorship, its principles could easily be applied to the regulation of other forms of writing. It seems that a good example of the way these recommendations were applied to works of literature was the addition of the year a poem was written in volumes of collected verse (the differentiation of pre-war and post-war poems ensured that only pre-war works could be pessimistic), with the potential for excluding individual poems from such collections.

Archival materials relating to the third (*sic!*) national conference of the directors of Voivodeship Offices of Press Control, which took place on 12–14 January 1946, show that Minister Berman was again present, as was the Premier of the Temporary Government of National Unity (Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej – TRJN) Edward Osóbka-Morawski. This conference explored the censorship of press, radio, performances and books separately, thus reflecting the growth and increasing specialization of the office. Nevertheless, attention was largely focused on press regulation. A model example was the newspaper *Życie Warszawy*, where only two or three interventions were necessary each quarter, showing just how well the editors were aligned politically. A statement by the head of the Łódź censorship office is particularly noteworthy in this respect:

The issue that causes us anxiety to some degree is what is known as “inspiration”. I have no intention of acting as an adviser, although I am happy to offer inspiration, I have nothing against that. It is not much of a challenge. But what is necessary in order to successfully provide inspiration? The absolute authority of our Office. In our city, its authority is founded upon a cultured and calm approach to dealing with editorial boards. It is not a case of sophistry or being a mentor but rather that we should approach each other as colleagues because we work with common tools – namely pens.⁵⁰

‘Inspiration’ was in fact a euphemistic expression for exerting pressure, and it gives a clear indication of the nature of the relations between officials and the

50 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/2, p. 69.

authors of controversial statements. An ideal solution was a calm conversation and reaching an agreement, although even more ideal would be a situation where the censorship office would not need to intervene at all. Of course, the claim that 'we both work with common tools – namely pens' offers an eloquent equalization of the intellectual status of both parties involved in the relationship, although it manages at the same time to render the authority of one side less equal.

Analysing the sources verifies the hypothesis that the general principles guiding censorship of both periodical and non-periodical publications are analogous. One of the earliest censorship theorists, the Italian sociologist Vilfredo Pareto, outlined the basic principles of restricting expression in 1911, thus prior to the emergence of modern totalitarian systems. He argued that censorship is one of the means used by the ruling class to defend their interests as it maintains a degree of ignorance in society while working towards the goal of influencing the opinions and thinking of the subordinated majority. This authority is exerted over texts that attack the position of the elites and disrupt the established system of norms. Pareto believed that the human tendency for passivity, discipline and subordination were likewise effective means of control. His description of repressive measures also highlights their connection to the force that is in the hands of the elite, with powerful authorities capable of applying the most severe forms of repression (including physical violence), while decadent rule would employ more refined intellectual methods.⁵¹ Thus the principles guiding the censorship of various forms of writing merely constitute one variant of the broader principles of censorship as such.⁵² The division into periodical and non-periodical publications was thus essential only in relation to particular cases, while the universal principles always remained the same to defend the changing interests of the elites and maintain ignorance in society.

The GUKPPiW reports do not, of course, reach the same conclusions. Officials stubbornly defended the divisions into various kinds of writing, developing ever more detailed guidelines.

Another set of minutes examined here comes from the national conference of the directors of voivodeship-level censorship offices, held on 5–6 November 1946.

51 See: Ursula Otto, *Cenzura literatury. Rozważania teoretyczne na podstawie koncepcji Vilfredo Pareto*, translated by Czesław Karolak, in: *Cenzura w Niemczech w XX wieku. Studia, analizy, dokumenty*, selected and edited by Czesław Karolak, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2000, pp. 434–455.

52 Jan Błoński has written generally about censorship. Jan Błoński, *Cenzor jako czytelnik*, in: Błoński, *Wszystkie sztuki Sławomira Mrożka*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1995, pp. 269–281.

The document examines the assessment of books between 1944 and 1946. It should be stressed that given the gaps in the archival record, this document features novel information that is verified by cross-referencing other sources in the GUKPPiW archive. The meeting was chaired by the Office's director Tadeusz Zabłudowski. He offered a description of the situation throughout the country and developments in the realm of publishing between 1944 and mid-1946. He noted the consistent growth of the publishing sector and the concomitant rise in the number of works submitted for assessment, with more than 1600 non-periodical publications assessed between April and the end of October 1946. Zabłudowski underlined that the greatest emphasis was placed on the 'general tendency of a book'. The most challenging situation was when a book contained nothing that could be considered explicitly controversial yet 'there is a perceptible negative tendency'. He argued that numerous difficulties stemmed from the fact that when the Office was being established the focus had been on press censorship rather than on books, a result of the fact that there was only one publisher at the time, *Czytelnik*, and its publications were always passed without the need for intervention.⁵³ He stated that book censorship would need to be examined and specific guidelines developed.⁵⁴ Zabłudowski noted that the difference between the press and books was that the latter were more complex, since censors' most important task when reading non-periodical literature was to get a sense of the metadata, i.e. elusive 'tendency'.

Another set of minutes includes materials relating to the meeting of the heads of voivodeship censorship offices held in Warsaw on 4–5 June 1948. This one was largely focused on organizational matters, with the 'Catholic sector' a matter of priority. The Office's deputy director Wojdyga offered a detailed speech on the situation of the Church in Poland, outlining the number of publications and size of the circulation of Catholic press. He cited extensively excerpts of articles that had required intervention, including 'asocial' materials from the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. There were also discussions on how to reorganize the institution generally and prepare it for the new tasks that awaited it after Mikołajczyk's Polish Peasant's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL) had been routed and significant transformation of the political landscape initiated. While non-periodical publications were not a specific point on the agenda, the minutes still contain recommendations for greater vigilance when assessing such texts.

53 Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka*, op. cit., p. 146.

54 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/2, p. 141.

We have always stressed that such assignments have little in common with our work in relation to the press. A newspaper goes in the bin, but a book lives and its impact changes, thus its resonance can never be foreseen.⁵⁵

As many as four national conferences were held in the key post-Szczecin year of 1949. The most important guidelines as far as regulating literature was concerned were issued at the meeting held on 26–28 June 1949. It opened with a typical speech by director Bida, who suggested that the discussions should be held in a ‘collegial atmosphere’, adding that ‘perhaps we should address each other using the salutation Comrade. We are now at a stage where we should address each other in such terms.’⁵⁶ Bida continued, speaking of an impending struggle and rising repression, while stressing the growing significance of imposing controls on literature. This was one typical statement:

Until now, we have dedicated more attention here to the press but the question of books is becoming more significant. Until now, books had been of secondary importance, even though they are of primary significance, because books remain for many years and find themselves in the hands of peasants and workers, or on the shelves of libraries. [...] The question of books in Poland must be dealt with more rigorously and we will be placing greater demands on publishers. Closer contact with authors will be necessary, but this should not take repressive, administrative forms, but should rather be collegial, in order to ensure that our Office has as much impact as possible. [...] The role of our Office is growing rather than decreasing at this stage in history, yet it is not only we who shoulder the burden of its transformation and realizing its goals. This burden is also shared by the Party and the powers realizing this, while we are a small but important instrument in this. Let us participate in everything, since everything reflects upon us.

Will our Office be superfluous once the question of the Church is resolved? Such views have been expressed in various circles. But this is not the case. The Party not only disagrees with such views but is indeed opposed to them. We are necessary at these stages just as we will be necessary in future. Let us prepare for battle. [...] We will also adopt new measures in respect of literature. We will avoid direct interventions but we will place new demands on publishers. It is possible that we will transfer responsibility for these tasks to other agencies in order to avoid provoking unnecessary responses.⁵⁷

In his agenda-setting speech, he made various statements relating to the growing ‘problem’ of literary publications in Poland and the growing amount of work related to them. The strongest criticisms were reserved for cosmopolitanism, Catholicism, failure to appreciate the achievements of communist Poland and

55 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/3, p. 42.

56 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/4, p. 1.

57 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/4, pp. 54–56.

the USSR, 'obsession' with the West (science and technology) and exaggerating shortages. The proposed intensification of controls, as analysis of the archival materials suggests, was put into practice immediately and it could already be sensed in reviews from the end of 1948.

The meeting not only dealt with proposals relating to regulating new publications, but also considered the issue of new editions of classics. While this matter goes somewhat beyond the scope of my study, I would like to highlight an important aspect that is related to my central argument. According to the censorship office, publishing popular texts by Sienkiewicz, Kraszewski or Rodziewiczówna legitimized the 'misdirected' efforts of Polish writers and – in the case of foreign works – provided a channel for Western influences. It is also worth mentioning that despite significant efforts in the realms of cultural policy, Polish readers' behaviour had largely gone unchanged since the pre-war period. The most widely-read works were nineteenth-century Polish classics and popular literature,⁵⁸ which was something that officials did not approve of. At the same time as controls on publications submitted for assessment intensified, GUKPPiW also recommended restricting

re-editions and thus the continuation and maintenance of the popularity of old, ideologically and educationally worthless works. This is particularly relevant to youth literature where constant reissues maintain the tradition of affection for *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Secret Garden* and *Nick of the Woods*, thus distancing young people from current issues and the problems of real life.⁵⁹

These recommendations would soon be translated into purges of libraries and the ultimate abolition of the private publishers that had been an important source producing lighter literature.⁶⁰

An important contribution to the discussions came from the head of non-periodical publications at GUKPPiW, Helena Landsberg. She argued that books should face very strict controls in anticipation of their effects, because books remain on the shelves of libraries and bookshops for a long time. Landsberg issued recommendations relating to the writing of reviews and also to the texts themselves, stating that books should communicate neither a 'sense of temporariness' nor the negative aspects of life at the time. She noted, meanwhile, that 'a short, general review containing a summary and a few remarks on the subject of interventions is insufficient. A review must mention the ideological content and

58 Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka*, op. cit.

59 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/4, p. 95.

60 See: Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka*, op. cit., p. 132.

educational value of the book'.⁶¹ She also advised against excessive zeal that could result in absurd demands, such as censoring the Psalms of David and demanding copyright in the case of Thomas Aquinas' writings.

The heads of GUKPPiW considered novels the most dangerous category of literary works because they 'remained' in families and bookshops. In his summary of the June meeting, the Office's director Bida made the gentle suggestion that authors should 'receive suitable guidance and advice, thus ensuring that novels would be filled with what we require'. But he also warned: 'Comrades, we have concentrated our efforts on the press and radio while treating books separately. This golden age is over. Books are weapons deployed by American imperialists who wear the mask of cosmopolitanism in Europe'.⁶²

The broad scope of possible interventions was highlighted at the short one-day gathering of the heads of voivodeship censorship offices in August 1949. 'It should be noted that as a repressive authority we have a broad range of means of intervention at our disposal. Our interventions can include the amount of materials and paper available, but they also cover illustrations and print works'.⁶³ It is worth adding that reducing print runs was a measure regularly taken against authors whose works had to be published but were not entirely acceptable in their content. Denying allocations of paper was one of the main ways of driving private publishers into the ground.

Analysis of the minutes of national-level meetings indicates that Helena Landsberg was made responsible for literary works, which was in accordance with her position in the Office as the head of the Department of Non-Periodical Publications. With each meeting, her voice became increasingly noticeable and she always spoke on the subject of literature. Her statement at the one-day meeting held on 11 December 1949 is particularly significant for this study.⁶⁴ Following general remarks on increasing controls and the growing role of the Office, she issued some important remarks on forewords, noting that each text of this kind 'should be subject to detailed and far-reaching analysis. A foreword can

61 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, 197/4, p. 96.

62 Cosmopolitanism as a censors' accusation was understood as excessive uncritical fascination with Western Europe and lack of connection to the socialist states. AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/4, p. 220.

63 AAN, GUKPiW, 421, teczka 197/4, p. 235.

64 Excerpts from these minutes of the meeting have been published in Daria Nałęcz in: *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL*, op. cit., pp. 79–94.

ensure that any old book becomes one of ours and vice versa.⁶⁵ The combination of colloquial phrases and administrative language was typical of Party authorities and it might even sound comical were it not for the aggressive opinions expressed. The addition of 'suitable' introductions had a rich history, particularly between 1949 and 1955, and most notably affected editions of Polish and foreign classics, as I will note further on in this book.

The national conference held in June 1951 was of a spontaneous nature as it was not planned but resulted from a situation 'that has led us to sound the alarm because of a flood of oversights'. It is worth noting that the full set of records from this meeting has not been preserved. The largest portion of the meeting dealt with mistakes in censors' work, something that was blamed primarily on their low level of ideological training, 'pettiness' (unnecessary interventions) and failure to see the full picture when faced with an issue. The two-day meeting also included statements relating to literature.

We need a new literature of struggle and optimism that would help build socialism. Our literary figures generally write sloppily without seeing the new issues that have emerged and they do not want to understand that Soviet literature is not without its faults. We need to push them towards such literature.⁶⁶

However, such statements were rare. Censors tended to focus on the negative, pointing out errors and creating lists of forbidden subjects, plots and modes of poetics. While the idea of a 'positive programme' was expressed somewhat imprecisely, it nevertheless supplemented the GUKPPiW directives outlined above with a call for more intense efforts. 'New' books that supported the construction of socialism would require no changes, thus creating a paradise for censors who would have no need to make interventions or undertake difficult conversations with sloppy authors.

The meetings held from 1952 to 1954 simply restated the recommendations issued previously. The reform of GUKPPiW conducted in the 1950s proved to be exceptionally absorbing as it generated additional organizational matters that became the chief focus of national level meetings. It is enough to cite here a typical statement from Helena Landsberg, who stated at the meeting held on 17 December 1954:

Comrades, your reviews have focused on faults, highlighting everything negative in a work without writing about its positive aspects, thus leading to negative opinions. The

65 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/4, p. 315. An extensive passage from this statement is cited in John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., p. 101.

66 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421, teczka 197/5, p. 123.

consequences of this are that we often have to read a given work for a second time and then we find that where a work has been reviewed from a negative perspective, omitting the positives, it can be made fit for approval with a few minor changes.⁶⁷

The subsequent remarks on censors' verbosity take on particular meaning in light of such 'advice'.

A more in-depth view of the operational programme put into practice at GUKPPIW between 1952 and 1955 is provided by the Informational-Instructional Bulletin.⁶⁸ Reading this source provides insight into the office's policy towards literature. Four bound typescripts of the Bulletin, marked 'top secret', are available in the archive. It is difficult to judge the actual size of its print run, although fifty copies of the errata were printed. The Bulletin was edited and published monthly starting in January 1952. It was the official organ of the central censorship office and was to be distributed to the regional branches in order to raise efficiency.

I would like to stress that the materials contained in the Bulletin are significantly more detailed than those contained in the collection titled 'National meetings' as they provide the most insight into what was expected of a well-written review. The Bulletin also carried greater authority as it disseminated decisions and recommendations established in meetings at various levels of the organization. These were top-level decisions that sought to test how effectively established regulations were being put into practice.

In Bulletin no. 8/1952, the formulaic and flawed review of a new edition of Nałkowska's *Medaliony (Medallions)* by Czytelnik publishers was criticized.⁶⁹ The reviewer's assessment does stand out as a particular case of stupidity in a competitive field: he suggested adding another story that would present a positive Polish figure! What was important, however, was that a superior had urged censors not to adopt clichéd ways of thinking and instead encouraged creative readings of literary masterpieces. Another section of the Bulletin stressed that reviews should avoid 'showing off', while a good review, from the perspective of GUKPPIW, would be posited somewhere between the non-formulaic and moderation.

Bulletin no. 1/1953, meanwhile, criticized the 'one-sided and thus false' review of Kazimierz Koźniewski's book *Piątka z ulicy Barskiej* (Five boys from Barska street).⁷⁰ Applicants seeking to become censors received this work as

67 AAN, GUKPPIW, 421,teczka 197/7, p. 169.

68 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420.

69 This has been published by Dariusz Jarosz, in: *Zapisy cenzury*, op. cit., p. 31.

70 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420,teczka 165/2, p. 45.

test material. In Bulletin no. 9 that year, there is an interesting article on Stefan Żeromski that portrayed him as the only true critical realist writer. This text was immediately followed by the telling piece ‘Several remarks on working on introductions, footnotes and postscripts’. Here the issue of adding politically suitable forewords was again addressed, this time making explicit the advantages that these measures have for readers.

A well-written Marxist introduction enriches readers’ knowledge of Polish and world literature, helping them to better understand a work while at the same time making them aware of the errors and falsifications that bourgeois interpretations of older works entailed, particularly as these interpretations had in many cases become deeply rooted in readers’ consciousness.⁷¹

The discussions regarding Jan Michał Rostworowski’s poem *Oskarżam* (I accuse) in voivodeship censorship offices and its subsequent fate provided the basis for claims that sensitivity was lacking in the approach to this controversial piece. ‘The attitude of voivodeship-level censors to Rostworowski’s poem is an example of a case where a mace was used instead of a lancet.’⁷²

Analysis of the Bulletins suggests that it was common practice for GUKPPiW to send such works to voivodeship offices for discussion. Usually the works selected for such exercises were more challenging and in disagreement with everyday reality. The findings, occasionally presented in the form of reports, were then published in the journal. In an article on the discussions around Kubalski’s short story *Wyrok* (The Verdict) in Bulletin no. 2/1954, the main mistake highlighted was that too much effort was invested in finding errors in the text while overlooking the novella’s content. The conclusion stated that ‘in assessing each work of literature, a formulaic approach mechanically employing scholastic, unrealistic, and abstract criteria should be avoided at all costs.’⁷³ Another mistake pointed out was that the review process took too long, since censors seemed to be operating according to the principle that ‘a book can wait but the press has to appear today’. Bulletin no. 7–8/1954, meanwhile, provided a universal ‘formula’ for a successful review stating that ‘the best test of the quality of a censor’s work is the presence of justified interventions while avoiding any oversights.’⁷⁴

The image of recommendations emerging from the analysis of the materials from national conferences and meetings, together with the Informational-Instructional

71 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420, teczka 165/2, p. 542.

72 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420, teczka 165/2, p. 630.

73 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420, teczka 165/4, p. 90.

74 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420, teczka 165/3, p. 319.

Bulletin, is relatively homogenous. In other words, over several years, similar recommendations were issued repeatedly relating both to literature itself and its regulation (there are more recommendations on the latter than the former). What becomes evident, though, is that the recommendations became more specialized as GUKPPIW developed and cemented its position.

Arguments in relation to literature

The negative programme issued by GUKPPIW is significantly more developed than the more positive agenda. It seems that it was easier for censorship officials to define what could not be published than to offer more precise recommendations on what could appear. The nature of their work significantly favoured a focus on errors and mistakes, while the formulation of a positive programme was a relatively rare occurrence and tended to take place in the background.

The issues most commonly criticized by officials included writers addressing religious themes and removing themselves from Polish realities ('cosmopolitanism') and instead becoming 'obsessed' with the West. Another thing that the censorship office found problematic was a failure to appreciate the achievements of People's Poland and the USSR while overstating shortages in goods and supplies. These negative aspects of everyday life were not to appear in books. The most serious fault found in the realm of poetics, meanwhile, was complexity that meant a work was not accessible to the masses.

The repeated arguments outlining the supposed threat posed by novels resulted from the conviction that they were complex and that they had a specific position in the book market that meant they would remain in readers' consciousness longer than the press. This meant that they were regulated strictly and subject to excessive restrictions, particularly works addressing contemporary issues in a realist form. From the Party's perspective, as Stanisław Siekierski argues, the strictest restrictions were applied to depictions of contemporary social life.⁷⁵ It is thus possible to query the stereotypical view that socialist-realist novels were treated more leniently. The sources examined here suggest quite the opposite, as such works were read particularly closely and the very slightest ideological missteps were effaced. Some works in the genre were even subject to several lengthy reviews. One example is Marcelina Grabowska's novel *Antoni Mroczek poznaje świat* (Antoni Mroczek discovers the world), the first part of the *Walka amerykańska* (American struggle) cycle submitted for assessment by Państwowy

75 Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka*, op. cit., p. 166.

Instytut Wydawniczy in 1951. The archives yielded sixteen pages of negative reviews.

The positive programme presented by GUKPPiW assumed that new literature would be ready for battle and support the construction of socialism. Such general statements cannot be easily backed up with evidence. If we look very closely, it is possible to state that texts lacking any of the abovementioned failings while also presenting a positive image of contemporary life in Poland and/or the USSR could be considered embodiments of the programme outlined by GUKPPiW. Socialist realist novels were best suited to the task, hence the cautious approach towards them.

Arguments relating to censors' work

The recommendations issued to censors can be divided into two categories – those relating to their work in general and those specific to writing reviews. The former includes the ways of influencing the structure of a book with the aim of shaping the interpretation of the whole, including 'correcting' a work by adding a suitable foreword, as well as reminders about reducing print runs and not allocating paper. Generally, censors were encouraged to assess works according to their positive aspects, which can be understood as encouraging reading without prejudice and considering each work potentially publishable. Increasing censorship office's authority was repeatedly stressed as a way to increase its impact.

The general information also contained several warnings. The heads of GUKPPiW warned against excessive zeal that could lead to absurdities. A particularly tricky issue, they found, was when a book had a bad 'tone' that was perceptible yet without being able to put one's finger on the exact elements of the text that could be removed to overcome the problem. Here the officials called for greater understanding of not only literal but also figurative meanings. Both the national-level meetings and the Informational-Instructional Bulletin dedicated significant amounts of attention to errors in censors' work, with the main causes being given as insufficient ideological training, 'pettiness' (unnecessary interventions), and failing to see the broader picture. In many cases, this was illustrated by calls to prevent new editions of 'suspect' classics.

The recommendations relating to writing reviews are, understandably, significantly more detailed. Opinions should avoid being formulaic or one-sided, while reviewers should avoid showing off. Officials were encouraged to adopt a more delicate approach to controversial texts. An ideal review would feature justified interventions and avoid oversights – and it should be submitted by the deadline.

A systematic outline of recommendations for censors reveals that they were at the same time very detailed and yet ambiguous. The reason for this could be that the officials at the censorship office enjoyed *de facto* free rein, thus they could always find something in the guidelines or in particular regulations that would suit them in a given situation. In the introduction to his study *Cenzura PRL: Relacje historyków* (Censorship in People's Poland: Historians' experiences), Zbigniew Romek writes of the trap that was laid by the broad formulation of the legislation regulating the formation and work of the censorship apparatus. Terms such as 'state secrets' and 'national interest' could be used to cover anything that was unpalatable, he argues.⁷⁶ It seems that ambiguity was also typical of regulations issued below the level of official decrees, too. It is thus difficult to establish their significance clearly. The majority of the guidelines referring to literature itself and literary censorship discussed in this chapter are unclear. Any discussion of the programmes formulated by GUKPPiW in the period from 1945 to 1954 must thus always bear in mind from the outset the tendency for official statements to get mired in generalizations.

2 Content-related censorship

This chapter examines how the guidelines produced by officials translated into practice. Having established the regulations' ambiguous nature, it can be assumed that the work of the censorship office was both very interesting and very difficult.

Let us add to the programme outlining censors' encounters with literature, recreated here on the basis of guidelines issued at national-level meetings, the findings based on the literature review conducted at the start of this book. The literature contains numerous references to the most commonly cut materials. Stanisław Siekierski noted that the subjects most commonly affected were depictions of contemporary reality and reflections on history, particularly events from the twentieth century.⁷⁷ Leszek Szaruga, meanwhile, states that Polish literature had to avoid addressing contemporary reality and, furthermore,

the very concept of censorship was censored – it could only be mentioned in the context of the very distant past. Ultimately, this was the key mechanism for ensuring that literature employed devices such as circumlocution and analogy, meaning that social reality could not be addressed directly.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, ed. by Zbigniew Romek, Warszawa: Neriton - Instytut Historii PAN, 2000, p. 32.

⁷⁷ Stanisław Siekierski, *Drugi obieg*, op. cit., p. 30.

⁷⁸ Leszek Szaruga, op. cit., pp. 13–14.

It was also impossible to create powerful political novels on current events, as Stanisław Majchrowski has mentioned in his study.⁷⁹ Many researchers have noted that GUKPPiW officials examined works not only in terms of problematic sentences or even individual words, but also teased out ‘dangerous’ subjects. They were thus interested in the tone of a work (the ‘tendency’ that, as we know, caused so many difficulties), its poetics and its content. Aleksander Pawlicki has termed this vigilance in relation to particular expressions the ‘principle of linguistic purity’, although he also states somewhat metaphorically that ‘GUKPPiW and its patrons were not only interested in removing particular ideas, but the censorship office also desired to create an image of a new world built on the ruins of the old, offering new descriptions of everything.’⁸⁰ The ‘new’ was to be described using commonplace myths and stereotypes,⁸¹ while the empty space emerging following censors’ intensive interventions was to be filled with propagandistic writings.⁸²

Summaries compiling all the interventions that would otherwise enable a systematic outline of all the changes made to texts during the period explored in this study are only available for the years 1949–1950 and 1957–1958. It is thus both out of necessity and also out of a desire to gain a broader perspective (the summaries of interventions are exceptionally brief) that other sources are employed here – typescripts featuring corrections, lists of proposed changes and reviews of particular works – in order to establish what changes and cuts were proposed and/or carried out.

Since it would be impossible to offer an analysis of all the sources I have in one book, I thus focus on the most interesting cases while attempting to categorize censors’ interventions. I am particularly interested in how elements within the texts were controlled (content and poetics), while I also consider extra-textual factors in the later sections of this book. I adopt a chronological approach to the documents based on the date they were created in order to trace the changes in the scope and depth of literary censorship.

There are very few surviving GUKPPiW materials on literary censorship predating 1949, with any such sources mostly concerning 1948. However, what is available today is typical enough to enable us to draw conclusions on the most

79 Stefan Majchrowski, *Między słowem i rzeczywistością. Problemy powieści politycznej w Polsce w latach 1945–1970*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1988, p. 56.

80 Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit., p. 65 and 119.

81 John M. Bates, *Cenzura wobec problemu niemieckiego w Polsce*, op. cit., pp. 79–92.

82 Stanisław Siekierski, *Drugi obieg*, op. cit., p. 30.

important aspects of censoring texts published or submitted for review before the Szczecin Congress. The most interesting issues concern restrictions on works about the war, including those by the most outstanding authors (Borowski's camp prose, Nałkowska's *Medaliony* and Rudnicki's short stories), and works on religious subjects. It should be stressed, however, that in many cases we have no direct insight into the reviews of the first editions of these works and instead only have access to the – largely critical – assessments of subsequent editions. Any findings must thus be based on reconstructions of the evidence.

PIW submitted Marian Berland's ghetto memoirs *Trzynaście dni długich jak wieki* (Thirteen days as long as centuries)⁸³ for review in 1948. In this work, the word 'German' was replaced with 'Nazi' (*Niemiec* with *hitlerowiec*) and the term 'Żydy' (Yids) was deemed anti-Semitic, while moments that were deemed to send the wrong educational message, such as references to God, were removed. The tendency to replace the term 'German' in the context of the Second World War increased after 1949 in accordance with the principle of 'political correctness' towards the newly-founded German Democratic Republic.⁸⁴ Fears of propagating anti-Semitism were another reason for cuts. They were mentioned quite often, likewise in reviews of classic works, thus leading to some fairly remarkable claims, such as arguing that some expressions should be removed from Henryk Sienkiewicz's journalism and essays.

Accusations of promoting nationalism were not only levelled against the content depictions of Jews and Germans but also, perhaps indeed above all, in relation to Russia and Russians, likewise – as I will mention further on – pre-Revolutionary Russia. The Catholic publishing house Pallotinum sought to produce a new edition of Zofia Kossak's novel *Suknia Dejaniry* (Dejnira's dress), with the long review from 26 November 1949, produced in Poznań by Helena Napierałówna, suggesting numerous interventions. Her superior added a handwritten note stating 'allocate no paper'. Here I will cite the most typical statement from the review:

The book clearly communicates antagonistic attitudes towards "Muscovites" and "Kacapy" [derogatory terms for Russians – PV] (p. 111). [...] Another cause for concern are the overly positive descriptions of the material conditions in Polish villages and among peasants in the seventeenth century. [...] Also inappropriate is the argument that the migration of large numbers of Jews to Poland contributed to a worsening of

83 Ed. note: Since there are clear discrepancies in titles, I have opted to employ the version employed by GUKPPIW. In the bibliography, however, I give the titles under which particular works were published.

84 See: John M. Bates, *Cenzura wobec problemu niemieckiego w Polsce*, op. cit.

peasants' living conditions (p. 238, 239 and 240). It would be a mistake to include the passage on page 98 of the book: At sunset, illuminated by torchlight, King Władysław IV entered the walls of liberated Smolensk. There were no more enemies surrounding the city. The legitimate borders of the [Polish and Lithuanian] Commonwealth had been restored...⁸⁵

Another common accusation levelled at works was 'ultra-Catholicism', which covered the entire range of a text's religious aspects. Zofia Kossak's texts thus often fell foul of censors, particularly as she had a negative reputation having moved abroad, while her sizeable oeuvre did not sit easily with new canons (it is enough to mention *Požoga* [Conflagration] and *Krzyżowcy* [Crusaders]). A secondary review, written in 1948, of her play *Gość oczekiwany* [An expected guest] stated that this work

features Christ on Earth who heals someone's daughter, gives a fortune to a poor man and punishes a merciless rich man – a miller.

The author took the idea for the play from a Silesian folk tale which she then updated, adding a series of secondary figures to the story who were intended to illustrate ways of thinking and behaviour that the author condemned. While the figure of the "devoted woman" was presented accurately and positively, the figures of the "politician" and "social activist" should be treated with caution, as it would not take much imagination to see them as libelling democratic activists. [...] For the abovementioned reasons and because of the overall suggestive resonance that this ultra-Catholic work could have on audiences (particularly in the provinces), we would like to request that this book be placed on the list of withdrawn plays.⁸⁶

The play was indeed removed from circulation.

The accusations of 'promoting Catholicism' and anti-Semitism were also levelled by the censor assessing Jerzy Zawieyski's work *Dzień sądu* (The Day of Judgement). She suggested permitting its publication only after editing.

The tone of the work is undoubtedly, although discreetly, idealistic. Christ here represents a new era, an era of dynamic ideology, bursting free of the existing stasis and disorder. The author distinguishes Christ and his followers from the Jewish people. The people and the chaplains are ascribed negative traits that inspire fear, antipathy and hatred even in the unbiased Pilate. This moment is of particular concern (chapter 7) and will only grow more significant should the play be staged (mimicry).⁸⁷

The piece was considered a new work, although the GUKPPiW materials offer no insight into its subsequent fate. Studies suggest that this play, written in 1944,

85 AAN, GUKPPiW, 173, teczka 32/42, p. 33.

86 AAN, GUKPPiW, 173, teczka 32/42, p. 20.

87 AAN, GUKPPiW, 173, teczka 32/42, p. 42.

was never staged professionally, although it was performed by student, school and seminary theatres.⁸⁸ It can thus be assumed that the aim in 1948 was to secure the first official publication of the text, but this initiative was thwarted by censors' interventions until 1957 when it was included in Zawieyski's collected *Dramaty*, published by Pallotinum.

The Catholic aspects of Seweryna Szmaglewska's camp memoirs *Dymy nad Birkenau* (Smoke over Birkenau) were the reason for cuts being made to this text. Eight of the eleven proposed interventions were approved, although their exact nature was not mentioned in the GUKPPiW assessment that most probably applied to the 1945 edition. I suggest that future research could take the 1948 edition (there were 18 editions in total, the majority featuring cuts) as the basis for comparison and restoring fragments of the text.

Zofia Kossak's collection of short stories *Nieznany kraj* (Unknown territory) was submitted before the end of 1948 but only reached the censorship office after the Szczecin Congress. The archived review is particularly interesting because of the corrections made to it. The censor approved of the texts that underscored the Polishness of Silesia and she also highlighted the significant role, which Catholic priests played in this according to Kossak. The end of the review states that the collection 'is marked by a zealous religious spirit and faith in the idea that it was the Church that saved and maintained Silesia's Polishness. As a result, the work expresses a positive political message – that Silesia is eternally Polish'. However, the final sentence continues with the words 'that is significantly weakened [by its religious aspects]', with the words 'its author's religious tendencies' scribbled out. The final verdict was that 'the book should be reissued' with an additional note adding 'in the near future, as far as possible'.⁸⁹ It can thus be assumed that the fundamental shifts in opinion on *Nieznany kraj* were connected to the strengthening of restrictions on literature that resulted from political shifts.

Zofia Nałkowska's *Medaliony* was first published in 1946, with its subsequent editions generating significant amounts of archival materials. There are no records relating to the first edition, with the oldest surviving GUKPPiW materials coming from July 1949. They are concerned with the second edition with *Czytelnik*. Both the primary and secondary review (from September) offer a positive assessment of Nałkowska's work, although the second reviewer

88 Dariusz Kulesza, *Tragedia ukrzyżowana. Dramaty chrześcijańskie Romana Brandstaettera i Jerzego Zawieyskiego*, Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 1999, p. 77.

89 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/24, pp. 192–193.

did point out the absence of Polish figures presented in a positive light: 'Polish readers might be taken aback by the lack of a positive image of Polish society. The two Polish figures in *Medaliony* are both negative. It would be worthwhile including another image that would present a positive Polish figure.'⁹⁰ A substantial print run of 10,500 copies was planned, with translations into foreign languages also called for. The suggestion for Nałkowska to add another short story to her collection seems completely unrealistic and it was not taken seriously, with no interventions actually made. This review was later subject to criticism in the Informational-Instructional Bulletin (No. 8, 1952), being framed as an example of excessive censorship and formulaic thinking.

The complaint that a work presented an unflattering image of Polish society's attitudes towards the Shoah became a common thread in censors' statements. It was also connected to the tendency of the authorities, including GUKPPiW, to mask difficult questions related to the Second World War.

Confirmation that *Medaliony* was assessed in 1949 comes from the 'Sprawozdanie opisowe Wydziału Badania Ruchu Wydawniczego' (Descriptive Report of the Department for Research on Publishing). A short note stating that *Czytelnik* published the work in September 1949 is accompanied by the assessment that '*Medaliony* is written in a straightforward manner, as if the author recorded only facts. Given how convincing the work is and the author's great skill, it deserves to be translated into foreign languages.'⁹¹ However, the collection of documents filed under 'Czytelnik 1951–1955' contains a thoroughly odd assessment of Nałkowska's work. Permission for a new edition in 1951 was refused on the basis of a review by censor Dobrzyński. Following his detailed summaries of the individual short stories, he concluded that

all the stories are completely stripped of political content, while at several points they contain harmful elements. The short stories are largely naturalistic and they all contain significant deeply pessimistic accents. The subject matter is somewhat obsolete (at least in this take on it).⁹²

Despite the clear condemnation of the text, superiors again approved the work for typesetting.

Another review of the 1951 edition, written, interestingly enough, three days after approval for typesetting was given, was positive. It was signed by censor Leszczyński, who stressed the positive impact that the text could have on

90 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/23, pp. 91–93.

91 AAN, GUKPPiW, 77, teczka 4/1, p. 431.

92 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375, teczka 31/29, p. 359. See: *Zapisy cenzury*, op. cit., p. 31.

readers, thanks to its 'disdain for and hatred of fascism.' I cite some excerpts here, although the document was very difficult to decipher:

Medaliony is a collection of short stories that reveals* the full immensity of bestiality and * of Hitlerite fascism [...] *Medaliony* continues, perhaps particularly* today, to have a significant social role, despite not saying anything new about fascism or expanding our knowledge of it.⁹³

The censors' remarks in relation to reeditions of Nałkowska's work require further commentary. What becomes evident, firstly, is the discrepancy between assessments and practice, as the proposed interventions are not acted upon. This was far from being the only such case. Secondly, the accusations levelled against the work were highly typical for the socialist realist period: it lacked social and political aspects, was naturalistic and pessimistic. Applying such judgments to works published between 1944 and 1948 necessarily resulted in significant complications that were resolved in various ways, according to archival sources. These ranged from publishing a work without any interventions despite unfavourable assessments (as was the case with *Medaliony*), through cuts and changes of varying degrees of seriousness (an extreme case was the creation of new versions of Andrzejewski's *Popiół i diament* [*Ashes and Diamonds*] and Nałkowska's *Węzły życia* [*Knots of life*]), to completely forbidding new editions and blacklisting works (such as Buczkowski's *Wertepy* – [*Rough roads*]). Thankfully for readers, *Medaliony* was spared, with the strange reviews in the GUKPPiW archives an indication of the tensions that emerged in the censorship office.

A very interesting yet complex case was the publication of Tadeusz Borowski's short stories, something that the editors of the four-volume edition of his writings (*Pisma*), the first critical edition of his oeuvre, refer to in detail.⁹⁴ Here I shall mention only a few questions relating to the aspects of his camp stories that were deemed acceptable and unacceptable. The oldest reviews are concerned with the first edition of *Kamienny świat* (*Stone world*). The three reviews signed off in July 1948 indicate the diverse opinions that this work evoked. The very fact that three reviews were necessary is indicative of the difficulties that censors faced, as only more controversial works required multiple assessments. What most probably happened is that after the first two highly negative reviews, a third was

93 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375,teczka 31/29, p. 360.

94 Tadeusz Borowski, *Pisma*, ed. by Tadeusz Drewnowski, Joanna Szczęsna and Sławomir Buryła, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2003–2005.

commissioned that approved the work for publication. The authorities' positive view of Borowski's political attitudes may have had an influence.

The first review by censor Billy stated that the work contained 'a collection of impressions from a camp and the initial period following liberation. Pessimistic, heavy, hopeless psychologizing in an existentialist style. Socially worthless, artistically flawed. A waste of paper'.⁹⁵ The second review, meanwhile, stated that

the work is formed of a series of scenes inspired by camp life in Auschwitz and the author's general impressions of his experiences after liberation. The particular parts are dedicated, for some unknown reason, to various contemporary Polish writers. The entirety of this little book (*sic!*) is exceptionally thoughtless while the selection of scenes seems arbitrary and hardly characteristic at all.⁹⁶

Similar condemnations were levelled against the work in opinion pieces at the time, as the editors of the critical edition of Borowski's writings have noted.⁹⁷

I would like to emphasize that both of these reviews were unusual in that they were so categorical in their assessments while being based on factors external to the content of the works. Had they been written a few months later, then there would have been nothing unusual about them at all, but July 1948 was still somewhat early for such unequivocal judgements. It could thus be argued that the reviews of *Kamienny świat* were indicators of the harsher environment that would emerge by the end of the year and intensify over the course of 1949 to reach a peak between 1950 and 1954. This offers further evidence in support of the argument presented in recent studies that the Stalinization of Poland's cultural life can be brought forward to the period between November 1947 (Bierut's speech at the opening of the Wrocław radio transmitter) and the end of August 1948 (when Gomułka was removed from power).⁹⁸ It was in summer 1948 that the first indication of these changes emerged at GUKPPiW.

The third review of Borowski's work was signed by J. Bardanowska with the approval for publication dated 21 August 1948. I will present an extensive citation of her review:

95 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/22, p. 128.

96 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/22, p. 127.

97 Tadeusz Borowski, *Proza*, ed. by Sławomir Buryła, vol. 1, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004, pp. 411–412.

98 Stanisław Gawliński, *Polityczne obowiązki. Odmiany powojennej prozy politycznej w latach 1945–1975*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1993, pp. 45–46; Jerzy Smulski, *Ciągłość, czy kataklizm? Kilka uwag o cenzurze roku 1949 w procesie literackim*, in: *Stare i nowe w literaturze najnowszej. Z problemów literatury polskiej po 1945 r.*, ed. by Lidia Wiśniewska, Bydgoszcz: Homini, 1996, pp. 29–44.

A collection of short stories written by the most talented young prose writer of the post-war generation. The subject matter of all the stories is related to the camps, whether directly through the events depicted or through the manner in which the author analyses them. This book is perfect not only in terms of its form, with its value also determined by the content and the attitude of the author. Perhaps its depiction of the brutality of the “stone world” seems cruel or even cynical to us, perhaps we will be unable to face the terrible truth that it presents about life, yet at no point as we read the book will we consider anything depicted to be impossible. We are completely convinced of the authenticity of the events and experiences depicted, while our conviction forces us to adopt a particular stance towards the world. Borowski has already written two books, publishing the first, *Byliśmy w Oświęcimiu* (*We were in Auschwitz*), in Germany. It was universally acclaimed as one of the best books – some even stating it was the best – about the camps. The second book *Pożegnanie z Marią* (*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*; lit. Farewell to Maria), published in Poland, quickly gained a large number of positive reviews. *Kamienny świat* is his third book and, in my view, it is the best of them all. It seems to me that it will provide our wartime generation with a document similar to what Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* provided the previous war’s generation. Borowski’s work, though, is superior to it in terms of the perfection of its form and humane storytelling. Borowski’s is a creative pessimism, while his depiction of life inspires us to fight rather than take satisfaction. It is thus not by chance that Borowski, a former Home Army soldier, has now joined the ranks of Marxists and is the brightest hope and shining light of Polish literature. [...] If the goal of art is to do justice to the world – as one art theorist stated – then Borowski has fulfilled all the necessary conditions for creating a truly eternal and great work about the world, about people and for people.⁹⁹

Despite the lack of precise information relating to the particular edition concerned (this was a common mistake made by GUKPPiW reviewers), this document makes clear that the work was approved for publication without any changes.

The next edition of his camp stories, in *Wybór pism* (Selected writings) submitted for assessment by PIW in 1952, posed censorship officials serious difficulties and they thus proposed significant cuts. Since this collection does not feature in any bibliography of Borowski’s works, we can thus assume that the project was abandoned, a decision that was all the more interesting since the collection was prepared shortly after the author’s death. The review by censor Światycka features several further reservations beyond the underrepresentation of social aspects and its ‘heavy atmosphere’. She judged the first four texts in the collection to be ‘nationalist and fanatically religious, glorifying the Warsaw Uprising and the pre-war Scout movement, while demonstrating anti-Soviet overtones’.

99 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/22, pp. 129–130.

She deemed the short stories *Droga przez las* (Through the forest), *Tropione zwierzęta* (Hunted animals), *Pewien żołnierz* (A soldier), *Panowie proszę do gazu* (*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*) and *Bitwa pod Grunwaldem* (*Battle of Grunwald*) to be the most harmful. At the end of the assessment there is a note stating that the first three stories were removed and replaced.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, there is no record of which works were added.

In the files containing documents relating to PIW from 1954, there are 28 pages of materials on the censors' work on Tadeusz Borowski's *Dzieła zebrane* (his collected works that were actually titled *Utwory zebrane* and edited by Wiktor Woroszyński and others). John M. Bates has briefly discussed these materials, noting the significant difficulties that GUKPPiW had in the Stalinist era with Borowski's texts from 1945–1947. Bates also mentions that the censorship authorities were responsible for inspiring the introduction to the collected works' second volume while also deliberately restricting the distribution of the book.¹⁰¹

The five-volume publication was reviewed fourteen times, with Borowski's poetry and essays never facing criticism. It was only the short stories about the camps that were accused of 'cynicism, cruelty and anti-Semitism'. Censor Świątycka even described his Home Army friend Andrzej as a 'fascist'. GUKPPiW, however, was interested in a complete edition of a 'classic' author with Comrade Bazańska's review of the most controversial series of short studies, dated 19 May 1954, offering a fairly typical statement:

Since all of the volumes will be sold together as a set and are aimed ultimately at an elite readership interested in tracing Borowski's development as a writer across all the volumes – something that will be made easier by the introduction to the first volume – then I would argue that this particular volume can be published without changes.¹⁰²

As a result of these reviews, it was possible to restore the full text, as Tadeusz Drewnowski has mentioned in his editors' note to Borowski's *Pisma*.¹⁰³

It is perhaps also worth mentioning here the accusation, levelled repeatedly against Borowski and others, of holding a positive opinion of the Warsaw Uprising, the pre-war Scout movement and the Home Army. My exploration of the archives suggests that these were the subjects that censors most zealously sought out and cut. The report resulting from the assessment of Wroczyński's

100 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/123 pp. 650–651.

101 John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., p. 106, n. 34.

102 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/125, pp. 118–145.

103 Tadeusz Borowski, *Proza*, vol. 2, here: Tadeusz Drewnowski, *Nota edytorska*, p. 481.

book *Wspomnienia o Jaraczu* (Memories of Jaracz) contains a passage that reflects GUKPPiW's official position on the Warsaw Uprising in the Stalinist period. 'This fragment reflects rumours common during the occupation and immediately after the war that claimed that the Soviet Army deliberately failed to intervene during the uprising'.¹⁰⁴ The recent past, particularly certain facts pertaining to the Second World War, proved to be unpublishable not only in journalistic writing but also in literary works.

In 1949, Książka i Wiedza publishers submitted a collection of short stories by Adolf Rudnicki for assessment. Three reviews (one primary and two secondary) of *Ucieczka z Jasnej Polany* (Escape from Jasna Polana) are held in the archives. They compare the collection to earlier works on a similar subject. Censor Jan Starski proposed numerous changes to mitigate supposedly excessive pessimism and overly forthright statements. At the same time, however, he praised Rudnicki's aesthetics.

There is no need to comment on Rudnicki's writing in artistic terms, but failings remain on the ideological side (such as in the piece 'Shakespeare') which is often presented in an unbalanced way in order to ensure his work's more powerful artistic impact.

The censor proposed as many as nine changes, with the most far-reaching being the removal of two sentences from page 84: 'If he had had a division of officer cadets ahead of him, he would have been fine. [But the division was made up peasants. The peasants were silent]'; one sentence from page 143: "Home?," replied Wołkow. "The age of homes is over, there are no more homes. [We live in a period of *kvartirna ploschchada*" – Russian, meaning square-meterage]; while from page 171 the following statement was to be cut: 'Heiden claims that Hitler's anti-Semitism was not the anti-Semitism of a German [but of a man from the East]'. The cuts were indeed carried out in the published version.

In the secondary review from 6 April 1949, the censor did not recommend any further interventions but expressed more general reservations.

In my opinion, the book is no good for the general reader who has already had enough of war themes and the hopelessness that fills them. What the general reader needs is something inspiring and joyful. The work is more suited to members of the intelligentsia who remain stuck in "pre-war" times.

The other secondary review repeated the claims about sadness and hopelessness.¹⁰⁵

104 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145,teczka 31/25, p. 558.

105 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/39, pp. 38–45.

The reservations expressed directly in the reviews mainly concern the pessimistic tone of Adolf Rudnicki's short stories while the interventions were largely of a political nature, cutting any comments relating to social changes or those that were of an anti-Soviet nature. The battle against pessimism and instead promoting 'joyful' texts acquired unprecedented dimensions under Stalinism. This campaign proved particularly tasteless in the context of works addressing the Second World War and the Shoah.

Ucieczka z Jasnej Polany (Escape from Jasna Polana) was removed completely from *Wybór opowiadań*, a selection of Rudnicki's stories published the following year. The justification was that 'the entire plot of *Ucieczka* goes against our political standpoint, historical materialism, etc'. The decision was not affected by the fact that the stories had previously been published in the journal *Kuźnica* and other collections. In the Descriptive Report, meanwhile, the reason for not approving publication of the stories was given as 'a false conception of the German question'. *Ucieczka* was restored in a new edition of the collected short stories published by Czytelnik in 1955.

All of the examples of censors' interventions from the Stalinist era presented in this chapter have so far related to reeditions of texts that were initially published between 1944 and 1948. What is the reason for the prevalence of such examples? In one of his studies, Michał Głowiński stated:

I adopted the principle that wherever possible I would examine only texts by authors that played a significant role in Polish literature – [...] showing the clash of the principles of socialist realism with the actual practice of undoubtedly outstanding artists seemed to be more interesting.¹⁰⁶

My aims are very similar as I examine the ways in which, and the extent to which, outstanding texts by the most talented authors – who often had already produced a significant oeuvre – submitted for assessment to GUKPPiW, faced restrictions. My findings suggest that the majority of such texts were published before 1949, while they enjoyed varying degrees of success in securing new issues during the Stalinist period.

For the sake of context, it is also necessary to illustrate how works submitted for initial assessment after 1949 were treated by the censorship authorities. As I have already mentioned, it proved to be the case that works written in accordance with the demands of the new cultural norms also faced protracted encounters with GUKPPiW.

¹⁰⁶ Michał Głowiński, *Rytuał i demagogia. Trzydzieście szkiców o sztuce zdegradowanej*, Warszawa: Open, 1992, p. 7.

Tadeusz Breza's novel *Niebo i ziemia* (Heaven and Earth) faced very significant politically motivated cuts because his work sought to critically work through the interwar period.¹⁰⁷ Czytelnik submitted the novel for assessment in the spring of 1950. A number of additional notes are included in the detailed review by censor Mieczysław Fleszar, who proposed numerous changes. Clearly the work caused the censors a great deal of trouble. At the top of the page in red pencil there is the remark 'KC PZPR!', indicating that the whole novel was probably sent to the highest authority, the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. At the bottom of the page there is a note in pencil: 'return to the editors – 26 April' and below that, 'the chapter set in the cemetery has been removed. Suggestions have been made according to the corrections by Comrade Staszewski and Yourself. 26.5.1950'. The text was thus reworked over the course of around a month. The censors do not mention whether or not the author himself was involved, although the signs are that he was. A further assessment by Fleszar marked 'urgent!' from 22 July 1950 was very brief:

The current version of the second chapter of Breza's novel is a substantial improvement on the initial version. The communist figures are now truer to life and more connected both to the party and everyday life. There are no substantial concerns with this chapter as it stands and the novel can be printed.¹⁰⁸

The changes carried out thus concerned the depictions of pre-war communists.

According to Piotr Perkowski's investigations, GUKPPiW expressed similar reservations in relation to Tadeusz Konwicki's novels *Przy budowie* (At a building site) and *Władza* (Power). The officials responsible for authorizing further editions of the works were troubled, in the case of the former text, by the author's failure to offer a positive depiction of the party's organizational work, the rather brief outline of the problem at hand, and the superficial depiction of the breakthrough in workers' consciousness. *Władza*, meanwhile, did not offer a focused take on the key issues, had a weak conclusion and offered an insufficient depiction of the 'right-wing, nationalist deviation' among communists.¹⁰⁹ Perkowski did not outline what changes were made to *Przy budowie*, but in the case of *Władza* he noted that

fragments of the novel were initially published in 1952 in *Sztandar Młodych* and it saw three more editions between 1954 and 1956. It was subject to reworkings by the author and the censors while also undergoing stylistic modifications that ensured its political

107 See also: John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., pp. 117–118.

108 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145,teczka 31/25, pp. 560–562.

109 Piotr Perkowski, *Cenzura jako źródło cierpień?*, op. cit., pp. 28–35.

correctness. Indeed, Konwicki's behaviour in this respect was no different to that of Jerzy Andrzejewski who censored his own works and corrected subsequent editions of *Popiół i diament*.¹¹⁰

Detailed analysis of the changes to *Władza* and comparing them with those to which Andrzejewski's well-researched novel were subjected could be an interesting topic for further research. As far as 'standard' socialist-realist novels were concerned, the censorship authorities focused primarily on political aspects, constantly reworking and refining them. Great expectations were placed on communist authors.

Concerns regarding political issues were common in reviews produced in the socialist-realist era. Moral objections were a completely different matter and they were usually expressed alongside other concerns. It is again worth examining the case of a text of high artistic value that was published before 1949 but first encountered a hostile censor's attentions only in 1953.

Leopold Buczkowski's *Wertepy* was written before the Second World War and first published by the private publishing house Gebethner i Wolff, whose archives indicate that the novel was printed on 27 May 1947.¹¹¹ Two positive censorship reviews are stored in the archives, too. However, Sławomir Buryła has compared a typescript held by the Polish Literature Museum and the 1947 edition. He found significant differences between the versions with the book missing several scenes that could be read as potentially anti-Soviet (those relating to the Polish-Bolshevik War, the traditions of the Polish Legions and the situation in pre-war Ukrainian villages). Buryła argues that these interventions were undoubtedly the work of GUKPPiW.¹¹² His claims can be verified, although it should also be noted that the archival sources from both the censorship office and the publishers that I have studied make no reference to these cuts being a result of institutional literary censorship. Further research is required on the matter.

In March 1953, however, *Wertepy* was reviewed again. In all likelihood it was not a matter of a new edition of the work being published (since the publishers had lost their licence) but rather about sanctioning the withdrawal of the work

110 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

111 Gebethner i Wolff, manuscript collection of IBL PAN, call no. 199. I found these completely unknown materials thanks to information included in: Jadwiga Czachowska and Roman Loth, *Przewodnik polonisty. Bibliografie, biblioteki, muzea literackie*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1989, p. 615.

112 Sławomir Buryła, *Edytorskie aspekty twórczości Leopolda Buczkowskiego. Pamiętnik Literacki*, vol. 2, 2008, pp. 180–185.

from sale (the publishers still ran an outlet). Comrade Kazimierska produced a highly negative review of the novel, which I cite here in full:

Buczowski's *Wertepy* is a book depicting a life at a certain time in the Podolian village Dolinoszczęsa (around 1920). It is difficult to speak of the protagonists of the novel since what is presented is a gallery featuring almost all of the inhabitants of the village, each of whom proves more disgusting than the last. All of the people shown are either horse thieves or habitual drunks, or are completely lacking in principles and moral boundaries; they are people for whom killing a human being because of a horse, for example, is no big deal (it is thus no surprise that there are around ten such cases in the book).

The work is completely deprived of political aspects and is ultimately lacking in key issues (because the issue of disputes between peasants resulting from personal matters can hardly be a problem). However, if we take into account the style of the work – pornography of the lowest order – then it becomes absolutely clear that this work should under no circumstances be on sale.

Oversights in preventative control: pages 105 and 106.¹¹³

The most significant faults that the official noted in respect of *Wertepy* included its apparently pornographic, apolitical and carefree nature. Although the accusation that the novel lacks key issues at the same time as the depiction of multiple murders is highlighted can be considered evidence of the censor's reading lacking insight. However, the charges that the work lacked political content and was pornographic were much more serious, particularly since they ultimately led to Buczowski's novel being banned from distribution. The archived review includes a superior's decision approving the book's withdrawal from sale.

GUKPPiW found dealing with apparent immorality in texts particularly difficult.¹¹⁴ Vulgarities and daring erotic scenes were cut from many works or substantial reworking was demanded. The censorship authorities also sought to use 'overly attractive plots (the romantic plot line)' as a reason to reduce print runs. The most interesting case during the period under investigation here is the prose of Jerzy Andrzejewski. The censors of *Bramy raju* (*The Gates of Paradise*) and *Idzie skacząc po górach* (*He cometh leaping upon the mountains*) were particularly disgusted by the homosexual themes in those novels while also finding themselves helpless in the face of them. There is more on this subject in the chapter on Andrzejewski, although it is worth noting here that the censorship authorities applied a strict classification of books based on their potential audience, so the intelligentsia (who, as we have already seen, were already potentially

113 AAN, GUKPPiW, 408, pp. 329–330.

114 See: Marta Fik, op. cit., p. 138.

demoralized) could read different things to peasants and workers, whose morals were of greater concern to GUKPPiW. My archival research also suggests that other writers accused of disseminating immorality were Leopold Tyrmand (*Siedem dalekich rejsów*, a novel that was first published in Poland only in 1992 but had already appeared in English as *The Seven Long Voyages* in 1959), Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and – among foreign authors – Samuel Beckett.

I have already mentioned some works that faced a ban on new editions between 1949 and 1955. Now I will turn to a somewhat different category, namely new works submitted for publication for the first time under Stalinism but rejected for publication by GUKPPiW. Many such works only hit the shelves a few years later, usually around 1956. Some of the most famous cases of works left waiting on the censors' shelves (known in Polish as *półkownicy*) noted by Zbigniew Jarosiński are Tadeusz Różewicz's *Opadły liście z drzew* (Leaves have fallen), Jan Józef Szczepański's *Polska jesień* (Polish autumn) and *Buty* (Shoes), Tadeusz Konwicki's *Rojsty* and Leopold Buczkowski's *Czarny potok* (*Black Torrent*).¹¹⁵ To this list I would also add, based on my own archival research, Kazimierz Truchanowski's novel *Droga do nieba* (The way to heaven), submitted for publication in 1948 and first published only in 1957, and Irena Jurgielewiczowa's fairy tale *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* (The boy who was searching for home). Drawing on others' research, I would also add Stanisław Lem's *Szpital Przemienienia* (*Hospital of the Transfiguration*)¹¹⁶ and Julian Strykowski's *Głosy w ciemności* (Voices in the darkness).¹¹⁷ It is also worth stressing that all of the abovementioned texts deal with the same subject: experiences of war and occupation. Since one of the main tasks of the censorship office was to work on texts for as long as it took to make them publishable, it should come as no surprise that there were relatively few works that were banned outright. Such texts are thus particularly worthy of attention because it indicates a deep-rooted tendency that could not be corrected and a tone that could not be harmonized with political demands.

My study can address only those works for which there are documents in the archives. These sources suggest that it was, to a sufficiently likely extent, obstinate censors who decided these works' fate. Interestingly enough, there is almost no evidence in the archive that the bans were issued by censors in the course of the

115 Zbigniew Jarosiński, *Literatura lat 1945–1975*, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 1997, p. 30.

116 Ewa Szczepkowska, *Doświadczenie inicjacji w autobiograficznej i realistycznej prozie Lema*, in: *Z problemów prozy. Powieść inicjacyjna*, ed. by Wojciech Gutowski and Ewa Owczarz, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Duet, 2003.

117 Anna Bikont and Joanna Szczęsna, op. cit., p. 239.

primary reviews following initial submission. In most cases, the archives contain only the assessments permitting publication in the post-Stalinist thaw. The fact that this is generally the case suggests that there might have been a purge of archival records relating to banned books, which most probably occurred around 1956 once the bans were lifted. The negative review of the fairy tale *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* might have evaded the purge – and this was the only example I was able to find – because of the work's relative insignificance.

I will examine Lem's and Jurgielewiczowa's works in the chapters dedicated to those particular authors. Here I would like to mention briefly that the reasons for denying permission to publish Lem's *Szpital Przemienienia* in its initial one-volume form were most probably the ideological neutrality of the central protagonist and the complexity of the philosophical treatises included in the text. I cannot state this with certainty since the negative reviews from 1948 or 1949 are missing. Meanwhile, Jurgielewiczowa's fairy tale was shelved by GUKPPiW for over eight years (it was written in 1949 and finally published in 1957) on the grounds that it masked 'allusions to the last war [...] behind dark symbolism' and contained anti-German ideology¹¹⁸.

Piotr Perkowski has outlined the reasons for and circumstances around the ban on Tadeusz Konwicki's *Rojsty*, with the subversiveness of the relativization of the activities of the Home Army being the key reason.¹¹⁹ The reviews from 1948 are also missing in this case (Perkowski does not mention any and I could not find any), meaning that the actual reservations censors had in respect of the book cannot be established.

Let us consider in greater detail Jan Józef Szczepański's works *Polska jesień* and *Buty*, which were submitted for publication by Wydawnictwo Literackie in 1955 and 1956, respectively. An extensive four-page review of the former, dated 17 February 1955, is available in the archives. It suggested that a significant print run of 10,000 would be appropriate. The censor began his review with a detailed overview of the work before moving on to an ideological appraisal:

Rather than take up a left-wing position, the author depicts all of this from the position of what seems like an impartial observer who does not adopt any ideological standpoint. [...] Szczepański does not commit any kind of ideological deviation, although he does deviate from the prevailing principle of depicting the Sanacja-era army in disarray.¹²⁰

118 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145,teczka 31/25, pp. 252–253.

119 Piotr Perkowski, *Pół wieku z cenzurą*, op. cit., p. 76.

120 AAN, GUKPPiW, 395,teczka 32/12, pp. 17–20.

The work was recommended for publication without changes, with the exception of the existence of a military airfield in Dębica being mentioned (this was a military secret). However, even this intervention was rejected by superiors. A further review written on 25 February 1955 also recommended publication without changes, although the assessment was less enthusiastic and included significant political critiques:

It should be stressed that the author commits a serious historical error in one particular case. According to this piece, the Soviet army entered territories inhabited by Ukrainian and Belarusian populations at a time when the Polish army was still battling invading forces, thus before the Polish government had fled to Romania, i.e. before 17 September. [...] This is a particularly significant historical inaccuracy that could also be used as an argument against the Soviet government's justified actions, particularly since similar arguments have already been presented in this respect elsewhere. Attempts have been made to present this as a "stab in the back" by the USSR, etc. The facts presented by the author might create such an impression. [...] As far as the aesthetic worth of the book is concerned, it is rather average. The language is simple and features a significant degree of naturalism. The plot is fairly repetitive, although there are numerous humorous moments. In light of its critical and realistic nature, the work is interesting and intriguing, thus it can be approved for publication.¹²¹

It is also worth adding here that the same collection of archival materials features critiques of Lem's *Czas nieutracony* (Time not lost), with one reviewer even comparing Lem and Szczepański's texts.

'Historical inaccuracy' and the potential 'argument against the Soviet government's justified actions' were perhaps the key reasons why the book was shelved in 1949. Violation of the good name of the USSR was an accusation that authors were powerless against in the years of absolute subservience to Poland's ally. This was the reason why the censors went against their own principles and prevented the work from being published. It seems that the fact that approval was given several years later for a work that was judged controversial in terms of its subject matter and take on events, reveals the extent of the apparent autonomy that Polish literature managed to secure in the short thaw. Likewise, the dates of the reviews provide evidence for the argument that censorship began easing off in early 1955 already. Anna Bikont and Joanna Szczęsna have provided an extensive account of the impact of the thaw on literature and culture, pointing to 1955 as the starting point of the changes.¹²²

121 AAN, GUKKPiW, 395,teczka 32/12, pp. 27–28.

122 Anna Bikont and Joanna Szczęsna, op. cit., pp. 237–246.

Comrade Lubczak received a copy of *Buty i inne opowiadania* on 26 October 1956. I will cite the complete review here:

This is the third work by the author that has been published at least in part, with the stories *Buty* (Shoes), *Narciarz* (Skier) and *Blogosławione wody Lete* (The holy waters of the Lethe) having been published previously. These short stories were written between 1945 and 1950. As the author notes in the introduction, they were supposed to have been his debut work, although for reasons outside of his control this was ultimately not the case. The subject matter of the collection is diverse, although the central theme is the wartime occupation. The author presents certain facts in the form of memoirs without defining his ideological position or offering a synthesis. The short stories *Wszarz* (Fleabag) and *Buty* offer an almost naturalistic and disturbingly shocking image of the deformation of human emotions caused by war, underground activities and pursuing military struggle without adequate leadership or a clear political programme. This is expressed clearly in the story *Koniec legendy* that describes the situation following the uprising when its participants discuss the sense of their struggle after being evacuated from Warsaw. Szary, the Home Army soldier, argues that it was an act of propaganda for the West, while Wielgorz, who does not have a clearly defined political position, declared the uprising an unnecessary act of shedding Polish blood. It is difficult to draw any conclusions in light of this mixture of conceptions and directions. The stories presented here tend to be limited to individual affairs without offering an image of political and social issues. Why this is the case is explained by the author himself in his foreword.¹²³

It is worth highlighting the softly phrased sentence that indicates that the short stories were the author's debut work, with the reasons why this was not the case having been outside the author's control. There is no further official comment on this, while even internal documents masked the censorship office's own involvement in the matter. It is quite possible that work was shelved for six years on account of the very same reservations presented in this review: a naturalistic depiction of war, an apolitical stance and, finally, the most significant argument: the depiction of the Warsaw Uprising, a subject that often made publication difficult.

In late February 1955, another shelved text reached the censorship office, namely Różewicz's *Opadły liście z drzew*. It was submitted by Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy. Three reviews of the short stories can be found in the archives, with two being full of praise while one was more restrained. The latter stressed, with its own poetic flourish, the work's naturalism, calling it 'a bunch of naturalist orchids'. Censor Trębicki was giving his opinion during the transition from the

123 AAN, GUKPPiW, 395,teczka 32/12, p. 6.

old to the new style, expressing his aversion to naturalism while admiring the texts' aesthetics and Różewicz's 'jackal-like nose for things.' He thus proposed cuts only to the naturalistic fragments. The head of department, however, considered the interventions unnecessary and thus approved publication on 7 March already. The second review was more generous towards the author, stating that

The description of those days is unprecedented; this cycle of unforgettable short stories [...], Różewicz's prose as a creative method is comparable only to Borowski's prose during the period that he wrote his camp stories. It could be said that what Różewicz writes about has never been described as courageously, ferociously and so innovatively by any other Polish writer.

The third review from July was entirely positive.¹²⁴ It ensured that the book was approved for printing. The growing liberalization of censors' judgements and the end of the ban on naturalistic descriptions of war that had probably been responsible for the text being shelved are clearly evident. In this case, too, I could not find any earlier assessments by the censorship authorities that would provide insight into the reasons for the earlier refusal to permit publication.

I will present several more examples confirming the changes to the depth and breadth of literary censorship around October 1956. Unfortunately, no materials have been preserved that would provide insight into meetings or national congresses and thus offer more context. The latest minutes available in the archives are from December 1954, while the Bulletin ceased publication with the twelfth issue of 1955. The reviews are thus the only available sources. Particularly interesting is the review addressing Zbigniew Herbert's delayed literary debut. *Struna światła* (Stream of light) was submitted to GUKPPiW on 5 February 1956. It was recommended for publication without changes, albeit in a very small print run of 1,205. I cite the censor's comments here in full:

This is the first collection of Herbert's poems. Herbert is familiar to us from the "column of five poets" that featured in [the journal] *Życie Literackie* last year. What can be said of the poems is that they are beautiful in their own particular way. Błoński was not exaggerating when he said that Herbert is a second Różewicz – just a bit different. Literary associations prevail in Herbert's poetry – subtlety and the play of light (something that he notes in the title after all) whatever the subject matter of the poem. It could be memories of war, his family and home, Greek mythology or admiration for inanimate objects. I have no reservations about the volume – it is just a shame that it has taken so long for them to appear – (the collection contains only poems). No remarks.¹²⁵

124 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/126, op. cit., pp. 158–166.

125 AAN, GUKPPiW, 424,teczka 31/36, pp. 176–177.

The assessment is somewhat unclear but nevertheless positive, although it also reveals the censor's helplessness in the face of this lyric poetry ('beautiful in their own particular way').

Herbert's subsequent volumes did not enjoy the same fortune. In April 1957, the poems *Odpowiedź* ([A response] noting that it was previously published in the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*), *Bajka ruska* ([Russian tale] for its anti-Russian sentiments) and *Węgrom* ([To the Hungarians] for its political subject matter addressing the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956) were cut from the volume *Hermes, pies i gwiazda* (Hermes, Dog and Star).¹²⁶ It is also worth noting that these cuts were made at a time when censorship was supposedly at its most liberal ebb. However, anything referring to the USSR was effectively out of bounds even during the period of liberalization at GUKPPIW. As other researchers have shown, for example, Wiktor Woroszyński's poem *Miasto* (The city) on the subject of the Hungarian uprising was also not approved for publication.¹²⁷

Other GUKPPIW materials show that while censors were more lenient in their treatment of Polish writers between 1955 and 1957, fundamental changes were still imposed upon their works. The May edition of the literary journal *Twórczość* (5/1957) saw several works cut completely: Wiktor Woroszyński's short story *Komendant* (Commandant) about Polish camp prisoners; Jerzy Zagórski's poem *Grudniowy kondukt* (December procession) with an image of Budapest; and two poems by Kazimierz Cis, *Wiosna na Syberii 1955 roku* (Spring 1955 in Siberia) and *Z północnego poematu* (From a northern epic poem). The following edition cut parts of Kazimierz Brandys' 'dark' tale *Matka Królów* (The mother of Kings) that presented various perspectives on socialism, as well as depicting the strangeness and incomprehensibility of everyday life in an ironic light. One line that fell foul of censors commented on how 'our people beat our people' in prisons.¹²⁸ As with Zbigniew Herbert's volumes of poetry, any anti-Russian statements and images depicting the negative side of the socialist system were deemed unpublishable.

Roman Bratny's novel *Kolumbowie. Rocznik 20* (Columbuses – Born 1920) also faced similar criticisms. A two-page review suggested a series of interventions that would reduce the extent of anti-Soviet statements (mentions of Katyń, the absence of Soviet patriotism in ordinary Soviet citizens and the fate of Home

126 AAN, GUKPPIW, 426,teczka 34/2, pp. 80–82.

127 Anna Bikont and Joanna Szczęsna, op. cit., p. 285.

128 AAN, GUKPPIW, 512, not paginated.

Army units in territories taken by the Red Army). I will cite the conclusion of the review here:

The book's pessimism is not reason enough to deny permission for publication. There is no doubt that its author, a Home Army officer and editor of the journal *Pokolenie*, Roman Bratny, has invested a great deal of passion in committing to paper the process that has formed the "AK complex". If the process is depicted here in a somewhat corrupted fashion, then the reason for this is the author's passion for laying the matter bare. This is, without doubt, the best and most aesthetically mature work Bratny has produced. Its historical errors cannot be a source of criticism, since they serve the entire conception of the book. It is a work that seeks to settle accounts with the past – depicting heroism, patriotism and injustice. Even if the account is a regretful one, this is just one small part of the price that we have to pay today for the mistakes of the past.

It seems that certain exaggerations in descriptions of the way the security services operated are permissible in literary works if we indeed recognize that these are exaggerations and the UB is ascribed a particular role in the novel even if this overstates its achievements in a particular realm. However, publishing the fragments that unfortunately evoke a rather anti-Soviet impression does not seem possible.¹²⁹

The passages regarding the methods employed by the security service (UB) seem quite unreal ('overstates its achievements!') and it is difficult to ascribe them to the censors' naivety. The very mention of the UB and the approval of a text that mentions its inglorious role indicates that the subject had been removed from the censors' blacklist.

According to my archival research, another subject was not completely removed from the blacklist during the thaw years, namely negative everyday experiences in People's Poland that in the various committee meetings was euphemistically termed 'exaggerating shortages'. The poem *W kolejce* (In a queue), about women's struggles and queuing for food, was cut entirely from Mieczysława Buczkówna's volume of poems *Chleb i obłok* (Bread and a cloud). The three reviews of the volume in the archives are generally unfavourable, accusing the author of imitating the Young Poland style and 'while not strictly graphomania, it does suggest chaotic thinking'. The cut poem was, according to the censor, an illustration of how the poet failed to see any positives in the new realities despite her great efforts to overcome her pessimism.¹³⁰ The poem 'W kolejce' was thus not included in the volume.

Researchers have suggested that the activities of GUKPPiW intensified and became more aggressive following the Tenth Plenary of the Central Committee

129 AAN, GUKPPiW, 426,teczka 34/3, pp. 370–371.

130 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375,teczka 31/33, p. 269.

of the PZPR [1957] where the decision was taken to eradicate some revisionist-oriented intelligentsia members of the party.¹³¹ These changes are difficult to trace in the archives since the transformation took subtle forms and was much less evident than the intensification of control that accompanied the onset of the Stalinist era in Poland, which was followed by a gradual moderation of censorship during the thaw era. It is possible, however, to attempt an analysis of the situation by examining a set of documents presenting interventions. The available sources relevant to this study cover the period from 1 August 1957 (just before the Plenary) to the end of 1958.

Between 1 July 1957 and 15 April 1958, a total of 66 works were subject to the censor's scalpel. I will list here the most important works alongside the official classification of the cuts: Witold Gombrowicz, *Trans-Atlantyk* and *Ślub* (*Trans-Atlantyk* and *The Wedding*) – GUKPPiW questioned part of Wittlin's introduction, with the publisher Czytelnik subsequently removing the whole of his text; Andrzej Strug, *Miliardy* (Billions) – the whole work was shelved; Leopold Tyrmand, *Siedem dalekich rejsów* (Seven distant voyages), the whole book was questioned; Czesław Straszewicz, *Turyści z bocianich gniazd* (Tourists from the crows' nests) – the book was submitted for preliminary assessment by the publishers PIW and the review was negative; Bogdan Wojdowski, *Wakacje Hioba* (Job's holidays) – two short stories were cut in their entirety, while several sections were removed from a third; Julian Przyboś, *Narzędzie ze światła* (Tools of light) – two poems were removed from the collection; Mieczysława Buczkówna, *Wygilie* (Vigils) – one poem was cut from the collection; Andrzej Kijowski, *Pięć opowiadań* (Five stories) – the short story *Wakacje* (Holidays) was removed; Marek Hłasko, *Następny do raju* (Next stop: Paradise) – was submitted by the publishers Iskry and the censors rejected the entire book; Czesław Miłosz, *Dolina Issy* (*The Issa Valley*) – Wydawnictwo Literackie asked for an assessment of the work and received a negative review and Tadeusz Różewicz, *Wiersze* (Poems), published by Wydawnictwo Literackie, saw one poem removed.¹³²

The first edition of *Trans-Atlantyk* and *Ślub* published in Poland (the two works were published in a single volume) were given a new introduction. In the file containing sources relating to Czytelnik from 1957, there is a document titled 'Opinion of the Head of Department' which included the remarks that 'in light of the objections on p. 8 and 16 of Wittlin's introduction, the editorial board decided to remove the introduction entirely. The foreword to Gombrowicz's book

131 Jerzy Eisler, op. cit., p. 21.

132 AAN, GUKPPiW, 591, teczka 60/2, pp. 1–5.

was replaced with one written by Gombrowicz himself'. The files also include a positive review accepting the text for publication, a copy of Wittlin's introduction featuring entire pages crossed out in red pencil, the author's original six-page introduction and the new foreword written by Gombrowicz.¹³³ These are significant materials. The original idea envisaged a book with two introductions: one about Gombrowicz, written by Józef Wittlin, and another foreword by the author himself discussing the content of the works. Thus the first Polish edition was to be a direct replica of the Paris edition, which was something unthinkable for GUKPPiW officials.

The censor's review that is among the sources is, however, very astute:

For readers that have grown accustomed to polite realist prose, this book will come as a shock and surprise exceeding those experienced with *Ferdydurke*. For many people it will be incomprehensible, absurd, meaningless; for others it will undoubtedly prove revelatory in terms of form. A cult of form prevails in the book – in the formal devices, the strangeness, absurdity and unreality of the style of the language, in many of the situations and events, and in the particular coarseness, uncouthness and vulgarity of it all. With this novel, Gombrowicz proves that he is probably the most outstanding contemporary Polish author of grotesque literature.¹³⁴

The censor commented on Wittlin's foreword, noting that it was written in 1951 as a 'small apologia for Gombrowicz's work', highlighting in particular the controversial nature of pages 8 and 16 without mentioning what is included there. The decision to prevent publication of Wittlin's and Gombrowicz's forewords in their original form was thus confirmed in other documents (that have not survived) or on the basis of oral instructions.

The foreword by the author had already been typeset before it was cut. The publishers thus had to bear the costs of the censors' intervention most probably because they simply had not been expecting it. The entire piece was crossed through with the most troubling fragments additionally marked. I will cite one typical cut section, although the entire case is worthy of more attention.

Poland's semi-life was paralysing us. [...] The new "proletarian" Poland, the one that had replaced the previous Poland, might have emerged in some respects from an anachronism and indeed managed to push through several necessary reforms, but it is now trying to again impose on Poles some kind of narrow-minded and overly primitive style, a paralysing form.¹³⁵

133 AAN, GUKPPiW, 424, teczka 31/37, pp. 68–73.

134 Ibidem, pp. 255–256.

135 AAN, GUKPPiW, 426, teczka 34/2, p. 70.

In other passages marked as completely unpublishable, the writer discussed why it was impossible for him to return to the country in 1939 and described his failed attempt to join the army. The main reasons, then, for Gombrowicz's introduction being removed were his remarks referring to the political situation in the country and the conditions surrounding his own emigration.

The new, shorter introduction was stamped by GUKPPIW on 17 June 1957. It was this version that was included in the 1957 edition and subsequently reprinted many times.¹³⁶ It would be interesting to trace the author's attitude to the changes to the introduction to *Trans-Atlantic*. Perhaps his comments regarding the 'forced' introduction and response to GUKPPIW's verdicts could be found. This would be worth exploring in further research.

It is worth examining the fate of two highly controversial novels submitted for assessment to the censorship office, *Następny do raju* by Marek Hłasko and *Dolina Issy* by Czesław Miłosz. Unfortunately, the reviews denying permission to print them have not survived. The works' presence in the collected lists of interventions provides the only trace of those perturbations. While the publishers submitting Hłasko's novel were simply mistaken in thinking they could get it past censors while they were uncertain as to the writer's legal and political situation (his situation did indeed change dramatically in 1958), the attempt to 'smuggle' into Poland the novel by Miłosz, who was subject to a blanket ban and blackout by censors, can be seen as a courageous act by Wydawnictwo Literackie. Of course, GUKPPIW did not change its opinion of Miłosz, with *Dolina Issy* not approved in 1957.

Any new edition of Andrzej Strug's pre-war novel was impossible because the author was 'blacklisted', although in 1957 *Dzieje jednego pocisku* (The history of one shell) was published. Tyrmand's novel was shelved on the grounds that it was supposedly pornographic. Alina Molisak has written an in-depth study of the circumstances surrounding the rearrangement and publishing of *Wakacje Hioba*.¹³⁷ Now, though, let us turn our attentions to Różewicz.

Censoring the work of an outstanding writer, an opinion that GUKPPIW officials expressed in many documents, caused censors difficulties. The sheer volume of Różewicz's output was also part of the issue. There are plenty of criticisms relating to his poetics, including accusations of formalism, naturalism

136 Witold Gombrowicz, *Trans-Atlantyk. Ślub*, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1957. Paryż: Instytut Literacki, 1953.

137 Alina Molisak, *Judaizm jako los. Rzecz o Bogdanie Wojdowskim*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Cyklady, 2004, p. 48.

and incomprehensibility, as well as numerous reservations relating to his chosen subject matter. As with Borowski or Nałkowska's *Medaliony*, both aspects of the criticisms of Różewicz's work were connected in a particular fashion. It was a certain *way of speaking about* the war that was unpublishable, rather than the subject itself. As already mentioned, these were the arguments used to justify shelving the collection *Opadły liście z drzew*.

In an overview of interventions from the turn of 1958, it was stated that one poem was completely cut from the volume *Wiersze*. The title given seems imprecise, since neither in 1957 nor the following year did Wydawnictwo Literackie publish such a work. However, *Poezje zebrane* (Collected poetry) was published in 1957. Another set of archival documents mentions that two complete poems were cut from that volume, *Umarli przypominają sobie...* (The dead remember) and *Wszyscy żywi są winni* (All the living are guilty). Both were about the war. The reviews are undated but the document is included in the archival collections on Wydawnictwo Literackie. Indeed, examining the published volumes confirms that both poems are missing.

The archival files on *Czytelnik* 1958 do, however, feature one review of Różewicz's volume *Formy* (Forms), submitted for assessment on 4 August 1958. Written by a censor whose name is illegible, I cite it in its entirety here:

The volume is formed of poetry (in various forms), including poetic prose, and this is probably the reason behind the title *Formy*.

Some of the poems are very readable while others, even if they are highly reflexive and very complex, should not provoke concerns. The content of almost all the poems relates to "the philosophy of life – existence" followed by a question mark, hence the volume leaves quite a depressing impression.

My remarks refer to:

p. 44 *Hycle* (Dogcatchers) – this poem can be read in two ways: either as the story of a person who is dog tired or as an illustration that "even a dog turned human would have a hard time in this world"; in both cases, these interpretations are mine as a reader.

p. 9 *Niejasny wiersz* (Unclear poem) – the first part of the poem is [illegible] of the whole, leading the hero to the starting point "they tied us to ideas turned into". Despite this, I think that the poem can remain in the volume.¹³⁸

A note added at the bottom of the page states that only the intervention into *Niejasny wiersz* was carried out, although the review does not offer insight into the content. The scope of changes could be established after drawing on a completely different collection of sources, namely 'Wydawnictwa różne 1958' (Various publishers 1958). It turns out that just one verse was completely

138 AAN, GUKPPiW, 596, teczka 68/2, pp. 395–396.

removed from the poem, one that referred to a reality where harm experienced is forgotten and 'our little stabilization' is preferred:

[przywiązali do
idei przemienionych
w narzędzia tortur
przywiązali do marzeń
chrząkających przy korycie]¹³⁹
they tied us to
ideas turned into
instruments of torture
they tied us to the dreams
of those scoffing by the trough.

Having examined the volume *Formy*, it is evident that the poem was published in its altered form without any indication that a verse was missing.

In the materials relating to the regulation of the periodical *Twórczość*, there is another trace of the cuts made to *Formy*. In issue 6/1953 several interventions into the short prose pieces that were published in *Twórczość* and then later in the collection under the title *Komentarz* (Commentary) become evident. A highly inventive method was applied, cutting single sentences or portions of them in order to moderate the pessimistic content that sought to critically face the past. The piece titled *Zima* (Winter) had the following sentence removed: 'The future was written about in newspapers and spoken about in meetings. [...] I could find nothing to nourish my faith'. Meanwhile, the short story *Tylko cisza* (Only silence) saw part of a sentence cut: 'At this time people [were handing back their party membership cards and spoke as if using somebody else's voice]'. In *Rola* (Role) the following was removed: 'This warden became a hairdresser. This dog-catcher now catches butterflies and collects stamps. [...] Stupid boy – it is easier after all to live without faith than to go without shaving'.¹⁴⁰ These cuts were all maintained in the abovementioned issue of *Twórczość*. However, the volume *Formy* that was aimed at the elite (it had a print run of just over 2000) saw the texts published in their complete form without any interventions.

Tadeusz Różewicz's own brief statement in the periodical *Odra* in 1989 reveals that his work faced similar interventions on several occasions as controversial pieces were passed for publication in limited-edition volumes but subject to cuts when printed in periodicals.¹⁴¹

139 AAN, GUKPPiW, 427,teczka 34/5, p. 132.

140 AAN, GUKPPiW, 546,teczka 41/32, p. 64–65.

141 Tadeusz Różewicz, *Różne oblicza cenzury. Odra*, vol. 4, 1989, pp. 52–56.

My archival research confirms that similar measures were applied not only against Różewicz but were part of censorship officials' general strategy. The extent of the accessibility of a work was another factor taken into account in establishing how extensive interventions should be.

It should be stressed that archival research conducted using the collections at AAN verifies the findings presented in existing literature. Entire subject areas were censored, as were particular issues. Individual sentences were cut or 'corrected' and single words were replaced. Censors targeted gaps in the plot as well as imperfections in the poetics of a work. It was not always the case that they intervened in a leaden and illogical fashion; indeed, censors were often very much aware of the intentions of a text and could edit it highly effectively. Jan Błoński is not entirely correct in his view of the way censors read texts:

The particular and typical censorial form of reading meant that censors tended to react to particular words, slogans and stereotypes rather than interpret the whole work, since that would have required knowledge of the literary and ideological traditions and contexts that are interwoven in art.¹⁴²

In the 1940s and 1950s, GUKPPiW officials teased out any form of nationalism, be it anti-Semitism or anti-German sentiment, but above all anti-Russian and anti-Soviet statements. The censors' pencils were also aimed at any religious passages, regardless of whether they were ideological or part of the content of a work. Certain negative expressions that were used seem particularly odd: 'ultra-Catholicism', 'spreading Catholicism', 'bigotry' or adopting a 'metaphysical standpoint'. Works addressing historical issues were also read very closely, in particular, as Stanisław Siekierski has argued, those on events in the twentieth century. Such interventions affected content on the interwar period if they dealt with Piłsudski or the city of Vilnius (such texts classed as 'regressive'). This broad classification also included some works that dealt with the Second World War. This was a subject that proved particularly challenging for censors as it was so important to the authorities, yet so complex and so common in literary works. A tendency to mask troubling and controversial subjects became evident (even though the job of the censorship office was to unmask them!), including the war, the Shoah, the Red Army's entry into Poland's eastern territories, Katyń, the Gulags, activities of the Home Army, the Warsaw Uprising and the Soviet army's attitude towards the Polish population. The censors were also somewhat dissatisfied with the way that the war was discussed, with the tendency being towards

142 Jan Błoński, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

naturalism, pessimism and depicting cruelty, leading them to label such works 'macabre'. This 'dangerous' subject was thus also tied to 'dangerous' poetics. It was largely those works that combined presenting the war through the prism of the most difficult issues with a particular poetics for addressing these issues that were most likely to be barred from publication, often for many years. When it came to current issues, censors were most concerned by depictions of the negative aspects of everyday life, poverty, social injustice, shortages and faults with the new order. This could take the form of describing queues for meat or prison violence ('Poles beating Poles'). On the other hand, censors were critical of works that were devoid of social or political messages. Works presenting the Polish diaspora or Poles who had chosen to live abroad were also viewed negatively. Another category of cuts were those made for moral reasons in cases where works were deemed to be 'pornography of the lowest order'.

In accordance with the directives issued at national conferences, complex poetics, formalism, incomprehensibility (common in the case of poetry) and naturalism (common in the case of prose) were deemed negative. The general tone of a text should not be pessimistic, 'heavy', cynical or lacking in positive accents, nor should it be, interestingly enough, excessively objective. One review stated that a work contained 'a great deal of objectivism, almost to an absurd extent'.

In what way did censorship officials respond when they encountered these awkward issues? Firstly, they carried out some degree of cuts, as illustrated here on the basis of Adolf Rudnicki's short stories and Tadeusz Różewicz's poetry and small prose forms. Censors could then either offer alternatives or leave gaps in a text. My archival research suggests that when replacement was used, it largely involved exchanging 'incorrect' words for politically correct alternatives. Calling for far-reaching changes to a text often meant sending it to be reedited, with an editor or the author taking responsibility.

I would like to point out that censors primarily made cuts and replacements to prose works. Poetry was subject to other forms of censorship, with whole poems being excluded from a volume (as was the case with Buczkówna's *W kolejce* – [Queuing]) or, in rare cases, particular lines (Różewicz's *Niejasny wiersz*). Publications of both prose and poetry were given new introductions that would highlight particular aspects of the content and message of a work. In some cases (including Gombrowicz's *Trans-Atlantyk*), the foreword would be replaced in its entirety by a new text. Another measure applied by censorship officials was reducing print runs. This most commonly affected 'elite' volumes of poetry.

It is worth mentioning again those works that were banned completely because in these cases interventions by editors or the author would necessarily

prove ineffective. Removing a work from circulation or preventing it from entering into circulation in the first place was a relatively rare event in the work of GUKPPIW officials because the guidelines stated that works should be read without prejudice and always be seen as potentially publishable.

The methods for censoring literature also differed over time. The most significant difference that emerges in the archival evidence is the shift in censors' attitudes towards depictions of the Second World War. Many works referring to the traumatic experiences of the war were published between 1944 and 1948. During the Stalinist period, many of these works subsequently proved unpublishable. A further change occurred from early 1955, as the bans were lifted on 'inconvenient' facts and takes on the occupation. Prior to the imposition of socialist-realism, it was possible to publish works with decidedly Christian overtones (as was the case, for example, in the first edition of Szmaglewska's *Dymy nad Birkenau*). After 1949, such works were withdrawn from print or were reedited. Another significant shift was evident in the promotion of positive images of reality, optimism and social engagement between 1949 and 1955. This changed once the errors and distortions of the socialist system were publicly acknowledged by the authorities. This, in turn, led to the more liberal censorship regime that made it possible to publish criticisms of the Stalinist regime and the security service (see, for example, *Kolumbowie. Rocznik 20* and *Matka Królów*). Critical attempts to face the past became unpublishable again towards the end of 1957.

My findings suggest that some subjects remained concerning for censors throughout the period examined in this book. Thus anything that called into question the good reputation of the USSR was removed outright, including any reference to Poland's subordinate political position or the isolation of prisoners in Soviet prisons and Gulags. Likewise, the Hungarian Uprising in 1956 was completely out of bounds. The archival materials feature a reference to typesetters who committed the infamous deliberate error that changed the slogan from 'the CPSU is our conscience and honour' to the 'CPSU is our conscience and humour' source. Laughing at the USSR was not permitted under any circumstances.

Political information was, likewise, always subject to the strictest controls (of course, in this case, censors responsible for controlling the press faced a more difficult task). And any voices critical of socialism were silenced.

3 Author-related censorship

As existing literature and archival materials suggest, censorship took into account both the content of a work and the author's attitude. In this chapter, I will

focus on the second aspect. In doing so, I stress that my focus will be on the author as an individual. I will consider the internal author later on in the book.

Zbigniew Romek's collection *Cenzura w PRL: Relacje historyków* (Censorship in People's Poland: Historians' testimonies) contains many crucial details on the relationships between authors and GUKPPiW. The historians interviewed for this oral history drew on their own experiences and argued that the significance of the author was reduced in People's Poland. In most cases, it was authors who were forced to compromise, coming to feel as if they were mere appendages to the publishing process. Furthermore, authors were rarely fully informed as to whether a change or cut was made by a censor or by an editor. This made it more difficult for them to get their bearings and defend the original version of their texts.¹⁴³

The official line was, of course, different. Other researchers have often cited Jerzy Bafia's statement that censorship was simply state-sponsored literary criticism and the critics were not there to fight the authors but to point out the weaknesses of a work in order to improve it.¹⁴⁴ In the statements from the minutes of meetings and conferences referred to in the previous section, we can find similar declarations about providing inspiration and advice, while cutting out sophistry to ensure authors' positive attitude towards the censorship office. 'It is necessary to have closer contact with authors', one statement from a meeting in June 1949 read, 'without allowing it to take on a repressive or administrative form; instead it should be collegial in order to ensure that our institution exerts the greatest possible influence.'¹⁴⁵ Such declarations were, of course, far removed from reality. And this was not the only such example.

It is clear that not all authors were treated equally. Existing studies provide significant evidence for this, producing the impression that the way censors read a work was determined by the position of a given author in the official ranking of ideological correctness, with dead authors being treated more leniently.¹⁴⁶ An interesting case in point is Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński whose works faced significant restrictions during his lifetime but were treated less strictly following his death.

143 *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, ed. Zbigniew Romek, op. cit.

144 Jerzy Bafia, *Prawo o cenzurze*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1983, cited in: Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit., p. 27.

145 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 197/4, p. 55.

146 Joanna Hobot, op. cit., p. 133, suggests Rafał Wojaczek as a case in point; John M. Bates, op. cit., p. 106 – suggests Józef Czechowicz and Tadeusz Borowski.

It is obvious that the closer an author was positioned to the political doctrines of those in power in People's Poland, the more creative freedom he or she had (whether the author then used it, is a different matter). At the opposite end of the scale were authors who were sceptical towards the political changes taking place in Poland, expressing their opposition to their realities in various ways. It was such authors who were then blacklisted on the basis of directives issued by particular departments of the PZPR Central Committee. Blacklisting could occur for various reasons, such as proposing a controversial book, an author refusing to accept the authorities' legitimacy, or submitting a work touching upon political, economic or social issues that the authorities considered controversial.¹⁴⁷ Official directives were issued often and changed quickly, meaning that censors had to keep on top of new information in order to avoid any oversights. Blacklisting an author could mean banning all mention of an author (this was the severest form), restricting information about his or her works in general (more moderate), or restricting information about particular works (the most lenient form of blacklisting). The situation could shift dynamically in relation to particular authors, with bans being lifted on certain figures or works and then reinstated in accordance with political shifts.¹⁴⁸

The Black Book of Polish Censorship states that any mention in the press or any other publication of persons who were blacklisted had to be consulted with the directors of the Office.¹⁴⁹ The matter was of such significance that rank-and-file censors were not allowed to deal with it without assistance from above. Roman Loth argues that

the aim of blacklisting was different to the censorship of texts; the goal was not only to create an instrument for creating a false image of reality that was in accordance with political demands, but rather to have a repressive instrument that could be applied against people who refused to submit to the demands of censors or those who were deemed to be unorthodox for other reasons. Blacklisting was a form of punishment applied to those who were insubordinate while also striking fear into the literary milieu.¹⁵⁰

147 I am grateful to Piotr Perkowski for clarifying this concept in correspondence with me in 2005.

148 Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka*, op. cit., p. 202.

149 *Czarna księga cenzury*, op. cit., p. 66. This information concerns the years 1976–1977.

150 Roman Loth, *Słownik specjalnego przeznaczenia. Opis słownika biograficznego pisarzy i działaczy emigracyjnych do wewnętrznego użytku Głównego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy*, in: *Poetyka, polityka, retoryka: profesorowi Michałowi Głowińskiemu na siedemdziesiątę urodziny*, ed. by. Włodzimierz Bolecki and Ryszard Nycz, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2006, p. 358.

According to Jacek Trznadel, blacklisting also ensured that many more outstanding writers were restricted to secondary status, while those who under normal conditions would be marginal were promoted as leading figures.¹⁵¹ Some of those authors who were blacklisted have been doomed to be forgotten in Polish consciousness, according to Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz, including Ferdynand Goetel and Ferdynand Antoni Ossendowski.¹⁵²

It is not easy to provide a list of all works and authors blacklisted between 1948 and 1958 owing to the gaps in the archival record. The decision as to whether to allow a particular author to be published or not was, according to Stanisław Siekierski, of an institutional nature, with officials often changing posts.¹⁵³ A fuller picture could be produced, as many other researchers have found, by comparing the archival materials from the PZPR with those from GUKPPiW. However, even the censorship office materials produce an interesting image of writers and works that were criticized and kept hidden from the public. While the GUKPPiW materials cannot present the full picture, they nevertheless offer insight on the blacklist. This will be the focus of the chapter, which will also suggest directions that future research could take.

In his study of library purges, Stanisław A. Kondek listed those writers that the communist authorities, for a variety of reasons, disliked.

Thus Jan Dobraczyński's penance for his previous nationalist tendencies was to have his entire oeuvre purged; Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna had to pay the price for serving as Piłsudski's secretary; Tadeusz Hołuj was punished for his supposed collaboration with the German occupying forces and Ferdynand Goetel for revealing the Katyń crime; Czesław Miłosz was punished for opting to emigrate permanently and Jerzy Stanisław Lec for emigrating temporarily.¹⁵⁴

This gives a clear indication of the kinds of 'sins' that could lead to being banished from the public's awareness. They ranged from unacceptable political attitudes (in the pre-war, wartime and post-war periods), collaboration with the Germans, addressing banned subjects, and abandoning the country.

I will now look to verify the findings of other researchers using archival material.

151 Jacek Trznadel, *Hańba domowa. Rozmowy z pisarzami*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo P. Skokowski, 1993, pp. 10–11.

152 *Literatura przełomów politycznych. 1956, 1968, 1981. Antologia w opracowaniu szkolnym*, ed. by Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz, Katowice: Książnica, 2000, p. 7.

153 Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka*, op. cit., p. 202.

154 Stanisław Adam Kondek, op. cit., p. 160.

Accounting for the author

In issue 7 (1952) of the Instructional-Informational Bulletin it was stated that

it is necessary to take into account who the author is, what role he plays in our political and social life, is he on our side and how did he come to join us. For example, we would of course treat inaccurate or even erroneous ideas more leniently if they are expressed by writers who joined us from the Catholic milieu (for example Morcinek and Żukrowski) than if they were expressed by party writers.¹⁵⁵

In an article titled *O wyższy poziom pracy nad książką* (For a better quality of work on books), its author explored various ways of making censors' work more efficient. Ultimately, though, she also indirectly outlined reflections that went beyond the modest practical focus of her statement. This is the case, too, in the fragment cited above, where she explicitly states that authors should be treated differently depending on the extent of political consciousness displayed by the author. Interestingly enough, the author, A. Purowska, proposed treating party writers more stringently based on the logic that more can be expected of someone who possesses a greater degree of consciousness. Hence her quite logical conclusion that those who were only just beginning to adapt to life as socialist artists should be forgiven their errors more easily. Of course, the key thing here was having ties to the new order that would ensure such lenient treatment.

Similar ideas were expressed at national conferences. In 1949 the high degree of complexity of censors' work was discussed.

The situation with books today is not very simple. We should remember that a novel that might be artistically underwhelming should be permitted for publication if it can be guaranteed that the author will in future serve as a progressive, campaigning and useful writer. We need to be even wiser in relation to poetry. Paweł Hertz, for example, published a volume of poetry where he wrote of the ivory tower, etc. This writer has certain hereditary burdens and reluctance, but given his clear progress we had to allow publication of this volume.¹⁵⁶

It is easy to become lost in this tangled web of relations. How, for example, would it be possible to recognize if a writer would become a progressive writer *in the future* and how could the degree of his or her (potential) progressiveness be assessed? The fact that the differing degree of difficulty in assessing prose and poetry is stated explicitly is also noteworthy. Poetry is presented as a realm that

155 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/1, p. 322.

156 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/4, p. 125.

is more difficult to verify given that, as was suggested in the above statement, its subject matter is often far removed from ordinary life.

The recommendation cited above can also be interpreted somewhat against the grain. What it suggests, then, is that writers who had come from an ideologically alien camp to join the 'right' side were in the most favourable position when it came to the struggle with GUKPPiW, at least during the period when literature faced the most severe restrictions. Such writers were probably required as indicators of success. Their reward for choosing this path was having works published that otherwise would never have seen the light of days since, as the censor stated, the authorities had to allow publication.

It is difficult to state whether Paweł Hertz consciously adopted such a strategy. Indeed, it is not even entirely clear which volume of his poetry was being discussed above. Most probably it was *Małe ody i treny* (Minor odes and laments) from 1949, a volume whose title already indicated its connection to classical tradition. With the benefit of hindsight, we can state that the hopes invested in him by the censorship authorities were soon dashed: he left the party in 1957 and signed the Letter of 34¹⁵⁷.

Tadeusz Różewicz was treated in a similar way to Hertz. Archival documents suggest that the authorities were genuinely interested in tending to his artistic development. This was most probably a result of his age; Różewicz was just a little younger than Hertz, meaning that he was not associated with any of the pre-war poetic groups and he thus made his debut only after the war. The following passage is typical of the secondary reviews of his volume *Czas który idzie* (Time that passes):

Różewicz's collection should be considered in light of his oeuvre. He is a poet with difficult formal tendencies (avant-garde), although he has been battling against them tirelessly for two years now. The pace of his struggle towards a new poetics is very slow – yet there is evidently a large degree of goodwill on his part.

The new collection is very significant in this respect. Alongside decorative poems that are artistically weak and ideologically indifferent (for example *Wodospad* (Waterfall), *Odkrycie pierwszych barw w ołtarzu Wita Stwosza* (Discovery of the first colours in the altar of Veit Stoss), and *Pejzaż* (Landscape)) there are poems that are filled with political issues and prove to be artistically mature, as they seek to discover simplicity of expression and a naturalness in their metaphors (*Czas który idzie* [Time that passes],

157 The letter of 34 was a protest of a group of intellectuals, who in March 1964 presented the government with a letter demanding changes in cultural policy and the abolition of censorship. The letter is derived from the number of signatories. See: Jerzy Eisler, *List 34*, Warszawa: PWN, 1993.

Tróskliwość robotnicza o wspólne [Workers' care for the common good], *Trzydziesty ósmy równoleżnik* [The thirty-eighth parallel]). The new subject matter causes a rupture with Różewicz's previous poetics, leading him to adopt a stanza-based rhythm, introduce rhymes to the construction of his poems, and eliminate the ellipses and "poetic silences" that are typical of avant-garde poetry. This is a fascinating process. It seems to anticipate a new Różewicz, a poet of People's Poland. It is for this reason that the collection should be judged positively, despite its significant shortcomings and formal excesses. Różewicz's evolution is pointing clearly towards political poetry, one that will be simple in its expression and "artistically" legible.¹⁵⁸

The assessment mentions difficult formal tendencies and the struggle against them, meaning that the censorship official applied the familiar formula: an artist is overcoming difficulties and is moving over to our side. Again, in light of how Różewicz developed, the authorities' expectations were not fulfilled.

Authors viewed positively

Analysis of the archives reveals a whole host of authors who were praised by the censorship authorities. However, the reasons for praise and how it was expressed differed greatly.

As background information, let us first provide a list of the most outstanding writers who received awards between 1945 and 1949: Jerzy Andrzejewski won three prizes – for *Noc* (Night) in 1946 and *Popiół i diament* (Ashes and Diamonds) in 1948, before being awarded the Standard of Labour – 1st class in 1949; Władysław Broniewski won six prizes; Stanisław Dygat won the prize awarded by the *Tydzień* weekly for *Jeziro Bodeńskie* (Lake Constance); Kornel Filipowicz was awarded the literary prize of the city of Krakow for his collection of short stories *Krajobraz niewzruszony* (An unmoved landscape); Gałczyński had a prizewinning entry in the competition to write the anthem of the newly united communist party, the PZPR; Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and Mieczysław Jastrun both won four awards; Zofia Nałkowska received the Standard of Labour – 1st class in 1949; Julian Przyboś won an award from the city of Krakow for his volume of poetry *Miejsce na ziemi* (A place on earth); Leopold Staff won three literary prizes; Jerzy Szaniawski received the *Tydzień* prize for the best book of 1945–1946 (*Dwa teatry* [Two theatres]), as well as a lifetime achievement award from the city of Krakow in 1947 and, finally, in 1949 Julian Tuwim

158 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/4, p. 125.

received the Standard of Labour – 1st class and a lifetime achievement prize in the literary awards of the city of Łódź.¹⁵⁹

This list, held in the archival collections of the ministry of culture, refers only to a short period in the years that we are interested in. But it is interesting for several reasons. The very fact that it was created indicates that officials responsible for culture working in several institutions required such rankings. It is, after all, not a typical list outlining prize money, since no sums are mentioned. What is striking is how many different kinds of awards are mentioned, ranging from the state honour of the Standard of Labour – 1st class, through a competition for composing a revolutionary anthem and the *Tydzień* prize, to lifetime achievement awards presented by the cities of Krakow or Łódź. What becomes evident is the chaos that reigned in the immediate post-war years, when different forms of activities in the cultural realm existed in parallel – some that were clearly communist and others with roots in the interwar period. Szaniawski and Dygat's work was, after all, blacklisted after 1949. My archival investigations suggest that the censorship authorities tried to deal with those who had been presented with the most prestigious awards leniently, or at least diplomatically. Władysław Broniewski, in particular, was afforded a great deal of leniency.

However, in the article *Kilka słów o odwilży* (A few words on the thaw) from GUKPPIW's Informational-Instructional Bulletin, cited previously, Jerzy Andrzejewski's novels that offered a critical take on the past were described thus:

A writer as closely associated with us as Andrzejewski will almost certainly overcome his depression, finding a place in our kind of art for himself and the valuable strengths of his writing: he will apply his honesty, zeal and passion in a way that will prove more fruitful for himself and his readers. Taking into account the personality of the author, as well as the faith in him and his potential, was decisive in – rightly, in my opinion – approving *Narcyz* (Narcissus) for publication.

Further on, the article adds:

Taking into account the author's personality, as he might be discouraged by the regular restrictions on his works, significantly outweighs all of our concerns, no matter how legitimate they may be, in relation to *Narcyz*.¹⁶⁰ (Emphasis KB)

159 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Twórczości Literackiej – Pisarze nagrodzeni w latach 1945–1949 [Wykaz] Wybór najważniejszych nazwisk (this source comes from the Ministry of Culture and Art, listing the leading authors who won one of its prizes between 1945–49), sygn. 515.

160 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420, teczka 165/4, pp. 331–332.

I will consider this issue in more detail below. At this juncture, however, it is worth noting that *Narcyz* was the only short story from the collection *Złoty lis i inne opowiadania* (The golden fox and other stories) that raised concerns from censors and even led them to suggest that it should be put up for discussion again. The story was passed for publication on the direct instructions of a superior.

It is quite evident, then, that party writers could count on favourable treatment even when they produced less 'politically correct' texts. Adam Ważyk's experience is quite telling, since his unshakeable position meant that he in effect had no reason to fear censors' interventions. In 1953, GUKPPiW received his collection of poems *Wiersze 1940–1952* for review. Both assessments that are available in the archives are highly positive; thus, the work was recommended for publication without any changes. The only negative aspect mentioned was the pessimism of some of the poems, with a bemused censorship official stating that 'even life in the Soviet Union could not bring solace to the author'.¹⁶¹ The deference towards Ważyk in all likelihood also played its part in passing his poem *Poemat dla dorosłych* (A Poem for Adults) for publication in the periodical *Nowa Kultura*, something that was subsequently viewed as an oversight.¹⁶² Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any reviews approving the work for publication, although a text titled *O sztuce dla dorosłych* (On art for adults) in the Bulletin leaves no doubt as to the censorship authorities' view on the matter. 'Of course', wrote censor Klejny, 'responsibility for passing this work for publication lies with the Central Office for the Control of the Press as its preventative censorship was unable to correctly read its [the poem's] falsehoods and harmful message'.¹⁶³ Ultimately, though, it was the periodical's editor at the time, Paweł Hoffmann, who lost his job.¹⁶⁴

The attitude of GUKPPiW towards Maria Dąbrowska was highly ambivalent. Officially, she was considered a writer who was actively engaged in supporting Poland's new reality (the positive view of her was further strengthened in the 1960s, particularly following the publication of her short story *Na wsi wesele* [A rural wedding]).¹⁶⁵ However, in the backrooms of the censorship office, she was

161 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375,teczka 31/31, p. 350.

162 See also: Jerzy Adamowski and Andrzej Kozieł, *Cenzura w PRL*, in: *Granice wolności słowa*, ed. by Grzegorz Miernik, Kielce – Warszawa: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe - Presspublica, 1999, p. 61.

163 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 522.

164 Krzysztof Woźniakowski, *Między ubezwłasnowolnieniem a opozycją. Związek Literatów Polskich w latach 1949–1959*, Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1990, p. 80.

165 *Ibid.*, s. 64.

treated mercilessly and even with a degree of scorn. Comparing the censorship history of the oeuvre of Maria Dąbrowska and Zofia Nałkowska, John M. Bates has argued that

the situation was completely different with Dąbrowska. While she was respected by the political and cultural establishment, she was never held in as high esteem as Nałkowska. The censorship records feature fewer references to publishing [Dąbrowska's] works simply on the basis of her name. Her "mistaken" view of social issues and her psychologizing approach to characters tended to count against approving her works.¹⁶⁶

Bates goes on to argue that GUKPPiW's position towards her improved after she wrote *Gwiazda zaranna* (Morning star), citing several reviews of the 1949 edition of *Ludzie stamtąd* (The people from over there), and the 1950 editions of both *Noce i dnie* (Nights and days) and *Gwiazda zaranna* as evidence. Having been through the archives myself, I would argue that the situation is more complex than this. In order to avoid repeating Bates' article, I will cite only the most crucial excerpts from these reports.

There are two reviews from 1949 of the fourth edition of *Ludzie stamtąd*. Both are positive and stress the work's significant artistic value, although they also point out political errors in it.

Socially the book is fundamentally false. [...] Each story presents the well-meaning faces of "the lord and lady of the manor" who play an active role in the fate of their "people", providing them with somewhat modest yet nonetheless genuine care. [...] **In spite of this, a new edition can be considered beneficial given the significant artistic value of Ludzie stamtąd.** (Emphasis KB)

The second review also adds that given the false take on social aspects, the book should not be recommended for translation into foreign languages, 'particularly in people's democracies'.¹⁶⁷

At the same time, the reedition of *Marcin Kozera* was submitted for review. The censor Irena Żmigród was concerned by the representation of Britain's great power politics, hence her call for an intervention. At the bottom of the page she made a semi-private note, stating: 'Please offer an opinion [...] this is a reedition **and the author is Maria Dąbrowska**' (emphasis KB). This seems to indicate the esteem in which the author was held, with the censorship official being unwilling to intervene without approval.

In January 1950, PIW submitted a second edition of her pre-war short stories for assessment. *Znaki życia* (Signs of life) included *Ksiądz Filip* (Father Filip),

¹⁶⁶ John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., p. 110.

¹⁶⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW,145, teczka 31/23, pp. 67–70.

Panna Winczewska (Miss Winczewska), *Drobiazg* (A trifling thing), *Oktawia* and *Szkiełko* (Glass slide). The reviewer castigated Dąbrowska for her fatalistic and pessimistic attitude, permitting himself a rather caustic remark in conclusion.

Perhaps PIW was guided by a certain degree of diplomacy in relation to Dąbrowska who has initiated a certain positive evolution; in that case publishing this collection could (but must not necessarily) be understandable. Otherwise, this would have to be considered a black mark on PIW's publishing record. [emphasis KB]

While nevertheless recommending the book for publication without alterations, the censor added the remark 'a matter of time'. The second reviewer was of a similar opinion:

The whole thing is presented rather confusedly. After finishing the book, readers will have no idea what the writer was trying to say. **Were it not for the author's name, this book should not really appear at the current time.**¹⁶⁸ [emphasis KB]

Again, it is a matter of offering Dąbrowska special treatment, approaching her diplomatically in order to claim her for the system.

In December 1950, a third opinion was sought. The official responsible offered a comprehensive summary of the work and was rather disappointed overall. However, he covered over his conclusion (which was most probably likewise positive) with a piece of paper on which he wrote a second conclusion that was closer to the spirit of the age (1950) and the views of his colleagues.

To summarise: all of the above short stories lack any ideologically useful moments that could be presented in the correct fashion and mobilize readers. At the same time, they do not feature any obviously socially harmful traits. Thus **this initiative should be considered as a reedition of part of the oeuvre of a famous and well-respected female author.**¹⁶⁹ [emphasis KB]

GUKPPiW officials were also somewhat surprised by Czytelnik's reedition of *Noce i dnie*. A secondary review from 25 April 1950 refused to grant permission for a further print run if required. The usual criticisms were repeated: a false political and social stance, glorification of the PPS and Piłsudski. The censor ended on a powerful note, stating that

the political position of *Noce i dnie* is hardly equivocal and thus it comes as some surprise that Czytelnik has decided to produce a reedition – and all the more so because

168 AAN, GUKPPiW, 152, teczka 31/121, pp. 85–88.

169 AAN, GUKPPiW, 152, teczka 31/121, pp. 89–90.

it has opted for four (most probably) parallel editions that would form a print run of several tens of thousands.

A superior commented that 'the censor's remarks are irrelevant' on another negative review.¹⁷⁰

At one national conference where the appropriation of Dąbrowska was discussed, Maria Geppert of the Krakow censorship office stated that 'we have spoken of claiming Dąbrowska for our side. But our office has been sitting on her work *Marcin Kozera* since March and we are yet to receive a response from the Central Office even though we need to claim her for our cause.'¹⁷¹ This reveals how complex the position of the censorship office was. It enjoyed autonomy only on paper because it was subordinate to the PZPR and was thus made to pay a heavy price for any errors and oversights. This explains the divergence of opinion, with Dąbrowska treated as a famous author deserving respect, who could be claimed for the socialist cause, on the one hand, while also being subject, on the other, to negative reviews that reflected the current climate and demands, as was the case with *Noce i dnie*. It became clear that those unfavourable opinions lacked agency, as all of Dąbrowska's abovementioned works were published without interventions and enjoyed significant print runs. I would thus argue, in contrast to John Bates, that it was not only Zofia Nałkowska that GUKPPiW sought to bring onside but also her great peer Dąbrowska.

It was rarely the case that an author was judged positively without causing GUKPPiW any complications or giving reasons to fear committing an oversight. The second-rate writer Maria Wardasówna, who seems to have genuinely reflected the portrait of her presented in *Hańba domowa* (Domestic Disgrace), was given the epithet 'daughter of peasant farmers and self-taught to boot'.¹⁷² Her ideal background had an influence on the positive review of her novel *Wylom* (Breach). This offered a counterbalance to those authors who were artistically more accomplished yet faced restrictions because of their views and names.

Authors viewed negatively

It was outstanding writers, the stars of the literary Parnassus of the 1920s and 1930s, who were prevalent among the authors viewed unfavourably by the censorship office, at least as far as the archival record suggests. They tended to be

170 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145,teczka 31/25, pp. 272–277. This unfavourable assessment has been published in: *Zapisy cenzury*, op. cit., pp. 22–23.

171 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/4, p. 166.

172 AAN, GUKPPiW, 388,teczka 31/136, p. 381.

insubordinate towards the new order without actively resisting it. They were largely focused on their art and publishing their works without encountering serious difficulties. Interestingly, the archives suggest, it was principally poets who were viewed unfavourably but not to such a degree that they faced being blacklisted. The reason for this might be that the censorship authorities placed greater emphasis on controlling prose, as it tended to enjoy larger print runs,¹⁷³ while poetry was treated more leniently due to its limited readership.

A secondary review of one collection of Antoni Słonimski's poetry suggested adding an introduction

that would explain more explicitly than the poet does the shortcomings emerging from his mistaken position during the 1920s. This would enable readers to critically judge and understand the limitations of his work while making clear what the poetry of the people's struggle would look like.¹⁷⁴

The poems were to be published without alteration but an introduction would be added that would condemn the author's position. Effectively, then, this was to be a case of having your cake and eating it.

Leopold Staff was treated in similar fashion. One review of his selected works stated that 'this is not the kind of poetry that we would like to promote, **yet it has to be published in light of the status of the author**' (emphasis KB). By and large, the reviewers were respectful of Staff's artistic greatness.

The archives suggest that Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, who another researcher has described as having to 'pay the price for serving as a Piłsudski's secretary', did not enjoy a good reputation at GUKPPiW. Her difficult character, a result of her unwillingness to cooperate, was often stressed. Analysis of the reviews held in the archive suggests that it was in fact the censors who were difficult towards the author. Two detailed reviews of a collection of poems submitted for assessment in 1955 suggested numerous changes, including removing the poem *Wigilia powrotu 1917* (On the eve of return 1917) in its entirety. Censor Królik notes with some surprise, however, that

in terms of the political content of this small volume, it should be noted that it does not really contain any poems featuring the explicitly hostile elements (glorifying Piłsudski or hatred of the USSR) typical of Iłakowiczówna's interwar work.¹⁷⁵

173 Stanisław Barańczak, *Knebel i słowo. O literaturze krajowej w latach siedemdziesiątych*, Warszawa: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1980, p. 30.

174 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375, teczka 31/29, p. 51.

175 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/126, p. 376.

The work was thus passed for typesetting.

In a subsequent review, a censorship official remarked on the numerous difficulties he faced in selecting poems by the author, given that her works feature strong anti-Soviet and pro-Piłsudski traces. ‘The strong religious accents that have no place in being promoted by state publishers certainly also made work on the selection more difficult’. At the end of the review, the censor notes that the author ‘is not someone who is enthusiastic towards our rule’.¹⁷⁶ The censor prevented publication of the final pages of the collection which concluded with the poem *Śniło mi się* (I dreamt), which suggested that it was better to dream about the sadness of reality than to wake up and see Poland for how it really was. While the censor’s superior initially supported the ban on the last pages, three days later, on 25 February 1956, the decision was overturned.

There were as many as seven interventions into Iłłakowiczówna’s volume *Niewczesne wynurzenie* (Ill-timed emergence) that was submitted to censors by PIW in 1958. On the reverse of a small piece of paper listing the pages subjected to cuts there was a note of the author’s response to the interventions. ‘I discussed the matter with editor Kijowski. On 20 June he informed me that the author had agreed to the cuts made at GUKP’.¹⁷⁷ There is thus no evidence to suggest that the author had a difficult character, with the negative opinion of her most probably stemming from prejudice that was a result of her background.

Let us return, finally, to the ‘Gałczyński case’.¹⁷⁸ I have already mentioned the fact that the official opinion of him changed after his death. Let us look into the matter more closely now by drawing on archival sources.

In 1953, GUKPPiW received the PIW edition of his selected poetry for review. The collection was passed for typesetting only after numerous changes. The content was substantially altered, with many pre-war poems marked for exclusion. According to the proposed new outline, the volume was to be formed of three parts: *Pokój*, *Satyry* and *Poematy* (Peace, Satires and Epics). The reworking was

176 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/126, pp. 473–474.

177 AAN, GUKPPiW, 603,teczka 68/12, pp. 265.

178 For more on this subject, see: Mariusz Zawodniak, *Socrealistyczna echolalia. Krytyka i samokrytyka w procesie komunikacji literackiej*, in: Zawodniak, *Literatura w stanie oskarżenia. Rola krytyki w życiu literackim socrealizmu*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Upowszechnianie Nauki - Oświata, 1998, pp. 15–40; Joanna Pyszny, “Przewyciężanie błędów i braków”. O trzech samokrytykach pisarzy z roku 1950, in: Pyszny, *Boje na łamach. Pisarze i literatura w prasie polskiej lat pięćdziesiątych XX wieku. Szkice*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002, pp. 7–59; Krzysztof Woźniakowski, op. cit.

far-reaching, with the volume reduced in size by some 100 pages. The review held in the archives stresses the poet's ideological and aesthetic shortcomings:

This selection of Gałczyński's poetry draws on his entire oeuvre. Only a very small percentage addresses socio-political aspects. [...] The majority of the poems are superformalist, distanced from reality and often poeticizing, free of any content that makes it impossible to establish what the author is thinking. A significant number of pre-war works is included. Some of them reflect the beauty of Vilnius and the surrounding area. Given that Gałczyński will be read largely by philistines who often yearn for those territories, I would suggest leaving in only those poems about Vilnius that feature positive social aspects. [...] ¹⁷⁹

Such extensive interventions (removing one third of a volume, for example) were genuinely rare. Gałczyński was viewed so negatively by the censorship office that in mid-1953 they had no wish to even consider his authorial intentions.

Joanna Pyszny claims that from 1949 Gałczyński was subject to significant attacks by literary critics, with the most common accusations centred around several issues: being distanced from the new realities; loading his poetry with elements from the past and exhibiting 'intelligentsia-type inhibitions' alongside excessive interest 'in focusing on the consumption side of socialism'.¹⁸⁰ If we compare the accusations made in the press with those levelled on the pages of censors' reviews, it turns out that they were largely analogous. Of course, we cannot establish a direct connection between the censorship office and the literary press (indeed, the influence is likely to have flowed in the reverse direction). However, there is evidence here of the general view of the poet, as well as an indication of the schematic and universal nature of some of the accusations that were levelled against many luminaries of Polish literature.

Less than a year later, the same volume that was not published in 1953 was treated differently. The particular criticisms of the poet were no longer accompanied by calls to intervene in the content of his poems (although it cannot be stated with certainty that the content submitted for assessment was entirely the same this time around). This is an extract of censor Rutkowski's review:

The poems in this part (*Pokój* – Peace) are not burdened by formalism; they have a clear message and most often express the desires of ordinary people. Often, though, these desires are marked by the petit bourgeois ideal of a garden with a bench and a cosy warm room. [...] The forth (sic!) and final part of the volume is formed of two epic poems,

179 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/124, pp. 798–799.

180 Joanna Pyszny, op. cit., p. 23.

Niobe and *Wit Stwoszcz*. They depict the universal elements of a complete culture that can only come to fruition under socialism.¹⁸¹

Permission to print the collection was given the same day with an extra-textual factor, namely the author's death, transforming the fate of Gałczyński's collected poems. Of course, it is impossible to overlook the fact that the idealized readings of the two epic poems sound somewhat unlikely.

By 1958, Gałczyński was being treated as a classic. A typical expression of this is evident in the intelligent assessment of the volume *Próby teatralne* (Rehearsals) that formed part of his collected works. I would add that the fact that a five-volume edition of his works, *Dzieła* (1957–1960), was sanctioned was itself indicative of the way the author was being honoured, thus underlining his high standing among artists.

[Gałczyński] is a modern classic. And the principle with a classic is – no cuts. I believe that in this substantial tome we can let a minor thing pass that would not get such an easy ride if it came from another author (p. 344 ff.). The subject matter and issues addressed in the book are exceptionally broad – indeed, alongside theatre rehearsals, sketches, film scripts etc., there is the full anthology of the *Zielona Gęś* (Green Goose) plays – and how is the poor reviewer to be capable of outlining its meaning and significance in but a few meagre words. In any case, let us underline one thing: this is a necessary volume and it should appear quickly. (Emphasis KB)

There was one proposed intervention, however, and it related to the censorship office itself.

Since the footnotes were prepared by his wife, rather than by [Gałczyński] himself, we should have no qualms about cutting from p. 710 the bit relating to the Kraków censorship office (censors need not have a sense of humour, especially not an absurdist one).¹⁸²

What was cut was a footnote stating: "The Kraków censorship office was in two minds as to whether it could permit the publication of this "goose", stating that "there was something hidden in it". It was thus strictly unpublishable because it revealed the existence of institutional control of literature."

GUKPPiW rarely shifted towards a positive opinion of an author. More common was for it to lose faith in an author once viewed favourably and instead adopt a negative attitude (see Andrzejewski and Ważyk, for example). The Gałczyński case is more indicative of a certain 'shortcut' that saw a shift

181 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/125, pp. 189–190.

182 AAN, GUKPPiW, 596, teczka 68/2, pp. 126–127.

from negation to acceptance over a period of barely a few months. However, the reason for this was, in my view, something quite exceptional – namely, his death.

Blacklisting, or the non-existent author

In 1948, the Pantheon publishing house submitted Stanisław Mackiewicz's book *Dostojewski* for assessment. At the bottom of the negative review there was a crushing note: 'Without going into the content of the book, I am opposed to the publication of the book in light of the author's identity'.¹⁸³ Permission was ultimately refused for a work that was begun in 1943. It appeared only in 1950 in an émigré publishing house before being published in Poland for the first time in 1956, once the author had returned to his homeland.

In the file named 'Various publishing houses beginning with S, 1948–50', there are documents relating to permission being denied for a poem by Stanisław Baliński to appear in a collection of poems about Warsaw. This decision was justified on the grounds that the author had 'signed the London list'.¹⁸⁴ It is not entirely clear which text this refers to, but it is most likely to have been from his collection *Trzy poematy o Warszawie* (Three epic poems about Warsaw) that was published in London in 1945. Again, the fact that the author had opted to emigrate determined the fate of his works back in his homeland.

The abovementioned examples show that the censorship authorities sought to ensure that authors opting to live abroad were not represented in works published in Poland. The office looked out for larger works as well as single texts in collected volumes. As it turns out, censors even sought out single mentions in dictionaries and encyclopaedias.

The assessments of a test print of *Słownik języka polskiego* (the authoritative Polish dictionary) from 1951 remarked upon citations from Andrzej Strug, Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski and Andrzejewski's *Ład serca* (Heart's harmony). While the ban on references to Strug, a supporter of the pre-war PPS and soldier in the Polish legions (even Broniewski faced related problems having dedicated a poem to him upon his death, which the censors banned – I will examine this in depth in the chapter on the author), and the blacklisting of Kaden-Bandrowski as the leading author of political novels in the interwar period, come as no surprise, the fact that Andrzejewski's novel was mentioned in the same list should be a source of some consternation. The explicitly Catholic novel *Ład serca* was hidden from the public at the peak of Polish Stalinism since it could not be permitted to

183 AAN, GUKPPiW, 182, p. 83.

184 AAN, GUKPPiW, 175, teczka 175a, p. 28.

disrupt the image of the author who had become a pillar of the new literary order having issued a self-criticism in 1950. Consequently, reeditions of his pre-war novels occurred only before 1949 and after 1955.

In 1954, reviewers of *Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny* (a dictionary of correct Polish) edited by Szober questioned the use of examples drawn from works that had been withdrawn from circulation. The works queried were listed as *Cudzoziemka* (The foreign woman), *Dni powszednie państwa Kowalskich* (The Kowalskis' everyday life), *Dwa księżycy* (Two moons) and *Twarz mężczyzny* (The face of a man), all by Maria Kuncewiczowa, and three novels by Janusz Meissner – *L jak Lucy* (L for Lucy), *Wilk, ryś i dziewczyna* (The wolf, the lynx and the girl) and *Żądło Genowefy* (Genowefa's sting).¹⁸⁵ Kuncewiczowa was blacklisted as she had opted to emigrate, while the negative assessment of Meissner's work almost certainly stemmed from his depictions of Polish airmen's contributions to the Battle of Britain.

Unfortunately, the archives yielded little information on the most famous case of a Polish author being blacklisted in the 1940s and 1950s, namely Czesław Miłosz. The issue of the changing attitudes of the authorities towards his work and person before and after his application for political asylum has already been examined extensively in existing studies.¹⁸⁶ The archives provide evidence of the extent of the blacklisting. It meant that any reference to the author and his entire oeuvre was forbidden. One researcher goes as far as to claim that it was highly effective since the poet's name was 'cast into oblivion'.¹⁸⁷ It could be argued that the very limited number of references to Miłosz in the archive of GUKPPIW is likewise an indicative of the impact of blacklisting.

The materials relating to the Czytelnik publishing house between 1951 and 1955 contain a review of Witold Wirpsza's *Polemiki i pieśni* (Polemics and hymns). It was published without interventions, although the censor concluded his text on a typical note:

All of the poems in this collection are political poems. They are biting and battling in their tone, sometimes polemical. The first, once published in *Twórczość* and subsequently inspiring widespread discussion in literary journals*, deals with Czesław Miłosz's ideological position.¹⁸⁸

185 AAN, GUKPPIW, 386,teczka 31/125, pp. 503–505.

186 Joanna Pyszny, "Sprawa Miłosza", *czyli poeta w czyściu*, in: Joanna Pyszny, *Boje na łamach*, pp. 61–93.

187 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

188 AAN, GUKPPIW, 375,teczka 31/27, p. 206.

In 1958, following the discussions in Polish literary press about Miłosz and his work *Zniewolony umysł* (*The Captive Mind*), his poem *Równina* was cut from a collection of patriotic poetry (*Imię mam Polska – My name is Poland*), as was his biography.¹⁸⁹ A reference to the fact that a copy of his *Traktat poetycki* (*A Treatise on Poetry*) was sold at an antiquarian auction was also removed.¹⁹⁰

In the overview of interventions from 1958, the fact that Wydawnictwo Literackie submitted Miłosz's novel *Dolina Issy* for initial assessment is mentioned. Of course, the censorship office issued a negative opinion of it. That year, a one-line dedication stating 'for Miłosz' was removed from an unnamed work in Anna Kamieńska's selected poems.¹⁹¹

The work and name of another dissident writer, Zofia Kossak, also faced a complete ban during the Stalinist period. She remained abroad until 1957 but even after returning to Poland, the aged writer did not have an easy time of it with censors. Her name and works are mentioned unusually often in the archive of GUKPPiW materials. I will present only the most typical cases here, since the question Zofia Kossak's relations to the censorship authorities in communist Poland is the subject of a forthcoming study.¹⁹²

In her history of the reception of Zofia Kossak's works, Barbara Pytlos outlines the most important findings relating to official responses. These were typified by 'a conspiracy of silence' in the immediate post-war years, which was a consequence of Kossak's Catholicism and the increasing repressiveness of the Stalinist era, that saw all of her books (even those aimed at children and youth) removed from libraries and bookshops.¹⁹³ Exploring the censorship archive also provides additional information on the shocking witch-hunt that she faced in relation to her time in a concentration camp. Censorship officials were not interested in criticising her work *Z otchłani* (*Out of the abyss*), as they were unable to critique the poetics of the work on the same level as Tadeusz Borowski. They were rather more concerned with personal matters.

189 AAN, GUKPPiW, 427,teczka 34/6, pp. 8–14.

190 AAN, GUKPPiW, 427,teczka 34/6, pp. 83.

191 AAN, GUKPPiW, 591,teczka 60/2, p. 9.

192 As regards the information relating to the censorship of Zofia Kossak's works provided by Joanna Jurgała-Jureczka in her study *Dzieło jej życia. Opowieść o Zofii Kossak*, Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Święty Paweł, 2007 – neither the author's archive in Górki Wielkie nor the sources at AAN yielded materials that could verify it. It is worth looking into this matter more closely.

193 Barbara Pytlos, "Córa Sienkiewiczza, czy Alicja w krainie czarów". *Z dziejów recepcji twórczości Zofii Kossak*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002.

On 16 May 1951, censor Renata Światycka wrote a crushing review of the third edition of Krystyna Żywulska's *Przeżyłam Oświęcim* (I survived Auschwitz). The work was nevertheless published without any changes, although the criticisms of the book included a significant attack on Kossak.

Przeżyłam Oświęcim is extremely naturalistic. The author shows that in the terrible conditions of the camps people turned into animals. [...] This is undoubtedly true, but this is just one side, and the least important side, of the truth. [...] This is a significantly damaging book in political terms, given its bourgeois atmosphere. [...] And one more political issue, besides the failure to mention the resistance movement in the camp: while Żywulska does indeed describe Zofia Kossak-Szczucka as a 'wonderful Polish writer', this does not seem to be harmful in my view. Most important is the fact that Z. Kossak was released from Auschwitz, which is suggestive of something that compromises her.¹⁹⁴

As with similar claims made against Miłosz, the failure to acquiesce and cease producing politically incorrect writing demanded that the argument was underlined with the most serious accusation possible – collaboration with the Nazi occupiers.

After her return to Poland, Zofia Kossak's writing was viewed far more favourably. She was associated with the PAX¹⁹⁵ group of state-supporting Catholics while enjoying significant popularity, ensuring that her novels often went through several editions. The censorship authorities did not, however, allow their vigilance to wane. The publisher Nasza Księgarnia submitted her pre-war fairy tale *Przygody Kacperka góreckiego skrzata* (The adventures of Casper the mountain dwarf) for assessment in 1958. It was passed for publication, with the review stating in conclusion that 'I will not be suggesting any interventions **based on the author's identity**'¹⁹⁶ (emphasis KB).

The same year, *Czytelnik* sought to reissue Kossak's collection *Bursztyny* (Ambers). Again, the positive review alluded to doubts related to the author's identity.

This collection of short stories ultimately presents a cross-section of Polish history from pagan times to the experiences of the [nineteenth-century] great migration to Paris. The individual stories focus either on significant moments in Polish history (for example, Poland adopting Christianity, the Prussian Homage of 1525 and the Targowica Confederation) or on significant individuals who played a crucial role in Polish history

194 AAN, GUKPPIW, 386, teczka 31/122, pp. 635–636.

195 PAX – an association and publishing house founded in 1947 by Bolesław Piasecki. Its members were Catholics who closely cooperated with the state. The authorities used its existence as proof of religious tolerance in Poland.

196 AAN, GUKPPIW, 601, p. 71.

(for example, Kazimierz the Great, Mikołaj Rej, and Tadeusz Kościuszko). In her historical overview, the author always sides with progressive and democratic forces, although she also, as would be expected, praises the role of the Church, as in, for example, the story *W uścisku dziejów* ([In the clutches of history] – p. 13, on Poland accepting Christianity) or in the piece *Proroczyna boży* ([God's prophet] – p. 22, about Piotr Skarga).

This collection is of course highly relevant today given that Poland's 1000th anniversary is approaching. **It is just a shame, though, that it will be this book – as far as I am aware – that will be the first that is to appear on the subject.**¹⁹⁷ (emphasis KB)

By 1958, it was no longer possible to block publication of Kossak's work simply because of the identity of the author. The censorship office thus approved it for printing without alterations.

In a file titled 'Sygnały' (Signals), there is information on the Catholic daily newspaper *Słowo Powszechne* cutting Jan Dobraczyński's highly enthusiastic article about Zofia Kossak. Titled *Nobel Prize*, his article, scheduled to appear on 25 October 1959, reflected the hopes and indeed expectation that she would win the prestigious award. The piece was altered to such an extent by censors that the editors decided to withdraw it.¹⁹⁸

4 Publishers

This chapter outlines the relations between publishers and censors, as well as the role of publishers in literary censorship. A fuller picture could certainly be achieved by examining the archives of particular publishing houses. This was possible with Gebethner i Wolff publishers, with the investigation yielding the expected results. This section should be treated as a preparatory study providing the basis for further research.

Relations between GUKPPiW and the publishing houses were complex. It might seem that editorial boards were powerless in the face of an apparently omnipotent institution. However, analysis of archival sources suggests a more ambivalent reality. At one national conference of censors, for example, an official from Krakow complained that

for a year now, Wydawnictwo Literackie has been operating in Krakow and it is becoming increasingly active. There are no difficulties in working with other publishers but Wydawnictwo Literackie is causing us the most trouble. It is currently publishing new works that are appearing in print for the first time. When publishing classics,

197 AAN, GUKPPiW, 596,teczka 68/2, pp. 10–11.

198 AAN, GUKPPiW, 594,teczka 62/3, pp. 175–178.

particular attention must be paid to the way the works are edited – the introductions and interpretations in particular, as these can sometimes contain mistaken perspectives. **On several occasions we have received copies of letters that were aggressive in tone which Wydawnictwo Literackie sent to GUKP complaining that we had prevented publication of several works.** [...] We hereby admit that we made mistakes relating to Wydawnictwo Literackie publications in terms of oversights and unnecessary interventions – such as in the afterword to Pola Gojawiczyńska's *Ziemia Elżbiety* (Elizabeth's land). Worse still, however, was that GUKP performed rash and imprecise interventions, such as in *Pamiętniki o Matejce* (Memoirs on Matejko), where an intervention into one of Matejko's own letters was proposed.¹⁹⁹ (emphasis KB)

The collection of 'Memoranda and instructions' form 1952–1953, meanwhile, indicates that voivodeship-level censorship offices were required to inform the Warsaw headquarters when publishers' editorial boards expressed opposition to interventions.²⁰⁰ This means that differences of opinion must have been expressed. I was unable, however, to find any information describing such disagreements because, in all likelihood, any such discussions were only expressed orally with only the final consensus being recorded on paper. From the comments in the margins of the review cited above, it is clear that the publishers strongly defended their position, as well as the integrity of the works submitted by Irena Szymańska, editor-in-chief at PIW.

Stanisław Siekierski notes that an important element that strengthened the position of literary censorship was the centralization of the publishing industry in Warsaw and the segmentation of the market. This saw PIW and *Czytelnik* dominate the literary fiction sector, Iskry youth publishing and *Nasza Księgarnia* children's books. Between 1944 and 1948 private commercial publishers operated alongside state publishers, with only the latter remaining after 1949.²⁰¹

Issue 5/1952 of the Instructional-Informational Bulletin contained an article summarizing the activities of *Czytelnik* in 1951. It featured an unusual review of the publishing house's work, focusing as it did on its shortcomings and oversights. GUKPPIW was generally fairly favourable towards *Czytelnik* because it was operating in an important and challenging sector, namely contemporary literature. A particularly serious error of judgment that was pointed out was the fact that Hussarski's plays and Lem's *Jacht Paradise* (Yacht Paradise) were submitted and passed for publication. The highlighted shortcomings included the

199 AAN, GUKPPIW, 421,teczka 197/7, pp. 113–114.

200 AAN, GUKPPIW, 308,teczka 9/1a.

201 Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka*, op. cit., p. 140.

publisher's failure to keep up with current events, a certain degree of arbitrariness in selecting works for publication, and its weak position on historical issues.

I have already mentioned, as have other researchers, that it was never the individual author but the publishers who were always the censorship authorities' addressees. This is confirmed by a review of Marek Nowakowski's collection of short stories, *Ten stary złodziej* (This old thief). 'The short story *Przymale buty* (Too small shoes) – p. 157–168 – which depicts the kinds of people who hang around railway stations, needs to be reworked because it presents an all too nightmarish image of their poverty'. Beneath the review, in red crayon, there follows a remark that:

I agree with Comrade Burczyn, interventions are necessary on pages 157, 158, 159 and 161. Since it is impossible to simply intervene into this text, I have asked Comrade Kopińska **to take responsibility for the whole short story and propose a new text**. My proposal has been approved.²⁰² (Emphasis KB)

This statement suggests that the publisher was expected to review and improve the work! This verifies the observation made above, that the role of the authors was being reduced as they became mere appendages to the publishing process.²⁰³

In April 1958, censors assessed Stanisław Dygat's book *Podróż* (Journey). They cut a passage from one page, informing the editor Irena Szymańska of this fact. The review, bearing an illegible signature, was signed on 10 April 1958. The conclusion stated that

the author does not address political issues. The one exception are the first two pages (7 and 8), where he wonders at the greatness of the monuments of ancient Rome and concludes that they are also evidence of the tyranny of the age, leading him to make some generalizations relating to the current age. It seems that this fragment would need slight amendments from the author.

There follows a remark in red pencil:

I discussed the book with Comrade Zych. I do not consider Comrade Zych's concerns on p. 7 justified. However, the text on page 8 should be removed in its entirety since the final sentences are clearly full of allusions and irony (with particular political context). I agreed with Comrade Szymańska that the current version on page 8 cannot be approved for publication. She stated that the text would thus either be retracted or redacted and presented again to GUKP. Verdict: approve for publication after amendments.²⁰⁴

202 AAN, GUKPPiW, 596, teczka 68/3, pp. 298–305.

203 *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, ed. Zbigniew Romek, op. cit.

204 AAN, GUKPPiW, 603, teczka 68/12, pp. 189–192.

In this case, too, all the changes are discussed with the editor without any mention of the author's position. The documents suggest indirectly that the publishers will inform Dygat about the changes to his text, although the impersonal forms (that the text would either be retracted or redacted) are indicative of the instrumental treatment of the author.

Thus, the typical journey of a text that was to be cut looked like this: the publishers submit the book for assessment; the censorship office suggests changes and returns it; the publishers consult the author, make the changes and resubmit the text for assessment, or they withdraw the work; the censorship office assesses the work again and gives permission to publish it. This journey could be repeated several times, the archival sources suggest, if the author, publishers or GUKPPiW refused to compromise. This caused significant difficulties, not least that this dragged out the process of introducing changes. However, it could also save authors time and money as they did not need to visit the censorship office themselves (Stanisław Lem, for example, complained of such difficulties as he had to travel to Warsaw after KiW acquired the assets of Gebethner i Wolff after its liquidation). This situation also meant that authors could avoid what were sometimes humiliating conversations with unsupportive officials. The publishers thus acted as filters and were the central node of relations with the censorship office within this arrangement.

The fate of Roman Bratny's novel *Szczęśliwi torturowani* (Happy torture victims) is illustrative of such peregrinations. The work was submitted for review towards the end of 1958. It was passed for publication only after the author made substantial changes that were mediated by the publishing house. On the reverse of the review, the following remarks can be found:

Following discussions between Comrade Strasser and the Publishers – Comrade Michalski sent the office two copies of the book *Szczęśliwi torturowani* corrected by the author. Comrade Strasser looked at the changes on 13 December. It was agreed that Bratny's work could be printed in the version presented to us. Comrade Michalski was also informed of the Office's decision. The pages corrected by the author were included in the record of the interventions.

13 December (signature illegible).²⁰⁵

The novel's journey thus initially took it to the reviewers and then back to the editors who then passed it on to the author for correction before the editors submitted the corrected text to GUKPPiW, where it was again reviewed before being approved for publication.

205 AAN GUKPPiW, 603,teczka 68/13, pp. 270–271.

These sources reveal that it was editors who informed authors of matters relating to the censorship of their works. The archives of Gebethner i Wolff contain, for example, letters informing authors that the censorship office had not yet finished reading their works.* [* Examples of such letters are included in the chapter on Stanisław Lem.]

In the case of authors who had longstanding relationships with a particular publishing house, such exchanges could be quite explicit and would go beyond text-related matters. In the files on *Książka i Wiedza* from 1950, there is a highly negative review of Jan Śpiewak's poetry which also features the remark that the publishers state that 'they must publish the work with a minimal print run **in light of their duty towards the author**'²⁰⁶ (emphasis KB). This explanation was enough to ensure that the work appeared with a print run of 3500 copies.

The censorship authorities also divided the publishers into 'ours' (state and party publishers) and 'alien'. During the national conference of 27 June 1949, Helena Landsberg spoke about the former:

It is a case of intensifying [restrictions on – KB] "our" publishers. Each publishing house can make a mistake. We thus ask publishers to make us aware of this, rather than hide behind their brand. This was the case with the Łódź branch of *Książka i Wiedza* and their book *Zagadki alchemii* (The alchemical mysteries). It is a work that explores a mystery set against the backdrop of the atomic bomb; it is a cosmopolitan piece that they agreed to change and rework after talking to us.²⁰⁷

A censorship official was thus surprised when reviewing Antoni Gołubiew's novel *Bolesław Chrobry*, submitted by *Czytelnik* in 1950, that a publishing house tasked with 'socializing literature' had decided to publish this work. It is not entirely clear what the censor meant by 'socializing', although it is quite evident that he was seeking to express his displeasure and disappointment with the actions of a state institution.

'Alien' publishers were primarily private publishing houses. At the national conference of June 1951 it was recommended that 'works from private publishers should only be accepted with caution – and only those pieces that are near completion.'²⁰⁸ The archival materials thus feature such remarks as 'Convince Arct not to publish...', 'Wait until the publishers resubmit the work...', and 'Query it with the commission for paper'. The Commission for Printing Paper allocated paper for printing and its refusals could mean a publication being held back. The

206 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/43, p. 590.

207 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/4, pp. 97–98.

208 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/4, p. 130.

GUKPPiW archives suggest that paper was no longer allocated to private and Catholic publishers from April 1949.

The category of ‘alien’ publishers also included some academic publishers, such as Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk (the publishing house of the Poznań Society of the Friends of Science). As archival materials from 1952 record,

the question arises as to why we need two reviews and two substantially different ones at that [...] I believe that this is an indication of the uncertain and inconsistent position of the editorial board that remains loyal to bourgeois scientific “objectivism”. Taking into account the high quality of Bardach’s work and the poor quality of Adamus’, I suggest suspending publication of the latter **in order to teach the editors a lesson.**²⁰⁹ (emphasis KB)

It should be stressed that the very fact that a private publishing house submitted the work – and all the more so as it happened in 1949 just as the private sector of the publishing industry was being abolished – was already reason enough for a work to run the risk of being refused permission to appear. In such cases, it was not the content of a work or the identity of its author that meant permission was denied, but the status of the publisher, with such decisions designed to undermine its financial position and ultimate viability. There are many such examples that can be cited from the ‘Descriptive report of the Department of Research on the Publishing Industry’ which, fortunately for researchers, covers the sensitive years of 1949 and 1950. In May 1949, private publishers were refused permission to print nine works, including Stanisław Lem’s debut collection of short stories *Wywiad i atomy* (Intelligence services and atoms). In June the publishing house M. Kot was refused permission to publish Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz* with an introduction by Stanisław Pigoń and Maciej Słomczyński’s novel *Papierośnica z alpaki* (Alpaca cigarette case). In December, Parnicki’s novel *Aecjusz, ostatni Rzymianin* (Aetius, the last Roman), submitted by Książnica Atlas, was not approved for publication. By the second quarter of 1950, of a total of 37 works submitted by private publishing houses 25 were not approved for publication. The most interesting works on the list include Parnicki’s *Srebrne orły* (Silver eagles), Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina’s *Dom wielki jak świat* (A house the size of the world), Kraszewski’s *Stara baśń* ([An old tale] which was not part of the publishing schedule) and Maria Dąbrowska’s *Uśmiech dzieciństwa* ([Childhood smile] which idealized life on a large gentry estate), submitted by J. Mortkowicz publishers.²¹⁰ As my archival research shows, private publishers often attracted

209 AAN, GUKPPiW, 402, teczka 32/47, p. 39.

210 AAN, GUKPPiW, 77, teczka 4/2a.

authors who were uncertain as to the political correctness of their work, debutant authors and writers who had been associated with the same publishing house since before the war. This is why there were serious academic studies and texts demanding significant literary knowledge from readers among the popular works and children's books.

In light of the recommendation that as few interventions ought to be made as possible, GUKPPiW pressured the publishers into ensuring that they themselves conducted corrections. What needs to be discussed now is the role of the publishers themselves in literary censorship. It is worth citing the relevant directives. The national conference in 1949 issued the somewhat convoluted statement that

we will avoid direct interventions but we will make demands of publishers. It is quite likely that we will, in the first instance, transfer these responsibilities to other agencies in order to avoid provoking unnecessary responses.²¹¹

In 1951, the conference stated:

Given the need to increase vigilance as far as possible, we must avoid taking on responsibilities that belong to editors, we must avoid excessive inquisitiveness, and **must prove capable of differentiating our competences from those of editors.**²¹² (emphasis KB)

John M. Bates has argued in an article that

the entire system of literary production was based on subordinating literature to ideological demands and all of the links in the chain, from self-censorship to the reception of a work by critics, guaranteed that the system reproduced itself. It would thus seem that the most institutionalized form of censorship (GUKPPiW) was largely superfluous and had relatively little to do, since other organs of control (**editors in publishing houses, above all**) were to ensure a work's political or ideological correctness before it reached the censorship office.²¹³ (emphasis KB)

As we know, and Bates himself goes on to argue, the censorship authorities in fact had their hands full, despite publishers' best efforts.

Existing studies refer extensively to the significant influence that publishers had on the final form of a work. Maria Bogucka presents insights based on her own experiences. 'Publishing houses worked on texts for months, examining each word, with control becoming more intense from the early 1960s to ensure that the officials on Mysia Street would not have any complaints.'²¹⁴ She also

211 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/4, p. 56.

212 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/4, p. 124.

213 John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., p. 95.

214 Maria Bogucka, *Życie z cenzurą*, in: *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, op. cit., p. 49.

recalled that from 1958, the censorship office no longer received manuscripts, but rather texts that had been proofread and typeset, meaning that publishers faced significant losses in the event of any cuts.²¹⁵

It is difficult to disagree with the argument that editors had a significant influence on the final form of a text. This is confirmed by archival sources. However, establishing just which changes were made by editors and which came from GUKPPIW is no simple task.

Let us consider the issue on the basis of Adolf Rudnicki's *Wybór prozy* (Selected prose). PIW submitted it for assessment on 6 February 1954. One official suggested removing the entire short story *Warszawa Podziemna* (Underground Warsaw). A second ripped the entire collection to pieces. While noting the 'political perfection' of some of the pieces, he could not understand the logic behind including works that describe a world that no longer exists. He was also left unimpressed by the order of the volume, as it resembled a 'see-saw'. The review form includes a handwritten note from a superior stating that 'editor Szymańska said that the story we had queried (*Warszawa Podziemna*) was included unnecessarily (particularly as a closing piece) and will be withdrawn'. Permission to publish was granted only on 23 October 1954, once the story had been removed. It is worth noting the significant amount of time that had passed between the negative review in early February and approval for publication being granted towards the end of October. Most of this time was probably spent correcting the work. This is what is suggested in the documents tracing the text's journey between PIW and GUKPPIW. Bibliographic records indicate, interestingly, that 'Warszawa Podziemna' was not included in any of the author's subsequent collections, unless it is the same as the story that appeared under the title 'Opis Warszawy podziemnej w dzień przedpodziemny' (A description of underground Warsaw on pre-underground eve) in a collection not published until 1979. More detailed research would be required here.

The interventions into Rudnicki's work are a relatively simple case, as one whole story was cut. Thus, it can be assumed that this action was taken jointly, with the editors (most probably after consulting Rudnicki) receiving a clear signal from the censorship authorities. It is more difficult to reproduce the history of changes in cases where particular sentences or words were changed and

215 See also: Jan Żaryn, *Cenzura w Polsce*, in: *Encyklopedia "białych plam"*, red. Artur Winiarczyk, vol. 3, Radom: Powen – Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2000, pp. 288–290. Aleksander Pawlicki shifts the date to 1955. Pawlicki, p. 105. The directive was most probably introduced gradually and inconsistently.

reformulated. Who altered them, in what order and when? These questions can only be answered by comparing GUKPPIW materials with initial drafts.* [* I attempt this in the subchapter on Jerzy Andrzejewski's novel *Idzie skacząc po górach*.]

Finally, it is worth considering the ambivalent situation that employees of the publishing houses found themselves in. Jan Pieszczechowicz, the editor-in-chief of the journal *Student*, has highlighted the contradictions and discomfort influencing their work. Joanna Hobot has cited his telling statement that 'the behaviour of editors in chief in communist Poland was characterized by a certain duality.'²¹⁶ This duality stemmed from the fact that a publisher had to speak for both the authors and the censors, something that the reviews of Rudnicki's stories, mentioned above, likewise reflect. The statement that 'the story we had queried (*Warszawa Podziemna*) was included unnecessarily (particularly as a closing piece)' reflects PIW's flexible position towards the censorship office. It admitted that it was at fault for including the story and affirms that the censors were correct, thus also justifying the existence of institutional censorship. It is also worth noting that editor Szymańska often fought hard to secure the publication of texts in their full form.

GUKPPIW, however, remained oblivious to this duality. In an article included in the Informational-Instructional Bulletin, a positive image of the influence of the censorship office on publishers was presented, with A. Purowska writing that

it has been demonstrated in practice that our Office can influence not only the way political and social issues are framed in the works submitted to us. Our pointers regarding the artistic quality, style, and language of a book **were often taken on board by editors too**.²¹⁷ (emphasis KB)

The censor failed to add, however, that these pointers were given in conjunction with threats of financial sanctions (refusing permission to print and destroying print runs) and staff-related sanctions (firing editors). Excessive editorial interventions, mentioned by many authors and academics in the context of my research,²¹⁸ often played a crucial role in the negotiation of compromises, although they were sometimes conducted somewhat clumsily and over zealously.

216 Joanna Hobot, op. cit., p. 353.

217 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 275.

218 Andrzej Krajewski, *Między współpracą a oporem. Twórcy kultury wobec systemu politycznego PRL (1975–1980)*, Warszawa: Trio, 2004, p. 30; *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, op. cit.

5 Readers

If it is possible to argue that the existence of institutional censorship reduced the significance of the role of authors, then this was all the more true for the role of readers. Any attempt to control literature was done with readers in mind and such actions ultimately patronized them. I should immediately stress, however, that this chapter is about the imagined reader rather than actual readers.

Krzysztof M. Dmitruk claims that censorship is always guided by a particular concept of interpersonal communication²¹⁹ that could be described, briefly put, as being grounded in clear asymmetries and imbalances. A fundamental objective of GUKPPiW was to prevent society from knowing the truth about reality.²²⁰ It is thus necessary to doubt the sincerity of the censorship officials' intentions, particularly as they denied their very own existence to the readers. Marta Fik thus called censors the co-authors of texts.²²¹

At national conferences and meetings, imagined readers were, interestingly enough, rarely the subject of discussion. While the majority of statements can be read as being indirectly related to the reception of a work, there are few direct references to this issue. Other matters were stressed, perhaps because it was obvious that all of the actions described had the virtual or imagined reader in mind. Thus, the 'correct' forewords that were supposed to shape the understanding of a work and interventions reshaping the order of a book in order to frame the issues presented in a desirable manner were described in much the same way. Censors were also opposed to complex forms of expression that would make a work inaccessible to the wider masses.

Significantly more insight can be gained from the reviews of works submitted for review. One of the oldest collections of sources, relating to Nasza Księgarnia from 1948, includes an assessment of Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina's *Choinka rybackiego synka* (The fisherman's son's Christmas tree). I will cite it in its entirety:

A rhyming children's story. It is written in a nice language. The subject matter is very simple – it is the story of a small fisher boy Mikołajek, who decided to take his catch to Jesus in the stable. For this he was rewarded with a Christmas tree for his home. Educationally valuable thanks to its simplicity.²²²

219 Krzysztof M. Dmitruk, *Kontrola literatury*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli – obieg alternatywny*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 21.

220 More on this subject, see: Stanisław Żak, *Cenzura wobec humanistyki*, Kielce: Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna w Kielcach, 1996.

221 Marta Fik, op. cit., pp. 131–147; see also: Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit., p. 52.

222 AAN, GUKPPiW, 148, teczka 31/66, p. 72.

Interestingly enough, the religious dimensions of the text did not determine its fate. However, this was still 1948. The censor noted the educational value of the story for readers, which was quite logical when discussing a work aimed at younger readers.

Seeking didactic values became something that censors were later concerned with when it came to works aimed at adult readers. A review of a collection of short stories by Sławomir Mrożek published by Wydawnictwo Literackie stated that ‘the light style and humorous approach to the issues presented will ensure the work’s popularity with readers, while the contents will have a positive political impact on them.’²²³ The collection *Półpancerze praktyczne* (Practical breastplates) was approved for printing on 9 June 1953 without any changes. It enjoyed very positive reviews from censors who had clearly failed to spot the ironic tone of the text (and not for the first time, since the stories were also published in the press). They even stressed the similarity of Mrożek’s short stories to Jerzy Andrzejewski’s *Wojna skuteczna* (An effective war), whose demonstrative nature remained impenetrable to the censors.²²⁴ It is also worth emphasizing, following Joanna Hobot, that censors and authors tended to operate with different imagined readers in mind.²²⁵ The author’s imagined reader was to pick up on the jokes and bitterness of Mrożek’s stories (generating extra-textual understanding and drawing on collective consciousness), while the censor’s imagined reader – in this case embodied by the censor him/herself – reads the work straight.* [* I will return to this highly complex and important issue in the chapter on authors’ strategies for dealing with censorship.] In the fragment of the review of *Półpancerze praktyczne* cited above, there is evidence of censors’ concern for the wellbeing of readers in terms of ensuring that they are entertained and educated. According to GUKPPIW officials, the stories meet both of these conditions.

The censor’s satisfaction with the didactic aspects of the reviewed text is not entirely unconditional, the archives suggest. Poetry causes particular difficulties in this respect.

In 1951, Czytelnik sought to publish Mieczysław Jastrun’s *Wiersze dawne i nowe* (Poems old and new), suggesting a print run of 5350 copies. The censor approved typesetting without any amendments, although numerous stylistic

223 AAN, GUKPPIW, 395,teczka 32/10, p. 19.

224 Wojciech Tomasiak, *Polska powieść tendencyjna 1949–1955. Problemy perswazji literackiej*, Wrocław: PAN. Komitet Nauk o Literaturze Polskiej, 1988, p. 95.

225 Joanna Hobot, op. cit.

shortcomings were highlighted. The difficulty of reading the works was the key issue. I will again cite the review in its entirety:

Jastrun's poems cover his entire career. Attentive readers will be able to trace the author's development over the volume's 257 pages, while also seeing how he came to perfect his craft as a poet.

Jastrun's poems are far from easy to read. His craft is heavy and complex. The content of many of the poems is highly personal and thus of little interest to a mass readership. Jastrun does not seek to make his experiences, issues, and interests typical. Jastrun focuses in his poems on personal emotions, on his individual view of nature and also (albeit in a smaller number of his poems) on internal events to such a degree that there is nothing in them beyond the poet. It could be said that Jastrun's poems are stripped of people and the world, being filled in their entirety instead with personal reflections and individual impressions of nature.

Hence even the social poems are of a personal-nebulous nature, as is the case with poems such as *W Bazylice Świętego Piotra* (In St Peter's Basilica), *Ballada o Puszczy Świętokrzyskiej* (The ballad of the wilderness of the Holy Cross Mountains) and *W pracowni świata* (In the workshop of the world). However, none of the selected poems read here raises any fundamental concerns and the volume can thus be published without changes and alterations.²²⁶

In 1954, Tadeusz Różewicz's collection of poetry *Równina* (The flat lands) was submitted for assessment by its publishers Wydawnictwo Literackie. The three reviews held in the archives are positive, although they all mention some of the poems' shortcomings. 'It is a shame that the author continues to make use of strange forms', wrote one reviewer, 'as this weakens the poems' ability to get their message across and thus also reduces their educational role.'²²⁷ The collection was published in a print run of 2000 copies. The same file in the archives contains an unfavourable secondary review of *Równina*, with the censor Borkowicz condemning the work's apparent brutalism and naturalism. Beneath the review, there is a rather exceptional note remarking on discussions of Różewicz's poetry held during a departmental meeting. Borkowicz's colleagues did not share her opinion and instead stated that Różewicz had produced an important contribution to literature. This, of course, does not change the fact that he continued to be labelled a formalist and his works were deemed incomprehensible. It was for this reason that Różewicz was offered only small print runs.

The simplest explanation for the fact that educational elements were sought in works aimed at adult readers is that it was deemed necessary to educate a 'new'

226 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375, teczka 31/27, p. 232.

227 AAN, GUKPPiW, 395, teczka 32/11, pp. 156–157.

society. Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska states that it is regimes lacking popular legitimacy that seek to appropriate literature, as literature takes on auxiliary roles in the public sphere, filling the gaps left by other means of mass communication.²²⁸ This is why literature was expected to serve non-artistic goals as it was instrumentalized. Following Wojciech Tomasik, we could add that writers stopped being authors who addressed a handful of people and instead came to embody the broad masses.²²⁹ This is why GUKPPiW divided audiences into the masses and elites (those in power were less interested in the latter).

The different approaches to censoring works depending on their potential audience (workers or the intelligentsia) should be emphasized. This is something that many existing studies have highlighted, including those by Aleksander Pawlicki and John M. Bates. Pawlicki mentions 'the various principles according to which censor shaped media communications,' including several that are particularly relevant to this chapter. The first such principle is making 'information and formation identical', i.e. each message should educate and shape audiences. Ideally, there would be no text free of educational values. Taking into account this part of censors' activities makes it easier to understand why censors sought educational values in works such as those of Różewicz. The second key principle highlighted by Pawlicki is the tendency to divide informational requirements into politically 'correct' and 'incorrect', according to the target audience.²³⁰ Bates, meanwhile, emphasises that censors had to classify books according to whether they targeted elite or mass readerships. They were also expected to make it clear to readers that some writers were merely tolerated and did not enjoy active support. This second task, made more complicated by the fact that information did not pass directly from censor to reader, was to be enabled by suitably composed introductions issued to publishers and by controlling the size of print runs.²³¹

The sources on *Nasza Księgarnia* for 1948 include a curious assessment of Adam Mickiewicz's *Lilie* (*Lilies*) with a foreword by Stanisław Pigoń. The volume was intended for school theatres. The first review raised no objections, with the censor even praising the 'work's high artistic value.' The second review, however, expressed significant critiques relating both to the foreword and to the content of Mickiewicz's work itself.

228 Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska, *Dyskusja*, in: *Literatura i władza*, op. cit., p. 263.

229 Wojciech Tomasik, op. cit.

230 Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit., pp. 56 and 59–60.

231 John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., pp. 101–106.

While the foreword is politically indifferent, its content is completely unacceptable. [...] It popularizes (and is all the more harmful because it does so in an attractive manner) rather undesirable, sensationalist content that is devoid of any social aspects. The story of a murder committed out of fear of taking responsibility for one's own behaviour and then punished by supernatural forces can hardly be considered something that shapes readers' worldview in the desired manner.

Despite these reservations, permission for typesetting was granted on 22 November 1948. However, that was not the end of the matter as it was discussed again several months later in the secondary reviews. *Lilie* can be published as part of Mickiewicz's collected works but there is no need to stage the work today, particularly for youth theatres.²³² Young audiences were to avoid reading (or watching) the ballad because it lacked the desired didactic elements, whereas adults, it seems, would not be harmed by the work. Given the status of the piece in question and its place in Polish literary tradition, I have chosen to present this example because it is particularly controversial. My archival research points to similar cases where censors viewed reeditions of classic works unfavourably. Ultimately, though, such opinions had little influence.

The situation was different in the case of contemporary literature. Any work criticized for being inaccessible or harming mass readers would face interventions into its content while the size of its print run would also be reduced. Let me now describe a typical situation: *Książka i Wiedza* submitted Anna Kamieńska's volume of poetry *Wychowanie* (Education) to GUKPPiW. It was reviewed in January 1949, with the censors recommending adding dates after each poem and reworking four passages. The overall tone of the review was less than enthusiastic with the excessive complexity of the metaphors and use of hyperbole a reason for criticism, as was the impenetrability for mass readership. The cut parts were only restored following an intervention by the director of the censorship office following a rare case of an author making an appeal, in this case to the voivodeship censorship office in Łódź.²³³

On the other hand, two positive reviews of Julian Przyboś's selected poetry published by *Książka i Wiedza* in 1949 as *Wybór poezji* also featured a note stating that the volume was not suitable for public libraries. The poems, both old and new, were considered 'too difficult' for mass readers.

Censors objected to Leopold Staff's three-volume *Wybór poezji*, edited by Mieczysław Jastrun and published by PIW in 1950. One review concluded

232 AAN, GUKPPiW, 148, teczka 31/66, p. 146.

233 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146, teczka 31/39, pp. 164–168.

by stating that ‘this selection of Staff’s poems merely serves to make readers acquainted with contemporary poetry while omitting any social or political aspects.’ Interestingly, the secondary review mentions Jastrun’s introduction, which was in fact lacking from the edition submitted for review, suggesting that it was to be added as a remedy for the poetry’s apolitical and asocial tone.²³⁴

It is also worth remembering that there were works that could be prevented from reaching mass readership but were permitted for publication as limited editions (which made them difficult to obtain) aimed at elite audiences. The most interesting example of this form of restriction that I came across in the course of my archival research relates to Jerzy Andrzejewski’s *Bramy raj*. The magazine *Argumenty* was refused permission to serialize the novel but the periodical *Twórczość* did receive approval for its serialization.

My archival research also revealed one more somewhat surprising thing. It turns out that the most strictly controlled texts were those aimed at mass audiences, particularly those dealing with contemporary issues. I have already mentioned this, but here I would like to stress that classifying a work as one intended for a mass audience meant that censors had to exercise greater caution and pay more attention than usual. John M. Bates has commented on the Stalinist era noting that

censors’ central task was to assess a work’s possible impact on readers. They were expected to ‘signal’ if a book was relevant to the needs of a mass readership or if it was more suited to a refined, elite readership. If a work appealed solely to the latter, it might not receive approval. [...] If a book was aimed at a broader audience it had to meet the basic criteria of having a clear message and being politically correct.²³⁵

When considering the role of readers in institutionalized literary censorship, the question of the censor as a reader should not be overlooked. Each work submitted for assessment was, after all, examined by a rather specific reader whose chief task was to interpret the text.

Piotr Perkowski has noted how Tadeusz Konwicki’s work, for example, was shaped by its constant dialogue with censors.²³⁶ For Konwicki, it turns out that the censor was, somewhat paradoxically, the most attentive and thus his best reader. Perkowski writes of Konwicki’s *Nowy Świat i okolice* (*New World Avenue and vicinity*) that the author

234 AAN, GUKPPiW, 152,teczka 31/121, pp. 427–436.

235 John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., p. 101.

236 Piotr Perkowski, *Pół wieku z cenzurą*, op. cit., p. 76.

was disappointed by readers' inattentiveness, thus he decided to write a book for the censor as someone who always read his work carefully and sensitively. Thus this unwanted reader, his most threatening reader, yet without whom Konwicki's work could not see the light of day, [...] became the novel's addressee.²³⁷

While this was clearly an extreme case – as well as one that was also subject to artistic representation – the matter nevertheless deserves to be taken very seriously. The censor is, of course, woven into many texts as a definite (rather than imagined) virtual reader. Zbigniew Herbert is another author who has spoken of adapting his style in such a way that it always considered (and avoided) the presence of the reading censor.²³⁸

The censor-as-reader differs from ordinary readers in fundamental ways because he or she could at any moment overcome any communicative barriers and become a co-author. 'Censorship officials, as specific receivers of a literary work', as Joanna Hobot highlights, 'have at their disposal a strategy that influences the strategies adopted by both authors (senders) and readers (receivers).'²³⁹ The censor is thus in a dominant position.

6 The poetics of censors' reviews

As I have already mentioned, around 70 % of the archival materials that I have examined consist of censors' reviews. Regardless of whether or not they met the demands of the directors of the censorship authorities, they nevertheless form a relatively homogenous group of texts in terms of their form. Censors' reviews are a specific and indeed unique genre that can be explained in many cases through analysis of their construction. While I refer consistently to the empirical aspects of such texts in this study, at this point I would like to highlight some aspects relating to their language and form. I apply the term 'poetics' here in its broader sense. Following Michał Głowiński, I use it to signify the study of the principles of construction, meaning and function of certain kinds of text.²⁴⁰

Systematic discussion of the language of censors' statements would require a separate book dedicated to the topic. This could be an option for future research. There are references to the subject across a number of studies on GUKPPiW.

237 Ibid., p. 95.

238 Cited in: Przemysław Czapliński and Piotr Śliwiński, *Literatura polska lat 1976–1998. Przewodnik po prozie i poezji*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1999, p. 321.

239 Joanna Hobot, op. cit., p. 133.

240 Michał Głowiński, *Poetyka wobec tekstów nieliterackich*, in: Głowiński, *Prace wybrane*, vol. 2, Kraków: Universitas, 1997, p. 219.

Paweł Nowak's book *Swoi i obcy w językowym obrazie świata* (Us and Others in linguistic depictions of the world) presents a broader discussion, although it remains a minor aspect of his study.²⁴¹ He describes GUKPPIW as a 'secret institutional sender', alongside the Party and state authorities and the USSR, while also suspecting censorship employees of possessing insufficient linguistic skills.²⁴² His intuitive argument is a result not of archival research but rather of comparative study of the language of journalism in 1950s Poland. Aspects of his claims are verified by examining documentary sources, but closer inspection reveals that the situation was more diverse than Nowak suggested.

Aware of the limitations of what I can present here, I will outline the key questions and my findings. To what extent did censors speak their own language? And what styles did they employ? Did they create their own set of concepts, or did they tend to select from already existing terms? The most typical terms can be presented here. Recognizing that valorizing elements tend to prevail in their arguments, it is worth examining how they constructed their judgements and what role emotional language played in them. How general were their claims and how much room did they leave for interpretation?

Positive reviews are the least independent in terms of their thinking and language. Censors were most likely to adopt clichés and schematic statements when praising something. This was most probably an outcome of their caution. More interesting are the moments when they expressed criticism, as it was then that censors had to be innovative in their use of language. They were more likely to push the boundaries in terms of the originality of their statements when they were dealing with 'politically incorrect' texts, even if they ultimately accepted a work for publication. In such cases we can see dismissive, bitter and offensive reviews; but, for all that, they were at least explicit. Here is an example of a positive review that is expressed using generalizations. I cite the review of Hanna Ożogowska and Wanda Grodzieńska's *Wiersze dla najmłodszych* (Poems for very young children), dated 21 March 1950, in full.

A selection of poems for pre-schoolers. The book has been approved by the Ministry of Education as material to be used in preschool libraries. It is aimed at making it easier for preschool teachers to educate children and build connections to reality. The authors have placed the greatest amount of attention (likewise evident in the order) on familiarizing children with the seasons, nature, etc. The entire work thus lacks a consistent

241 Paweł Nowak, *Swoi i obcy w językowym obrazie świata. Język publicystyki polskiej z pierwszej połowy lat pięćdziesiątych*, Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie – Skłodowskiej, 2002.

242 Paweł Nowak *Swoi i obcy*, op. cit., pp. 20–21.

and explicit ideological thrust. Nevertheless, the book will be useful in educating the youngest children.²⁴³

There is, in fact, no evidence of passing judgment here. The content preceding the statement of the decision could have applied equally to a negative assessment. Reviews of children's literature very often employed generalizations and this was something that censorship officials were unhappy with. The head of the voivodeship censorship office in Poznań, for example, pointed out the weakness of works submitted for review by *Nasza Księgarnia*.

The authors [of the reviews – KB] give us an impression of the value of a book by stating: "The novel contains educational elements." Such statements are absolutely inadequate. No one is trying to deny that the reviewers are right to point to didactic values, but it must be stated explicitly what they are.²⁴⁴

There is no evidence indicating how reviewers who were humiliated in front of the entire class, so to speak, responded to the criticism, but it is clear that the number of reviews offering little insight did not decrease.

Another rather tenuous assessment relates to a work that the censor most probably did not understand, namely Marek Hłasko's debut novel *Baza Sokołowska* (Sokołów depot). I cite it in its entirety here:

A story in the form of a report describing drivers at a transport depot. This reportage-style piece is the debut of a writer who is also a driver. It depicts in a vivid and interesting fashion the wealth of complex issues affecting the milieu described, including the difficulties and dangers associated with drivers' work while also bringing to the forefront the process of the new man reaching maturity and becoming a hardy, active builder of socialism in the course of everyday, difficult work, as part of a strong collective of people bound by common labour and common struggle. This reportage can be classed among other good and indeed very good works. The people depicted are vivid and full-blooded, the plot is interesting and tight, with each page filled with liveliness.²⁴⁵

Hłasko's text was published without changes in a print run of 5000. This is a particularly delectable case given that the author was blacklisted a few years later, with publication of his palinode texts completely forbidden. It seems that the positive assessment stemmed from the subject matter being modelled on Rybakov's novels.²⁴⁶ The censor clearly overlooked the critical undertones of *Baza Sokołowska*.

243 AAN, GUKPPiW, 144, teczka 31/14, p. 182.

244 AAN, GUKPPiW, 422, teczka 197/10, p. 155.

245 AAN, GUKPPiW, 385, teczka 31/118, p. 455.

246 Stanisław Gawliński, op. cit., p. 85.

By contrast, a review of Stanisław Dygat's novel *Pożegnania* (Farewells), dated 5 February 1955, clearly employed verbal aggression despite the book ultimately being approved for publication without changes.

It is a farewell to the old world of chimerical mannerisms and stylized decadence; it is a farewell to the prostitution of the grand salons and to lordly foolishness on a grandiose scale. The plot is set in the pre-war period among the milieu of coffeehouse snobs and poets, among the playboys, posers, dandies, show-offs, charlatans, and other cretins. The book depicts the degradation of the urban and rural bourgeoisie during the Nazi occupation. This wonderfully written grotesque of the limitations of particular classes is, however, let down by its failure to counter the depiction of the bourgeoisie with an image of the healthy parts of society. The assessment of reality presented in the book is justified by the class of the protagonists appearing in the book – this is so obvious that it is unlikely to provoke any dangerous allusions.²⁴⁷

The loaded vocabulary (prostitution, lordly foolishness, snobs, dandies, charlatans and cretins) illustrates the ways a milieu that the censor clearly despised was labelled. The inability to separate the real world from the worlds depicted in literature, something that GUKPPiW reviewers often suffered from, is clearly evident here. The reviewer adopts a certain language together with the vision of the world that it entails, forgetting that he is describing a fictional world. It is worth stressing that this curious judgement came in early 1955, thus at a time when the activities of GUKPPiW were beginning to show signs of a certain degree of liberalization. It is clear that the new ideas were only slowly gaining acceptance and not without resistance.

A review of a brochure written by Father Antoni Walentynowicz, relating to an image of the Virgin Mary at the church in the village of Krypno, makes its scorn clear.

Prayers and songs dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Krypno. The **goodhearted parish priest** included psalms and prayers used in Mass throughout the year (**to make the publication more profitable**) in addition to the collection of songs. No objections. Given the low level of interest, I would advise against further editions.²⁴⁸ (emphasis KB)

In 1948 already, a condescending attitude towards religious publishers and their authors prevailed in censors' statements. Such attitudes became even more widespread from 1949 onwards.

Censors' reviews were written using a combination of several styles and registers: official, journalistic and academic. What becomes evident is a

247 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375,teczka 31/35, pp. 160–161.

248 AAN, GUKPPiW, 168,teczka 32/25, p. 26.

significant degree of heterogeneity that seemingly is an outcome of both the very texts that were being censored and the reviewer's degree of competence (his or her education and intelligence). Many reviews contain a mixture of registers, as illustrated by the following examples.

The official or bureaucratic style was conventional and linguistically schematic. It was usually used in positive reviews that approved texts for publication without changes. This resulted in short, positive reviews featuring oft-repeated phrases: 'the book contains educational elements'; 'the work has been approved by the Ministry of Education for use in libraries'; 'a new edition of the pre-war poems of a well-known poet' and 'a favourable publication'. The official or bureaucratic style also featured in relation to works requiring special attention, such as texts on the USSR, those translated from Russian, and, in particular, works by the revolutionary leaders Lenin and Stalin. Servility and the fear of making a mistake meant that censors sought to protect themselves by using clichéd phrases that sounded official and thus seemed to reduce the personal input of the person writing the review.

The academic style was relatively rare, becoming evident largely in relation to texts on scientific subjects and textbooks. It is worth remembering that before such works were submitted to GUKPPiW, they were first assessed by the Ministry of Higher Education or Ministry of Education where they were reviewed by experts in the relevant field. Some of these external reviews are part of the archival collections of the censorship office. The censors then made use of these reviews, copying some of the more telling phrases and sentences. Some of the terms that appeared more regularly in the academic register include 'to polemize', 'polemics', 'treatise' and 'dissertation'. Censors also delighted in examining the contents of bibliographies. One variation on censors' academic style was a tendency to produce poor imitations. 'Censors' preferred style was dull', writes Aleksander Pawlicki, 'and it justified its approach by imitating the academic style'.²⁴⁹ Attempts to introduce specialized terminology or argumentation in the condensed form that was demanded by the censorship office and its discourse often had unintentionally humorous effects that could result in curious opinions such as: 'the book examines the impact of a parasitic lifestyle on parasites'; 'the subject of the brochure is a highly detailed analysis of the fishing industry, in particular the herring on the global scale' and 'the entire work divides the content appropriately into three chapters'.

249 Aleksander Pawlicki, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

The journalistic style involved commenting, offering clear opinions and judgements, and seeking to convince readers that the views expressed were justified. This style was most common in reviews,²⁵⁰ although some of them were closer to one end of the journalistic scale (namely propaganda familiar from pamphlets and daily newspapers), while others offered a more critical discourse.

Agitprop-style reviews of course featured a degree of newspeak. Typical of this was a review written by the head of the Łódź censorship office T. Kubik in 1949 on Mieczysława Buczkówna's volume of poetry *Rozstania* (Partings).

The poet is stuck in her "ivory tower", lost in her ignorance of life and the world while writing (undoubtedly beautifully) about love, longings, sadness and partings, and readers thus grow weary of her after the first few poems already. They are sad, pessimistic poems. Sick.

It is only in the closing pieces that the poet understands what tasks face poetry today. [...] The atmosphere and subject matter shift. The poet starts taking an interest in social matters, current affairs and judging the past. Indeed, she remains unable to overcome a degree of pessimism and melancholia until the very last page, meaning that she sometimes explores certain issues quite clumsily. Nevertheless, the breakthrough comes. The poet has opened her eyes.²⁵¹

A similar assessment could have applied to the majority of poetry collections assessed by GUKPPiW during this period. There is nothing to indicate the originality of Buczkówna's poetry, while the rather generalized assessment follows a pre-established pattern: the pessimistic, elite poet experiences a breakthrough and starts to turn, albeit clumsily, towards social issues. Vocabulary drawn from propagandistic journalism was thus applied, hence the references to 'sick poetry' and being 'stuck in her "ivory tower"' before attempting to 'overcome [...] pessimism', making a 'breakthrough' and 'open[ing] her eyes'.

Another case where a vulgar journalistic style was employed was in a review of a new edition of Ehrenburg's *Dzień wtóry* (*The Second Day*) from December 1955. It includes a comparison to Ważyk's *Poemat dla dorosłych*, with the censor referring to current discussions in the press and thus establishing extra-textual context.

It would seem that this book would offer an essential companion piece to the discussion of Ważyk's poem, as it would enable understanding of the processes taking place at such a construction site, making clear their full complexity. The analogies between the

250 *Słownik terminów literackich*, ed. by Janusz Sławiński, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1989, p. 492.

251 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/41, pp. 375–376.

situation in Nowa Huta and in Kuznetsk are significant, thus a new edition of this work would be highly valuable.²⁵²

My analysis of the GUKPPiW archival record suggests that it is necessary to counter the claims suggesting that censors in communist Poland generally had low-level language skills. Many of their statements in fact indicate the influence of critical discourse, which is something that requires great skill. How did censors develop such advanced ways of thinking and writing about texts? The works that provided the basis for these more sophisticated analyses formed a fairly homogeneous group. They were, by and large, contemporary works that required the closest of readings and they were allocated to the most skilful censors. Indeed, being employed at the Department of Non-Periodical Publications was already seen as a promotion as it was officials with the greatest professional experience who read contemporary literature alongside Polish and foreign classics, likewise as part of their duties, who were allocated to this section. This, therefore, enabled them to produce the numerous intertextual connections, comparative readings and even attempts at producing syntheses that formed part of their reviews.

What follows are just some of the more notable assessments. Mieczysław Fleszar's positive review of Stanisław Piętak's short novel *Burzliwa pora* (A stormy time), dated 18 February 1950, could easily have formed part of a comparative reading of the work of Piętak and Andrzejewski.

The communism presented here exists only on paper, just as the contemporary realities of the protagonists of Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* exists only on paper. Were we to compare Piętak's story to another famous work, then the closest analogy would be Andrzejewski's *Lad serca* – albeit that Andrzejewski is more talented. Still, what the two authors have in common is the discrepancy between the genuine and engaging personal dramas of the protagonists, on the one hand, and the unconvincing social setting for the events.²⁵³

It would seem that Andrzejewski must have been popular among censorship officials because they referred to his works so often. In January 1956, censor Papiernik reviewed Brandys' collection of short stories *Czerwona czapecka* (The red cap) and made the following observation:

I would consider *Obrona Granady* (The Defence of Granada) to be the best thing that Brandys has written in the last few years and it constitutes the best and fullest contribution to discussions relating to the development of our art. Brandys' short story does not display any regret or bitterness nor, therefore, any of the unnecessary pessimism and

252 AAN, GUKPPiW, 385, teczka 31/119, p. 990.

253 AAN, GUKPPiW, 154, teczka 31/135, p. 75.

unpleasant bitterness of, for example, some of Andrzejewski's work. Brandys adopts the position of a Party writer who seeks to offer an objective depiction of the current state of development of our artistic production and it is he who is probably the first to attempt to find the source of the mistakes that have been made.²⁵⁴

Beyond the assessment of Andrzejewski's prose, what becomes evident here is the attempt to summarize and describe Brandys' development as a writer. The review also points towards the 'thaw' as a key strand of debates, with the reviewer differentiating 'malicious' and 'objective' contributions.

Finally, let us refer to a review that also constructs comparisons, a text that I have already mentioned in this study. In 1955, Tadeusz Różewicz's volume *Opadły liście z drzew*, which had long been held back by censors, was submitted for assessment. Comrade Rutkowski's review was generous towards the author, awarding the volume the highest praise. He stated that 'no one has come close to matching this description of those days' as presented in this 'cycle of **unforgettable** short stories' (emphasis KB). In conclusion, the censor compared Różewicz and Borowski's writing, noting that

Różewicz's prose, his creative method, is comparable only to Borowski's during the period of his camp stories. It could be argued that none of our contemporary writers has been as courageous, assertive and inventive as Różewicz in writing about the same themes.²⁵⁵

Censors' reviews employing the 'high' journalistic style often came to recall literary criticism in many respects. As Janusz Sławiński has argued, the activities of GUKPPiW employees reflected the following aspects of literary criticism: they described the extent to which intentions were fulfilled; they commented on the ideals that desirable literature would fulfil and the negative ideals presented in rejected works of literature.²⁵⁶ The issue might be understood more clearly if we can classify the censor's review as a genre. The most obvious way of approaching this is to examine how the classical type of review, not censors' reviews, have been classified. The aim here, however, is not to produce a classification but rather to reveal the basic structural traits of such texts and the various pragmatic complications they entailed.²⁵⁷

254 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/126, pp. 456–457.

255 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/126, p. 164.

256 Janusz Sławiński, *Krytyka literacka jako przedmiot badań historycznoliterackich*, in: *Badania nad krytyką literacką*, ed. by Janusz Sławiński, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1974, pp. 7–25.

257 M. Głowiński, p. 226.

Słownik terminów literackich (The dictionary of literary terms) describes a review as a discussion of a work published in the press or appearing in other mass media.²⁵⁸ *Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie* (The encyclopaedia of press studies) states that a review is

a discursive report, critical analysis or assessment of books, theatre performances, exhibitions, concerts and other current artistic events. [...] It serves empirical-valorizing, popularizing-propagandistic, educational, aspirational, and artistic-programmatic purposes. Depending on the aims of the particular publication and its readership, a review can take the form of a concise, factual report on a work, while a review essay offers a more subjective perspective that is light in tone or, alternatively, it can offer a deeper analytical critical sketch. [...] In contrast to reports, reviews are subjective in their interpretive-valorizing approach given their focus on current phenomena and works; they formulate their opinions and assessments, using them towards ideological and popularizing goals.²⁵⁹

In a much newer publication, *Słownik terminologii medialnej* (Dictionary of media terminology), reviews are defined as discussions and/or assessments of artistic, scientific or other publications that resemble an academic (or peer) review, but are less in-depth and professional as they operate with simpler critical apparatus and more general assessments, although this does not free the author from having to respect objectivity and accuracy.²⁶⁰

Censors' reviews generally fit within the framework of such descriptions. They have much in common with reviews generally, including the fact that they offer critical, subjective analysis and assessment of current artistic phenomena (or less current when it comes to new editions of older works). Censors' reviews, like all reviews, serve several purposes: empirical-valorizing, propagandistic, educational and aspirational.

The standard form that censors used to write their reviews included the following recommendation: 'reviewers should, among other things, address the following issues: 1) the theme and subject matter of the book; 2) the ideological and social-educational significance of the book.' Older versions of the form also called for a description of 'the political, social and moral resonance' and its 'artistic worth'. Beneath one review, a superior assessed the censor's review,

258 *Słownik terminów literackich*, ed. by Janusz. Sławiński, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1992, p. 424.

259 *Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie*, ed. by Julian Maślanka, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1976, p. 209.

260 *Słownik terminologii medialnej*, ed. by Walery Pisarek, Kraków: Universitas, 2006, p. 181.

noting that 'I consider this a good review. It is brief yet rich and describes 1) the author's position on the question at hand; 2) the reviewer's position on the value of the publication.' It can thus be argued that what GUKPPIW valued above all was the valorizing and educational aspects of censors' reviews.

The encyclopaedia definition of reviews cited above addressed the question of the relationship between the aims of a review and the readership of the publication it appeared in. A crucial question emerges at this point, namely: who were the potential readers of censors' reviews? We can rule out the readers of the works being assessed, as well as their authors whose official and unofficial statements have often expressed surprise at the verdicts issued by censors and the oblique nature of the censors' work.²⁶¹ The review itself was never seen by the editors who submitted a work for assessment; they were merely informed of the decision and were given access to a list of interventions. It is worth repeating that it was the publishers rather than the authors who were addressed by GUKPPIW.

In all likelihood, it seems that the only readers of a review were censors in other offices and superiors, as well as Party officials on occasion. Stanisław A. Kondek notes that censors' assessments of books were forwarded on to the Central Committee's departments of culture and of press and publications. Today they form part of the archival collections of the PZPR.²⁶² Many documents, meanwhile, include notes from superiors that provide insight into the second potential group of readers. This specific recipient also features virtually, being reflected in the way the narrative is formed. To adapt Małgorzata Czermińska's concept, it could be argued that it was a case of two people on the same side talking about an outsider.²⁶³ This was the source of a certain nonchalance characterizing the way works were described, indicative of unwillingness to recognize the value of a work and identify with it. As senders, censors also tended to avoid employing complex strategies aimed at convincing recipients to accept particular ideas and views. Both sender and recipient, it was assumed, shared the same value system, after all.²⁶⁴

261 See, for example, Jan. Józef. Szczepański at the nineteenth ZLP (Polish Writers' Association) Conference in 1975, cited in: Andrzej Krajewski, *Między współpracą a oporem. Twórcy kultury wobec systemu politycznego PRL (1975–1980)*, Warszawa: Trio, 2004, p. 154.

262 Stanisław A. Kondek, p. 144.

263 Małgorzata Czermińska, "Punkt widzenia" jako kategoria antropologiczna i narracyjna w prozie niefikcyjnej, *Teksty Drugie*, vol. 2–3, 2003, pp. 11–27.

264 For more on this subject, see: Paweł Nowak, p. 26.

What, then, were the main differences between the two kinds of reviews described here? Beyond the fact that one type was published openly and the other was not, it was clear that there was no logical need for censors' reviews to engage in popularization and promotion of the works assessed, nor was there any need for artistic-programmatic statements in them. Instead, what was specific about them was their tendency towards unequivocal verdicts.

Those censors' reviews that did attempt more ambitious analyses of particular texts provide researchers with particularly interesting sources. Such reviews, firstly, created a specific hierarchy of authors and texts, with each work assessed positioned within it. This hierarchy, it should be added, fluctuated. Secondly, such reviews offer a particular synthesis of the development of contemporary Polish writing. Publications from the time were unable to offer anything similar, since they were directly involved in constructing the literary world.

Did censors employ their own particular set of concepts in their reviews, or did they draw on existing terms? Of course, the specific styles employed (official, academic and journalistic) all came with particular terminologies. It thus seems that the majority of concepts appearing in the censors' statements analysed in my study had been adopted from elsewhere. The most original contributions in terms of terminology seem to relate to descriptions specific to the work of the censorship office. Emblematic of this are the euphemisms *ingerować* (to intervene), *wyingerować* and *wyingerowany* (cut or adjust, as verb and adjective, respectively), *zapis* (ban or blacklist) and *recenzja* (review, i.e. censor's assessment). These familiar terms were set in a new context of signification to hide the genuinely threatening intent.

I have already mentioned the fact that the goal of censors' statements was valorizing. It is thus worth examining more closely the ways in which they constructed their judgements, including the use of emotional language. A few particularly explicit statements of opinion by censors have provided illustrations in my study already. These were far from the only examples, since such statements were fairly common, even if the majority of reviews were more balanced. If, beyond offering a summary of the content of a work, the main objectives of a censors' review were, firstly, to describe the ideals embodied in the desired form of literature, and, secondly, to outline the negative ideals of undesirable works, then it is possible to analyse the means employed in reviews to express judgement. We can also draw insight from the language employed in political propaganda.²⁶⁵

265 See: Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Janina Frasz and Beata Ociełka, *Teoria i praktyka propagandy*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1999.

GUKPPiW officials often issued positive assessments in many of their summaries, highlighting the progressive and rational aspects of texts, rather than focussing on their aesthetic value. This is how the censor Renata Światycka described Gałczyński's collection *Ślubne obrączki* (Wedding rings) in 1949:

This short volume contains 39 poems that are, almost without exception, perfect. [...] It should be noted that *in accordance with his own call for "poetry for the masses", the author has created simple, powerful and suggestive poems, poems that are capable of speaking to ordinary people.*²⁶⁶

This statement seems particularly superficial when placed alongside Gałczyński's poetry, yet it is also clearly an attempt to place the work within one of the prevailing categories of the socialist-realist era. As has already been made clear in this study, Gałczyński caused the censors significant difficulties. There was an obligation to publish him, yet writing positive reviews was challenging. Hence the attempts to underscore the simplicity, accessibility and suggestiveness of the works, as these were highly valued traits that could indeed be traced in his works (even if, allowing for a degree of goodwill, 'powerful' and 'suggestive' are adjectives that could apply to the majority of literary works).

Let us again draw on the example of assessments of Marek Hłasko's works. In May 1956, the censor agreed to publish *Pierwszy krok w chmurach* (A first step in the clouds), a collection of his short stories, without any cuts. The review stands out because of the moderation and quality of its language. Unusually for the Stalinist era, the censor also addressed the quality and values of the work. I will cite here only those passages that contain emotional language:

Hłasko's prose is an undoubtedly **outstanding contribution** to contemporary literature. He is a writer whose debut immediately secured his **significant reputation** among readers without enjoying critical acclaim. [...] The premise of the majority of the stories is something apparently insignificant – a mother's dream of having a house, a letter, a window – trivial things that provide the context for the **creative associations** with important aspects of existence. [...] Hłasko's stories are difficult to summarize according to the issues addressed precisely because it is difficult to find any epic realities in them as they instead feature an often **quite surprising hierarchical ordering of problems**. [...] What he manages to do, however, (and this is his great achievement) is to **overcome the idealizing tendencies of much of the prose that is celebrated today.**²⁶⁷ (emphasis KB)

The loaded language in this case does not refer to the progressiveness of the text (i.e. its content) but rather to the reception of Hłasko's novels and their aesthetic

266 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145,teczka 31/24, p. 250.

267 AAN, GUKPPiW, 424,teczka 31/36, p. 140.

value. The focus is placed on various aspects, with the positive views on Hłasko contrasting with the critique of 'idealization', or the overly positive opinions of socialist-realist works. This is quite obviously a thaw-era review, written during the period of most significant liberalization at the censorship office. It also offers clear evidence undermining the rather homogenizing view that censors were stupid and employed a limited vocabulary.

The negative vocabulary employed in censors' statements usually referred to several spheres: the author, his or her poetics, and the subject matter of the text, including its references to reality. Drawing on findings from propaganda studies it is worth restating that

linguistic violence employs sharp, cutting and often offensive or vulgar terms. The effectiveness of an attack is not measured simply by its effectiveness in overcoming an opponent (another person or institution) or forcing them into submission, but rather in the responses of all those who receive the malicious message. The attacker is mainly counting on the fact that the greatest number of people will ultimately share his or her view that the object under attack deserves condemnation or, at the very least, should be considered suspect.²⁶⁸

A particular paradox emerges from the fact that censors' reports were secret and did not have external recipients. An official who attacked an author or work could seek to convince only superiors of the legitimacy of their verdict, yet superiors often took decisions regardless of the content of summaries. Filling a review with loaded language was thus largely intended to signal the censors' 'correct' ideological stance. In light of this, such language can be treated as mere convention.

In the above-mentioned review of Mieczysława Buczkówna's poems, there are numerous offensive epithets relating to the author – that she was 'locked in her ivory tower' (suggesting isolation from society), 'lost in her ignorance of life and the world' (lacking empirical competence), and 'approached issues clumsily' (suggesting she was unskilled). The author of the religious brochure, mentioned above, earned himself the patronising epithet 'goodhearted', suggesting that he lacked rational knowledge and was instead guided simply by good intentions.

The poetics of a work submitted for assessment would ideally be as clear and simple as possible, thus avoiding the problem of overshadowing the content. Censors' common complaint that a work was incomprehensible was often followed by other criticisms, including that of formalism (a term applied to any innovation and experimentation), inaccessibility for the masses, and naturalism

268 Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Janina Frasz and Beata Ociepka, *Teoria i praktyka propagandy*, op. cit., p. 95.

(phrased in one case as 'a bunch of naturalist orchids'). Modernist and avant-garde influences were judged particularly harshly. The very concepts 'formalism', 'naturalism', 'modernist' and 'avant-garde' functioned as pejorative terms. There were also other terms and phrases that revealed their negative meaning only in particular contexts:

the young writer employs strange and dangerous **sublime forms** (Bohdan Czeszko's *Początek edukacji* – Initiation of education), [...] the book ends in **accord while completely lacking any clearer perspective** (Wilhelm Mach's *Rdza* – Rust), [...] the **form of the poem imitates the Young Poland movement** and it is clear that the author has read a lot of Wyspiański which is something that, as we know, cannot go unpunished. (emphasis KB)

This provides a clear illustration of the interesting phenomenon whereby the complexities of unacceptable poetics are described using seemingly neutral terms that in fact function pejoratively.

The subject matter of a text seems fairly easy to criticize. It is enough for it to relate to the pre-war period or previous social order. Detachment from contemporary reality or lacking engagement was condemned, hence the aggressive terms applied in the review of Stanisław Dygat's *Pożegnania*, cited above.

It is a farewell to the old world of **chimerical mannerisms and stylized decadence**; it is a farewell to the **prostitution of the grand salons and to lordly foolishness** on a grandiose scale. The plot is set in the pre-war period among the milieu of coffeehouse **snobs** and poets, among the **playboys, posers, dandies, show-offs, charlatans, and other cretins**. (Emphasis KB)

Many of the negative connotations are drawn from terms that regularly featured in reviews of works published before 1939, particular avant-garde texts.

It is also worth pointing out that excessive censorship of older works stemmed from the fact that those in power had observed a disturbing phenomenon, namely that such works were read for their allusions.* [* Prof. Janusz Maciejewski drew attention to this fact at the conference *Umysły zniewolone. Literatura pod presją* (Captive minds. Literature under pressure), which was organized by the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Literary Studies in Konstancin-Obory, 27–29 May 2009.] This explains why classics were judged by contemporary standards and read through the prism of contemporary issues, thus completely ignoring the historical context in which a work was produced. In a secondary review of Witkacy's dramas from 14 December 1950, for example, it was stated that

the volume contains two stage plays written using language that recalls the **ramblings of someone who is seriously ill and delirious** – [...] *W małym dworku* [*The Little Manor*

House] is, in a way, a comedy of manners. The plot is **macabre and nonsensical** – [...] Nevertheless, this play is better and more realistic than the social commentary offered by *Szewcy* [*The Shoemakers*]. In this play, [...] the protagonists speak a language that is a mixture of **nebulous philosophy and vulgar ramblings**. The entire play represents a **strange mixture of unhealthy eroticism, decadence, and nebulous views** – all served up in a stew of **gloomy pessimism and macabre**. It might be possible to find at least some positive intentions in both plays, but the way in which they have been written is **incomprehensible and nonsensical** for a normal, mentally stable reader – and this in itself would be enough to disqualify the volume. Regardless of the assurances of the author of the postscript that these are merely ‘human comedies’, both plays create the impression that they were written by **a troubled individual and that they are aimed at mentally ill people**. [...] There are 1564 copies of the volume remaining, thus distributing them via Dom Książki should not do any harm. It seems strange that similar works were published in 1948 already.²⁶⁹ (emphasis KB)

The accumulation of terms undermining the value of the text is indicative of the extent of the censorship official’s displeasure. He not only doubts the mental wellbeing of the author (as well as potential readers), but also calls into question the poetics and content. Such harsh assessments were most common during the Stalinist era, with these reviews also offering the clearest example of a shift away from the high journalistic register as propagandistic language became increasingly common.

The issue of censors drawing on propagandistic statements deserves more attention. Experts on the subject employ the following categories: persuasiveness (explicit and implicit), convincing the recipient that the sender is correct, selection of information, biased selection of information, manipulation, loaded language, creating an image of an enemy and reference to the widespread nature of an opinion.²⁷⁰ This set of categories can certainly be employed in examining the language of GUKPPiW employees. However, one significant difference is in the reach of their statements and, thus, in their intended audience. The elite and inaccessible nature of censors’ reviews suggests that they served a different role to the one that Janusz Sławiński identified as the core of propagandistic utterances, namely to ‘disseminate and explain (using the spoken and written word) ideas, views and doctrines in order to ensure that they gain the **broadest possible ranks of followers and supporters**’²⁷¹ (emphasis KB). While it did indeed draw

269 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145,teczka 31/26, pp. 839–840.

270 Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, et al., op. cit., p. 91.

271 *Słownik terminów literackich*, op. cit. 1989, p. 401.

on the arsenal of propagandistic language, censors' discourse was not a propagandistic utterance in the strictest sense.

Still, even if individual utterances by censorship officials did not meet all the criteria of propaganda, the sum of the activities of GUKPPiW could be defined as propaganda. It was the censorship office that shaped (likewise indirectly through the pens of editors and authors themselves) the nature of communications that reached recipients; it was the censorship office that was in charge of the selection process and making authoritative choices as to which statements would reach the broad masses of readers. Rather than producing propaganda through their statements, it was the censors' actions that thus had a propagandistic *effect*.²⁷²

It is worth asking how much room for interpretation did censors' conclusions leave? So, how generally applicable were they? A large number of the reviews examined here contain a significant degree of generality before being followed, quite unexpectedly, by unequivocal verdicts. There is no need to add that very often this verdict was not based sufficiently on what was contained in the summaries and assessments of the particular works. It should not be forgotten that the recipients of censors' reviews were their superiors and, occasionally, party functionaries, who did not treat the findings as binding, as my archival research shows. There are plenty of cases where two or three extremely negative reviews were overlooked and a work was published without any changes. The opposite was also true, with a superior's view that a work should be shelved overriding the content of positive reviews. It could thus seem that censors wrote their reviews as if commissioned to satisfy top-down expectations. Officially, tenuousness and generalization was criticized, but in practice it was safer to use clichéd phrases in order to meet what was demanded by fluctuating directives.

The GUKPPiW archival collection also features highly detailed reviews that offer insight into each chapter or poem in a particular publication. Such reviews cannot be accused of generalizing; on the contrary, their excessive scrupulousness instead tended either towards naïve reproductions of the works at hand or towards overly critical assessments. One reviewer, Renata Światycka, was known for her unsurpassed negativity towards all the texts she reviewed but she was also very detailed in her approach. She invariably proposed numerous interventions

272 In accordance with the classification proposed by the authors of *Teoria i praktyka propagandy* (The theory and practice of propaganda), censorship in People's Poland can be seen as a mode of political, internal, vertical, supplementary and indirect propaganda. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, et al. op. cit., pp. 29–45.

that superiors most often rejected. Interestingly, I never saw her name mentioned on lists of awards for employees.

It is also worth addressing both the issue of the function of censors' reviews as well as the nature of relations between the activities of critics and censors. It is necessary to highlight not only particular formal aspects of reviews, such as their language, style and genre, but also to present the surrounding context.

It is generally accepted that censors' reviews were, overall, more numerous than those written by professional critics. Both forms were produced in parallel throughout the existence of communist Poland.²⁷³ It is also a well-known fact that only those works that had successfully made their way through the censorship process could be reviewed in the press. Furthermore, reviews in the press were assessed by censors and also faced cuts or even being shelved. One such example relates to a special edition of the journal *Twórczość* from 1957 that was dedicated to French literature. The interventions affected not only the literary works themselves, but also the discussions of them in accompanying essays as they went beyond French literature and touched upon the social and political situation in the country, too.²⁷⁴ In the archival collection titled 'Documentation on books 1954–1955' (a misleading title, since it relates to interventions in the press) a statement from Jerzy Andrzejewski, which came up during a discussion with him, is reproduced. His positive view of Ważyk's *Poemat dla dorosłych* and his polemic against claims that the thaw-era epic poem was of supposedly anti-party nature were both cut.

Literary criticism, as Janusz Sławiński states, shapes the public's knowledge, taste and abilities. The activities of GUKPPiW absolutely met these criteria, at least in principle. Both literary criticism and institutional censorship can be considered part of the 'social pedagogy' that was used to legitimize the state's cultural policy and actions with respect to literature.²⁷⁵ In contrast to critics, who read and discussed only those texts that suited their pre-existing ideas of what was worth interpreting, censors had to read everything. Their sizeable output was thus utilitarian, but also highly heterogeneous. Censors used the language of critics but modified it for their specific genre as their activities were broader in scope.

273 Tadeusz Drewnowski, p. 19.

274 AAN, GUKPPiW, 512,teczka 39/31, not paginated.

275 Janusz Sławiński, *Krytyka literacka jako przedmiot badań historycznoliterackich*, in: *Badania nad krytyką literacką*, ed. by Janusz Sławiński, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1984, pp. 7–25.

If each statement by a critic, as experts in the field claim, was indeed based on the 'principle of double dialogue' – involving the person being written about and the intended readers²⁷⁶ – then the autonomy of expression enjoyed by GUKPPiW officials must have been greater. Entering into relations with readers of a book approved for publication, with the particular work and with potential readers of the review itself (i.e. superiors), would thus mean creating a reality of the third order.

It is worth underscoring that censorship performed explicitly repressive functions. Literary criticism, meanwhile, could offer only indirect influence by assessing a work after it had appeared. Critics' opinions proved dynamic while their methods of persuasion and styles of interpretation remained stable;²⁷⁷ the opposite was true in the case of censors. Their assessment styles changed but their opinions proved permanent as they were etched forever in published works that had been cut or shelved.

7 A few words on censors in communist Poland: Towards a portrait

Researchers have established that the personnel records of the censorship office were destroyed as the institution was being closed down. Thus, there are no details available on the level of censors' education, their earnings, career paths, or even their names. However, the history of the activities, personalities, and fate of censorship office employees can be recreated indirectly using information scattered among other significant data. The glosses and anecdotes that were often an unintended side-effect of their work supplement the image of GUKPPiW that can be recreated from such sources. This can often give an indication of the reasons for the imprecision and inconsistency of the censorship authorities' activities.

276 Michał Szulczewski, *Publicystyka. Problemy teorii i praktyki*, Warszawa 1976, s. 151.

This was discussed earlier, albeit using different terminology, by Janusz Sławiński, *Funkcje krytyki literackiej*, in: *Dzieło, język, tradycja*, Warszawa: PWN, 1974, p. 175.

277 Krzysztof Dybciak, *Problemy interpretacji tekstu krytycznego*, in: *Zagadnienia literaturoznawczej interpretacji. Studia*, ed. by Janusz Sławiński and Jerzy Świąch, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1979, p. 203.

Working conditions

Based on information contained in the minutes of national-level meetings and congresses, it can be established that during the first years of the censorship office's existence, conditions were very challenging.²⁷⁸ The minutes of the Congress of Voivodeship and Municipal-level Censorship Offices on 23–25 May 1945 include detailed notes on the formation of regional offices. They also include descriptions of the difficulties involved in acquiring and renovating offices, including complaints regarding the lack of telephones, transport and shoes for censors, as well as a shortage of straw for mattresses in guestrooms.* [* The report also includes information regarding the reconstruction of cultural life in particular regions, with information available on Lublin, Kielce, Rzeszów, Białystok, Warsaw, Katowice, Łódź and Kraków, as well as the Pomeranian voivodeship. These materials deserve separate attention.]

It is well-known that censors covered long distances on foot between offices as they conducted their inspections (hence the need for shoes!) and attended training offered by other offices (hence the mention of guestrooms). There is a record of a female employee complaining that she was not allocated a room during training in Warsaw, meaning that she had to seek accommodation with relatives.

All large cities experienced problems with providing accommodation. As the head of the Krakow office stated in one document, 'accepting that employees must out of necessity reside in the office is not conducive to a healthy working discipline; instead it weakens it and means a domestic atmosphere has emerged.'²⁷⁹ Employees controlling the daily press worked night shifts. They thus received an additional payment for cigarettes, something quite unimaginable today. Health and safety was certainly not GUKPPiW's strong point. The all-day conference of the heads of voivodeship offices in December 1949 ended after 22:30 with the participants then expected to return to their particular places of residence.²⁸⁰

As data from 1952 suggests, the average GUKPPiW employee read between 4500 and 5500 pages of typescript monthly. Given they were also expected to analyse and describe the material in reviews, this was hardly a small amount of reading material. A report from the Krakow office reveals that the team there managed to pass judgement on as many as 86 non-periodical publications. This is indicative not only of the city's lively publishing industry but also of the large

278 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/1.

279 AAN, GUKPPiW, 422,teczka 197/9, p. 156.

280 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/4, p. 365.

workload that censors faced.²⁸¹ It is thus hardly surprising that the employees complained when they realized that a colleague who had been sacked for disciplinary reasons immediately found a new job that saw his salary trebled.

Issue 1/1955 of the Informational-Instructional Bulletin, dedicated in its entirety to marking the tenth anniversary of the existence of GUKPPIW (its official founding date was given as 19 January 1945),²⁸² contains interesting recollections from censors relating to the early years of their work. Published as 'Employee statements',²⁸³ they were submitted to the Bulletin after the editorial board issued a call for contributions to mark the jubilee. Some were highly clichéd and schematic, while others were clearly written with great skill. They not only supplement the history of the censorship office but also offer insight more broadly into the reconstruction of cultural life in post-war Poland. As Zofia Figlewska wrote:

My time at [GUKPPIW] covers a significant portion of my life. I can thus say without any hint of exaltation or sentimentality that the Office raised me. I completed my secondary education here and graduated from university. I, too, have left the era of political illiteracy far behind. I have, of course, worked hard on improving myself and it was at times very difficult for me. My first review as a censor – of Kataev's *Samotny biały żagiel* (*Lonely White Sail*) which is a charming work and hardly challenging to assess – took me nearly half a day to write as I was so emotional and stressed. I had over four years' experience in my job before I was given my first book to review.²⁸⁴

Officials recalled the friendly and sincere relations that characterized the first years at the censorship office, as well as the difficult conditions they experienced at the initial headquarters in Warsaw's Praga district and then at 31 Koszykowa Street.²⁸⁵ Recalling her experiences in 1945, the censor Regina Stefańska wrote:

Working conditions differed greatly from those we enjoy today. There were no fixed working hours. During those first years we worked as many hours as were necessary – ten, twelve hours or more, with the censors working more than anyone. It would be fair to say that they worked day and night. During that period, the censorship office was more than a place of work. It was also a home. Many employees lived there and the canteen provided three meals a day. Every nook and cranny was occupied, even the kitchenettes and bathrooms.²⁸⁶

281 AAN, GUKPPIW, 422, teczka 197/9.

282 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420, teczka 165/4.

283 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420, teczka 165/4, pp. 4–66.

284 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420, teczka 165/4, p. 14.

285 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420, teczka 165/4, p. 14.

286 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420, teczka 165/4, pp. 19–20.

Władysława Zawistowska's contribution reflects the hierarchical nature of the censorship office. In theory, each of its departments enjoyed equal status. But, as other sources make clear, work in the sections dealing with flyers, the press, and children's literature was less respected. Tomasz Strzyżewski, an employee of the Krakow voivodeship censorship office who fled to Sweden in 1977, claimed, half-jokingly, that the bottom rung of the hierarchy was occupied by 'the censor editing *Miś*, a children's magazine.'²⁸⁷ Another employee, meanwhile, provides an image of the Non-Periodical Department suggesting that it was the pinnacle of a censor's career.

After several months working in the Radio and Press Department, I was offered a transfer to the Department of Non-Periodical Publications. As someone who was in favour of progress and innovation, I accepted the offer. As I recall my first encounters with the intelligent intellectuals from our Department, I found it hard to express myself, even though I am not generally someone who lacks confidence or a common touch with people. I experienced moments of doubt. I sometimes wondered if I would ever be capable of matching the way they juggled words and whether my innate sense of humour might fail me.²⁸⁸

Beyond the descriptions of their own career paths, the films also include more general reflections relating to the principles behind their work and the particular sense of calling that attracted them to it. Those contributing their recollections thus spoke, for example, of the 'creative unease' that accompanied their work as censors, as well as the need to 'treat clients sincerely.'²⁸⁹ Many GUKPPiW employees also recalled the lack of training offered in the early years, meaning that they cut works according to their instincts. Leon Jasiewicz stated directly that 'during the initial period of my time at the Office, the most significant and crucial factor ensuring good work as a censor was having a good nose for things. A sensitive, simple censor's nose.'²⁹⁰ Knowing that the fate of Polish literature was decided by such an imprecise instrument means that this rather comical statement in fact carries something of a threatening undertone.

There is no shortage of irony in these recollections; 'ordinary' people are capable of reading only that which is written, wrote one, while censors can also read what is not there.²⁹¹

287 Paweł Misior, *Ja, Tomasz Strzyżewski. O cenzurze i cenzorach*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Leo Bonnet, 1997, p. 34.

288 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 44.

289 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 37.

290 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 23.

291 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, pp. 27–28.

Social background and education

Traces of personnel data are scattered across many documents. Letters bearing the surnames of censors are included in the archival collections relating to the newspaper *Gazeta Ludowa* in 1945²⁹² and 1946–1947.²⁹³ The Informational-Instructional Bulletin includes lists of people (77 in total) who were given awards to mark the censorship office's tenth anniversary.²⁹⁴

Many documents also include officials' home addresses. The introduction to one review even includes a short biography of the censor: after 1945, she was sent to work at the Polish embassy in Paris and then in Rome, where she edited a communist newspaper. Another official recalled nostalgically in her description of Maria Dąbrowska's *Uśmiech dzieciństwa* that the work offered an image 'of a childhood that differed to mine as it showed the prosperity of a wealthy land-owning family'.

The archival materials from the Ministry of Culture and Art include information on censor's previous occupations. As one source states, 'here too I have the impression that we will have to appeal to the 'terrible' editor at the Main Office Wida to reach into his memory and recall the good old days when he was a journalist himself'.²⁹⁵

As the minutes of the national congress in 1951 show, even students of the Catholic University in Lublin (KUL) worked as censors.²⁹⁶ Comrade Pietrzak was an employee of another office while also working in parallel as an assistant lecturer at the university. Well-educated censors were not a rarity at GUKPPiW. By 1959, all censors in Krakow had a degree. The reviews produced by the Łódź censor Irena Weinfeld were of particularly high quality. Another employee of that office signed off as Dr. Kaniowa. There is no information on what field her degree was in, but research suggests that she was always given the most controversial texts. For example, when *Wichrowe wzgórza* (Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*) received a scathing review, she was summoned to write a review that would save a classic novel from being shelved. Kaniowa was also a regular reviewer of Tadeusz Różewicz's poetry, which had a reputation for being incomprehensible

292 AAN, GUKPPiW, I1.

293 AAN, GUKPPiW, I3.

294 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, pp. 334–335.

295 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Twórczości Literackiej, sygn. 487, p. 26.

296 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/5, p. 51.

and hermetic. In 1949, she described the collection *Pięć poematów* (Five epic poems) thus:

This small collection comprises of two parts: I – *Wiersze* (poems), II – *Pięć poematów* (Five epic poems). The poems that feature progressive ideology either resound with the bestiality of the Nazis or in their complex symbolism express the destruction of the world and the might of the working class who have entered history's stage – the poet's willingness to go arm-in-arm with the working world. Of the five epics, the best, or at least the most comprehensible, is the poem *Gwiazda proletariatu* (Star of the proletariat), which is dedicated to General Walter. Other epics offer a genuine indication of the poet's original talent, although their modernist form and challenging symbolism make this poetry largely inaccessible or perhaps completely incomprehensible to even an intelligent reader.²⁹⁷

It was ultimately Jerzy Borejsza himself who approved publication in this case.

We can also establish that in the 1940s and 1950s, censors read works in foreign languages and offered quite lucid reviews of textbooks for learning foreign languages, while also commenting on the quality of translations. The descriptive reports of the Department for Research on Publishing (Wydział Badania Ruchu Wydawniczego) are likewise highly insightful, expressing interesting arguments while being written in correct Polish.

Alongside such materials, there are also texts suggesting that some censors had a low level of education and thus lacked basic argumentation skills and linguistic abilities. One employee of the voivodeship censorship office in Białystok was ordered to attend secondary school for working adults. The discussions at the national congresses suggest that the intention was for censors to have a 'certain level of education', although what was deemed more important was for them to have the necessary ideological training. In 1950, GUKPPIW employed 467 people, with the office calling for a further 513 posts to be created. However, it proved impossible to find employees with the requisite qualifications. The suitable 'level of education' expected of censors was never defined, meaning that great variations in the level of qualifications and intelligence were permitted.

In the minutes from a national-level meeting held on 17 December 1954 to assess the quality of political-organizational work at GUKPPIW during the campaign for the elections to national councils, one of the delegates outlined an ambitious plan: 'if we are able to recruit people with master's and doctoral degrees, then we will be able to guarantee the quality of our work. But this is a long-term issue – for the next 15 years'. Archival materials indicate that in 1948,

297 AAN, GUKPPIW, 145,teczka 31/24, p. 455.

only around 15 % of employees at the censorship office had a degree. Aleksander Pawlicki, meanwhile, writes that from 1956 employees' qualifications gradually increased, meaning that by 1970 some 80 % were university graduates.²⁹⁸ The improvement was thus significant, although the predictions regarding increasing levels of qualifications were not fully realized. Nevertheless, it is clear that censors with low levels of education were employed in the hope that they would raise their standards as GUKPPIW developed.

Errors and oversights

Much has been made of the many spelling mistakes littering reviews. In issue 7/8 of the Informational-Instructional Bulletin even features the rather biting advice: 'Comrades, please do consult spelling dictionaries'. Some of the reviews even feature corrections (perhaps by superiors or other censors) of spelling mistakes and underlined stylistic issues. A rather humorous note features on a copy of Stefan Turcki's *Wojna z babami* (The war against countrywomen), asking 'Who made so many spelling cock-ups?'

Alongside spelling mistakes, there are also errors resulting from ignorance or, in some cases, haste. Thus one review speaks of *Balladyna górnicza* rather than *Ballada górnicza* (rather than 'A miners' ballad' it came out as reference to Słowacki's *Balladyna*), with the mistake crossed out by another GUKPPIW employee; another wrote of 'Marxist dietetics' rather than 'dialectics'; the first part of the review form on *Antologia walki o pokój* (An Anthology of the struggle for peace) instead wrote of an anthology of war and peace; a merciful reader corrected the title of Narcyza Żmichowska's novel *Poganka* (*The Heathen*) after it was called *Pogadanka* (A talk); one censor provided a reference to Herod's (*sic!*) *Histories* and someone else suggested that *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* was originally written in English.

Striking levels of ignorance sometimes influenced censors' decisions as to whether a work should appear in print or not. The archival materials on *Czytelnik* relating to 1950 feature a rather unbelievable decision to ban a work. Censor K. Wołkowicz was very annoyed as he read the short story *The Duel* by the nineteenth-century Russian classic author, Alexander Kuprin.

The officers' wives are a bunch of erotically frustrated bird-brained females. [...] A few decades ago, Kuprin's work might have moved the stagnant bourgeoisie and aroused the "lionesses of the salons" by creating little shudders of tiny scandal and crypto-eroticism.

298 Aleksander Pawlicki, op. cit., p. 81.

He was even more scandalized by the story *Elephant* about a hysterical girl who asks for and receives the eponymous animal as a gift.

The fact that Kuprin's work was submitted for assessment makes a mockery of our institution in the most literal sense. [...] It is difficult to escape a sense of bafflement and anger at the fact that while hundreds of truly beautiful Soviet children's stories do not receive the quality translations that they deserve, such kitsch and criminal literature – a crime in every sense of the word – is given the honour of a mass-scale publication, and by a state publisher in Poland to boot.

This is followed by a comment written in pencil by the censor's manager, who approved the work for publication: 'The novella forms part of the second volume of the author's selected works. It should be treated unequivocally as a humorous piece. The work is clearly aimed at adults rather than children.'²⁹⁹

GUKPPiW employees were well aware of the numerous errors that were being made, particularly in regional offices. It is for this reason that the Bulletin reproduced such cases together with a commentary, highlighting failures in understanding works while condemning the ignorance that caused them.

Many archival documents give the impression that censors were rather careless in their work. One file of materials on Wydawnictwo Literackie in 1954 includes an internal memo where a director explains why the publisher had to wait so long for a review (holidays, illness and 'a heavy workload'). Elsewhere, an employee noted that 'the deadline has been missed for this review because Comrade Bryczek failed to write it immediately after reading the work; he is writing it now after receiving numerous reminders'. Meanwhile, the assessment of Andrzej Wydrzyński's book *Wszyscy są nadszy* (Everybody is naked), published by Wydawnictwo Śląsk, went missing because it was borrowed by Comrade Wincenty Kraško, who failed to return the document.

Some archival materials, meanwhile, offer insights into anecdotal evidence. The files relating to PIW from 1958 include, for example, a rather original memo dated 17 January 1959:

Please find enclosed again the text for the inside flaps of the dustjacket for Andreev's *Mysł* (Thought). The document approving printing of the dustjacket went missing when our courier was taking it from the Office to PIW. There was a severe frost and heavy snowfall that day – most probably the courier lost it somewhere on the street. Despite efforts to find it, the copy was never found and the dustjacket was covered in snow and destroyed.³⁰⁰

299 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145,teczka 31/25, pp. 202–209.

300 AAN, GUKPPiW, 603,teczka 68/13, p. 25.

The minutes of the third national conference of the directors of voivodeship censorship offices held on 12–14 January 1946 includes the information that one of the censors turned up to the second day of discussions drunk and was subsequently banished from the meeting with further consequences to follow.

Personality

The archives also feature significant amounts of information that individualize GUKPPIW employees. Censor Kupraszwili was usually fairly conservative in her approach. She left one decision to the Office, protecting herself from the consequences of any erroneous or risky decisions. Meanwhile, a colleague followed an accurate description of Wednarowicz's socialist-realist collection of reportage *Jak na żołnierskim posterunku* (Like a soldier at his post) with a reflection that revealed critical awareness: 'Literary style – clumsy; the reports are exaggerated, mawkish and dull. In literary terms – a poor work.'³⁰¹

Likewise, there is no denying that some censors possessed literary talent themselves. One illustration of this is evident in the conclusion to a review of Iwaszkiewicz's volume of poetry *Warkocz jesieni* (Autumn braid):

This volume features the reflections of the older generation for whom the country of their childhood, in light of the 'black wall of the sky' marked by 'machine gun traces', seems to be located far away and is powerless... this is simply an expression of the tragedy of the passing of time, not the obvious tragedy that features in Hertz's *Pieśni jesienne i zimowe* (Hymns of autumn and winter) but rather of the kind that is located within those trivial, personal emotions, the right to which cannot be denied any poet. (Because who could prevent a cricket expressing its sadness through its sorrowful song).³⁰²

Many censors quite obviously possessed a sense of humour. Censor Fleszar commented on Lesław M. Bartelski's novel *Ludzie zza rzeki* (People from beyond the river) that this is 'a well-meaning novel about the struggle against kulaks in rural areas, but written without any trace of talent'. In a review of *Antoni Mroczek poznaje świat* (Antoni Mroczek discovers the world), the first part of Marcelina Grabowska's *Walka amerykańska* (The American struggle) cycle, the reviewer noted: 'while we should avoid upsetting an army of secretaries, this work does require reediting.'

The tenth-anniversary edition of the Informational-Instructional Bulletin, mentioned above, offers a veritable feast of humour. Two extensive satirical works were created to mark the anniversary, *Nasz bilans* (Our balance) and

301 AAN, GUKPPIW, 388, teczka 31/137, p. 5 (the file does not use continuous pagination).

302 AAN, GUKPPIW, 386, teczka 31/126, pp. 435–436.

Cicha woda brzegi rwie (Still waters run deep). The former was created by the Łódź team, while the latter came from J. Kleynty of GUKPPiW. Both works were presented on 22 January 1955, proving that the censors could laugh at themselves. This was the evidence of intelligence and a degree of distance to what they were employed to do. Above all, it shows that a variety of people were employed as censors, ranging from idiots to rather interesting figures.

The satirical works were, it seems, very well received as they initiated a whole gamut of similar texts. Two humorous poems about GUKPPiW employees were written for International Women's Day, while issue no. 9/1955 of the Bulletin provided a description of the satirical newspaper *Nasze ingerencje* (Our interventions) that was produced by the Łódź office. Issue no. 11 included the first instalment of the anonymous humorous 'censorship novel', *Cenzor doskonały* (The perfect censor).³⁰³ Such satire would not, it would seem, pass through the standard censorship filter since it was, paradoxically, largely unpublishable. This is a typical fragment from the work:

The perfect censor opened his eyes, closed them again and then repeated to himself the five key differences between bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions, as well as the triune Leninist principle of the Party's rural policies, while also recalling the instructions regarding military secrets, before then jumping out of bed and eagerly humming to himself the words "fulfil the plan!, fulfil the plan..." as he went to have a wash. [...] After that, he performed his exercises while seeking to follow a politically acceptable line.³⁰⁴

Unfortunately, I was unable to locate further instalments of the ups and downs of the fictional censorship official. In all likelihood, they were never written.

The final memoirs included in the jubilee edition of the Bulletin were by Irena Lewicka. They indicate that there were other satirical works about GUKPPiW, with the censors producing numerous rhymes about working at the institution between 1947 and 1955. Some offered witty criticism of the difficulties and absurdities that they had faced, such as cramped working conditions.³⁰⁵ Clearly, then, some employees of what was in a way a rather dull and downcast institution did possess a sense of humour and rhyming abilities.

303 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, pp. 612–617.

304 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 612.

305 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, pp. 57–63.

Part 2: Case studies

1 Between accommodation and resistance. Jerzy Andrzejewski

Describing the fate of Jerzy Andrzejewski's works following their encounters with GUKPPiW should prove interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it makes it possible, in selected cases, to supplement the publication and editorial history of his works. It also facilitates the recreation of integral versions of texts, which researchers have called for in order to resolve some debates over aspects of interpretation. Examining the archival records of the censorship office also offers insight into the strategies that the writer used to cope with restrictions, which increased the further he moved away from the one and only truth proclaimed by communism. How an integral version of a text could be restored was demonstrated in the previous chapter in the case of *Idzie skacząc po górach* and, partly, in the case of *Bramy raj*. The archival materials from the censorship office, as well as the writer's personal papers, proved to be the most complete source in relation to these particular works. It is for this reason that this exploration of Andrzejewski's works goes beyond the timeframe of the book to reach 1963, which was when his novel about Picasso appeared.

In the course of my archival research, I managed to gain access to a series of documents relating to the majority of Andrzejewski's post-war works, namely *Popiół i diament*, *Bramy raj*, *Idzie skacząc po górach* and his short stories. The most significant gap in the record relates to his novel *Ciemności kryją ziemię* (Darkness shall cover the Earth), as there is not a single mention in the sources of how it was treated by censors.

***Popiół i diament* (Ashes and Diamonds)**

Andrzejewski's first post-war novel has been the subject of a wealth of studies. Several researchers have examined the significant transformation that the text underwent between its serialization in *Odrodzenie*, which began on 19 January 1947, and the *Czytelnik* editions published in 1948 and 1954.³⁰⁶ Unfortunately, I was unable to locate the first censorship reviews that approved the *Odrodzenie* serialization and the book version that soon followed. However,

306 Stanisław Burkot, *Popiół i diament po latach. Miesięcznik Literacki*, vo. 7 1981, pp. 40–48; Janusz Detka, *Przemiany poetyki w prozie Jerzego Andrzejewskiego*, Kielce: Wyższa szkoła Pedagogiczna 1995; Zbigniew Jarosiński, *Wersje poprawiane*, in: *Autor – tekst – cenzura*, ed. by Janusz Pelc Pelc and Marek Prejs, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1998, pp. 39–47; Dariusz Nowacki, “*Ja nieuniknione*”. O

there is another interesting document that relates to an early version of the work, namely a secondary review dated 12 March 1949. This source contributes significantly to discussions relating to the changes that Andrzejewski introduced and subsequently never retracted.

The review was written in Łódź and in barely legible handwriting. The document bears an illegible signature. The censor noted in conclusion that the book would be suitable both for further editions and for distribution in public libraries.

The end of the war – the start of peace and a new era in the life of Poland – these events provide the backdrop to a plot that takes place over just a few days. The setting is a small provincial town, typical of dozens of similar small towns that were partly destroyed in the war. The protagonists are people reflecting the new and the old; there are PPR members and partisans, there are aristocrats and restaurant owners, there are workers and there are, last but not least, old men and young boys.

The author presents a gripping story, entangling events from various plot strands while offering ‘sensational’ twists, as well as illustrating the dedication and challenges faced by those early pioneers who fought for People’s Poland; he shows their unfailing faith in the legitimacy of their cause and in ultimate victory. They are not fazed by splits in the ranks caused by the bullet of a masked killer.

Their tragic counterpart is embodied by a group of former AK soldiers, partisans and fighters from the Warsaw Uprising. They are people of worth, yet their minds are clouded and they are lost; despite lacking faith in their cause (Andrzej Kossecki) they are unable to shake themselves free of the men giving them orders, thus they plough on – in the name of a false conception of solidarity and honour – and turn to crime.

These two groups of people, their attitudes towards Poland and its new reality, the points of view that they represent, form the crux of the novel.

In light of this, the wonderful depictions of the figure of the judge, the former camp prisoner, the landowner who was a decent man in times of peace and a criminal during the war (this issue, i.e. the issue of the depravity and humiliation faced by people in the camps, is dealt with in barely a few sentences) – who is thus a representative of a dying world that believed in a quick transformation, of restaurant owners and careerists who exist at all times, after all – all this fades into the background. One particular legacy of the war are the rather “Indian” passions of a group of troublemakers, with these lads seeking to achieve their goals at all costs, including by way of crime.

The book is written in comprehensible language; it is gripping and moving, drawing readers into the heart of events that were, not so long ago, particularly urgent and remain relevant today. This is undoubtedly a highly valuable work.³⁰⁷

podmiocie pisarstwa Jerzego Andrzejewskiego, Katowice: Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2000.

307 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/23, pp. 200–201.

It is also worth pointing out that this unequivocally positive assessment was written after the Szczecin Congress. The fact that there was no mention of any cuts at this point (indeed, the available sources are rather meagre) does not mean that GUKPPiW did not suggest some later on. It seems that the document cited here supports the argument presented by those researchers who believe that Andrzejewski willingly made changes to *Popiół i diament*. As Zbigniew Jarosiński has argued,

It is impossible to grasp all of the circumstances that had an influence on Andrzejewski's decision. The text itself does not offer any indication that the censor served as co-creator in this case. None of the cuts relates to a matter that censors would have considered undesirable, while none of the additions seems to have stemmed from a need to fulfil the demands of censors.³⁰⁸

A contrasting perspective is suggested by two documents from 1954. The initial reviews, dated 23 March, were supplemented by a new version of the novel. And what is surprising is that this politicized reworking, which was closer to the Party's vision, was met with a less enthusiastic response. Still, it was also passed for publication and distribution.

The first review, cited in full here, underlined the differences between the two versions of the work:

Most of the corrections relate to stylistic issues. Content-related changes appear on p. 101, 102 and 103, toning down the accents that justified the underground army and giving focus to the discussions between Kossecki and Podgórski, while the corrections on pages 203-206 refer to the discussion between Szczuka and Kalicki on the Soviet Union and our revolutionary path. Andrzejewski's foreword is presented in a warm and personal tone. No remarks.

The second review stated that the author's introduction to this new edition of the novel 'neither corrects nor highlights certain errors in the novel; instead it offers a reflection of the author's feelings as he wrote the book.'³⁰⁹ Underscoring the importance of the foreword was typical of the socialist-realist era, as was the phrase 'certain errors in the novel'. Unfortunately, the censor was not willing to develop this idea further; thus, it cannot be established what exactly he considered inappropriate. As noted previously, close analysis of the texts of the 'new believers' was a key principle and such texts were constantly perfected. As Stanisław Burkot's research has shown, the author's controversial foreword did not appear in 1954 and was instead first published in the 1956 edition.³¹⁰ The

308 Zbigniew Jarosiński, *Wersje poprawiane*, op. cit., p. 41.

309 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375, teczka 31/33, pp. 436-437.

310 Stanisław Burkot, op. cit., p. 41.

second review made its main failing clear, namely that Andrzejewski failed to admit the error of his ways.

Short stories

The available archival sources also include several interesting references to Andrzejewski's wartime and post-war short stories. Czytelnik submitted the collection *Kukułka – opowiadania optymistyczne* (Cuckoo – optimistic stories) to GUKPPiW in September 1949. The censorship review ended on a strange and rarely encountered verdict, namely: 'defer a final decision'. Dated 30 September 1949, I cite it in full:

Four short stories, with the last including a conclusion presenting the protagonists' future fates. The stories present a truthful depiction of the period of wartime occupation as experienced by certain groups of inhabitants of Warsaw. The protagonists enjoy a pleasant life; they eat, drink and are merry, while also trading. Trade is how they survive. An older woman engages in trade, obsessed with 'overcoming temporariness', as does her biologist husband, a refugee from Lwów, a female student, a woman from a good home, etc. This passion for trade is so prevalent and dominant that a marmalade producer manages to buy... a partisan organization (in *Przebudzenie Lwa* – The Lion's Awakening). This organization supports the idea of dynamic ethnic imperialism, thus revealing the stupidity of its leaders and gullibility of its young members, therefore condemning right-wing political groups.

The book is written in fluid and witty language, although the work provoked certain unpleasant reflections as I read it. The struggle against the occupier was merely a way of ensuring suitable status after the war or simply a matter of chance. By depicting only this social group, the author distorts the image of life and struggle under German occupation.

In different handwriting, there is a note stating: 'cut the final novella.'³¹¹

On the basis of this highly generalized information, it is difficult to establish exactly which short stories were approved for inclusion in the volume. Since *Przebudzenie lwa* (The lion's awakening) and, given the collection's title, *Kukułka* are mentioned directly, it would seem that the third text included is *Paszportowa żona* (A wife on paper). Despite the censor's ambivalent verdict, the collection was never published, with the texts being dispersed. It was not possible to establish the title of the fourth story which, according to the censor, presented the protagonists' subsequent fate. In light of the decision to withhold the entire volume, it seems likely that Andrzejewski never returned to the story which had

311 AAN, GUKPPiW,145,teczka 31/24, pp. 212–213.

been removed from its context. Of course, it would be very interesting if the manuscript version of the text that the censors ordered to be cut could be found.

In 1954, the censors were concerned by the text *Warszawianka* (La Varsoviennne) that was added to the second edition of the collection *Noc* (Night), as it was seen as ‘something of a celebration of the Warsaw uprising’. Nevertheless, the work was passed for publication without any interventions on 9 August 1954. *Warszawianka* had already been published twice before, in the journal *Odrodzenie* (no. 17, 1945) and in *Nowe Widnokreği* (no. 6, 1945).³¹² In 1954, it was added to the new edition published by PIW, anticipating the changes that were approaching.

On 19 February 1955, *Złoty lis i inne opowiadania* (The Golden Fox and other stories), a collection of short stories indicative of the thaw, was submitted to GUKPPiW. The archives hold two highly positive censors’ reviews. Comrade Rutkowski mentions that the eponymous short story represents ‘quite possibly the zenith of the author’s artistic development’. There was some resistance, though, to the story *Narcyz*, with the censor asking rhetorically:

Does our cultural leadership really resemble its depiction here? Is it really they who create poor, weak, repugnant literature? Can the outcome of the past decade really be summed up by this poor literature alone? All of these questions deserved to be answered with a firm “no!” This is not how our cultural leadership appears, nor our literature. Both the cultural leadership and writers alike have committed many errors and mistakes. Nevertheless, we can point to a great many achievements in the literary realm.³¹³

In conclusion, the censor proposed further discussion of this short story. Somebody else added: ‘On Comrade Łazaburek’s recommendation, approved for publication 4 June’. It should be noted that this volume also included the first three short stories from the proposed collection from 1949 that was never published in full.

Many archival materials have survived that relate to the fate of the collection *Niby gaj* (Almost a grove). The primary review is available alongside a memo and a note relating to a review of interventions from 1959. The review is fully two pages long, written on the back of pages from the draft print of Sigrid Undset’s novel *Krystyna, córka Lavransa*’ (*Kristin Lavransdatter* – thus saving resources!). It is written in sprawling handwriting and dated 2 February 1959, signed off by an illegible signature. A relatively small print run of 7000 copies was recommended.

312 Cited in: Anna Synoradzka, *Andrzejewski*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997.

313 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/126, pp. 138–144.

This collection includes two short stories from the interwar period, eleven about the occupation or the period immediately following it, and one longer story about the author's childhood, as well as five short stories (*Narcyz* (Narcissus), *Pantofelek* (The court shoe), *Wielki lament papierowej głowy* (The great lament of a paper head), *Złoty lis* (The golden fox) and *Mój chłopięcy ideał* (My childhood ideal)) from the so-called thaw era or the period immediately after October, and one written in 1958 that is full of allusions and a particular subtext, *Niby gaj*.

Apart from the short story *Podróż* (The journey), which was begun in 1942 and completed in 1958, all of the pieces have already appeared in print, either in other collections or in literary journals. I am not entirely certain that the wartime short story *Powrót* (*The Journey* – a fragment of a novel) has been published previously.

In my opinion as a censor, there are two short stories that could prove problematic at this point in time – *Narcyz* (p. 537) and *Wielki lament papierowej głowy* (p. 559).

It seems to me, however, that they have been toned down and their force of expression blunted somewhat. They do not make the same impression as they did three years ago. This is why I am not demanding their exclusion from the collection, particularly because they have already appeared in Andrzejewski's previous collection of short stories.

Beneath the review is a note stating, 'Regarding the short story *Podróż* p. 115, 146, please read this short story'.³¹⁴

It should be noted that the censor's memory failed him. While *Narcyz* did indeed appear in the collection *Złoty lis*, *Wielki lament papierowej głowy* had not yet been published in book form. Other officials expressed greater doubts about the latter text, hence the exceptional treatment of the collection *Niby gaj*, which resulted in the production of a unique document in the archival records, namely an 'Official memo', which noted:

Comrade Chaber has been notified of the piece titled *Wielki lament papierowej głowy*. Comrade Strasser has informed me that Comrade Chaber will speak to Comrade Michalski regarding the withdrawal of this piece. Comrade Chaber informs that the publishers will withdraw the piece but if they fail to do so, then GUKP should call it in and withhold permission for publication.

11.3.59 Comrade Michalski requests permission to publish the entire collection, stating that he is withdrawing the piece in question. In light of this, I passed the book for printing.³¹⁵

The signature is illegible and the memo, written in neat handwriting, is dated 12.3.59.

Wielki lament papierowej głowy was held back by censors and appeared only eight years later in the third edition of the collection. It is difficult to establish

314 AAN, GUKPPiW, 630, pp. 74–76.

315 AAN, GUKPPiW, 630, p. 79.

whether any changes were made to the text. In the document ‘Overview of interventions from 1958’, which also includes the start of 1959, there is evidence of significant interventions, but comparison with the version published in the journal *Świat* (no. 36, 1956) and the version included in the collection from 1967 suggests that no significant alterations were made. It is not clear from the sources, then, what changes the report refers to or what version of the text the censors read in 1959. Perhaps this could be established in the course of further research.

What the fate of *Wielki lament papierowej głowy* suggests, however, is that the extent to which censors held back texts was masked. The available archival sources indicate that the piece was to be included in the volume *Niby gaj* in 1959, yet it first appeared in a book in 1967. The editor’s note to this edition stated, however, that it first appeared in the volume *Złoty lis*, i.e. in 1955. Given the problematic nature of the text, it is difficult to accept that this was an unintentional error on the part of the publishers. It seems that this was a deliberate attempt at misleading readers at the censorship office in order to create the impression that publishing policy was more liberal during the thaw-era than it was in reality. The fact that this statement suggests that the short story must have first appeared in book form before being printed in a journal, something that was never actually practiced, did not seem to be of concern. The enigmatic editor’s note nevertheless offers insufficient evidence to establish whether *Wielki lament papierowej głowy* was indeed submitted for publication in *Złoty lis*. As Anna Synoradzka states, the short story was completed in autumn 1953 (this date is also given in the *Świat* edition) and was not permitted for publication.³¹⁶ This seems to be a likely version of events, even if it cannot be fully confirmed on the basis of archival research.

***Bramy raju* (The Gates of Paradise)**

There is a file in the GUKPPiW archive (no. I/588) called ‘Documentation relating to reviews of serialized novels from 1957–1958 and 1959–1960’. Alongside reviews of another 71 novels, there are two records relating to *Bramy raju*.

Andrzejewski’s work was submitted to GUKPPiW in November 1959. As Anna Synoradzka has established, he finished the novel in September 1959 and it was submitted to PIW on the 28th of that month.³¹⁷ In April 1960, the novel

316 Anna Synoradzka-Demadre, *Wstęp*, in: Jerzy Andrzejewski, *Miazga*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2002, p. XXII.

317 Anna Synoradzka, *Andrzejewski*, op. cit., p. 144.

was published in its entirety by *Twórczość* (issue no. 4), with the January and March issues already carrying announcements in anticipation of this. The book version appeared several months later, with the imprint stating that it was passed for typesetting on 8 July 1960 and approved for publication on 1 October 1960, with the print run completed the same month. Thus the fate of the publication was determined between September 1959 and October 1960.

Bramy raju was categorized as a serialized novel on 13 November 1959, although both reviewers at the censorship office maintained that it was a short story. Indeed, the original plan was that *Argumenty* would serialize the work.

It is worth saying a few words about this particular publication. *Argumenty* was a bi-weekly journal published between 1957 and 1989, marketed as ‘The socio-cultural journal of the Society of Atheists and Freethinkers’, while it also acquired the subtitle ‘Humanism, rationality and lay culture’ for the later part of its existence. The journal was established during the period of liberalization of cultural life following October 1956. The profile of *Argumenty* was inspired by a motto drawn from Socrates: ‘I am and always have been one of those natures who must be guided by reason, whatever the reason may be which upon reflection appears to me to be the best’ (Plato, *Crito*). The publication’s goal was to promote rationalist thought and condemn superstition, backwardness and dogmatism. During its early years, when the periodical was edited by Emil Wojnarowski, social issues took precedence over cultural subjects, with the latter largely limited to theatre reviews and short overviews of selected literary works. Some of the more interesting cultural pieces appearing in *Argumenty* during this period include excerpts of Igor Newerly’s biography of Janusz Korczak, an article marking the 120th anniversary of the death of Jędrzej Śniadecki, a report from the Venice biennale, and Julian Przyboś’s articles on Juliusz Słowacki and Peiper’s *Zwrotnica* (Switch). Analysis of the material included in the publication suggests that the target audience was formed of readers of average intelligence, so members of the intelligentsia who had benefitted from the post-war social advance.

Argumenty published serialized novels from issue no. 9/10 in 1958. That particular edition included excerpts from Thomas Mann’s *Doctor Faustus* under the title *Diabeł w ornacie* (‘The Devil in vestments’; this related to the protagonist Dr. Schleppfuss). Subsequent issues featured the prose of Lion Feuchtwanger and Izaak Babel and poems by Boris Pasternak, while Polish literature was represented by Natalia Rolleczek and Stanisław Dygat. There were no announcements indicating what would appear in the following issues. The works were selected to match the journal’s profile, hence the preference for works promoting rationalist thought, challenging Christian dogma and presenting the darker moments in

Church history. It should also be noted that *Argumenty* did not feature serialized novels in the strictest sense of the term, but rather selected excerpts of novels. Was an exception to be made for Andrzejewski, since *Bramy rajy* was to appear in full? It is difficult to offer a definite answer to this question. The fact that the publication's standard practice was to present excerpts of particular literary works suggests that this was not the case. However, subsequent editions of *Argumenty* do indicate that the journal was changing its format, thus Andrzejewski's work might indeed have been planned for inclusion in its entirety. In December 1959, the likely date planned for publication of *Bramy rajy*, *Argumenty* published excerpts of Józef Kapeniak's novel *Ciesem się ja, spiwom, gwizdom* (I rejoice in song and whistle) under the title *Stary gazda* (The old farmer). Yet neither the subsequent December nor January issues included any literary works. It can thus be assumed that the editors were working to quickly prepare another text and perhaps this was indeed *Bramy rajy* after it had been queried by censors.

The decision to publish Andrzejewski was deliberate on the part of *Argumenty* because his work obviously challenged Catholic ideals and thus matched the profile of the publication. The famous name could also attract readers to the periodical. However, in the censors' view, *Bramy rajy* not only challenged religious views but was a subversive text that also 'provided arguments against *Argumenty*'.

Uniquely in the context of the archival record, the work had received two extensive negative reviews at this stage of deliberations. Usually, one negative review was sufficient to stop the publication of a serialized work, as was the case with Antoni Marczyński's novel *Tam gdzie szalał Ku-Klux-Klan* (Where the KKK ran wild) and Stanisław Wygodzki's *Serce mojego rodzeństwa* (My siblings' heart). Both were rejected on the basis of one censor's assessment. Indeed, the majority of works submitted for serialized publication in 1958 and 1959 – which largely comprised third-rate texts (with the exception of Erich Maria Remarque's *Życie na kredyt – Life on Loan*) – received one positive review. There was only a very small number of rejected texts, while only those texts that provoked some reservations from the first censor because of concerns over political or religious content, or because the author was the subject of intense debate at the time, received more than one review. Andrzejewski's work met all of these criteria. As Krzysztof M. Dmitruk has noted, 'the ideal system would operate in such a way that ensured that no undesirable text was even created. It should be blocked at the stage when the idea is conceived by the author.'³¹⁸ If we accept Dmitruk's

318 Krzysztof M. Dmitruk, op. cit., p. 30.

argument, then Andrzejewski's novel signalled a genuine systemic failure for censorship officials.

Both reviews were dated 13 December 1959 and are contained on page 12 of the file according to the censorship office's own system (and pages 25–29 according to the archive's pagination). The reviews were submitted on the requisite forms, although the second one did not fit on one and so had to be continued on another. The handwriting is difficult to read – but still simpler to decipher than Andrzejewski's own hand – in the first review, while it is simply sprawling in the second. The first review used lighter coloured ink, the second darker. The first review stated:

The story addresses the question of faith and not only faith in God, but human faith as such. Using the example of children who organized a crusade to Jerusalem, the author offers a depiction of the participants' blind faith, fanaticism and debauchery. The aim of the journey was to liberate Jerusalem from Turkish occupation in the thirteenth century. The central reason for organizing this fictional enterprise was the passion of the pastor who was inspired to undertake the crusade by a sexually perverted magnate. The central protagonists of this pilgrimage and its leaders are boys and girls who, supposedly in the name of a grand ideal, go on the march together but in reality do so in order to facilitate debauchery and satisfy their own passions. The depictions of the pilgrims' sexual acts are exceptionally lewd and distasteful. Nobody in the entire group has genuine faith except for one monk who offers confession to all before he himself loses faith and is at this moment crushed by the crowd. The crowd goes onward, led by a group of perverts, but dies before reaching Jerusalem. Having read the story, I would offer the following reflections:

Above all, the author expresses the opinion that there is no point believing in any ideal or noble aim since there is nothing beyond human desires and passions. Likewise*, the more fanatically somebody believes in something, the more they are guided by desire. The idealistic leaders not only lack faith in the ideal towards which they lead the people, but they are also essentially sexual perverts.

The nature of the story means that it could be understood as an allusion to our times in terms of building socialism where several or a dozen or so individuals who go off the rails drag the people in an unknown direction and without an obvious goal, with the only certainty being complete defeat.

Furthermore, this short story contains a large number of overly distasteful sexual-pornographic scenes depicted against a religious background and for this reason it cannot be published at all, let alone in *Argumenty*.

The second review begins with the censor offering a faithful summary of the motto drawn from Schloesser. There then follows an interpretation of Andrzejewski's work:

Andrzejewski depicts the children's journey from close up, which means that they are largely made up of adolescents. These supposedly innocent creatures are riven

with desires and passions, both fulfilled and unfulfilled; they carry the burden of sins and, what is worse, they are completely devoid of faith as they seek to liberate the holy sepulchre arbitrarily for this or that reason and hardly do so in the name of lofty ideals; largely it is because they desire the company of a girl or boy they have fallen for, so someone who has joined the pilgrimage for exactly the same reasons as themselves.

There is an older man among the crowd, a monk who is not unfamiliar with human affairs and sins. He, however, does believe in the innocence of the youths. The old man offers confession to each person in turn. However, this three-day-long collective confession ultimately deprives him of his faith. Each and every person is a sinner, thus the mission cannot be fulfilled. The monk is crushed.

The leader of the procession – a handsome young pastor who supposedly had a vision – received the order to liberate Christ's grave not from the supernatural realm but from a certain knight who is a pederast and they spent the night together in a hut – there were no sexual relations between them because he did not want to satisfy his sexual desire, since doing so kills love.

That, briefly put, is the plot of the book.

The author primarily explores the question of faith, suggesting the following mechanism:

1. faith is born of human misfortune and suffering. People created God themselves, although god is the key issue for the author.
2. faith can achieve great things.
3. blind faith, however, can lead people to criminal deeds committed for supposedly noble reasons.
4. the moment that someone recognizes the reality of the situation and understands everything*, there follows disappointment, loss of faith and hope.

Beyond the issue of faith, Andrzejewski also poses the question of love as a physical emotion dominated by desire. Love – as passion – passes the moment that it is fulfilled. People thus seek to satisfy their desires while at the same time seeking to prolong the moment of satisfaction for as long as possible, since love passes once it is over.

And here we see a certain parallel between love and faith. Love's grave is satisfaction, while faith ends once its objective is achieved.

The overall impression stemming from the work is that all human endeavours are futile since they only lead to disappointment. Only the naïve, who *do not know the truth*, believe.

Can Andrzejewski's story be read as a condemnation of religious faith only? The answer to this question has to be no, especially given the fact that this is not the first time that the author has turned to the medieval era to express his opinions about the contemporary age.

Likewise, the analysis of human nature contained in the book means that we cannot limit the reading to the religious realm or to some distant past.

The following image emerges from a reading of the novel: a fanatical crowd led by a random leader, who is full of failings and flaws that he keeps hidden from everyone, proceeds towards an unknown goal that might not even exist.

What Andrzejewski wanted to express in this image seems quite clear.

It should also be noted that Andrzejewski's short story contains many naturalistic depictions of a sexual-erotic nature* that readers will consider distasteful and a source of embarrassment. Publishing such depictions would certainly provide strong 'arguments against *Argumenty*'.

Verdict: Deny approval for publication.

It is worth noting that both reviews were signed on the same day. It is thus quite likely that the censors exchanged opinions as they worked. The simplistic language used in the reviews, particularly the first, suggests the censors had a low level of education. The reviews also offer evidence for the way in which texts submitted to censors were hierarchized: the least educated censors were given works aimed at more naïve readers. 'Low-skilled' censors were given third-rate texts to assess, although in this case an outstanding piece of literature got caught up in the system. It should also be stressed that the primitive judgements cited above nevertheless offer evidence of deep insight into Andrzejewski's novel. The religious costumes³¹⁹ could not mask a message that was clear even to these censors, who were responsible for *Argumenty*, as they, too, raised serious objections. This offers evidence of the extent of the barriers faced by writers who attempted to say something important about reality.

Bramy rajy was not published in serialized form. It went on to appear in *Twórczość*, though, before being published in book form towards the end of 1960.

The overview of interventions from 1958 in the GUKPPiW archive (which also covers the end of 1957) supplements the information so far presented on the deliberations over Andrzejewski's novel. A document from November 1958 offers an explanation for GUKPPiW's decision to stop its publication in serialized form in *Argumenty*, arguing that it was 'because the novel contains pornographic scenes'.³²⁰ The same archival collection includes an additional document, namely 'An appendix to the list of interventions into non-periodical publications for November 1959', dated 4 December 1959 and signed by Strasser, director of the non-periodical department at GUKPPiW. The document was addressed to all recipients of the original list of interventions and concerns Andrzejewski's

319 For a broader discussion of this subject, see: Leszek Szaruga, *Wobec totalitaryzmu. Kostium kościelny w prozie polskiej. Wobec cenzury*, Szczecin: Ottonianum, 1994.

320 AAN, GUKPPiW, 591, teczka 60/3, p. 76 and 86.

text, with the author himself receiving a copy of the document as one of the authorities' trusted people. 'Further to our verdict on J. Andrzejewski's novel *Bramy raju*, we would like to add that the decision not to permit this work for serialization in *Argumenty* does not mean that the novel is not suitable for publication as such. In all likelihood, it will be published in *Twórczość*. Was such favourable treatment a result of negotiations with the author? This cannot be established on the basis of the archival record. Certainly, though, his position as a renowned writer in People's Poland would have done him no harm in this situation. I have already noted the way that texts intended for narrower, elite audiences were treated different to those that were aimed at a mass readership. The journal's small print run meant that *Twórczość* could feature works that stood no chance of being published elsewhere.

It is also worth pointing out the significant discrepancies in dating. Both negative reviews regarding publication in *Argumenty* were signed off on 13 December, but there was already a note on the subject in the November list of interventions, while the compromise with *Twórczość* was announced on 4 December already. There are too many mistakes in this chain of events to ascribe this to the usual carelessness. Instead, it is likely that the Andrzejewski case was first discussed outside the usual censorship process, leading to the decision to permit publication in *Twórczość* rather than *Argumenty*. Most probably, then, the two reviews were subsequently commissioned to satisfy pro forma requirements. If more archival materials emerge then my hypothesis might stand to be corrected or indeed verified.

In April 1960, the complete novel was published in issue no. 4 of *Twórczość*. It was not possible, however, to find any documents presenting GUKPPIW's approval.

Further on in the same file documenting reviews of serialized novels in 1957–1958 and 1959–1960, there is a loose page that has been filed in the wrong place as far as chronology and subject matter are concerned. It provides insights offering closure on the fate of the novel *Bramy raju* in its encounters with the censorship office. The whole story is not presented and this document is more likely to have been the final page of a larger record. The date suggests that it relates to the publication of the work as a book. The document lists pages (43, 105, 109, 183 and 184) and then underlined is the verdict that it can be published following amendments. It is signed by Lucyna Kańska and dated 16 December 1960. At the bottom of the page there is a note in red pencil, which means it probably came from a superior, stating 'Interventions justified. I forwarded them together with the typescript to Com. Andrzejewski on 17 December 1960. Approved for publication.' The signature is illegible, although the same handwriting added a

note that the changes to pages 183 and 184 were not necessary, meaning that Andrzejewski only needed to correct pages 43, 105 and 109.

Zofia Mitosek has written an insightful study on the creation of *Bramy raj*.³²¹ She analysed the available manuscripts and typescripts, undermining the author's own claim to have written the work 'in one sitting almost without corrections'. The most important changes evident in the development of the novel are the stylistic corrections that sought to construct a single blossoming sentence.

Unfortunately, the incomplete nature of the censorship records means that it was not possible to establish what further changes Andrzejewski made. Comparing the first edition of *Bramy raj* with the typescript (no. 2268) held at the Museum of Literature in Warsaw also yielded no further information. The typescript is paginated from 1–87, while the first edition was numbered from page 5 to 126. In all likelihood, the censors read a rough print that has not been preserved in the archives that I have explored. Perhaps publishers' archives might yield more information and I would suggest turning to them in future research.

The imprint on the first edition indicates that it was sent for typesetting on 8 July 1960 and permitted for publication on 1 October 1960, with the print run of 5000 completed the same month. The dates thus do not agree at all with the censors' records, meaning that it could be the case that the information given in the imprint is false.* * [I have published this subchapter in somewhat shorter form as K. Budrowska, *O nieznanym etapie wydawniczych losów Bramy raj Jerzego Andrzejewskiego* (On an unknown stage in the publication history of Jerzy Andrzejewski's *Bramy raj*), *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 2 (2006), pp. 227–231].

***Idzie skacząc po górach* (He cometh leaping upon the mountains)**

Exploring the censorship history of this novel opens up two broader questions relating to the appearance and disappearance of one of its scenes and to the 'cuts' made on political and moral grounds throughout the entire text.

The missing 'opening night' scene

Reconstructing the fate of this scene is useful for several reasons: it enables a fuller description of the history of the creation of the novel; it reveals the mechanisms of self-censorship; and it offers insight into the author's genuine and affected interest in the subject matter. The scene itself is hardly of great artistic value

321 Z. Mitosek, *Morał i historia (transformacje sensu w genezie „Bramy raj” Jerzego Andrzejewskiego)*, *Twórczość*. 12 (1993), pp. 85–93.

and its removal actually benefitted the novel as a whole, rather than working to its detriment. The existence of this section of the novel is not indicated in the existing secondary literature, nor is it mentioned in the critical edition of Andrzejewski's three novels (*Trzy opowieści*),³²² even though this was, in percentage terms, the largest cut they faced.

This interesting scene presents a conversation that took place at the opening night of Ortiz's (Pablo Picasso) exhibition between some of the attendees: the famous Soviet nuclear physicist Professor Sergei Kozlov, Fiodorenko – an employee of the Soviet embassy, and a journalist from *Le Monde*, Jean Jacques Thery. In the final version of the typescript submitted by the publishers, Andrzejewski positioned this scene between the statement by the US-American dramatist about the new play that he was writing and a telephone conversation between the gallery's new owner Gulio Barba (his grandfather died during the opening night) and his mother.

Jerzy Andrzejewski wrote *Idzie skacząc po górach* in several stages. The earliest date mentioned in the archives is 2 February 1962. The author of a monograph about Andrzejewski states that he began work on the novel following his return from a Ford grant, i.e. in 1961.³²³ Andrzejewski himself noted on the final page of the typescript: '17 March 1962 – 16 March 1963, Obory'. Both the time and place seem to be inaccurate. Most probably he believed that this dating simply 'worked' for the novel, suggesting that the creative act was completed within a year and that the author was thus highly organized (it has been established that he had 15 March 1963 down as the completion date for his work) and found the writing process easy. As various notes in the margins of the text show, he actually found writing this piece very tiresome and could not wait to be finished with it. On 18 May 1962, he noted on page 14 of the manuscript that he had 'completed the Suzanne 'section'. Exhaustion and despair that I will not manage to cope with all this'.

The archival documents tracing the creation of *Idzie skacząc po górach* are made up of the following sources: 1. spiral notebook, 2. the manuscript on A4 paper, 3. the earliest version of the typescript featuring traces of numerous rewrites by the author which is held in the Museum of Literature in Warsaw (file number 2269) and 4. the latest version of the typescript, which features fewer handwritten corrections (file number 2270). These sources suggest that work on

322 Jerzy Andrzejewski, *Trzy opowieści*, ed. by Włodzimierz Maciąg, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1998, pp. V–CV.

323 Anna Synoradzka, *Andrzejewski*, op. cit., p. 149.

the various protagonists ran in parallel. The spiral notebook includes various notes for ideas and early handwritten drafts that were then transferred to the manuscript, with these subsequent drafts of particular scenes being reworked on its pages before being rewritten in a 'clean' version as the early typescript, which also saw additional portions of text added; the author then returned to the manuscript, which served as the novel's final construction site, as the scene bearing the latest date was transferred directly from the manuscript to the typescript, with final changes being made on the latest version of the typescript.

That version of the typescript also includes notes relating to the layout of the novel, which suggests that this version of the novel was intended for outside use. File 2770 at the Literary Museum features notes made by Andrzejewski and some in another person's handwriting noting that the text was delivered on 4 April 1963; the file features 217 pages and was accepted on 16 May 1963. Given that the novel reached GUKPPiW somewhat later, with the censors' reviews dated 29 June 1963, this suggests that date of acceptance refers to it being approved by editors at the publishing house, who then prepared the typescript for preventative censorship. The typescript is marked by the traces of intensive work on it that was clearly conducted in parallel, as there are many handwritten notes from Andrzejewski, crossings out and corrections of quotations. Some of these changes were simply part of the author's attempts to improve the text, although other corrections were forced upon it by external factors.

The earliest traces of the removed opening night scene can be found on the penultimate page (60) of the spiral notebook. It includes a profile of Comrade Kozlov and a fragment of the conversation between him, Fiodorenko and the journalist Thery. It thus includes all of the participants, featuring the final versions of their surnames. This scene was written in a darker (older) tone of ink.

Is it possible to date this entry into the notebook? Pages 42–43 feature only diary entries, dating from 12 April to 25 April 1962. The same pages also feature entries written in a lighter tone of ink that was used for entries dated almost a year later – January 1963 and then 16 March, 12:30: 'I finished a moment ago'. Pages 44–53 are filled with dense writing that supplemented the typescript version, with these notes dated 18 September 1962, Maisons-Laffitte (page 45) and Obory, 17 January 1963 (page 47). Meanwhile, on page 59, between short fragments of *Idzie skacząc po górach* there is a short note relating to *Miazga* (Pulp) under the heading 'MIAZGA, tzw. materiały' (Miazga, so-called materials), dated Paris, 2 December 1962. When, then, did Andrzejewski have the idea of introducing a politically correct dialogue into the novel? Dating the scene is important because it will provide an answer to the question of whether it was 'tacked on' artificially

during a later stage of work (if this was the case then we would have to ask why), or whether it emerged organically as a natural development of an idea.

Neither the manuscript nor the early typescript features the scene. It first appeared in the later typescript on pages 140, 141 and 142 (or 130, 131 and 132 according to the author's own pagination). The author supplemented the typed text with handwritten additions which are marked below in brackets. I will now cite the removed opening night scene as it stood in the latest known version:

"Good evening, Professor Koslov", the journalist from *Le Monde*, Jean Jacques Thery, recognizes the man standing nearby as the famous Soviet physicist Sergei Kozlow, and because the interesting conversation he had enjoyed with the scholar the previous year in Moscow is still fresh in his memory, he approaches him and greets him sincerely. "How pleased I am to see you. I was unaware that you were in Paris."

"Zdrastvujte, gaspadin Thery", Kozlow [, a tall, slim man with a light tick in his right cheek,] says somewhat reluctantly before gesturing at his companion [a handsome young brunette]. "I am not sure if you are already acquainted, gentlemen. Mr Fiodorenko, from our embassy..."

"Oh, Mr Thery and I are well acquainted", Fiodorenko responds [in a kind voice, revealing his neat white teeth through his friendly smile], "old friends".

"Indeed", confirmed Thery who exchanges a handshake with the [young] diplomat before turning to Kozlow. "I have mentioned our Moscow encounter many times. You left a great impression on me, Professor. [It is rare to meet someone with such an open mind and such universal interests.] What a shame that I was unaware that you are in Paris. You were in Cuba, if I'm not mistaken."

"Comrade Kozlow", explains Fiodorenko, "is currently returning from Havana, where he held a lecture series. He is merely passing through Paris and in a private capacity."

"And when are you leaving?"

"My flight is tomorrow morning, [, Kozlow replies abruptly. And he adds: "] It's tough – work, duties."

Thery senses that the conversation was not flowing and thus changes the topic.

"It is wonderful", he says, "that you have found a moment to view the new Ortiz. It is of course hardly surprising, as I am well aware of your active interest in painting and contemporary art in particular."

"You see what our scientists are like", says Fiodorenko with genuine pride. "Comrade Kozlow, [our] great, leading scientist nevertheless, as I have just learned, finds time to have an interest in [contemporary] art."

"A side interest, very marginal", Kozlow says, playing things down with the tone of his voice and a light gesture that turns the conversation to inconsequential matters. "My son studies painting. And when it comes to what is known [in the West] as contemporary art, I am not impressed by everything I have seen. But, indeed, I do take an interest in it when I have the time and opportunity while of course remaining critical. Maintaining a critical stance is, in a sense, the scientist's duty. Of course, criticism should

be appropriately directed. Ortiz? Well, he is a true artist, an honest artist. He is greatly respected in the Soviet Union as someone who has fought for peace between nations.” “Indeed”, states Fiodorenko. “We, the Soviet people, Mr Thery, are a peace-loving people and we seek peace. We have no need for war. The Soviet Union wants to compete with capitalism in a peaceful arena and [under conditions of peaceful coexistence] it wants to demonstrate the superiority of our Marxist-Leninist scientific theory, the superiority of the socialist economy and of our political order. And also the superiority of our socialist realist art over all the abstractionisms and formalisms of bourgeois ideology.”

“Ortiz’s art [, in your view,] also deserves to be condemned in this way?”, Thery asks in a somewhat provocative tone.

Fiodorenko smiled.

“No, Mr Thery, you are mistaken. We in the Soviet Union do not condemn anyone. [Times have changed.] We simply tell it like it is. Antonio Ortiz, as Comrade Kozłow correctly noted, is held in great esteem in the Soviet Union as some who has fought for peace between nations. [We hold his progressive declarations in high regard.] But this does not mean that we are not critical of his work. We [, the Soviet people,] believe that true friendship involves telling the honest truth. And we will say it openly [to your face, whether you like it or not]. The artist’s subjective feelings are not sufficient criteria for us communists. We say: good, you are fair and honest, but what objective message do your fairness and honesty have? What do your works offer the masses? Do they help them in their struggle for progress and a better tomorrow? What ideological load do your works carry? The real question can thus be found in this one true way. Is this not the way things are, Comrade Kozłow?”

“Twenty past eight [, Comrade Fiodorenko]. If am not mistaken, aren’t we due to be at the embassy at half past eight?”

“We shall make it”, Fiodorenko replies, “but we should indeed be on our way. I think that we shall have plenty more opportunities for discussion. You really should take a longer trip to the Soviet Union, Mr Thery. You will see many problems and issues in a completely new light.”

This is a weak scene that sounds particularly unlikely, even in comparison with some of the other rather wooden conversations that some of the protagonists of Andrzejewski’s novel hold. It adds little to the plot beyond internationalizing the cast even further. It is worth recalling that the artist’s intention was to present the *crème-de-la-crème* of Parisian society – artists, politicians and the aristocracy. In doing so, *Idzie skacząc po górach* does not offer a singular perspective because the distanced narrator who offers a grotesque perspective is accompanied by a naïve narrator, completely lacking in distance to the story being told.

The desire to introduce this fragment suggests that the author had several intra- and extra-textual intentions: enriching the plot, demonstrating that the Soviet elites were present in the salons of Europe, offering a declaration of his own political views, and giving a nod to the censors who might thus be more

inclined to pass over more suspect parts of the novel (the “porcelain puppy” strategy³²⁴). These goals were not mutually exclusive.

The file labelled by GUKPPiW as ‘Documentation on PIW books 1963’ is listed under inventory number I/768 at AAN. The material on *Idzie skacząc po górach* is not that extensive: two reviews, a list of corrections, and a short discussion relating to it being approved for publication. This was, generally speaking, the standard amount of documentation.

Stępkowski’s review covers two full A4 pages. The typescript is signed but not dated and includes handwritten remarks dated 29 June 1963. A print run of 10,000 copies is envisaged (the amount was written in by hand, most probably later on):

Andrzejewski’s new novel is set in France, largely in Paris, in 1960.

The book represents a classic *roman-à-clef*, with insightful readers easily establishing that the central protagonists come from the French artistic-intellectual elite, with the central figure being Pablo Picasso, who features here as the eighty year-old painter Antonio Ortiz. As an artist, he is the embodiment of genius and talent, while as a human being he is an example of exceptional vitality for his age, an example of “biological brawn”, who is cast as a giant who “cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills”. [The phrase that lends the novel its title comes from the Song of Solomon – PV]

Of course, not all the details relating to Ortiz match Picasso’s actual biography. There is a lot of fiction and invention involved. This also applies to other figures, such as Paul Allard, the poet, novelist, essayist and member of the Académie Française who, in his private life, is a homosexual (most probably Jean Cocteau), Robert Naudin is a film director belonging to the French new wave (Vadim or Jean Pierre Godard perhaps?). While our “émigré” Marek Hłasko makes an appearance as the young Polish novelist Marek Kostka.

The book features a whole host of other figures who are largely fictional but at the same time symbolize this particular milieu – the journalist, the female aristocrat, the art historian (perhaps Perruchot?), the art gallery owner, the American playwright (probably Williams) and others.

The novel’s stylistic conventions and narrative style draw on the method of “simultaneity” which has established itself as a certain tradition in contemporary novels, constantly “entangling” events, thoughts and feelings that run in parallel while always orbiting around the genius of Ortiz. The present is interwoven with retrospection, while different issues and events become enmeshed. There is direct confrontation of the attitudes, views, and character traits of the various protagonists in the culmination of

324 For more on this subject: *Daleka droga do książki. Doświadczenia pisarzy z cenzurą w NRD*, ed. b Ernst Wiechert and Herbert Wiesner, translated by Wojciech Król, in: *Cenzura w Niemczech w XX wieku*, op. cit., p. 349.

the novel, at the opening night of an exhibition of Ortiz's pictures that are dedicated to a single model, the older man's twenty-two year-old lover Françoise.

What is Andrzejewski's book about? Does it seek to offer an intimate portrait of the everyday life of artists, sparing no detail as it goes behind the scenes, under the bedsheets and... into the toilet with them? Is it a moral pamphlet on the abovementioned subjects? Is it a grotesque take and mockery of human foibles and the weaknesses of famous people, an image of the artistic milieu, or an epic poem in honour of the vitality of the "old dog" Ortiz, who is experiencing love again, a love that will this time end tragically? I think that it is a little bit of everything.

One layer of the book that is a logical consequence of the plot and closely bound to it is the erotic-sexual realm. When it comes to how these matters are depicted then there are clear analogies to Sartre's work (*Drogi wolności – The Roads to Freedom, Mur – The Wall*), which becomes particularly evident in the fairly naturalistic "bedroom" scenes and in the highly pointed language that does not turn to euphemisms (examples on pages 45, 67-68, 77, 8, 96, 138, 139, 172).

At the same time, the love between Ortiz and Françoise, as well as Piotr and Suzanne, is depicted with great subtlety, including lyrical scenes presented in a poetic tone.

The "toilet" scenes and the language of some of the protagonists, particular the younger ones, are somewhat vulgar.

In my view, the book is far from being pornographic and I have no reservations in this regard, despite the fact that some of the scenes are particularly daring and drastic.

In contrast to Andrzejewski's other famous novels and short stories, political issues are of secondary significance here – the book's metaphorical level does not have a great deal to do with politics, although the author takes up certain themes in digressions that relate to "grand politics" (pages 5-6, 17, 34, 74, 95).

This book is certain to become a bestseller, although I am not convinced that it will be considered particularly innovative or original. Despite the great skill, its wonderful observational elements, and sense of humour, it is the derivative nature of the form and content that stands out, meaning that this is probably not Andrzejewski's best work.

While not expressing reservations about the work as a whole, I am convinced that some minor interventions are necessary. 1) Despite the fact that Marek Kostka (there is no doubt that the author has Hłasko in mind) has been depicted as "a hysterical buffoon, imagining that he is Stavrogin from Dostoyevsky's *Demons*" (pages 165 to 173, 179-181, 73-75), he nevertheless earns the sympathy of readers thanks to his mockery of a famous French art historian and biographer. I think that the parts of the book dedicated to Hłasko should not be a cause for concern, although the fragment where he speaks in superlative terms about "our Government and Party who love artists and give them unfettered freedom and that is why artists are as happy as Larry in Poland" is unacceptable (169-170). Such claims coming from Hłasko are quite obviously scornful.

2) Minor formulations on pages 5, 6, 74 (Hłasko), 95, 163, 164.

Underneath the review in slanted handwriting there is a note from a superior: 'I have read the book. I am in favour of approving the book for print. The minor

interventions are justified.³²⁵ The signature is illegible. The crossings-out in red pencil indicate that the interventions on pages 5, 6, 74, 163 and 169 were deemed justified.

Renata Świątycka's review repeats the same arguments contained in Stepkowski's assessment. It seems that her review was largely derivative and was written in connection to her colleague's. Her text is somewhat shorter, covering just one side of A5. It is worth citing a somewhat surprising passage from her review: 'It is a charming novel, the style is strange, complex yet light'.

Alongside the two reviews, the file also contains a typed page that emphasises fragments cut from the novel. This document is an appendix to a letter sent by PIW to GUKPPiW on 18 September 1963 that outlined which minor changes had been made in proofreading the text:

Page 45, line 6 from the bottom reads: "Moj drogi, na to Allard, tak zwany "byle kto", może mieć w najlepszym gatunku "co", a poza tym..." (My dear, Allard responds, such "riff-raff" can still have that "something" of the highest quality and also ...)

On page 138, lines 12 and 13 from the bottom and half of line four from the bottom were cut, from the word "chciałem..." (I wanted to...)

On page 139, half of line 2 from the top was cut from the words "i żeby..." (and in order to...)

On page 185, in line 10 from the bottom the sentence beginning with the words "Nie znam się..." (I am not familiar with...) has been cut to the end of the paragraph and in line 15 from the bottom the entire sentence beginning with the words "Pożerali go oczami..." (They consumed him with their eyes...) has been removed.

On page 188, line 11 from the bottom now reads: "byłby od tego, żeby mieć i dziewczynę, i chłopaka..." (he wouldn't mind to have both a girlfriend and a boyfriend)

On page 225, line 1 from the bottom reads: "... do siebie, że mi się chce." (... to myself, that I have the urge).

On page 226, in line four from the top the sentence beginning with the words "Z wstrętu do ciebie..." (Out of disgust felt towards you...) has been cut.

On page 216, the first half of the first line from the top has been cut.³²⁶

The reviews available in the archives suggest that the censors did not read the conversation between the Comrades from the USSR and the representative of the 'degraded' West. It seems unlikely that such an important issue would have escaped the attention of GUKPPiW officials as political passages, especially those relating to the Soviet Union, were read particularly attentively and were subject to extensive discussion. Meanwhile, the only politically questionable scenes

325 AAN, GUKPPiW, 768, inconsistent pagination in the file.

326 AAN, GUKPPiW, 768, inconsistent pagination in the file.

found by the two censors Stępkowski and Świątycka were those relating to Marek Kostka (i.e. Hłasko). The censors directed their cuts in this case towards passages that they considered obscene. All of the abovementioned interventions related to vulgarities and explicit sexual scenes.

Therefore, the opening night scene must have been removed at an earlier stage of work on the book. In all likelihood, it was cut at PIW where an editor was responsible for preparing the work for assessment at the censorship office. Why did the author agree to have these three pages cut when he was known for standing his ground over sometimes very minor changes?³²⁷

On the basis of the available source material, it is not possible to provide an exact date for when the scene with the Soviet guests at the opening of Ortiz's exhibition was written. The darker colour of ink used in the spiral notebook suggests that it was drafted during the early stages of work on the novel, so in 1962 rather than the following year. In later stages of work on the novel, the scene disappears before re-emerging in the final draft. The balance of evidence suggests that this was an early idea that was abandoned for many months before making a return in spring 1963, with the reasons for the reappearance unknown. The artificiality and clumsiness of the scene is determined both by the nature of the discussion (the presence of newspeak) and by the fact that it was not subject to several stages of rewriting. The scene thus retained a certain degree of rawness.

What are the reasons behind Andrzejewski's decision to reintroduce the scene and then easily agree to its removal? I would like to refer here to certain issues related to the author's genuine and affected political engagement, both of which are evident in the novel.

Any work published in People's Poland addressing political and social issues could be deemed an engaged piece of literature. By passing successfully through the censors' filter, it acquired the authorities' official approval. I have obviously simplified the situation here, since publishable works discussing contemporary life were an outcome of both resistance and acquiescence. In *Idzie skacząc po gorach*, Andrzejewski seemed unable to decide upon a single strategy and sought to combine both approaches. He gave the plot an exotic appearance, writing a novel about France while also introducing Polish protagonists and a politically correct take on relations between the USSR and the West. It has been established that censors used publishers to exert pressure on writers to at least ostensibly accept a Marxist worldview, hence the regular appearance of artificial inserts about Marx or Stalin.³²⁸ Self-censorship also played a role here, with the odd-sounding

327 See: Anna Synoradzka, op. cit., p. 151.

328 *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, op. cit., pp. 8–11.

passages being produced before they were formally demanded. It seems that it was indeed a case of this mode of self-censorship playing a role in *Idzie skacząc po gorach*, which was the riskier strategy and also more difficult to prove. As Michael Kienzle has noted,

the ultimate impact of censorship is that those subject to it or threatened by it internalize the norms of censorship and apply self-censorship in order to avoid external censorship. [...] The mechanisms of self-censorship, in anticipation of censorship mechanisms, are more dangerous than the latter; self-censorship entails an accumulation of demands that can render efforts to create literature impossible, as authors become entangled in fruitless and hopeless encounters with mutually contradictory demands and orders.³²⁹

The scene from the opening night not only sounded false in the context of the rest of Andrzejewski's novel but, what is worse, it also seemed ironic from the authorities' perspective. The simplest solution, then, was to cut it.

'Cuts' made on political and moral grounds

The cuts proposed by GUKPPiW relate to the figure of Marek Hłasko and the moral sphere. The history of the problems faced because of obscenity is somewhat longer, thus it is worth starting with that.

In June 1963, editor-in-chief of *Twórczość*, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, sent Andrzejewski a letter regarding the publication of *Idzie skacząc po gorach* in his periodical. Ultimately, it was never published there, despite a number of announcements (from issue 6, 1962 to issue 6, 1963, with the exception of issue 7, 1962). Andrzejewski's work was thus announced well ahead of the piece being completed. The matter of non-publication in *Twórczość* has already been addressed, but comparison with archival sources from the censorship offices sheds new light on the matter.³³⁰

Iwaszkiewicz did not hold *Idzie skacząc po gorach* in high regard and he requested or indeed even demanded changes. On 4 June 1963, he wrote to Andrzejewski stating that

I think that all those obscenities, they are the source of my greatest fears for you, the book and our journal, as they are only weakly woven into the highly complex, subtle, web-like plot. [...] Of course, I am no way inclined to condemn the work but some

329 Michael Kienzle, *Logofobia. Cenzura i autocenzura w RFN. Rys historyczny*, trans. Wojciech Król, in: *Cenzura w Niemczech w XX wieku*, op. cit., pp. 221–222.

330 More on this subject in: Anna Synoradzka; Jerzy Andrzejewski and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, *Listy*, ed by Andrzej Fiett, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1991, p. 119.

things simply disturb me. [...] Furthermore (which goes without saying), it is an ideal pretext for them.³³¹

The editor of *Twórczość* provided a detailed list of the obscenities, requesting the removal of several phrases from the urination scene and the American writers' press conference, as well as the phrases 'widzisz, że mi nie stoi' (an allusion to erections) and 'I paint with my balls and sperm', and the conclusion to the conversation between Alain Piot and Suzanne (which Iwaszkiewicz rejected 'absolutely'). He also believed that the work was suitable for serialized publication, thus contradicting Andrzejewski's express opinion, as this would mean that the scene with princess d'Uzerche could be removed 'without detriment to the general flow'. His letter suggests that the columns had already been typeset and Andrzejewski would be expected to accept the changes to them.

The available sources suggest that at the same time as Iwaszkiewicz was working on the text and wrote his letter to Andrzejewski, the author submitted a typescript of the novel to PIW. The file submitted to the publishers bears the same date as the letter from Iwaszkiewicz. Given the time required for correspondence to reach its addressee, it seems that Andrzejewski submitted the typescript without waiting for an opinion from the editor of *Twórczość*. In all likelihood, he was expecting critical remarks and was unwilling to cater to them. PIW accepted the novel quickly, on 12 June already, and forwarded it on. It is not clear if the publishers demanded any changes. In all likelihood it was simpler to request the removal of the scene with the Soviet guests at the opening of the exhibition without detriment to the rest of the work. The quick pace of work at the editorial office suggests that any far-reaching changes were unlikely, with the censors having completed their reviews by 29 June.

Anna Synoradzka has claimed that

Andrzejewski did not want to accept the suggested changes. The novel did not appear in *Twórczość*. In September 1963, he was in negotiations with PIW. However, the book met with a similar response there, too. Ultimately, the author agreed to tone down and shorten the erotic scenes.³³²

Analysis of the censorship archives suggests that some corrections are required to this version of events. However, it is important to note Synoradzka's finding that Andrzejewski was opposed to making changes. This indicates that the editors at PIW might have employed the risky strategy of sending a typescript

331 Jerzy Andrzejewski and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, op. cit., p. 117.

332 Anna Synoradzka, p. 151.

to GUKPPiW that was fully in accordance with the author's wishes, thus anticipating that it would face problems. Ultimately, the author could not argue with the opinion of the censorship office.

Examining the available archival sources makes it possible to attempt a summary of the changes made to the text. However, there are three lists of suggested changes to take into account: Iwaszkiewicz's suggestions from June 1963, the remarks from the censors' reviews, and the list submitted by PIW to GUKPPiW in September 1963. It is fair to assume that Iwaszkiewicz, editors at PIW, and GUKPPiW employees all read the same version of *Idzie skacząc po gorach*, namely the typescript now in file 2770 at the Literary Museum. It is this version of the text that forms the basis of the following analysis.

The chapter titled 'Pierre Laurens odkrywa wrzodzionkę w okolicach nosa' (Pierre Laurens discovers a fostering ulcer near his nose) includes a scene that was supposed to be humorous, as it describes the renowned critic's thoughts as he urinates:

Over the years, human beings spend a long time peeing, doing so indolently, without satisfaction, in instalments, [standing and standing over the stupid urinal, fumbling around with their curled up animal, their little lamb, squeezing the last drops out of their wee willy winky,] always longer than necessary, uncertain if that is the end, fearing that their trousers might become damp afterwards. God! How complicated this life is (page 30).

The fragment in brackets was removed in the course of the alterations to the novel. The terms that the author considered to be rather affectionate did not prove essential to the logic of the sentence, whose syntactic value remained intact after the cuts. In light of other scenes involving Pierre Laurens, depicting his childish explosions of anger and his dependence on his mother, the affectionate and infantile nature of the language used here is part of his character. This means that any cuts to the short and direct characterization of the numerous protagonists in the novel were ultimately detrimental to the author's efforts to give a fuller picture of a particular figure.

The scene involving Paul Allard and his servant was marked by Iwaszkiewicz as one where a decision needed to be made over its inclusion.

I cannot understand you, Rene says quietly, you can have as many boys from the best background as you wish, yet you bring in such riff-raff off the streets. My dear, Allard responds, [a young lad with a big cock is never riff-raff and] you know full well that young people from good homes generally bore me stiff (pages 50 and 51).

The line in brackets was removed and replaced by another line, noted above, that reads roughly as: 'My dear, Allard responds, such "riff-raff" can still have that

“something” of the highest quality and also...’ The logic of the statement suggests that censorship on moral grounds was not necessarily justified, since it cannot be assumed that Allard would have been particularly careful in the words he used with his most trusted lackey, who was familiar with all the intimate details of his life.

The typescript (page 61d) also features a whole passage relating to an attempt by princess d’Uzerche to seduce a young sportsman.

Well! says the old lady once they are in her bedroom, do come closer, closer!, princess d’ Uzerche allows it, the princess loves brave men, closer!, well, what are you waiting for? Where is that Ortiz?, the young demigod asked somewhat baffled by the situation, by the excessive décor of the bedroom and, above all, by the troubling proximity of this historic body covered in rather thin and flabby skin that was particularly aggressively wrinkled around the neck, Fool!, the princess responded in a voice that vibrated in her throat beneath that imperfect skin, it is hanging behind you, no, you can view it later, now you have the real thing before your eyes. Oh, so big and strong yet so ungracious! More powerfully, oh yes!, Please, leave it alone, the demigod murmured, Oh, so shy but I have to see what kind gifts (lapsus calami – a gift) you are bringing your mistress. Oh, truly the gates of paradise, such smooth warmth of your skin and such virile roughness of this youthful thicket, and young, full of disgust, attempting in vain to break off this inspection, And what is this?, the princess suddenly shouts, this dumpling, this... little flabby sausage, that is what you call your manhood? You dare to offer me this? It is your good fortune that we are now in the twentieth century, otherwise Małgorzata d’ Uzerche would have ordered you to be given some exercise and chased by the dogs. Now you can put your treasure away and do yourself up. Now you may view the Ortiz.

In terms of plot development, this description does not add anything. Andrzejewski thus effaced all trace of it, although he did not completely remove the figure of the aged aristocrat and left a few scenes involving her. The passage cited above did not exist in the earlier manuscript or typescript. On page 38 of the manuscript, there is an outline of an idea for ‘Princes d’Uzerche’s Salon’ including a guest list, subjects for conversation and a brief outline of events, but no mention of this episode. The cut scene with the princess seems to have emerged fairly late in the creative process, hence it’s rather croaky nature and unintentionally comic overtones. Cutting it was thus not detrimental to the work as a whole.

In one of the scenes from the opening night, an American writer infamous for his controversial behaviour makes an appearance. On this occasion, too, he lives up to expectations:

Did you see the faces of those cretins all around us? They consumed him with their eyes, as if each and every man and woman among them were dreaming of giving him a fellatio. A rut of monsters, a herd of starved masturbators and impotents. Ortiz, I can

understand that, but he is Spanish, he has the balls of a real man. I am not familiar with painting, but he is a somebody. I suspect that he has spent his whole life painting with his cock and sperm (page 126).

This entire statement was reworked and shortened so that it read:

Did you see the faces of those cretins all around us? A rut of monsters, a herd of starved masturbators and impotents. Ortiz, I can understand that, but he is Spanish, he has the balls of a real man.

While the logic of the statement remained intact, it lost some of its expressive force.

Meanwhile, the cut proposed by Iwaszkiewicz to the wordplay alluding to an erection while expressing the discomfort of a situation ('widzisz, że mi nie stoi' – p. 150), does affect the logic of the subsequent scene. As they watch coverage of the opening of Ortiz's exhibition on television, the protagonists who were to provide the 'voice of the people' are lying in bed together. The man considers ways of getting more money while the woman cuddles him. These rather brutal words, spoken among his dreams of 10,000 francs, put an end to the woman's advances. Removing this line, however, makes the whole scene incomprehensible.

A similar situation emerges in the final conversation between Alain and Suzanne. The exceptionally crude statements by the furious male protagonist can be ascribed to his agitated state. It is difficult to expect someone who wants to hurt and destroy others to be careful with their words. Iwaszkiewicz was most stringent in his criticism of these passages, since they are among the most vulgar of those under discussion.

Perhaps you would like to know what I felt at the time? Disgust, terrible disgust. I was disgusted by you, you hear me? And disgusted by myself [that I got it up and was fucking you]. "Stay!", he grasped her hand, "you wanted to know what happened, so now you will finally know. You thought that I was doing this for so long out of love? [It was because of my disgust towards you that I could not come, so do you now understand?] (page 158).

The first bracketed part of this statement was changed to 'that I had the urge', while the second was cut completely. The new version requires greater attention on the part of the readers as it is thus more difficult to understand Alain's intentions.

Close reading of the manuscripts of the novel leads to the conclusion that the obscene sections that were queried, apart from the scene involving the princess d'Uzerche and the hockey player, were integral to the particular scenes and formed natural extensions to them. Cutting certain themes, usually parts of dialogues, makes the meaning less clear and blurs Andrzejewski's sharply focused characterization. In percentage terms, the cuts to *Idzie skacząc po górach* are not extensive and they concern barely a few dozen sentences, so they do not

transform the overall impression of the novel. Restoring them could thus only be justified if we were to argue that this would return the text to the form the author had intended it to appear in.

Interestingly, Iwaszkiewicz's remarks are not aligned with the official assessment issued by the censorship office. Censor Stępkowski did indeed mention the novel's 'highly forthright language', but refrained from accusing it of being obscene. As he wrote in his review, 'the book is far from being pornographic and I have no reservations in this regard'. However, related changes were indeed carried out. There are two more likely explanations for this: either the interventions justified on moral grounds were introduced by the publishers before the novel was submitted for assessment (so between 4 and 12 June), with the censor thus reading a (partially) toned down version of the text, or it was 'sanitized' in the period after it was returned from the censorship office to PIW. The changes to the novel also drew on Iwaszkiewicz's suggestions.

The list sent to the censorship office by PIW in September 1963, labelled as 'minor changes', is indeed a record of the interventions. They all relate to supposed obscenities and reflect the scenes that either Iwaszkiewicz or the censorship office had queried.

In the conversation between Allard and his loyal servant, the sentence about class relations and penis sizes was changed, as were the vulgarisms on pages 138–139 used by Alain Piot and Suzanne. On page 139 lines 12 and 13 from the bottom and half of line four from the bottom were cut from the word 'chciałem...': ['at the very same moment, I noticed that I was getting an erection even though I did not want to get an erection'], while the word 'I wanted to say' replaced ['I wanted to come']. On page 139, half of the second line from the top was cut, removing another reference to an erection. On page 225, the last line was changed, as was the discussion about disgust involving Alain, noted above, on page 226. The other points on the censor's list refer to the depiction of Ortiz by the American dramatist, who described him as being devoured by the attendees' eyes, while an alteration on page 188 in the eleventh line from the top changed the line ['to screw girls and boys'] to 'to have both a girl and a boy'. Another cut on page 216 removed a repetition of the scene with the 'voice of the people' and half of a line referring to an erection.

Despite the censors' reviews finding that *Idzie skacząc po górach* was not pornographic, it was nevertheless necessary to put the controversial scenes up for debate. All of the sentences mentioned above refer to scenes deemed immoral. It is impossible to rule out the possibility that censorship officials issued instructions by telephone and the novel was 'cleaned up' in accordance with them. In this case, the reviews cited here would not have been the direct source of any changes

and would have provided a formal basis rather than binding judgements. The situation was similar with *Bramy raju*, where comparative analysis of the available documentation suggests that the negative reviews relating to publication in *Argumenty* did not decide the fate of the work overall. The note cited above did determine who was to take responsibility for interventions into the morally questionable scenes in *Idzie skacząc po górach*. As Iwaszkiewicz predicted, such scenes did provide plenty of ammunition for censors who sought to prevent socialist society becoming depraved, even if this posed difficulties in editing the text and the author was reluctant to accept the verdict.

Censor Sępkowski levelled other significant criticisms at *Idzie skacząc po górach*. He drew attention to the scenes featuring the Polish writer Marek Kostka, who for him was a clear analogy for Marek Hłasko. The official proposed several changes that were to weaken the significance of the statements made by this protagonist. The references to international politics were to be cut, too. In the end, the censor's superior accepted five changes.

I present the cut sections in brackets, while any altered terms are in bold:

p. 5 we also ate a boy in uninhabited **territories** [in the uninhabited taiga, eating off the bones in temperatures of minus 40]; it was just a shame this did not fall on his birthday because perhaps then the YMCA would have sent a cake with twelve candles (...)

p. 6 in the typescript: here and there **silent crowds** stood by the megaphones predicting an earthly paradise; in the print version: here and there **small groups of people** stood by the megaphones predicting an earthly paradise

p. 74 I don't like this cake, the newcomer from Poland told me, turning his back on the dome of the Pantheon, [I was inside and it was clear that socialist realism did not begin with Stalin], listen Henryk, he is a genius, this guy

p. 163 a repetition from page 6, in the typescript: here and there **silent crowds** stood by the megaphones predicting an earthly paradise; in the print version: here and there **small groups of people** stood by the megaphones predicting an earthly paradise

Page 169 features a conversation between Marek Kostka and Allard on the subject of the conditions Polish artists face in their home country. It was written in French and Andrzejewski's translation can be found on the back of the original typescript. Asked whether artists faced difficulties in Poland, Kostka responds that artists are as happy as Larry in Poland.

Please forgive me, but I think you are misinformed. [I promise you that we enjoy full freedom in Poland. Our government and Party love artists, all artists, we are happy,] sorry, I can't find the right word.

In conclusion, it is worth considering the questions that emerge from the above investigations: were there to be a new edition of *Idzie skacząc po górach*, would a return to the author's intended version be justified? While I am convinced that

it is absolutely necessary to restore those lines deemed obscene along with those cut for political reasons, I am unsure as far as the scene from the exhibition opening and the rather weak scene involving Princess d'Uzerche are concerned. There are two separate issues at play: the artistic truth of the text and the truth of its creator.

2 Stanisław Lem as a writer for young readers?

The findings stemming from my archival research seem to be particularly engrossing in the case of the works of Stanisław Lem. His position when he made his debut and the unusual subject matter of his texts meant that the censorship authorities treated his early works very strictly. The fact that his first three works submitted for assessment were shelved influenced, I believe, the decisions he subsequently took in his career. Archival sources from GUKPPIW and the Ministry of Culture and Art reveal new information about the early career of this master of the science-fiction genre. My findings could be further supplemented by analysing his typescripts and manuscripts. My most significant finding here relates to a text whose existence has never previously been noted.

***Wywiad i atomy* (Intelligence services and atoms)**

The oldest document on the work of Stanisław Lem in the sources stemming from GUKPPIW relates to a collection that has not been mentioned in the existing literature on the author. The file titled 'Documentation on books, K-M publishers', with the call number I/186, contains the information that the private publishing house Krakowskie Towarzystwo Wydawnicze had submitted a work by a young writer named Stanisław Lem for publication. On pages 139 and 140 in file 33/18 there are two entries relating to a collection of short stories titled *Wywiad i atomy*.

The work was submitted to the voivodeship censorship office and forwarded for assessment on 3 April 1949. The publishers envisaged a small print run of 3200 copies. The book was described as a new work. The first review was written by censor Janina Zborowska on 13 April using the standard form. Her assessment is filed on page 140 and runs to two pages of typescript. There are some inaccuracies in the titles of particular short stories, as well as some false information regarding their earlier publication in the press.

Wywiad i atomy is a collection made up of the following short stories: 1) *Odwet* (Revenge), 2) *V nad Londynem* (V over London), 3) *Plan – anti-V*, 4) *D – day*, 5) *Miasto atomowe* (Atomic city), 6) *Człowiek z Hiroshimy* (The man from Hiroshima). They are

thrillers about the war. The subject matter of *Odwet* relates to spying by the Soviet and British intelligence agencies in a German rocket factory. The activities of the Soviet intelligence agency, embodied in the figure of a German professor who opposes the Nazi regime, are depicted with great sympathy by the author. In *V nad Londynem* and *Plan anti V* he presents attempts by the British intelligence agency to break the secret of how the rockets are produced. *D-day* describes the landings of US and British forces on the west coast of France. All of the aforementioned novellas inspire no objections. They are written with great skill and are thus a positive contribution to this literary genre. They have already been published in the magazine *Przekrój*, while *Plan anti-V* was published in *Co Tydzień Powieść*. Things are different with the remaining short stories. The eponymous atomic city of *Miasto atomowe* is located in the Tennessee Valley in the USA and constitutes a complex of underground factories equipped with the most modern technical equipment. The description of these technological wonders and the production of a most probably fictional atomic bomb nevertheless bear all the traits of reality thanks to the author's artistic and suggestive depictions. The description thus overwhelms readers with the great potential of the USA. *Człowiek z Hiroszimy* is a horrifying depiction of the consequences of the atomic bomb. As before, this story presents an image of American military might stemming from the possession of such a weapon. At a time when two clear political camps are emerging, one centred around the USSR and another around America, depicting the military might of the latter does not seem appropriate or timely. It is for this reason that I would recommend withholding permission to print the last two stories in the collection.

Page 139 features a short, handwritten negative review just about filling one side of the form. The censor received the collection on 19 April and signed off the review on 30 April 1949. The signature is illegible.

Wywiad i atomy is a collection of thriller spy stories focused on the work of the British intelligence agency, which emerges here as a well-oiled anti-German machine. Soviet intelligence features in only one of the short stories (the first one) and appears clichéd and unconvincing. The short stories are of varying quality and lack literary value, while their political impact will be undesirable as they strengthen the popularity of the British in relation to the war years. *D-Day* is thus presented, for example, as a 'wonderful triumph' of technology and people. The book is not suitable for publication.

Page 139 also features a note from a superior written in pencil: 'Do not grant permission for publication', which is signed 4 May 1949, while the statement on the form with the verdict 'not approved for publication' is underlined in red.

Material contained in the files marked as 'Descriptive reports of the Research Department on the Publishing Industry' relating to 1949–1950 also confirm the fact that *Wywiad i atomy* was submitted and not approved for publication. File 4/1 (index number I/77) dated May 1949 includes the information that nine works were not approved for publication in the private publishing sector, including Stanisław Lem's work, classified here as a novel. A short review

states that *Wywiad i atomy* is a 'thriller-spy story lacking in literary value. The author glorifies Britain in wartime as a well-oiled anti-German machine.' Both assessments not only reflected doubts over the political content of the short stories, but were also indicative of the increasingly restrictive turn in literary censorship at the time.

Only a small number of works among the wealth of existing literature on Lem comment on his early works. Published in magazines and journals such as *Żołnierz Polski*, *Kuźnica*, *Odra*, *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Co Tydzień Powieść*, they have been treated by researchers and the author alike as something of a prelude, often unsuccessful, that nevertheless laid the groundwork for his later career. The end of his early period is often given as 1948 because in September that year he completed *Szpital Przemienienia* (*Hospital of the Transfiguration*), a mature novel that gave an indication of his narrative talent.

The fullest description of Lem's early short stories is provided in a chapter of Andrzej Wójcik's book *Wizjonerzy i szarlatani* (*Visionaries and charlatans*).³³³ He refers to over a dozen texts in his analysis, pointing to their significance for Lem's later works. He divides the short stories into two categories: those that deal with the war and occupation (*Hauptsturmführer Koestnitz*, *Placówka* (Outpost), *Nowy* (The new guy), *D-Day*, and *Spotkanie w Kołobrzegu* (An encounter in Kołobrzeg)) and those featuring elements of the fantastic (*Obcy* (Alien), *Dzieje jednego odkrycia* (The history of a discovery), *V nad Londynem* (V over London), *Miasto atomowe* (Atomic city), *Człowiek z Hiroshimy* (The man from Hiroshima), *Plan Anti-V*, *Koniec świata o ósmej* (The end of the world at 8), *Trust Twoich Marzeń* (Your Dream Trust) and *Historia o wysokim napięciu* (High-voltage story).) While this is indeed a detailed list, it is worth noting that it does not include all the short stories that Lem wrote between 1946 and 1948.

Wójcik is rather critical of these early works, stating that Lem

was right to keep his science-fiction juvenilia published in hard-to-find periodicals hidden from contemporary readers. They are derivative in their content, primitive in their plot construction, already revealing their "dramatic" and "surprise" endings halfway through and, thus, offer no indication of what was to come with *Solaris* and *Niezwycięzony* (*The Invincible*).³³⁴

Wójcik has something positive to say only about *Dzieje jednego odkrycia* and *Człowiek z Hiroshimy*, where the science-fiction elements are secondary to plot

333 Andrzej Wójcik, *Stanisław Lem*, in: Wójcik, *Wizjonerzy i szarlatani*, vol. 1, Warszawa: KAW, 1987, pp. 55–106.

334 Wójcik, *Stanisław Lem*, op. cit., p. 66.

development, while *Dzieje* was clearly set in Poland. He concludes that 'Lem's non-sci-fi stories from the 1940s are much richer and more interesting than his science-fiction works from the same period.'³³⁵ While Wójcik holds *Szpital Przemienienia*, another work from this period, in high regard, he also suggests that Lem might have been wounded by the failure of his realistic prose and instead turned to science-fiction, thus getting to work on *Astronaucci*. Indeed, Wójcik writes that Lem was 'wounded by the objections of his publishers', thus camouflaging the role of censors in this decision.

Stanisław Bereś dedicated a significant portion of his article 'Socrealistyczne przypadki Stanisława Lema' (Lem's socialist realist cases) to Lem's early works.³³⁶ Bereś notes that they were forgotten because their connections to his later works were overlooked. He argues that

the lack of a full overview of his early works resulted from the fact that only his short stories about the war and contemporary period, published in *Kuźnica*, *Żołnierz Polski*, and *Co Tydzień Powieść* were known, so *Hauptsturmführer Koestnitz*, *Placówka, KW-1*, *D-Day*, and *Spotkanie w Kołobrzegu*. Examining these works together reveals one basic common trait, namely how the texts shift the focus from human to technological aspects. Lem focused his entire attention in these works on the way technology functioned and on descriptions of technical parameters. Beyond the depiction of battles, there is little room left here for humans and socio-political reality.³³⁷

Bereś then goes on to analyse four other short stories, *Plan Anti-V*, *Miasto atomowe*, *Koniec świata o ósmej* and *Trust Moich* (sic! 'your dreams' is replaced here with 'my dreams') *Marzeń*. While he considers them 'neat', he primarily emphasises their ideological nature and entanglement in efforts to legitimize the new political order, arguing that 'a typical trait of Lem's early works is that they grow increasingly ideological and are increasingly politicized as the 1940s progress'³³⁸

Anton Smuszkiewicz also mentions Lem's early works briefly.

Among the short stories of varying quality that were largely about the war while featuring some sci-fi elements it is worth mentioning, for example, *Nowy, Placówka, KW-1*, *Obcy, D-Day*, *Koniec świata o ósmej*, *Miasto atomowe*, *Plan Anti-V*, *Historia o wysokim napięciu*, and *Trust Twoich Marzeń*.³³⁹

335 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

336 Stanisław Bereś, *Socrealistyczne przypadki Stanisława Lema*, *Puls*. vol. 45, 1990, pp. 63–74.

337 Stanisław Bereś, *Socrealistyczne przypadki Stanisława Lema*, op. cit., p. 64.

338 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

339 Anaton Smuszkiewicz, *Stanisław Lem*, Poznań: Rebis, 1995, p. 14.

In his study of Lem, Smuszkiewicz notes that the stories were mainly written as a source of income, hence their thrilling and entertaining nature. The only work that was not cast into oblivion was ‘Koniec świata o ósmej’, which was included in the 1957 collection *Dzienniki gwiazdowe* (*The Star Diaries/Memoirs of a space traveller*), although just one edition of this volume was published. Smuszkiewicz’s claim that the themes examined in Lem’s earlier works would resurface later in his career somewhat contradicts his unfavourable opinion of these pieces.

Jerzy Jarzębski has also mentioned the early works in the afterword to the first edition of *Człowiek z Marsa* (1994). Jarzębski notes that Lem wrote this piece in parallel with other thrillers from the same period, meaning that they all featured similar themes of military threats, as a response to the needs of readers. Jarzębski even claims that the plot of the novel seems to resemble that of *Miasto atomowe*.³⁴⁰

More recent publications that have appeared since Lem’s death also make sparse reference to the early short stories. Marek Oramus claims that British and American realities were treated superficially.³⁴¹ But even this was enough, it should be noted, for permission for publication to be withheld. Wojciech Orliński, meanwhile, notes the similarities between these novels and pulp fiction.³⁴²

Lem did mention his juvenilia in interviews. In conversations with Stanisław Bereś (published 1987), he mentioned only one of the short stories.

I was also imitating Stefan Żeromski to whom I had sent a few things. *Kuźnica* published one or two of my short stories. I remember only that one of them was about some kind of tank and was called *KW-1*. I am not sure where I got the idea from. When I pick up fragments of texts written back then, it seems as if I am reading works by somebody else. There is no bond of memory between me today and me who wrote those things back then.³⁴³

In a later, expanded edition of these conversations (2002) not subject to interventions of censors, who had removed a whole chapter referring to contemporary Polish realities and enforced numerous minor changes, Lem spoke

340 Jerzy Jarzębski, *Golem z Marsa*, in: Stanisław Lem, *Człowiek z Marsa*, Warszawa: Nowa, 1994, pp. 130–143.

341 Marek Oramus, *Wojna, szpiegzy i atom*, in: Marek Oramus, *Bogowie Lema*, Warszawa: Kurpisz, 2006, pp. 213–216.

342 Wojciech Orliński, *Zaginione opowieści*, in: Orliński, *Co to są sepulki? Wszystko o Lemie*, Kraków: Znak, 2007, p. 267.

343 Stanisław Bereś, *Rozmowy ze Stanisławem Lemem*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1987, p. 16.

somewhat more extensively about his prose works from 1946–48. While he still only mentions *KW-1*, he does also mention the intellectual atmosphere at the time and the dramatic encounters with censors that he had endured when publishing *Szpital Przemienienia*. In response to Bereś asking why, in light of the significant difficulties he was facing personally and professionally in 1949 and 1950 (his medical studies were incomplete and he lacked any significant job prospects; then he was interned by the security services), he did not seek to publish a collection of the numerous short stories previously published in the press, Lem stated:

Because they were not original. Furthermore, over time I was raising my narrative standards and no longer turned any old thing into a story. I wrote those stories for money. Simply put, for a long time I could not really find my way and I did know what my strengths were. I still had no idea what I was made for. Those classicist-style poems, post-Rilke, epigones, those fragments of prose that proved highly unsatisfactory – the talentless writer and hack remained strong in me. [...] Those were years of experimentation. I still have great affection for *Szpital Przemienienia* and I am still surprised how that book “shot out of me” since everything that I had written before and afterwards is significantly inferior to it. Weaker, less true, stilted, not my own and as if somehow placed on stilts.³⁴⁴

Lem’s memory seems to have failed him here.

There is no mention of the early texts in the volume *Świat na krawędzi* (The world on edge), which features interviews with Tomasz Fiałkowski,³⁴⁵ even though Lem mentions the problems that he had with censors in publishing *Szpital Przemienienia*.

Since 2005, Lem’s early short stories have been available in Polish in book form as the final volume of *Dzieła zebrane*, his collected works. The volume bears the name *Lata czterdzieste. Dyktanda* (The 1940s: Dictations), with their appearance meaning that the author had finally approved them. This volume features thirteen short stories (including two that are excerpts of *Czas nieutracony*; Time not lost), twelve poems published in the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and the humorous texts for spelling bees (dictations) that Lem wrote in 1970. The short stories included are: *V nad Londynem*, *Plan Anti-V*, *D-Day*, *KW-1*, *Obcy*, *Miasto atomowe*, *Człowiek z Hiroshimy*, *Koniec świata o ósmej*, *Trust Twoich Marzeń*, *Historia o wysokim napięciu* and *Dzieje jednego odkrycia*. Alongside the short stories, there are also the works *Operation Reinhard* (written in 1949) and

344 *Tako rzecze... Lem. Ze Stanisławem Lemem rozmawia Stanisław Bereś*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002, p. 53.

345 *Świat na krawędzi. Ze Stanisławem Lemem rozmawia Tomasz Fiałkowski*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000.

Dyżur doktora Trzynieckiego (Dr. Trzyniecki's shift; 1950), and fragments of the second and third parts of *Czas nieutracony* (Time not lost), which were never again published in full after 1955.

Jerzy Jarzębski, editor of the collected works, wrote in an afterword to this volume titled *Początki* (Beginnings) that

this is the first time such a book has appeared in Poland. It features in a single volume of works with which he began his literary career [...]. Lem's short stories were published by periodicals of vastly diverse political orientation, from *Tygodnik Powszechny* to *Żołnierz Polski*. Never before have these works appeared in one volume in Poland, although this did take place some years ago in Germany.³⁴⁶

There is no mention here, however, of the plan to publish six short stories together in 1949.

Jerzy Jarzębski and Andrzej Wójcik make their claims in relation to all of Lem's early short stories, including those that were not included in the proposed collection *Wywiad i atomy*. Jarzębski stressed the presence of heroic and martyrological tropes related to the Shoah, as well as the prevalence of war themes, writing that 'the war was the most popular subject in the 1940s, nothing else could compete with it and it was only the Stalinist-era supervisors of literature who managed, not without difficulty, to push it into the background, as it was a politically unsafe subject'.³⁴⁷

Jarzębski was the first to offer a generally positive assessment of these works.

Lem wrote these pieces skilfully, incorporating elements of suspense, while doing everything that was expected of an author of popular literature. Yet, as was also the case with Gombrowicz's *Opętani* (*Possessed, or The secret of Myslotch*), he could not completely hide what truly fascinated him and the questions that he was genuinely interested in.³⁴⁸

Some of the analysis cited above does not stand up to scrutiny, I believe, when it is confronted with Lem's texts. It seems that the negative perception of them was to a significant degree shaped by Lem himself, as well as by the inevitable comparisons with his significantly superior later works. Many of the short stories demonstrate a fascination with the western world, something that Wójcik held against them. This was most probably a result, on the one hand, of his interest in advanced technologies, and, on the other hand, of comparison with impoverished Polish reality. The extensive descriptions of motorcars seem to suggest the young

346 Jerzy Jarzębski, *Początki. Posłowie* (Afterword) to: Stanisław Lem, *Lata czterdzieste. Dyktanda*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2005, p. 408.

347 Jerzy Jarzębski, *Początki*, op. cit., p. 409.

348 *Ibid.*, s. 410.

author's yearning for a world of technological progress, prosperity, and hopes for the future. Similar adoration for cars can also be found in the poetry of Andrzej Bursa from more or less the same period. Here, for example, is a somewhat poetic description from the short story *Człowiek z Hiroshimy*:

There were already several dozen cars in front of the building; one look was enough to know that they were the best motorcars around. American automobiles prevailed, the most recent models from Buick and Chevrolet. Graham's Chrysler, which I arrived in, seemed rather ordinary in the company of these giants made of glass and metal that glistened like majolica.³⁴⁹

Between 1946 and 1948, the UK and USA could still be presented as the world of progress, while from the time of *Astronauta* it could only be associated with the communist order.

It is difficult to agree with Bereś's view that the technological realm prevailed over the human one in these works. *Placówka*, for example, which tells the story a Jewish girl who remains stationed at her post by the door of a wardrobe hiding over a dozen people, demonstrates Lem's ability to depict many aspects of human existence – fear, dedication, and profundity – in a very short narrative.³⁵⁰ Even those works where technological advances are an important part of the plot, there is rarely a sense that the technological aspects prevail. In the short story *Obcy*, the perpetuum mobile created by a young boy seems to be a way of representing the indifference of fate, which can crush the most genial being just as it crushes the most ordinary. The technological tropes seem equal to the human aspects in the work, with Lem most interested, it would seem, in encounters between them.

I would tend towards Jarzębski's opinion that these short stories are well-written with no evident logical flaws or repetitions. There are better works (*Miasto atomowe* and *Człowiek z Hiroshimy*) alongside lesser pieces (*KW-1*). Is it really possible to simply divide these works into realist and sci-fi pieces? I would say so, with the caveat that the elements of utopian technology that appear in the works – deadly radiation, inflammable substances, a camera that enables live observation of an atomic explosion and contemporary methods of combatting cancer – were not that far removed from existing technologies. These elements enrich the known world but cannot be considered a counter-image of it.

Several of the abovementioned critics have remarked that there were themes in the early works that Lem would develop in future. There are certainly particular plot elements that are strikingly similar to situations presented later. More

349 Stanisław Lem, *Człowiek z Hiroshimy*, in: *Lata czterdzieste*, op. cit., p. 183.

350 Stanisław Lem, *Placówka*. *Kuźnica*, vol. 6, 1946, pp. 7–8.

important, however, are the more general similarities. The earliest works feature all those elements that researchers later came to consider typical of Stanisław Lem's entire oeuvre.³⁵¹ They thus feature:

- A closed space: a laboratory, a mad scientist's flat, or a factory producing top-secret weapons;
- Archetypal protagonists: idealistic professionals, scientists overcome with creative passions, and fanatical spies;
- Chance deciding people's fate;
- Depictions of advanced technologies.

The shelved publication from 1949 and the 2005 volume present the short stories in the same order: *Wywiad i atomy* thus features *Odwet*, *V nad Londynem*, *Plan Anti-V*, *D-Day*, *Miasto atomowe* and *Człowiek z Hiroshimy*. The volume from the Polish edition of Lem's collected works includes significantly more stories but, with the exception of *Odwet*, which was left out of Jarzębski's collection (I was unable to locate this text in the likely periodicals published between 1945 and 1949; it could also be the case that it was never previously submitted for publication), the stories appear in the same order as was proposed in 1949. As Jarzębski notes in his postscript to the 2005 volume:

It is worth commenting on the order that the short stories appear in here. It is not the order in which they were written, but rather the chronology of events depicted that is significant. The story thus begins in occupied Poland before moving on to the sensational efforts of military intelligence to combat new, destructive weapons, primarily in the Anglo-Saxon theatre of war, hence the numerous battle scenes, before ending in the post-war period with (somewhat distorted) depictions of American realities.³⁵²

The mysterious coincidence of the order of the stories can thus be explained: the different works are similar enough in terms of subject matter that they form a larger story that maintains a degree of logical cause-and-effect progression. They also feature the same protagonist who is depicted at various points in his life, as Wójcik has noted. It is a contemporary story about the Second World War, which features a few elements of science-fiction, but nevertheless remains clearly rooted in the period.

In the subsequent short stories, the main focus is on the battle of minds involved in creating and stealing outlines for new means of destruction. The action-packed aspects

³⁵¹ See, for example: Jerzy Jarzębski, *Wszechświat Lema*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002.

³⁵² Jerzy Jarzębski, *Początki*, op. cit., p. 409.

of the protagonists' actions go hand-in-hand with the author's fascination with issues of technology that seem to be addressed by the by. [...] On the one hand, the texts are full of youthful enchantment with technological perfection while, on the other hand, they reveal the moral disgust at the ways in which such technologies are used in practice.³⁵³

It should be stressed that among the sixteen short stories Lem wrote between 1946 and 1948, the most interesting are, it seems, those that were planned for inclusion in the collection *Wywiad i atomy*, as they are the most action-packed and most attractive for readers. All of the pieces relate to the activities of the intelligence services (sometimes depicted in a rather unbelievable fashion), new military technologies, and the production of the atom bomb. All of the stories are set outside Poland (with the possible exception of *Odwet*) which, as Jarzębski remarks in his editor's note in *Człowiek z Marsa*, was particularly attractive for readers exhausted by the war and post-war realities. However, this was also the main justification used by Stalinist-era censors to reject the publication of the collection. It is also worth addressing the issue of the title. *Wywiad i atomy* is quite an eye-catching title that would certainly attract readers' attention. Whether it came from Lem or the publishers is difficult to tell. What is clear, however, is that it is highly appropriate for this collection of six short stories. If we accept the hypothesis that Lem selected the title and the order of the short stories, then we can suggest that from among his juvenilia he picked out works that formed a certain whole. He thus created a cycle of stories. While the 2005 collection offers more extensive content, it undermines the added value of the 1949 selection.* [*I published this subchapter in somewhat different form as K. Budrowska, 'Wywiad i atomy'. O niepublikowanym zbiorze opowiadań Stanisława Lema (*Wywiad i atomy*. On Stanisław Lem's unpublished collection of short stories), *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 2 (2008), pp. 191–198.]

***Człowiek z Marsa* (The Man from Mars)**

The incomplete nature of the GUKPPiW archival record means that it cannot be established for certain whether *Człowiek z Marsa* was submitted as a bound work to the censorship office. However, other archival collections are useful in this respect.

The archival sources produced by the Ministry of Culture and Art relating to 1949 include four files with reviews of texts submitted for publication. It is worth emphasizing that the relations between the Ministry and GUKPPiW were highly complicated. To put it most simply, the Ministry received texts

353 Ibidem.

that were perceived as potentially problematic. The publishers sought to protect themselves by requesting the Ministry's opinion on controversial works. If it was negative, then the texts were not forwarded to GUKPPiW, thus saving on costs. The reviews produced at the Ministry's Department of Artistic Output (Departament Tworzości Artystycznej) were typically of higher intellectual and linguistic standard than those written at the censorship office. Still, the reviewers were not averse to newspeak. The Ministry also used completely different forms that suggested particular points that were to be addressed in the summary. All of the Ministry reviews were typed and their authors received handsome remuneration that was calculated by the page, with bonuses paid for more challenging works. Requests for reviews could be submitted to the Ministry by authors, publishers or censorship offices. To establish who made the request in the case of Lem's novel, it was necessary to turn to another archival collection, namely the documents relating to the publishing house Gebethner i Wolff.³⁵⁴

The majority of the Ministry files relate to children's and youth literature. This is the category that Stanisław Lem's fairly short, 108-page novel *Areanthropos* was classified under when it was submitted by Gebethner i Wolff in October 1949. The change in title should be noted. When Lem published his short story *Obcy* (The Alien) in *Nowy Świat Przygód* (a journal whose title translates as New World of Adventure), he gave it a simple title that also reflected the sensationalist profile of the publication it appeared in. The academic-sounding title *Areanthropos*, which is what other protagonists called the new arrival from outer space, was perhaps intended to give the work an air of seriousness as it was to appear in book form rather than in a 'rag' for uneducated audiences. The new title almost certainly came from Lem, as is indicated by a letter dated 25 September 1948, sent by the publishers:

Dear Sir,

We read your manuscript of *Kula czasu* and *Areanthropos* with great interest.

We would like to include one of the works, namely *Areanthropos*, in our publication schedule for 1949. We regret that we are unable to publish the other work, *Kula czasu*, because we have obligations to other authors and we must therefore limit the number of new works that we offer.

Once our publication schedule is approved by the state authorities, we shall contact you again and send a draft of the contract.

We would also like to ask if you would be interested in submitting for perusal any other of your manuscripts, since we have learned that you have several completed works. We

354 IBL PAN, Gebethner i Wolff, call numbers 194 to 205.

would be grateful if you could contact Dr. Słapa with regard to this matter or, should he be unavailable, editor Olchowicz.

If you could also inform us if you would like us to return your manuscript of *Kula czasu* or whether you would like to collect it yourself, should you be in Warsaw.

We look forward to your response and send sincerest regards.³⁵⁵

It is not clear whether Lem was thus encouraged to send other works. In an interview he did state that he submitted *Szpital Przemienienia*. Equally, the case of *Kula czasu* (Time sphere) seems particularly intriguing and would be a worthy topic of research. What can be stated with some certainty, however, is that the publishers were sufficiently interested in *Areanthropos* to submit it for assessment. The available archival sources do not make clear the connections between the two versions of the text, i.e. the version published in 1946 and the one submitted to Gebethner i Wolff in 1948. Perhaps the answer is to be found in Lem's papers.

Here I cite in full the first review from the Ministry, signed off with an illegible signature on 27 October 1949:

This is a science-fiction novel that combines the themes of the mystery of Mars with the issue of technological progress, including the question of atomic energy. Since the author employs diverse technological motifs and introduces a host of terms and processes from the realm of physics, the work should be read and assessed by experts in that field. If their opinion is positive, then Lem's novel would deserve to be published, after conducting certain changes and corrections.

The basic premise of the novel is interesting and develops in a generally well-considered fashion. The work is at the level of a good scientific thriller in the style of Jules Verne and is far superior to the older science-fiction novels of Wł. Umiński, while the seriousness of the narrative (not the style) is closer to Żuławski's *Na srebrnym globie* (On the silver globe).

The biggest shortcoming of the novel is its opening and ending, which should be reworked in light of the quality of the whole work. The opening (the first chapter) follows the conventions of those unwholesome American thriller novels – and this is very much to the detriment of the work. The ending leaves the reader hanging: the professor hides behind some “secrets” and refuses to reveal the true state of affairs, meaning that readers are thus denied a logical ending and are left to draw their own conclusions. Such “mystery” should not hang over the ending.

The central question – that of the creature from Mars – has not been developed clearly. Regardless of the oddness of its construction, the author ultimately presents it as a dangerous monster, although, on the other hand, it does not kill people and even

355 IBL PAN, Gebethner i Wolff, sygn. 201, p. 82 (copy).

shows them “life” on Mars in a fantastical dream, meaning that the reader does not ultimately know what the crucial reasons were behind the research team’s decision to destroy this “character”.

In the view of the author of this report, this not entirely justified pessimistic overtone casts a significant cloud over the whole work. The author did not need to turn this creature into a monster; he could have developed its positive traits (which he has done only partially), while its struggle for survival should be shifted into the realm of the ideological struggles between people. – But all of this can be improved.

It is also advisable for the novel to lose its “American” overtones because the plot could be set in other countries, including Poland.

Despite these remarks, I believe that Lem’s novel – following certain alterations – would offer a valuable contribution to literature aimed at older youths (and, to some degree, at adults).

The final verdict reads: ‘The novel is fundamentally valuable, although it requires certain changes and alterations as recommended in the review. It deserves to be published following the corrections.’

The first review was positive despite recommending far-reaching changes: changing the setting of the plot, altering the unclear ending, and reworking the depiction of the protagonist from outer-space. It can be assumed that were Lem to have fulfilled all of these requests, then he would have been forced to write a different novel altogether, which indeed proved to be the case with devastating effects with *Szpital Przemienienia*.

The second review is undated and was signed by Helena Wielowieyska.

An alien from Mars fell to Earth in the United States of America: Areantropos (sic!), a creature possessing exceptional intelligence. It is a mixture of a living being and a highly complex and precise machine. It resembles a hybrid of the atomic bomb and a human being. Areantropos most probably wants to destroy our world. His efforts are stopped by several scientists and an unemployed young journalist, who all study the strange creature very closely initially before disarming it after Areantropos had killed their colleagues and threatened life on our planet.

Areantropos is a typical thriller that employs scientific terms. It is not entirely clear, what value this “scientificity” has – and it should be checked urgently (let a physicist assess it). Secondly, the book’s ideology is far removed from life: the author preaches some kind of general human solidarity as a form of self-defence against the hostile acts of creatures from another planet. This is typical escapism, i.e. an escape from the hot social and political topics of our times. This idea is presented explicitly on the final pages. The novel’s condemnation of American capitalism does not result from the plot, but is merely an ad hoc addition that is not clearly connected to the action. Why the scientist’s experiments take place in secret, away from the eyes of the capitalists, why they would want to collaborate with the Martians and harm Earthlings remains unknown – and this is an unforgivable error.

And which group of readers is the book deemed suitable for? '[F]or the intelligentsia and youth with an education in mathematics and natural sciences.' The final verdict given was: 'The book is of questionable ideological value, artistically uninteresting, and demands significant prior specialist knowledge on the part of its readers. It should not be published.'³⁵⁶

The document features a handwritten note from a superior – 'Negatively'. The review adopts a highly didactic tone as it stresses the book's ideological failings, its escapism and somewhat weak condemnation of American capitalism. The review also denied the novel any artistic value. Helena Wielowieyska was left with no doubt: *Człowiek z Marsa* offered readers nothing. It is possible that this assessment was written *pro forma*, with the management of the censorship office having already decided to refuse permission to publish the work. Numerous examples of such practices can be traced throughout the archive.

New light is shed on the matter by letters sent from the Krakow office of the publishers Gebethner i Wolff to their Warsaw office, which in all likelihood was responsible for contacts with the Ministry. The letters were written before the censors' reviews, which would thus suggest that either the archive is incomplete or, what is equally possible, decisions were being taken orally. What is clear is that Lem made changes to the novel in advance of the decision. A letter dated 3 August 1949 states:

We sent you the first text, Sirs, after the author had made some changes that were discussed in person with Dr. Gebethner who, it should be noted, in a telephone conversation with us expressed a positive view of the changes and has promised to take the matter forwards once Mr. Klauze returns from holiday. And this is very urgent if *Areanthropos* is to appear in time for this year's festive season.³⁵⁷

In another letter, dated 3 September 1949, the matter was addressed again:

We would like to ask you for an update on Lem's *Areanthropos*. The author has enquired as to whether the changes he has made have met with the Ministry of Culture's approval and if the novel has been forwarded to the censors. Likewise, he has also asked when it will be time to sign the contract and remains hopeful that it will appear in time for the festive season.³⁵⁸

There is, unfortunately, no written record of the justification of the decision to deny permission to publish the book and whether the decision was motivated

356 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Wydawniczy, sygn. 705, not paginated.

357 IBL PAN, Gebethner i Wolff, sygn. 204/4, p. 166.

358 IBL PAN, Gebethner i Wolff, sygn. 204/4, p. 177.

solely by the content of the text or whether it was also connected to the campaign against private publishers that was gaining pace in autumn 1949. It is also not known, whether the censors read the corrected version and if so, how far-reaching the changes were.

It is also worth emphasizing that the book was read as a work suitable for older youths and garnered comparisons to Verne. This would prove to be a common way of reading Lem's early works. Perhaps officials from the Ministry of Culture and Art were partly responsible for the emergence of this trend. The second review, like the first, also saw youths as the target audience, while stating more precisely that it was suited to young people with an education in mathematics and the natural sciences. This explains why the book was sent to the Department of Artistic Works to be read and also why Lem was seen as yet another author who was seeking to serve naïve readers. It soon became clear that this classification was not necessarily a curse but could also be a blessing.

Człowiek z Marsa suffered as a result of the attempts to publish it in the late 1940s. It remained unpublished for many years in Poland, appearing first in 1994 with the publishers Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza Nowa. It was then included as one of thirty-three volumes in the collected works edited by Jerzy Jarzębski, with the version there based on the text that appeared in *Nowy Świat Przygód*. The editor's notes do not mention the attempts to have the novel published with Gebethner i Wolff. Stanisław Lem also made no reference to this matter.

He wanted to publish this early text as a book but, as was the case with *Wywiad i atomy*, Lem was thwarted by the restrictions imposed by the censorship authorities.

***Szpital Przemienienia* (Hospital of the Transfiguration)**

Completed in 1948, his debut novel about Doctor Stefan Trzyniecki is seen by researchers as the final work of Lem's juvenilia. In the interviews with Stanisław Bereś, Lem spoke of his attachment to the text and reaffirmed its artistic value. In the late 1970s, Lem agreed to an English translation of the work which was then published in New York (1988) and London (1989).³⁵⁹ The value of *Szpital Przemienienia* is impossible to overstate since, beyond the forgotten early short stories, this is the only time that Lem explicitly addressed the Second World War and Shoah.

359 *Współcześni polscy pisarze i badacze literatury. Słownik biobibliograficzny*, ed. by Jadwiga Czachowska and Alicja Szalagan, vol. 5, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1994, p. 45.

I am only interested in a particularly narrow aspect of the novel, namely its publication history and, more specifically, the few fragments of the story that can be reconstructed on the basis of the available archival sources. It is also worth stressing that the original version of the text is not available; only the significantly altered version following interventions from GUKPPiW is known.

As we know, *Szpital Przemienienia* did not appear in either 1948 or 1949 because it proved unpublishable. Lem repeatedly corrected it and added the previously unplanned and more politically correct second and third parts. The trilogy *Czas nieutracony* (Time not lost) was published by Wydawnictwo Literackie in 1955 during the thaw, so seven years after the first part was written, it was already an anachronistic piece when it appeared. As Ewa Szczepkowska has written,

despite the numerous changes to the text enforced by the publisher in order to make the work as close as possible to the ideal of the socialist realist novel, *Czas nieutracony* appeared only in 1955. Only its first part, *Szpital Przemienienia*, was approved for reedition by the author, while the other two parts were treated as relics, documenting the epoch when they were written, meaning that they were rejected in future. The *Czas nieutracony* cycle, apart from the first part, proved to be a work that was doubly marginalized in Lem's oeuvre: both as a result of the pressures of an epoch that imposed a socialist-realist form on novels and also as a result of the subject matter, which Lem later completely abandoned.³⁶⁰

Of course, it is somewhat imprecise to speak of pressure from the publishers, while it should also be mentioned that Wydawnictwo Literackie was only established in 1953.

In the interview mentioned above, Lem stated fairly enigmatically that he initially submitted the novel to Gebethner i Wolff, as was the case with *Areanthropos*. But since the publisher was dissolved and the liquidated assets transferred, he was forced to begin his regular journeys to Warsaw. The conversations concerning the changes to be made to *Szpital Przemienienia* took place, he said, at Książka i Wiedza, whose editors were renowned for their zealotry and fastidiousness.³⁶¹ It is difficult to confirm this information based on the sources available to me, but it is clear that Lem's memory often failed him. There is no evidence in the archives of the text being submitted to either Gebethner i Wolff

360 Ewa Szczepkowska, *Doświadczenie inicjacji w autobiograficznej i realistycznej prozie Lema*, in: *Z problemów prozy. Powieść inicjacyjna*, ed. by Wojciech Gutowski and Ewa Owczarz, Toruń 2003, p. 457.

361 *Tako rzeczy Lem*, op. cit., p. 50.

or to *Książka i Wiedza*. It could also be the case, however, that the text never got further than the publishers' editorial offices.

Whether any conversations were held on the subject of the novel at GUKPPiW is also impossible to state with certainty. Perhaps further archival research could confirm this. The editors certainly carried out directives issued by the censorship authorities, while they often anticipated them, which was a common part of collaboration with them.

The only censors' reviews of *Szpital Przemienienia* that could be found are from 1955 and relate to the version submitted by Wydawnictwo Literackie. Two of the available assessments are primary reviews, which passed the trilogy for publication, while there is also a secondary review that judged both the text itself as well as the quality of initial assessments.

The publishers expressed an intention to publish the text in May 1955, receiving a positive response. Interestingly, the first two reviews gave the title as *Kontrapunkt* (Counterpoint) rather than *Czas nieutracony*. The third part also has a different title to the published version, namely *Powrót z wysp* (Return from the islands). The sources I have examined do not indicate who inspired the changes to the title and when. The publishers proposed a substantial print run of 10,000, which is hardly surprising given the censor's positive reviews. Nevertheless, this was, to a large degree, a work that was written to order.

The first review was signed by A. Lisiecka on 28 May 1955. The assessment fills four typed pages and there are no notes from superiors. I reproduce extensive passages from it below, omitting the sections that summarize the work:

The main problem with *Kontrapunkt* is the issue of the ideological transformation of the member of the intelligentsia, who, having struggled with his old burdens, finally breaks free of his position as a "neutral", who did not get actively involved in life, and ultimately comes over to the right side. [...] While Dr Trzyniecki does not immediately become a communist, faithful readers will believe that there is no chance of him abandoning the path that he had chosen once and for all. The author places heavy emphasis on the fact that there are no "neutrals" in the current realities, meaning that it is necessary to take up a position on one or the other side of the barricades. Prof. Rzepicki is someone who believed he was completely apolitical, but he thus unwillingly assisted the enemy. It seems to me that the figure of Stefan and the motives behind his behaviour will be clear to readers, with Lem thus coming out on top in the way he deals with the issue of the transformation of this member of the intelligentsia.

The author also deals with another issue very skilfully, one that is explored at length in the novel – namely the Jewish experience during the occupation.

The censor goes on to summarize the issues addressed by Lem, namely the social and material stratification of Jewish society and his description of Polish society during the war and following liberation. The censor's conclusion reads:

Lem does not always tell the story to the end; he leaves some questions open allowing readers to draw their own conclusions. [...] Lem's novel demonstrates great skill in developing the plot, it has great style and often presents surprising terms and images, while also exhibiting great knowledge of some of the more arcane aspects of the medical profession. There are, for example, highly suggestive descriptions of various medical symptoms and of difficult operations. Aside from the overlong and convoluted philosophical discussions, particularly in volume one (Sekułowski's tirades), the book is a real page-turner, while some scenes are genuinely moving.

The author uses the term "Germans" to describe the Nazi occupiers. This can be justified, since the milieu described by the author is likely to have used this term during the occupation.

In the first volume, Lem writes about Ukrainian brigades that served the Nazis and carried out the liquidation of the psychiatric hospital in Bierzynieć. The issue of Ukrainian fascists reappears in volumes two and three. Since the Ukrainian question in World War II is largely unknown among some sections of society, it could be worthwhile adding an explanation in a footnote.

There are some economic remarks – the location of the electricity substation [...] and the location of the power plant in Rafałówka, whose output is also stated. – to be decided by W.S.

One page 172 of the second volume, Captain Zawojski, the enemy of the revolution who was a witness to the revolutionary events in Ufa in 1917, states that 'in the surrounding villages there were some cases of cannibalism'. I am not sure whether such words, even if uttered by an enemy, are permissible.

In volume two, the author refers to the recruitment of Soviet prisoners by the Wehrmacht (they were forced to join through starvation). I am not familiar with this issue and I am unsure as to whether or not objections will be raised in relation to it.

Beyond these minor issues, there are no objections to the work as a whole.³⁶²

The second review fills nine pages of typescript, which is some kind of a record. It was signed off on 3 June 1955 by the censor Kazimierz Kudroń. It suggests that the only thing that should be removed is the reference to cases of cannibalism during the period of terrible hunger in Russia. His superior agreed. Both censors were thus in agreement on this matter.

A handwritten note from the superior comments on both reviews together: 'the observation regarding page 172 (cannibalism in Russia) is legitimate; permission for typesetting is granted'. Both reviews were judged to have been accurate

362 AAN, GUKPPiW, 395, teczka 32/12, pp. 57–59.

and correctly written, although Lisiecka's remaining observations were judged superfluous.

I will cite extensive passages from Kudroń's review, omitting those sections that reproduce the plot.

The repertory of contemporary novels addressing the occupation era and initial post-war years has acquired a further work – Stanisław Lem's trilogy (*Szpital Przemienienia*, *Wśród umarłych*, and *Powrót z wysp*). While novels such as Putrament's *Wrzesień* (September), Żukrowski's *Dni klęski* (Days of defeat) and Szczepański's latest, *Polska jesień* (Polish autumn) primarily explore Poland's defeat in September 1939, mentioning briefly only the first days of occupation, Lem's trilogy offers an extensive epilogue to those novels as it begins at the point that Szczepański's book ends. Lem differs from his predecessors not only because of the period that he explores but also, and primarily, thanks to his perspective. While Putrament, Żukrowski and Szczepański reproduce the September defeat as, first and foremost, a national-political phenomenon in which people fade into the background, in Lem's works human beings as individuals or in groups are in the foreground, always marked by their internal contradictions that reflect everything that is human and non-human. The central plot axis is centred upon the fate and life of the young doctor Stefan Trzyniecki, who came from an impoverished land-owning family [...].

Located somewhere in the distant provinces that initially remained unaware of the occupation as news failed to reach them, this hospital became the eponymous hospital of the transfiguration of doctor Stefan Trzyniecki. It was here that he first started looking differently at life and began to understand it, learning to respect even the mentally ill as human beings. [...] The Jewish experience emerges as the central focus of the depiction of the occupation, with the author offering a faithful and convincing representation of it that will move even the most indifferent reader.

Stefan embodies someone undergoing ideological evolution, with the process concluding in the third volume. After overcoming his internal struggles, Stefan emphatically joins our side, trusting in the party while expressing his concerns, taking up a party post while not being a member, although he is delighted to see the construction of Mariensztat and the W-Z (East-West) route through Warsaw, has various flings, which is normal for any leading protagonist of a novel, before finding true love and hoping for marriage. There are such hopes. The greatest achievement of the third volume is, without doubt, depicting Stefan as a hero who has been transformed from the descendent of expropriated landowners into a new man who loves himself and others, a human being who is not an embodiment of Marxist ideology but in the next volume he would almost certainly ask to join the party. It would have been too soon for him in this volume. [...] By the third volume, the party has its finger on the pulse of life. [...] The third volume is undoubtedly the best. It describes the ongoing process of which we are part as a pleasant process and thus even the most difficult postnatal operation is no longer repugnant, as it was in the second volume, because here it is connected to a generally optimistic mood.

And the conclusion to the review:

When it comes to the work as a whole, it should be recognised as a great achievement, with Stanisław Lem demonstrating that he is comfortable not only writing about interplanetary creatures (*Obłok Magellana*) but also about more down-to-earth matters, showing people as they are in this contemporary age. The trilogy is genuinely good and perhaps even superior to *Polska jesień*, since it not only depicts the changes affecting individuals but also forces readers into deep contemplation thanks to its powerful impact as its convincing tone leaves the work etched in their memories.

The novel also features a whole host of humorous moments that the author skilfully distributes throughout the chapters, moments that are sometimes perhaps too serious to be a source of laughter, but he does it so instinctively. [...] It is such moments that ensure that the challenging and pleasant moments balance each other out, meaning that the work leaves a generally pleasant impression.

It is necessary to make one intervention to an overly drastic sentence on page 172 of the second volume where the author describes the fate of people who are ideologically alien to us and claims at one point that during the October Revolution in Russia there were 'cases of cannibalism' when hunger was rife. Stressing such drastic moments that have not been presented officially and which cannot be verified would be damaging.³⁶³

On the basis of the reviews cited here, it is possible to trace, in very general terms, the trajectory of the changes that Lem had to make to the original single-volume edition. Of course, it seems that the closest equivalent that we have of that virtual prototype would be the one volume from the trilogy that the author authorized for republication.

Firstly, censorship officials read the work as part of the wave of 'intelligentsia reckonings with the past', hence the emphasis on Stefan's inconsistent attitudes. In all likelihood, the goal was to efface these inconsistencies. The protagonist's ideological struggle proved a challenge in *Szpital Przemienienia*, while there is something of a breakthrough in the second volume and more emphatically in the third, as he comes out in favour of communism. A particularly delightful assumption on the part of the censor was that Trzyniecki would join the party, most probably in a fourth volume.

The censors' reviews thus accordingly placed great emphasis on the issue of ideological neutrality that was alien and hostile to the 'new faith'. They are also suspicious of the overly long and convoluted philosophical tirades that appear in the first volume. In all likelihood, they had already been shortened, thus diluting the intertextual connections to Mann's *Magic Mountain*.

The content of the second and third volumes, however, was judged correct, in particularly the descriptions of everyday life under Nazi occupation, including the diverse attitudes towards Germans. 'The third volume is undoubtedly the

363 AAN, GUKPPiW, 395, teczka 32/12, pp. 63–70 (the pagination in the file is imprecise).

best', the GUKPPIW official stated authoritatively. It was only his horrific war experiences (in a concentration camp) and Trzyniecki's decision to contribute to the rebuilding of the country that provide justification for the presence of a member of the intelligentsia as the hero of a novel published in 1955.

In his typology of political prose, Stanisław Gawliński has argued that

the mainstream of "intelligentsia reckonings with the past" appeared between 1946 and 1948, while the first prose texts that reckoned with Poland's pre-war history were published between 1946 and 1952. The similarities and differences between the two strands were determined not by their timeframes but by the degree of ideological inspiration that was evident in the works by particular authors.³⁶⁴

It seems that *Szpital Przemienienia* trod the very fine line between the revision of individual attitudes and taking full responsibility for this, on the one hand, and a critique of external circumstances, on the other, while projecting some responsibility for moral unease onto them.

The secondary review written by Comrade Trębicki on 7 January 1956 sheds new light on the circumstances surrounding the publication of *Czas nieutracony*. The censor noted that the publishers had been waiting for five years for an opportunity to publish the book, a situation that he deemed unacceptable. The censor's notes are long, covering seven pages that are partially illegible. I will cite extensive passages here:

With the Obersturmführer demanding an exact count of the patients at the institution the day before the execution, a dilemma emerges: to tell the truth and live with a guilty conscience or to save some of the unfortunates from death by lying while risking one's own life... As the salvos of execution resound, the mathematical genius and son of a communist Karol Wilk faces the question: to accept this person into the party or to remove such a valuable individual from the frontline of those involved in the struggle, thus protecting him from immediate danger...

Finally, as the money-grabbing surgeon makes a hash of Wartheim's (sic!) operation* (removing the womb), he faces a difficult problem: to preserve the clinic's good name, or to denounce his colleague to the prosecutor. Such decisions are taken, of course, after significant internal struggles and produce a chain reaction which, whatever we might call it – life, destiny or fate – becomes the focus of the protagonist's experiences and determines what becomes of their character. The problems they face are hardly the most original, but this is not only the author's fault. Five years this little book (sic!) was held by the publishers before it could reach readers towards the end of 1955. Five years!

The issues addressed in *Czas nieutracony*, cover almost all social groups, not only the rural question, and include experiences in the ghetto and the Home Army. First

364 Stanisław Gawliński, op. cit., p. 21.

and foremost, however, is the intelligentsia working through their conscience, something that has been addressed in [Andrzejewski's] *Popiół i diament* and [K. Brandys'] *Człowiek nie umiera nigdy* (Man never dies). It is this issue that I will focus on, meaning that I will dedicate less attention to other questions, while my remarks are hardly likely to be completely original.

There is a broad spectrum of society presented in the book. [...]

Following a short outline of the protagonists, the review continues:

Having briefly encountered so many protagonists who represent so many ideas and interests, we should pause to consider what the outcome of their roles in the plot is; to put it in somewhat sophisticated terms: what is the writer fighting for?

The first volume presents the argument that the independent intelligentsia is now morally bankrupt, as they seek to wash their hands of politics and refuse to engage in the struggles of our times. The lead protagonist of *Czas nieutracony* Stefan Trzyniecki finds himself at a crossroads – on the one hand he faces subordination to the poetic aesthete, the cretin Sekułowski, while on the other hand, he can opt to join the ongoing struggles; and he does indeed get an education that enables him to understand the meaning of contemporary reality. At a point when the biological survival not only of the intelligentsia but of the entire nation is cast into doubt, there is only one path open to the sober-minded individual – to either accept or reject the path of struggle and battle. [...] The argument presented in the first volume, that the bankruptcy of an attitude that transcends class is affirmed, is then strengthened in the second volume (*Wśród umarłych* – Among the dead). The writer goes even further.

The reviewer presents a summary of Karol Wilk sacrificing his life.

The third volume of *Czas nieutracony* (*Powrót* – Return) presents disturbing tendencies among students who for a period embraced petty bourgeois attitudes. Again, Stefan Trzyniecki, a member of the intelligentsia, emerges as the central figure. [...]

The simplest solution for the writer, whose novel remained stuck in the past of the occupation, would have been to end the book on the suggestion that the period from 1939 to 1945 was lost time, wasted time, for a member of the intelligentsia. But this writer forces Trzyniecki to overcome all his resistance and inhibitions, forces him to overcome all the difficulties faced in our revolution. He is helped in his cause by the party secretary and his co-workers. And there is a lot of work to do. As a party activist he encounters sabotage, a security service officer must denounce an enemy, the Minister of higher education has a problem with a professor, etc. etc.

Not so long ago, our literary press was discussing the validity of epics in our conditions, with some fairly depressing conclusions reached, or the whole issue was dismissed as irrelevant and left open. It seems that an answer has emerged in practice. Lem's *Czas nieutracony* is an attempt, we can state confidently, to return to a form that fell into "neglect" after [Dąbrowska's – PV] *Noce i dnie* (Nights and days). But it is just an attempt. The construction of this novel, running to almost 700 pages, is epic in scope, typical for writers of previous epochs, but – and this is the heart of the matter – the

breadth of the plot is rather over ambitious for a writer like Lem. Particular planes of the plot are not sufficiently developed as part of the overall narrative.

The reviewer then lists particular errors in the composition of the story, as well as the overuse of coincidence as a plot device.

These artificial efforts to forge the various links into a logical chain binding together the fates of all the protagonists to a large extent determine that the epic intentions of *Czas nieutracony* are ultimately weakened. It is simply spread too thin. The promise of an epic story emerging in the first volume is blown from the surface like dust.

Generally speaking, the entire work is written with passion and the author's high literary calibre is evident. Lem's descriptive technique is very interesting, including the descriptions of his protagonists' labour. The focus on production in many contemporary novels, which puts readers off with heavy-going depictions of technology and rather dry descriptive nature, is replaced here with a narrative that presents readers with a host of emotions despite a certain degree, I find, of moderately correct empiricism.

The downsides to the novel are judged to be its naturalistic characterization of the protagonists (all the doctors have pimples) and the use of youth jargon. It was passed, though, without reservations.³⁶⁵

This thaw-era censor's review, which is critical of the artificiality of the socialist-realist inserts that had been previously forced upon the work, is something of a curiosity. It reveals the way in which the office was heavily dependent on the current political climate and was effectively opportunistic. The nonchalance with which Comrade Trębicki forgets why novels such as *Szpital Przemienienia* had to wait years for publication and why he is critical of the second and third volumes is quite astounding. It is difficult to establish why documents such as this review were produced in the first place. Perhaps the censors wanted to deceive themselves?

What situation did Lem and his works find themselves in by the late 1940s? After a series of successful publications between 1946 and 1948, Lem sought to have his work published in book form. In September 1948, Lem completed *Szpital Przemienienia* and set to work on adapting the novel to the publishers' demands, a process that lasted many years. In March 1949, he submitted for publication a collection of short stories that had previously appeared in the press. Despite having been accepted by GUKPPiW officials once already (with the possible exception of *Odwet*), the stories proved unpublishable in light of the shifts in cultural policy. The volume was rejected outright with no opportunity for conducting corrections or changes, or transferring particular texts.

365 AAN, GUKPPiW, 395, teczka 32/12, pp. 1–4.

The collection was also completely forgotten. In October 1949, the Ministry of Culture and Art issued a negative response to an enquiry relating to the publication of *Areanthropos*. By late 1949, it was clear that none of the author's works would appear any time soon. Content that was acceptable prior to the Szczecin Congress, appeared highly subversive immediately after it.

***Astronautci* (The Astronauts)**

Stanisław Lem's debut book was *Astronautci*, published by Czytelnik. Jerzy Jarzębski noted in the introduction to the critical edition of the novel that the work was written quickly, with the text dated 'Krakow, 11.1950 – 05.1951'. It proved to be less impressive a work than *Szpital Przemienienia*, yet it was a hit with readers, its plot proving attractive to readers tired of socialist realism. This was of great surprise to the author.³⁶⁶

Astronautci reached censors on 19 July 1951. The archives hold one positive review. The censor treated the work as a debut piece and passed it for publication without changes. Quickly, on 23 July already, superiors at the censorship office approved the work for typesetting.

The work is based on the famous "cosmic" episode in Siberia in 1908. A huge meteor crashed to earth there, laying waste to a significant area of the taiga as it lodged deep in the earth's crust. It is difficult for me to judge whether the book was based on genuine scientific data. I would suggest so, given the terminology employed in the book. In any case, fantasy is combined with particular knowledge of the subject, making significant reference to our realities. An unquestionable quality of the book is the way that it makes wonderful literary use of the fascinating subject matter. The book has been constructed in such a way that it manages to maintain a clear image of the whole and the unity of the event while leading readers into ever expanding scientific realms. The book is of significant educational value. Bourgeois writers such as Jules Verne or Welles have been unable to present a form of social order that would create conditions enabling exceptional scientific and technical achievements. The plot of the novel *Astronautci* is thus set in the communist era, a long time after the collapse of the final capitalist state and the final war on earth. Having tamed the forces of nature, something that completely transforms the conditions and forms of human life and labour, with humans being the creators and leaders of these achievements, human beings of the communist epoch rule over nature, direct its forces, and are the most intelligent – and thus most important – beings among the limitless forces of nature. The book is ideal for young readers.³⁶⁷

366 Jerzy Jarzębski, *Astronautyczny debiut Lema*, in: S. Lem, *Astronautci*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004, p. 355.

367 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375, teczka 31/28, pp. 494–495.

It is clear that the censor reads the text literally, seeing it as an apotheosis of the universal victory of communism. Furthermore, by mentioning Verne, he considers its audience to be young readers, meaning that it is positioned somewhat lower down the scale of difficulty. This is a view that other censors' reviews, as well as press reviews, repeated in relation to *Astronautci* and Lem's later works.³⁶⁸

The author of the secondary review written on 14 December 1951, after the work had been published and distributed, offered a deeper reading of *Astronautci*. This review was not entirely positive and proposes a minor intervention in the text. More importantly, however, the censor focuses on the idea behind the novel, rather than its plot.

A science-fiction novel. The plot arc follows an interplanetary journey from Earth to Venus.

The plot is set in the 2000s.

The main issues in the book are: 1) the human race's struggle to dominate nature; 2) condemnation of war and destructive human acts; 3) faith in progress and love of other humans and life.

The value of the book: its materialist interpretation of natural phenomena, popularization of scientific achievements and its attempt at marking out perspectives for further development of human life, its optimistic faith in the victory of humanity over destructive forces that are pitched against the human race.

Its shortcomings, failings and downsides: 1) the protagonists are completely removed from their social base: they form a kind of "brain trust" (a gathering of scientists who determine the fate of the mission, whose aim is to prevent a catastrophe that the inhabitants of Venus are seeking to wreak upon Earth). This seems to suggest that in this future order a group or caste of people has emerged who are separate to the rest of society.

2) the depiction of wars as a result of blind and destructive forces. The inhabitants of Venus were fighting each other, leading to mutual destruction, just as imperialist forces do today and how it was once done on Earth. This is an idealist perspective that resembles the attitudes of petit-bourgeois pacifists. The author thus overlooks the class-based aspects of the imperialists' genocidal politics.

Interventions: the claims that humans have also learned to direct social forces that had for centuries made progress pointless by turning it against humans (p. 44). Although there is no direct indication of the era that the author has in mind here, this sentence does not make sense because social forces have not always rendered progress pointless and they can only come under human control in the socialist era. This should be corrected.

368 See, for example: Ludwik Grzeniewski, *Stanisław Lem: „Astronautci“*. *Twórczość*, vol. 6, 1952, pp. 175–178.

Generally speaking, in light of the educational value of this book, it should be considered a valuable contribution to our literature.³⁶⁹

The sentence called into question reads:

Over the course of generations, an age full of difficulties and suffering, [humankind – PV] managed not only to dominate nature but also succeeded in directing social forces that for centuries rendered progress pointless as it was turned against human beings.

Despite the suggestion made in the secondary review, this sentence was not altered in any subsequent edition.

Towards the end of 1952 (and dated 1953), the first new edition of *Astronautci* was commissioned, with further editions following in the thaw-era years of 1955 and 1957. The GUKPPiW archival sources contain only a note confirming approval for the new edition, dated 4 April 1952, with permission for printing following the same day. Distribution was approved on 1 December 1952. This short note is full of admiration for Lem's knowledge of the natural sciences. However, the censor is less impressed by his knowledge from another realm:

A second edition of a science fiction novel aimed at youths. The story presents an interplanetary mission to Venus set in the years 2006-7. The author has skilfully woven a whole host of knowledge from astronomy, physics, hemistry (sic! The original text contains a spelling error here: "hemii"), and optics into the plot. The work is written in a very interesting way, it is gripping and accessible for readers. They learn a lot about achievements in the realm of astronomy, physics, hemistry (sic!) and optics. A weakness of the book is its awful proofreading.³⁷⁰

Literary critics are divided on *Astronautci*. Some, like Stanisław Bereś, consider it a typical example of socialist realism, while others, such as Jerzy Jarzębski, have discovered attempts at camouflage in it. Writing about *Astronautci* and *Obłok Magellana* together, Jarzębski noted that

the victory of communism in Lem's first novels is an honest declaration: ultimately it is about avoiding political questions by casting them in general terms in order to make room for depicting technological utopia, i.e. the issue that the author was genuinely fascinated by.³⁷¹

It is worth highlighting that Bereś and Jarzębski's statements came twelve years apart (1990 and 2002, respectively), thus reflecting the dynamic developments in

369 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375,teczka 31/28, pp. 496–497.

370 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375,teczka 31/30.

371 Jerzy Jarzębski, *Wszechświat Lema*, op. cit., p. 56.

literary studies relating to the Stalinist era, with analyses acquiring greater depth and avoiding simplistic ethical judgements.

***Sezam i inne opowiadania* (Sesame and other stories)**

Sezam was reviewed by GUKPPiW in spring 1954. It was given three positive reviews and a print run of 20,000 was recommended. I will cite the typical excerpts from the lengthy assessments, omitting the plot summaries. The reviews include errors in the titles of the individual short stories. The first review was signed on 5 March 1954 by Comrade Figlewska:

It is difficult to offer an exact assessment of *Sezam*, both because of its thematic diversity and because of the variety of literary forms employed in the different short stories – science-fiction novellas, satire, and even grotesque pieces.

Despite the numerous themes addressed in the short stories, a central issue running through them is evident: that of the limitlessness of human cognition in all realms of life. The starting point for these stories are the great advances made in the sciences and the related great discoveries and inventions that make an even more advanced phase of development possible.

Taken as a whole, the collection can be divided into three parts in terms of the literary form of the individual novellas. While this division might be somewhat artificial, it could also be useful for readers in offering a general characterization and assessment of the whole. [...]

The collection is as a whole highly original, engaging and thrilling, while it also has educational benefits as it encourages engagement with the basics of science (the first short story; *Sezam* – KB). It is highly entertaining and evokes a great many allusions and analogies in the rest of the stories regarding relations with the USA, issues of religious fanaticisms and deception, etc.³⁷²

The censor suggested one intervention on page 135 without specifying the content of the change. She also claimed that the stories will prove successful ‘particularly among young readers’. Her superior approved typesetting on the same day.

The second review employs more simplistic terms, making no attempt to mask its use of the language of propaganda. The handwriting is difficult to decipher. The censor, M. Burczyn, nevertheless proposed no changes in his review from 5 March 1954.

This is a collection of science-fiction short stories, with the majority presenting a satire denouncing and mocking the ruling classes of the USA, their use of racism as a tool of oppression and the imperialist aspirations of those classes, thus offering a scathing take on the “morality” of capitalist regimes, their fear of progressive views becoming

372 AAN, GUKPPiW, 385,teczka 31/119, pp. 134–135.

widespread in their country, and the hypocrisy of American science as it serves belligerent aims. There are also many moments depicting the deception and two-facedness of the clergy who convert the strange inhabitants of one planet, pronouncing truths that they do not believe or apply in their own lives. There are also stories that mock the essence and ruthlessness of the rules of the capitalist system, which the author presents in an allegory showing the relations that pertain on this fantastic planet which is ruled mercilessly and indifferently by machines, above all consuming the working people while turning them into schemata.*

The fantastic elements of these stories are very colourful, rich, original and indicative of the author's lively imagination. This time he has used it to attack American imperialism, stupidity, hypocrisy, the heartlessness of the clergy, the American lifestyle, and capitalism. At the same time, the author places significant emphasis on the international solidarity of working people in their struggle for peace.

The short stories are written with a sense of humour and in a good literary style, which, taken together, creates a very original work that is easy to read, with the biting satirical elements easy to understand. [...]

No reservations – the work will be read with great interest by youths (and by adults too).³⁷³

The third review was written two months later. In all likelihood, the censor read a typeset version of the work, with a superior granting permission for publication on 24 May 1954. I cite the review in its entirety, maintaining the mistakes in the titles of the stories:

This collection of short stories by S. Lem is based on science-fiction plots. However, the author's main goal is to critique socio-political relations under capitalism, with a particular focus on the USA. At the same time, the author offers an illustration of the struggle for peace and the attitude of the population towards it. It is depicted in the short stories *Sezam*, *Kryształowa kula* (Crystal ball), *Hormon agatropowy* (Agathrope hormone) and *Dzienniki gwiazdowe Ijona Tichego* (Iljon Tichy's star diaries). The short stories *Klient Panaboga* (Lordgod's client) and *Hormon agatropowy* deserve special attention as the author uses fantasy and humour to denounce the role of religion in justifying crimes in capitalist societies, while at the same time revealing the policies of the USA and its attitudes towards the struggle for peace. It is difficult for me to adopt a position on *Topolny i Czwartek* (Topolny and Thursday), since I am unable to describe what the author was trying to say with this story. I am struck by some of the cosmopolitan elements in it, i.e. the way a certain group of scientists bow down to Western science. Showing the work of their assistants who work on and solve problems despite their lack of faith and the resignation of professors does not do anything to defuse the situation.

373 AAN, GUKPPiW, 385,teczka 31/119, pp. 136–137.

On the whole, the work is written with great talent and it departs from the usual patterns in presenting solutions to socio-political issues. It will serve to further denounce the politics of the USA and further support the struggle for peace.³⁷⁴

It is clear that officials at GUKPPiW read *Sezam i inne opowiadania* as a text professing 'the new faith'. The interpretations avoid focusing on the genuinely fantastical setting and foreground the text's ideological layer instead. This leads to rather astounding simplifications and unintentionally humorous statements. Interestingly, two of the reviews recommended the work for younger readers without offering a justification for this, while there is evidence within the reviews themselves that would suggest that such classification was mistaken.

The content and order of the short stories in the book edition does not differ in any way from the version that was reviewed, as they both feature *Topolny i Czwartek*, *Kryształowa kula*, *Sezam*, *Electronic Subversive Ideas Detector*, *Klient PANABOGA*, *Hormon agatotropowy* and *Dzienniki gwiazdowe Ijona Tichego*. Stanisław Lem later distanced himself from the stories collected in this volume. He refused permission for them to be included in his Polish collected works, making an exception only in the case of 'Dzienniki gwiazdowe Ijona Tichego'.

***Obłok Magellana* (The Magellanic Cloud)**

The novel *Obłok Magellana* was published in instalments in the weekly magazine *Przekrój* from the turn of 1954 (numbers 456–489). In his editor's note to the critical edition, Jerzy Jarzębski highlighted the work's most important traits: its dependence upon the political canons of the era, its optimism that in later years was supplanted by Lem's characteristic pessimism and the large number of impressive plot elements that must have had quite an impact at the time of publication. Lem has also stated that mid-1950s readers considered the novel to be quite an attractive adventure story.³⁷⁵

Serialization in *Przekrój* began with the double Christmas edition in November 1953 (no. 454–455), running through consecutive issues to no. 489 of 22 August 1954. Each instalment filled around a page and a half and was accompanied by attractive colour and black-and-white illustrations. The first instalment was presented in quite sensational terms:

374 AAN, GUKPPiW, 385,teczka 31/119, pp. 138–139.

375 Jerzy Jarzębski, *Daleka podróż*, in: Stanisław Lem, *Obłok Magellana*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2005, pp. 402–407.

Stanisław Lem is the author of *Astronauci*, a science-fiction novel about the first mission to Venus. Many of our readers will certainly be familiar with this work. *Obłok Magellana*, a novel whose serialization begins in this issue, tells the story of the first mission beyond our solar system, taking place eleven centuries later in the year 3123.³⁷⁶

Subsequent issues of the magazine feature similar trailers alongside plot summaries as the story grew more complex. At the conclusion of the final instalment there is a note stating that large portions of the novel had appeared in *Przekrój* while the whole novel would be published by Czytelnik in 1955.

There are significant differences between the version of the text serialized in the magazine and the one ultimately published in book form by Iskry. The most significant shift was in the plot structure. The strictly chronological structure employed in the book was broken up in the periodical, with certain scenes (that became chapters in the book), such as *Dom* (Home) and *Młodość* (Youth) being framed as memories or flashbacks in *Przekrój*. Another crucial difference is evident in the fragmentary nature of the periodical version, which only published parts of selected chapters. *Przekrój* never published the set-piece chapters *Maraton*, *Pożegnanie z Ziemią* (Farewell to Earth), *Ogród próżni* (The void garden) or *Złoty gejzer* (The golden geyser). In early parts of the serialization, the missing texts were marked with a star, although this principle was later abandoned.

The plot arrangement proposed in the serialized version seems to be more interesting, dynamic and surprising. Lem was skilled in writing texts suited for magazines, as he was well aware of the completely different dynamics that serialized texts demanded. The ease with which he used his text, spliced it, and juxtaposed various fragments suggests that he did not write the work week-by-week but had a ready novel, or almost complete version, when serialization commenced. It can be stated, albeit cautiously, that *Obłok Magellana* was ready for book publication no later than summer 1954.

In his monograph *Stanisław Lem*, Antoni Smuszkiewicz states that the author faced significant difficulties in publishing the novel.

Indeed, publishing this novel was no simple matter. The publisher's internal reviews highlighted various errors and distortions, including the most significant accusation – 'ideological smuggling', with the author accused of seeking to smuggle in 'hostile bourgeois cybernetics' under the name 'mechanistics'. Finally, after eighteen months of efforts, negotiations and discussions, the novel was allowed to appear in print.³⁷⁷

376 Stanisław Lem, *Obłok Magellana. Przekrój*, vol. 456, 1953, p. 9.

377 Antoni Smuszkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 33–34.

Lem spoke in similar terms. He stated that he wrote the text in 1953 but because of the internal reviewer at Iskry, the book edition was delayed.³⁷⁸ The GUKPPiW archive did not yield any further information on the subject. There is no trace of the reviews that permitted publication in *Przekrój*, nor is there evidence of the planned publication with *Czytelnik*. It cannot be established if the author was forced into making any changes to his intended version of the text; for example, were the additions to the book publication previously envisaged? The records in the censorship archive relate only to the text from mid-1955. Neither review offers any revelatory information. They are also exceptionally tenuous. Their superficial and derivative nature is rather striking, even in comparison with other politically correct summaries written by censorship officials.

The first review, dated 11 July 1955, was signed off by censor Szulkin. On the same piece of paper, approval for typesetting was granted the following day. The first review reads:

This is a science-fiction novel in which the author depicts the future in the year 3000. A group of people leave Earth, going beyond the limits of the solar system. Significant knowledge of physics is required from the reader to understand these adventures. Aspects of great scientific discoveries dominate the story and it is difficult for me to assess them without the necessary preparation. The book could be of interest to older youths who possess the necessary education, although the work is unlikely to be understood by the average young person who might find it tiresome. Furthermore, the author seeks to present a perspective on and analysis of contemporary music and love between people – as seen in the year 3000 – although this aspect is not explored in greater depth and instead constitutes a stream of words and empty phrases. Furthermore, the descriptions of contemporary surgical techniques are often a product of the author's overly active imagination and tend to prove shocking.

No reservations.³⁷⁹

The second review was written on 27 October 1955 by comrade Purowska. Following her review, the work was passed for publication.

Obłok Magellana is another science-fiction novel by Lem familiar to some readers from *Przekrój*. It comes as no surprise that the story is again about interplanetary travel. This time, the author has gone far into the future, to sometime in the thirty-third century, a time when there are no more states on earth, no borders, and the words “war” and “kill” are completely unknown; their meaning can only be explained to children by historians researching “the ancient period”, i.e. the twentieth century. Lem's new interplanetary journey takes readers inside a rocket-city which is to reach the Centaur galaxy within

378 *Tako rzeczy Lem*, op. cit., pp. 64–65.

379 AAN, GUKPPiW, 385,teczka 31/19, pp. 861–862.

twenty years. The mission is successful and in the Centaur galaxy on the White Planet, the humans encounter living, sentient beings (who are not described in detail), who also live in an advanced technological age.

The value of Lem's book, as with his previous works, lies in his depiction of potential technological developments and his view that there is a need to prepare adequately for any profession, as well as in the fact that he reminds young readers of familiar yet oft-forgotten truths. Collective effort, energy and passion, combined with thorough knowledge, lay the ground for great achievements possible.

The fantastic element is also valuable as it is based on existing scientific achievements that reveal the broad horizons of the future.³⁸⁰

Many scholars have commented on Lem's 'escape' from socialist-realism into science-fiction. The available archival sources confirm this theory. Knowing that *Wywiad i atomy* and *Areanthropos* were barred from publication, while there was a significant struggle over *Szpital Przemienienia*, makes it easier to imagine his decision to return at the turn of the 1950s to a convention that he had once adopted in his earliest works. Indeed, the censorship authorities' view of his thrillers that included elements of fantasy was unequivocally negative. The censors suggested numerous changes, although as an intelligent writer he had no difficulty in carrying them out. It was enough to change the USA and UK into an unspecified communist state while adding a few declarations about the victory of the one and only true doctrine and the failure of capitalism in order to secure approval for publication. As fluent in writing texts that were dressed up as fantasy as those that were 'standard' contemporary pieces, Lem turned to science-fiction with *Astronautci*. He perhaps took the decision not only in order to stand a chance of publication but to be able to do so without falsifying reality, even as he wrote about the glorious victory of communism which, in 1950/51, proved to be the only acceptable subject matter.

In a discussion with Tomasz Fiałkowski, when asked about his struggles with censorship, Lem noted that Aesopic language proved highly useful.³⁸¹ *Astronautci*, *Człowiek z Marsa*, *Wywiad i atomy*, and *Szpital Przemienienia* are essentially books about the same subject: global-scale war and conflict. The fantastic elements provide something of a 'costume of non-reality', to use Leszek Szaruga's term,³⁸² allowing the author to safely issue his diagnosis of contemporary reality.

380 AAN, GUKPPiW, 385, teczka 31/19, pp. 863–864.

381 *Świat na krawędzi*, op. cit., p. 67.

382 Leszek Szaruga, op. cit., p. 12.

Lem's strategy of locating himself in the ghetto of science-fiction literature seemed to work faultlessly. His subsequent works, *Sezam i inne opowiadania* and the novel *Obłok Magellana*, found their way through the filter of censorship and were published at the height of socialist realism. He paid a high price for securing publication, though. As Małgorzata Szpakowska has argued,

his turn to "science-fiction" was not only a theoretical mistake, but it also became a rod for the author's own back. In committing himself to a marginal genre and, more importantly, finding himself *identified with* this genre, Lem was constantly forced to prove his first-class status as an author.³⁸³

A further price that had to be paid for being allowed to publish in 1954 and 1955 was that the content of his works had to be politicized, which was particularly evident in *Sezam*.

It is worth restating that following the success of *Astronauci* as a novel aimed at older youths, censorship officials started reading his books as works targeted at more naïve audiences. Lem was thus doubly marginalized as an author, being classified as both a science-fiction and youth writer. He was published by less respected publishing houses, meaning that the works were reviewed by less educated and intelligent censors. Both *Sezam* and *Obłok Magellana* were ultimately sent not to *Czytelnik* but to *Iskry*, which specialized in publications for children and youth. While it is reasonable to state that Lem consciously opted to adopt the costume of science-fiction, the fact that his works were classed as youth literature had nothing to do with him. It was an arbitrary decision taken by officials who struggled to describe Lem's challenging works at all. Censors had simply stumbled across a convenient way of classifying Lem's works: adventure novels for youths dressed up in a science-fiction costume. This assessment was certainly a simplification but it proved to be particularly useful during the darkest years of Stalinism.

What new interpretive horizons are opened up thanks to the archival material? Firstly, had *Wywiad i atomy* been published in 1949, this would have been Lem's literary debut, coming two years before *Astronauci*. The collection of short stories lacked an explicitly fantastic element. Secondly, it can be assumed that had Lem been permitted to publish *Areanthropos* and *Szpital Przemienienia*, he would thus have been able to adopt a two-track approach to writing, producing both science-fiction and realistic pieces in parallel. The reviews held in

383 Małgorzata Szpakowska, *Dyskusje ze Stanisławem Lemem*, Warszawa: Open, 1996, p. 9.

the archive suggest that in the late 1940s Lem did not deny the value of his early works and did consider them worthy of publication.

3 Władysław Broniewski uncensored: 1949–1955

Throughout his eventful life, Władysław Broniewski faced problems with censorship. That this should have been the case seems rather obvious, given the period in which he was writing and the politically engaged nature of his works. As Feliksa Lichodziejewska noted,

the paradox presented by Broniewski is that his works proved unacceptable in the eyes of censors in various periods and in various countries. They were confiscated by the [interwar] Sanacja regime in Poland, they were cut by censors in the USSR and in People's Poland, while wartime censorship also prevented the publication of several works.³⁸⁴

Examining the censorship and restrictions imposed on his poetry, which in the 1940s and 1950s was deemed highly 'revolutionary', proves to be a most interesting case that reveals both the mechanisms for adapting these works to dynamically shifting demands and also the responses of a particularly privileged author. It is worth emphasizing that there are records relating to all of Broniewski's works published between 1949 and 1955 in the GUKPPiW archive, with the exception of those issued by military publishers. While the records are far from complete, the fact that there is reference to all editions of his poetry – which might have resulted from his particular status – means that we can have an exceptional sense of completeness in archival research into Broniewski's oeuvre.

The censorship of Broniewski's poetry has already been explored by researchers including Wiktor Weintraub³⁸⁵ and Feliksa Lichodziejewska.³⁸⁶ Weintraub's essay *O Broniewskim na emigracji* (Broniewski as an émigré) serves as the introduction to the émigré edition of his poetry published in Paris (Biblioteka *Kultury*, vol. LXXV). Weintraub mentions the poet's turbulent experience and tempestuous character, emphasising Broniewski's controversial attitude towards communism. He also addressed the issue of the unpublishable nature of some of his

384 Feliksa Lichodziejewska, *Broniewski bez cenzury. 1939–1945*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Społeczne Kos, 1992, pp. 5–6.

385 Wiktor Weintraub, *O Broniewskim na emigracji*, in: Władysław Broniewski, *Wiersze*, Paryż: Instytut Literacki, 1962, pp. 9–19.

386 Feliksa Lichodziejewska, *Broniewski bez cenzury*; Lichodziejewska, *Wstęp*, in: Władysław Broniewski, *Wiersze zebrane. Wydanie krytyczne*, vol. 1, Toruń – Płock: Towarzystwo Naukowe Płockie, 1997, pp. 5–20.

works. The collection published in Paris includes the full version of works transcribed from wartime newspapers and small volumes published between 1943 and 1945 in London and Jerusalem. There is no clear indication, however, as to which poems were published in People's Poland and which were not. Of the thirteen pieces included in this volume, as many as eight had yet to appear in communist Poland: *Może nic w tym życiu nie będzie* (Perhaps there will be nothing in this life), *Człowiek eto zwuczył gordo...* (Man, that sounds noble), *Tułacza armia* (Wandering army), *Rozmowa z Historią* (Discussions with History), *Kasztan* (Chestnut), *Droga* (The road), *Wszystko nam jedno* (It is all one to us) and *Przepis na poezję* (A recipe for poetry).

Feliksa Lichodziejewska's book *Broniewski bez cenzury* (Broniewski uncensored) is based on many years of research and her erudite knowledge as editor of his collected poetry, *Wiersze zebrane*. While her study focuses only on the period from 1939 to 1945, she often goes beyond the stated timeframe to touch upon the communist period. Lichodziejewska's aim was to draw attention to the forgotten parts of Broniewski's biography and the parts of his texts that had been cast into oblivion. 'Making Broniewski into a regime poet', she argues,

meant performing certain procedures on his life and works, eliminating everything that did not accord with the monolithic image of the standard-bearing bard of People's Poland. His experience in the Legions was unwelcome, while the most troubling issue was his life and work in Second World War. 18 months of Soviet prison, serving in General Anders' army [...]. The revolutionary bard could not have been locked up in a prison of the Soviet Union; he could not have written poetry aimed against the country of "victorious socialism". Thus, several years of Broniewski's biography were passed over in silence and part of his oeuvre was cast into oblivion.³⁸⁷

Lichodziejewska mentions the problems with censors that over a dozen of Broniewski's works faced. *Rozmowa z Historią*, *Kasztan*, *Droga* and *Mniejsza o to* (Whatever) were the lyrical works from the volume *Bagnet na broń* (Bayonets ready) that were never published in Poland before 1989. Part of line 12 in *Nad rzekami Babilonu* (On the rivers of Babylon) was questioned – 'Poleci na COP, na Borysław' (He will fly to COP [the central industrial district] and Borysław) – with the final word (an oil-producing town now in Ukraine) changed to 'Wisła' (the Vistula). The 1952 edition faced the most cuts, with the poems *List z więzienia* (Prison letter), *Co mi tam troski* (What good is sympathy) and *Zamieć* (Blizzard) also cut. *Homo sapiens* was only published in 1950, with the poems *Monte Cassino*, *War Pictorial News*, *Mogily* (Graves) and

387 Feliksa Lichodziejewska, *Broniewski bez cenzury*, op. cit., p. 5.

Targowisko (Marketplace) also cut during the Stalinist period. Other poems that could not be published were *Przepis na poezję*, the epic *Bania z poezją* (A flask of poetry – with only fragments appearing in the periodicals *Przekrój* and *Odrodzenie*, with one line being changed: ‘Die neue Ordnung, “nasza władz”’ now reading ‘w legend dni te będą kłaść’ (these days will go down in legend, rather than the German New Order and Russian ‘our rule’), and *List do Marii z Bejrutu* (A letter to Maria from Beirut), which exists only in manuscript form.³⁸⁸

The fullest, albeit indirect, information on Broniewski’s writings’ encounters with GUKPPiW is provided by the critical edition of his collected works. The editor’s notes are very valuable as they describe the fate of a particular text and any changes made. Beyond the interventions noted in Lichodziejewska’s *Broniewski bez cenzury*, she also notes the problems encountered during the attempts to publish various editions of his collected verse. Based on conversations with the poet himself, she yielded the new information that Broniewski himself did not want to publish the poem *Droga* as he was unwilling to change the names of the cities of Lwów (Lviv) and Wilno (Vilnius).

These findings can be supplemented by turning to the archives of GUKPPiW, as Broniewski scholars have thus far avoided using them. Any improvement to the excellent critical edition is unlikely, but knowledge of several issues can be expanded:

- The reservations censors had in respect of particular poems;
- The extent of the list of politically incorrect texts and their publishing history;
- Changes to particular texts;
- Relations between the author (including his particular status as a model socialist-realist poet³⁸⁹) and the censorship authorities.

In the course of my archival research, I examined all files that were likely to be of relevance to Broniewski’s works from 1949 to 1955. During this period, his works were issued by several publishers including Książka, his pre-war publishers, and Wiedza – which were then fused into Książka i Wiedza. Broniewski thus became one of the few outstanding authors to be associated with this publishing house. He was also published by Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, while individual volumes appeared with Czytelnik, Związek Literatów Polskich and military publishers.³⁹⁰ Obviously, my approach was to search for any references

388 Op. cit., p. 45–55.

389 See: Zbigniew Jarosiński, *Nadwiślański socrealizm*.

390 Cited in: *Współcześni polscy pisarze*, vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 281–286.

to Broniewski's work towards preparing his first post-war collection of poetry. However, there is no trace in the archives of the volume *Wszystko* (Everything), which did not appear for political reasons. This is a great loss, since this was supposed to have been the first selection of his poetry to be published in Poland after the war. As the title suggests, it was to have included 'everything'.³⁹¹ The archives contain just one brief document from 1948 relating to Broniewski's poetry. This means that there are thus no archived reviews of his collected verse, *Wiersze zebrane*. However, other documents are available that enable at least partial reconstruction of the contents of the missing documents from 1948.

The available sources can be divided into two groups: those relating to collected editions and those on individual volumes of Broniewski's poetry. Given the number of interventions by the censorship office, as Lichodziejewska has noted, I prefer to focus here on the anthologies. The most important volumes should be mentioned, namely those published between 1949 and 1955: *Wiersze zebrane* (Książka i Wiedza 1949 and 1952, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1955), *Wybór poezji* (Książka i Wiedza 1950), *Poezje wybrane* (Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1954), *Wiersze warszawskie* (Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1948, 1952), *Nadzieja. Poezje* (Książka i Wiedza 1951), *Mazowsze i inne wiersze* (Książka i Wiedza 1952) and *Młodym do lotu. Wybór wierszy* (Książka i Wiedza 1952). It is also worth noting that censors' reviews are ridden with inaccuracies when it comes to the titles of particular volumes.

***Wiersze zebrane* (Collected poems), 1949**

Broniewski's collected verse was submitted to the censorship authorities by KiW and then reviewed on 10 September 1949. This is a heavily cut and altered edition of the volume that appeared in 1948, which itself was a result of a compromise between the author and the censors.³⁹² At the top of the review form there is a note stating 'fairly urgent!'. The review reads:

Władysław Broniewski's poems, presented in chronological order, offer something of a summary of historical events in Poland, starting in 1925.

Broniewski was deeply moved by the struggles of the revolutionary camp, expressing his experiences in a series of outstanding and engaged poems. Sometimes he experienced moments of crisis and apathy, although he managed to overcome them in order to again sing the songs of rebellion and call for a better tomorrow.

391 More on this subject in: Feliksa Lichodziejewska, *Wstęp*, in: Władysław Broniewski, pp. 6–8.

392 Ibidem.

During the war, Broniewski found himself in Palestine. This period resulted in poems full of longing for his homeland, expressing a yearning to fight for the Poland we have today.

Broniewski also experienced moments of weakness then, although his infallible political instinct always brought him back to the path leading to the struggle for progress. Several poems from the period following Poland's liberation indicate that Broniewski definitely moved to the rhythms of the country's reconstruction and was deeply moved by the class-based significance of the changes taking place in Poland.

The interventions suggested related to *List z więzienia* (p. 174) which is about Broniewski's time in the USSR. The review was signed off by D. Tyrman.

At the bottom of the page there is a note stating: 'Approve for publication. Come to an agreement with the publishers regarding the poem on p. 174. Leave the decision up to director Welfel 12.09.1949'.³⁹³ The censors thus had doubts about the poem, but it was ultimately published unchanged in this edition.³⁹⁴ The secondary review was conducted in February 1950 and features the note 'without reading.'

***Wiersze zebrane* (Collected poems), 1952**

The subsequent edition of his collected verse (1952) is the least honourable episode in the history of publishing Broniewski's texts. It appeared at the zenith of socialist realism and is marked by numerous interventions that stemmed from detailed reviews by censors.

The archives of *Książka i Wiedza* include an extensive, four-and-a-half-page review (plus a list of proposed changes) signed by Jerzy Ostrowski. It is undated but is filed alongside documents from 1951. The review was not written on the standard form but on typically thin typewriter paper. There are no additional handwritten notes. It is difficult to classify this document according to existing categories. It most closely resembles a super-review conducted by censorship officials in exceptional circumstances. But what is unusual here is that a large number of texts by an officially favoured author were cut. This source thus offers insight into the reservations that GUKPPiW had in respect of particular poems by Broniewski.

I reproduce here the most interesting extracts that present the justifications given for particular changes.

393 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/41, pp. 337–338.

394 Władysław Broniewski, *Wiersze zebrane*, Warszawa: 1949, *Książka i Wiedza*, p. 174.

Broniewski [...] does not always distance himself successfully from his former brothers-in-arms. He fails to understand the significance of the October Revolution for Poland's independence and on several occasions glorifies the achievements of the legions in the struggle for a free Poland. Even in a poem that criticises the Piłsudski regime (*Do towarzyszy broni* (To my comrades), p. 43), he refers to their revolutionary spirit and patriotism. [...] In the poem *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga* (On Andrzej Strug's death) p. 146 he writes: 'I ponieśliśmy ten pocisk (an allusion to Strug's 1905 novel, *Dzieje jednego pocisku* [The history of a single shell]) przez życie w czapce bojowca, w mundurze strzeleckim' (And we carried this shell through life in a warrior's hat, in a rifleman's uniform). The apotheosis of Strug that emanates from every single line of the work seems misplaced. [...] The inconsistency of Broniewski's ideological stance during this period is also evident in the poem on p. 109 where the image of Bakunin raises this figure up to the level of the leading fighter of the revolution.

The cycle of poems *Bagnet na broń* and *Drzewo rozpaczające* (The despairing tree) embodies the poet's turn away from his once revolutionary path. His time in the Soviet Union yielded just one poem about the common struggle of the Polish and Soviet peoples. The remaining poems express only longing for his homeland. *List z więzienia* on p. 175 is full of pessimism.

I am not sure whether disseminating the information that Broniewski spent time in prison in the USSR is permitted. The tone of the final line of this poem is also disturbing, with the author drawing allusions to Mickiewicz's *Pielgrzymi i Wygnańcy* (Pilgrims and exiles) from the period of tsarist domination. References to prisons and camps are also evident on the following pages, 175 and 176. [...]

At a time when the entire world (including the West) was full of admiration for the heroic struggle of the Soviet people, Broniewski got bogged down in individual lyrical poetry. His poems are filled with pessimism and hopelessness, while lacking the fighting spirit that would have reflected those years. Beyond these lyrical poems, he produced only a few typically-Anders soldiers' poems that praised the Carpathian Brigade (NB. It was led by Gen. Kopański who is now an agent of the US). What I have in mind is *Monte Cassino* on p. 215 and *Nad rzekami Babilonu* on p. 182. [...]

Very typical of relations among the London émigrés at the time are two closely-related poems (likewise in terms of their layout). They are *Targowisko* (Marketplace) on p. 221 and *Homo sapiens* on p. 223. Both pieces are most probably a response to the Yalta Conference and the outline of Poland's eastern border that was established there. [...] These poems seem to have been written with the social demands of émigrés in mind as they offer a close reproduction of what was emanating from the London press at the time. It seems to me that any other interpretation of these poems would be impossible. Reading Broniewski's poems in turn, while bearing in mind the date they were written (the strict chronology of this particular collection is very helpful in this respect), allows for no other conclusion. The atmosphere built up around the Katyń crime in the poem *Homo sapiens* is also very disturbing.

The turn to the traditions of the legions that I mentioned above can also be found in the poem *Mogiły* on p. 217, which is about the heroism of Warsaw. [...]

It is also worth considering how appropriate it would be to publish works such as *War Pictorial News* on p. 210, where the poet gives his blessings to the destructive actions of the Anglo-American air force. A recent speech given by a leading figure in the SED utterly condemned this bestial bombing of German cities while preserving sites that were part of the arms industry. [...]

[...] this volume, which is an exact copy of older editions, overlooks the poet's works that are most important to us today. There is no trace of *Słowa o Stalinie* (A Word about Stalin), nor any mention of the epic about Świerczewski, nor of any of his other famous post-war poems. This oversight cannot be explained by the fact that these texts have been published elsewhere. In offering an overview of Broniewski's work, as this volume undoubtedly does, his most important post-war output has been overlooked. Furthermore, this edition features two highly bloated cycles of émigré poems, while the new pieces merely form a marginal addition. In this way, the image of the poet has been deformed.

I did not emphasise the great political and artistic value of the lion's share of the poems included here since this does not seem necessary in Broniewski's case.³⁹⁵

The zealous censor sought the removal of the following poems: *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga*, *Nad rzekami Babilonu*, *Monte Cassino*, *Targowisko*, *Homo sapiens* and *Mogily*. All of these pieces were included in the first post-war edition of *Wiersze zebrane* from 1948, and it was most probably this edition that the censor read and cut virtually. None of the above-mentioned poems that were deemed unpublishable were included in the 1952 edition.

The primary review of this edition of *Wiersze zebrane*, signed off on 27 February 1952, is more restrained. However, the GUKPPiW official most probably read the abridged version which was missing the politically incorrect poems.

This collection of poems is arranged in chronological order, reflecting experiences and events in the poet's life from the First World War, through pre-WWII Poland and the events of 1939 – including being sent abroad – to the present day.

There are primarily lyrical, rebel, and revolutionary poems.

P. 61 – ed. 'ochrana'.

Beneath the review in red pencil there is a note stating: 'I discussed this with *' (possibly Broniewski, though it is unclear). 'Correction on p. 61. Permitted for publication on 27 February 1952.'³⁹⁶ This edition replaced the Russian word 'ochrana' in the poem *Szpicel* (Police spy) with the Polish form 'ochrona', which remained the case in subsequent editions. This is the full verse:

395 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376,teczka 31/50, pp. 15–19.

396 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376,teczka 31/53, pp. 780–781.

Był w ochronie, K-stelle, w defensywie polskiej,
 Kiedy mówię te słowa on tu jest i słyszy,
 On szepnie towarzyszom: "Jutro wiec na Wolskiej"
 I jutro wskaże palcem własnych towarzyszy.
 He was in the ochrana, K-stelle, in the Polish defence force,
 When I say these words he is here and hears,
 And he will whisper to his comrades: "Tomorrow on Wolska it is then"
 And tomorrow he will point his finger at his own comrades.

Feliksa Lichodziejewska has included this version of the text in the critical edition, but she classes it as a misprint.³⁹⁷ In light of the source materials I have explored, it seems that the text was deliberately altered in order to avoid associations with the tsarist system.

Wybór poezji (Selected poems), 1950

Another anthology, *Wybór poezji*, was submitted to GUKPPIW in summer 1950. A print run of 50,050 was recommended for this selection of his poems. The first review was signed by a censor named Purowska on 23 August 1950 and the second on 4 September 1950 by D. Tyrman. It was approved for publication without changes:

This selection of Broniewski's poetry features works dedicated to working class struggle against a repressive order, to its leading figures, to prisoners dying behind bars and on the slopes of the citadel; there are poems here that address the defeat of September 1939 and memories of the years that Polish soldiers spent in exile and abroad, fighting fascists on all fronts, offering a reflection of their feelings and yearning for their home country; this selection features poems about the poverty faced by the Warsaw proletariat before 1939. The final cycle in the volume features poems about the new Poland of the People and our contemporary realities: about the labour of hundreds of thousands of people, about miners, steel mill workers, moulders, working Łódź and cities full of new life.

Wybór poezji finishes with two extensive and outstanding pieces: *Słowo o Stalinie* and *Opowieść o życiu i śmierci Karola Waltera Świerczewskiego* (The story of the life and death of Karol Walter Świerczewski), the worker and general.

The second review by Tyrman merely reworked his assessment of *Wiersze zebrane* from 1949. His self-plagiarism was probably a result of having an excessive workload, with the censor merely adding one sentence on the 'wonderful' epic poems about Stalin and Świerczewski. Permission for typesetting was granted on 1 September 1950, even before the reviews had been dated, which is a

397 Władysław Broniewski, *Poezje zebrane*, ed. by Feliksa Lichodziejewska, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 30 and 462.

further indication of the way in which the censorship office produced numerous *pro forma* reviews.

However, the secondary review, written just a few months later and dated 31 December 1950, recommended an intervention:

W. Broniewski's *Wybór wierszy* includes poems selected from the volumes *Wiatraki* (Windmills), *Dymy nad miastem* (Smoke above the city), *Troska i pieśń* (Care and a hymn), *Krzyk ostateczny* (The final scream), *Bagnet na broń* and *Drzewo rozpaczające*, as well as a selection of his most recent pieces.

The pre-war poems and the latest verses are closely connected to the struggles of the working class, they are fighting, standard-bearing pieces, whereas the poems from the period of the Second World War, when the author was in exile, diverge from the rest of the volume as their subject matter lacks a social dimension. They are largely reflexive poems, personal and lyrical. This also applies to poems selected from the collections *Bagnet na broń* and *Drzewo rozpaczające*.

All of the poems are of a high artistic standard, they communicate their message clearly and are easy to understand for a mass readership. Publishing this selection within the framework of the Komitet Upowszechniania Książki [the Committee for Popularizing Books] is, in my view, highly beneficial. One fault in the selection is perhaps the relatively large number of poems written in exile, whose content I have outlined above. Including the poem *Via dolorosa* on p. 135 seems particularly inappropriate. For a publication aimed at such a broad audience, a more careful selection procedure would have been advisable. The book is published within the framework of the Komitet Upowszechniania Książki.

An oversight by preventative censorship was noted, namely the inclusion of the poem *Via dolorosa*, pages 135–136.

The censor concluded that the collection was suitable for further editions 'after conducting certain changes – a new selection of poems from the volumes *Bagnet na broń* and *Drzewo rozpaczające*, and removing the poem *Via dolorosa*'.³⁹⁸ Interestingly, the poem did remain in the subsequent edition of this volume from 1952, which was the most limited in terms of content, yet it was removed from the collection *Poezje wybrane*, published by PIW in 1954. *Via dolorosa* returned to favour quickly, though, as it appeared in the 1955 volume *Wiersze zebrane*. The suggestions made in the secondary review were thus treated rather selectively.

Examining further archival sources leads us onto the trail of an abandoned publication. The archives contain a censor's outline of the volume *Wiersze zebrane* submitted by Książka i Wiedza in 1953. The censor Furmanik offered a sober assessment of the poverty of the volume yet, despite his disapproval, suggested only

398 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/45, pp. 316–322.

one correction and signed off his review on 6 April 1953. Approval for printing was given on 20 April 1953.

In comparison to the previous edition, this selection is rather pared back. The editors have removed the entire cycle *Wiatraki* and a large portion of *Dymy nad miastem* and the cycle *Troska i pieśń*. The poems that have been removed are among the poet's best-known works from the interwar period and they are marked by a clearly-defined political stance, namely a decisively revolutionary one. The criteria applied by the editors in conducting this operation are unclear.

Page 289 – the poem *Cytadela*.³⁹⁹

None of the editions published by Książka i Wiedza match the censor's description. Analysing the contents and comparing them with the note cited above suggests that he might have been referring to *Poezje wybrane*, published by PIW in 1954. It contains very few poems from *Dymy nad miastem* and *Troska i pieśń*, while the only poem from *Wiatraki* is *Robotnicy* (The Workers). There is no trace of the poem highlighted by the censor, *Cytadela*.

In all likelihood, the volume was taken on by another publisher for reasons unknown. The PIW edition was reviewed twice. A note dated 2 September 1953 reads:

The selection of Broniewski's poems is fairly homogenous in its ideological position, containing mainly works from the interwar period that target capitalist exploitation and imperialism's militaristic politics, war poems linked to the construction of socialism, poems written for special occasions, an epic about Stalin, and some small lyrical pieces.

On the basis of a second, equally tenuous review, permission was granted for printing on 9 December 1953.

Broniewski's *Wybór poezji* opens with the famous poem *Robotnicy*. This piece gives an indication of the volume's leitmotif. The subsequent poems are arranged chronologically, depicting the stages in the fight of the working class for social and national emancipation. The concluding pieces describe People's Poland. *Wybór poezji* includes the poet's most famous works: *Pieśń o wojnie domowej* (A hymn about civil war), *Komuna paryska* (The Paris Commune), *Elegia na śmierć Ludwika Waryńskiego* (An elegy for Ludwik Waryński), *Łódź, Troska i pieśń, Rozmowa z Janem* (A conversation with Jan), *Cześć i dynamit* (Honour and dynamite), *Pokłon Rewolucji Październikowej* (Bowing to the October Revolution), *Słowo o Stalinie, Poemat o generale Karolu Świerczewskim*, and others.

The endnotes at the conclusion of the volume comment on various figures, explain the names of cities and the meaning of foreign words, etc. The endnotes are correct.

399 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376, teczka 31/56, pp. 347–348.

There is a need for further proofreading – the entire volume features numerous misprints, for example *Słowo o Stalinie*, p. 158.⁴⁰⁰

***Wiersze zebrane* (Collected poems), 1955**

There are two more interesting documents that reveal the dramatic circumstances relating to the publication of the 1955 collection of Broniewski's verse. The file containing sources on Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy contains a page titled: 'Memo regarding the book *Wiersze zebrane* by Władysław Broniewski submitted by PIW'. The signature is illegible and the note is dated 9 August 1954.

PIW submitted the abovementioned volume published by Książka i Wiedza in 1952, with the following reservations noted:

1. the dedication of the poem *Żydom polskim* (To the Polish Jews – the dedication reads: 'In memory of Szmul Zygielbojm') p. 199 and the poem *Cytadela*, p. 289.

Regarding the additional five poems submitted, there were reservations regarding the poem *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga* and the poem *Co mi tam troski*. Following a conversation with director Różański when communicating the remarks, it was indicated that:

1. the dedication of the poem *Żydom polskim* can remain in place;
2. the poems *Cytadela* and *Co mi tam troski* should not appear in this edition, although if the author should insist on their inclusion then our Office will not issue sanctions;
3. the poem *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga* should be removed.⁴⁰¹

The note suggests that the PIW edition of *Wiersze zebrane* was based closely on the most heavily censored edition from 1952 but several more controversial texts were added. It was assumed that the author could demand that the book remained completely intact.

Did the poems mentioned above find their way into the volume without any hindrance? A partial answer can be established on the basis of a non-standard document. On 27 December 1954, the censor Bieniasiewicz wrote:

This volume of Broniewski's collected verse features poems that we have already called into question, namely *Bakunin* p. 113 and *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga* p. 151. The dedication to the poem *Żydom polskim* – has been left in place by the editors.

400 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/124, pp. 864–867.

401 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/124, pp. 868–869.

On the reverse, there is a note from a superior:

The poem *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga* was discussed with Comrade Szymańska (in agreement with Comrade Landsberg). The editors will leave this poem largely untouched as a result of the author's extremely strong opposition. I stated that the office will not apply administrative sanctions and I have left the poem at the publisher's disposal. Permission for printing granted on 28 December 1954.⁴⁰²

There is clear evidence here of the poet's uncompromising attitude and the difficulties that he subsequently faced from GUKPPIW. 'The censor's style of reading,' to cite Joanna Hobot again, 'was determined by the position of the author in the "ranking" of ideological correctness.'⁴⁰³ Broniewski's status was so great that he could *insist* on something to force the censorship office into *making concessions*.

The above-mentioned edition features both *Bakunin* and *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga*, while the dedication of the poem *Żydom polskim* remained unchanged in all editions. *Cytadela* and *Co mi tam troski* also remained in place.

***Wiersze warszawskie* (Warsaw poems) 1948, 1952**

The first review of *Wiersze o Warszawie* (the review did not use an accurate title) was signed on 25 February 1948 and is the oldest trace documenting the post-war censorship of Władysław Broniewski's work. The entire assessment of this collection of poems about Warsaw is contained in a single, somewhat nonchalant sentence: 'I like them.'⁴⁰⁴ It is worth noting that shortly afterwards, as censorship controls became stricter, a similar assessment would have been unthinkable.

The subsequent edition of *Wiersze warszawskie* was reviewed twice, resulting in two more substantial documents. The first review bears a note stating 'highly urgent! send copy of review to the KC' [Central Committee of the PZPR]. The review was signed by J. Klejny on 2 July 1952, who suggested that the work could be approved for publication following changes. Sending a copy to the Central Committee was done in the case of controversial works by famous authors, particularly those who enjoyed the support of the party and state. The censorship office was not an independent institution, as I have already mentioned. It was merely a tool of power. The most crucial verdicts were passed by the Central Committee, sometimes completely contradicting those coming from GUKPPIW. It is not known who took the decisions in Broniewski's case, but in the end none of the suggested changes to *Wiersze warszawskie* were carried out.

402 AAN, GUKPPIW, 386, teczka 31/125, pp. 1038–1039.

403 Joanna Hobot, op. cit., p. 133.

404 AAN, GUKPPIW, 152, teczka 31/120, p. 14.

A new edition of Broniewski's poems about Warsaw. The volume features works from various periods: pre-war, wartime and post-war poems written in People's Poland. Alongside the engaged and political poems, there are also a lot of highly personal lyrical pieces in the collection. The order of the poems is insufficiently clear and it gives a somewhat chaotic impression which is reinforced by the fact that they are not dated.

The editors have already made – completely justified – cuts to the book. Nevertheless, this is still insufficient. It should be noted that the dynamism and political force of the works from the period that the author spent in exile during the war declines starkly, while there are also numerous references to the traditions of Tobruk, Narvik, and the “Polish Forces” in the same poems (for example, p. 45 *Co mi tam troski*, p. 38 *Damaszek* [Damascus]). It would thus be worthwhile to consider the relevance of including poems that do not add any value to a thematic volume (e.g. p. 65 *Ballada*).

The poems mentioned on the reverse should absolutely be removed from the collection.

p. 39 – the poem *Bar pod Zdechłym Psem* [Dead Dog Bar] to be removed (particularly given the order – *Ulica Miła*, *Bar pod Zdechłym Psem*, *Bagnet na broń*).

p. 47 – the poem *Zamieć* – to be removed or the final verse should be altered at least.

p. 51 – the poem *Via Dolorosa* – to be removed.

The second review expressed no reservations and was signed on 24 July 1952. It ensured that the volume was approved for publication with a print run of 10,000.

A collection of W. Broniewski's poems. The author discusses the years 1939-1949. The poems positively emanate patriotism, internationalism and great creative power. They express the strength of class struggle, the battle against the invaders, great yearning for the homeland and the power of the working class in reconstructing the country. The poems are written in simple, suggestive language that speaks to the reader.⁴⁰⁵

***Nadzieja. Poezje* (The Hope. Poems), 1951**

There are four assessments of the volume of poems published as *Nadzieja* (Hope) in the GUKPPiW archives. The volume was published at the height of socialist realism in a single edition. Despite the fact that it dealt with a desirable subject, it was subject to stringent controls, as was typical for the time. Given the general nature of the remarks, I will cite only the most interesting excerpts.

The first review was signed by censor Rayska on 23 May 1951.

In many of the poems, the poet lauds the Polish landscape, the Vistula and, the best of them, *Mazowsze* (Mazovia), expresses deep patriotic feelings for People's Poland. That is the plus of this collection.

Generally speaking, there is nothing that makes this volume stand out in artistic terms. There are even some rather awkward poems, such as *Pod koniec maja* [At the end of May] on p. 22 and, in particular, *Radio* on p. 53 is quite aestheticizing to an asocial

405 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/123, pp. 328–331.

degree, which is quite disturbing coming from W. Broniewski. W.B. could have done without publishing such a piece.

These poems are inspired by sadness and powerlessness.

In the second brief review, the censor noted that the poems are ‘highly pessimistic and weak’. This assessment seems worthy of mention given the note at the end of the form: ‘p. 22 (intervention in *Radio*). T. Mińska has been made aware of the matter. Permission for typesetting. 28 May 1951’. The third review includes extensive passages on the poet’s love of his fatherland and features the note: ‘Discussed with T. Mińska. Permission to print. 27 August 1951’.

Examining the publication itself leads to very interesting findings. It turns out that the poem *Radio* was removed from the volume without a trace. It does not feature in any other volume of Broniewski’s verse nor is it evident, at least not under the same title, in the critical edition of his works. None of the poems included in *Nadzieja* matches the censor’s description, thus it is difficult to argue that it underwent a radical change of title or a complete overhaul of its content. Lichodziejewska’s critical edition suggests that the censor’s comments might have referred to the poem *Radiofonia – rzecz pożyteczna* (Radio broadcasting – a useful thing), which was only published posthumously on the basis of a manuscript in 1997. The editor gave 17 November 1947 as the date it was written, meaning that it was ready before *Nadzieje* was typeset.⁴⁰⁶ The similarities between the poem *Radio*, as described by censors, are evident in the title and subject matter (which featured nowhere else in his oeuvre), while the criticism that it is ‘aestheticizing to an asocial degree’ seems justified in the context of the poem. Let us reproduce it here:

Radiofonia – rzecz pożyteczna,
 ale bardzo często zbyt użyteczna.
 Jeśli chodzi o radio, to lubię skrzypce,
 lubię maję, lubię czerwcę, lubię lipcę,
 lubię nawet koniec listopada,
 ale już nie mam cierpliwości:
 upadam.⁴⁰⁷
 Radio broadcasting is a useful thing,
 yet very often has a redundant ring.
 When it comes to radio, I like the fiddler’s tunes,
 I like Aprils, Mays and Junes,
 I even like the end of November,

406 Władysław Broniewski, *Poezje zebrane*, vol. 3, op. cit., p. 469.

407 Ibidem, p. 267.

But now I am at the end of my tether:
I fall.

This comic rhyme certainly did not suit the serious tone of a volume bearing the overblown title *Nadzieja*. Among the works about the reconstruction of Warsaw, epics about Stalin and Świerczewski, and even alongside texts expressing pain and regret following the loss of loved ones, the vastly different tone of this poem resounds rather awkward. It thus met with consistent disapproval at GUKPPiW, whose officials, as has been established here, did not lack a sense of humour. However, they were not sufficiently amused and the text was thus removed not only from the volume submitted to review but, in effect, from Broniewski's oeuvre.

The secondary review of the volume *Nadzieja*, written on 30 November 1951, does not mention any politically incorrect poems, although it is critical of the pessimistic tone of Broniewski's personal lyrical poems.

The poet's own experiences are completely disconnected from the reality around us, while at some points there is a strong sense that the poet has completely and explicitly distanced himself from life. However, the collective tone is set by the civilian poems and it is for this reason that Broniewski's new poems should be seen as a significant achievement within his outstanding oeuvre, although the artistic value of the individual poems is rather uneven.⁴⁰⁸

Mazowsze i inne wiersze (Mazowsze and other poems), 1952

The earliest review of this volume was signed off by the Łódź-based censor Roberta Kubik on 10 January 1952.

This small collection includes the epic *Mazowsze* and several other poems, including some written during the author's time in the Middle East when he was serving in the Polish army.

It is a shame that not all of the poems mention when they were written. The juxtaposition of *Mazowsze* with the other poems included in the volume does not seem to have been guided by any central concept.⁴⁰⁹

In May 1952, the work was submitted to the censorship office in Warsaw. The review is dated 22 May 1952, with permission for typesetting being granted the same day. Although the censors did not express any reservations, they were disturbed by the poems' pessimism. The first review reads:

408 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376,teczka 31/50, pp. 587–594.

409 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376,teczka 31/53, pp. 124–127.

There is a lot of longing and pessimism in them (p. 9). This nostalgia is understandable in the case of the works written in exile (*Damaszek*, *Mazurek Chopina* – the dates should be given), but it is more difficult to comprehend in the case of poems written today.

The second review suggested alterations to the order of the poems in the volume, in order to avoid the prevalence of pessimism.

It would be advisable to change the order of the poems – the subject matter of several of them is the love of the Mazowsze region and Płock, e.g. *Mój pogrzeb* [My funeral], *Na narodziny wnuczki* [On the birth of my granddaughter], *Dzwon w Płocku* [The bell of Płock].

This love of the Mazowsze region is indeed evident in all the poems. Some of them were written during the last war while the author was abroad and they offer an expression of nostalgia, e.g. *Miasto rodzinne* [Home town], *Damaszek* [Damascus], *Mazurek Szopena* [Chopin's Mazurka]. Other poems discuss the contemporary age: *Najbliższa ojczyzna* [The closest homeland], *Mazowsze*. And this is the order that the poems should appear in because the poem *Mazowsze* is the best of the lot, as it has the strongest creative accent, the most powerful enthusiasm and faith in the future (even though it mentions death several times), while the collection is dominated by generally sad poems and the motif of death appears repeatedly. – And this sadness would be more understandable and less oppressive were the poems to be reordered as proposed here. Indeed, the poet reminds himself in *Mazowsze* that he is not from the 'Land of the sad Helots'. The ending of *Dzwon w Płocku* is, however, inappropriate.⁴¹⁰

The proposed changes were not made and *Mazowsze* did not provide an eponymous and optimistic coda to the collection. However, several of the overly pessimistic poems were dated (*Miasto rodzinne* (My home city), *Mój pogrzeb*, *Damaszek* and *Mazurek Szopena*). There is also no indication of any changes being made to the ending of *Dzwon w Płocku* in this or subsequent editions.

It should be noted that the accusation of pessimism levelled against Broniewski during the Stalinist era was one of the basic criticisms faced by poetry generally at this time. There is evidence here of one particular manipulation that was being conducted, namely that the trauma of the war was being relegated to the collective subconscious and replaced by the optimism of constructing a new world. Jan Prokop states that the formation of a socialist man demanded his subordination to a modified memory, one that was completely controlled by the authorities. In Poland, amnesia normally proved to be the safest option after 1945.⁴¹¹

The secondary review was written – in handwriting that is difficult to decipher – by M. Burczyn, who dated it 21 October 1952. I have omitted the opening

410 AAN, GUKPPiW/376,teczka 31/50, pp. 579–582.

411 Jan Prokop, *Pisarze w służbie przemocy*, Kraków: Viridis, 1995.

summary of the contents, focussing here on the criticisms levelled against the volume.

The selection of poems for this collection is justified although there are some reservations regarding the poems on p. 27 *Cytadela* and on p. 32 – *W Damaszku*. Would it not be advisable to remove these poems from future editions, in particular *W Damaszku* which is about foreign matters and does not bring anything positive other than beautiful form? On p. 27 the author's formulation of the role of the PPS and SDKPiL in the struggle for independence and suffering in the citadel is somewhat unfortunate. It creates the impression that the entire PPS was so radical and revolutionary.⁴¹²

No changes were made either to the poem *Cytadela* or *Damaszek*. There were no further editions of this volume.

Młodym do lotu. Wybór wierszy (Poems for Youth. Selected poems), 1952

At GUKPPiW, this volume was titled *Wiersze dla młodzieży* (Poems for youth, rather than Youth – take flight). There are two documents relating to it in the archive. A primary review dated 27 May 1952 suggested two interventions.

Revolutionary themes prevail in the majority of the poems which are of significant ideological and artistic value. Alongside such poems there minor lyrical works such as *Maria, O szumie* [The hum], *O ptakach i tramwajach* [Birds and trams], *Majowy nocny wiersz na imieniny Joanny* [A May nocturne for Joanna's name day], *O przekwitaniu* [On withering], etc. which impose* a generally homogenous tone on a volume dedicated to a youth jamboree. Notably different to the other pieces is *Młodość* [Youth] – one of Broniewski's earliest poems which lacks ideals and is pacifistic. Given the premise of the collection, which ought to determine its nature, this poem might provoke reservations.

P. 87 – in a new order – no reservations. *Żołnierz polski* [The Polish soldier] –?⁴¹³

While the poem *Żołnierz polski* that was questioned by the censor did ultimately remain in the collection, the pre-war poem *Młodość* was removed.

The second assessment offers no fresh insight into the history of the volume's publication, although it is worth citing because it is so deeply permeated with the language of propaganda.

The book presents Broniewski's best revolutionary poems, expressing the oppression and struggle of the proletariat, with the works' simple and realist image evoking hatred of capitalism and the optimism of further struggle and final victory.

412 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376, teczka 31/53, pp. 124–127.

413 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376, teczka 31/54, pp. 684–685.

As the title indicates, the volume is aimed at young readers who are thus presented with an image of the battle of the proletariat against the sanacja regime and the great victories following liberation in poetic form. It is a shame that the editors have not provided the date when particular poems were written, as this would make it easier for readers to understand the stages of development of Broniewski's work.⁴¹⁴

Typesetting was approved on 30 May 1952.

Describing the censorship of individual volumes, rather than collections and selections, of Broniewski's poetry seems particularly interesting because some were published before the war or abroad, so outside the reach of the authorities in People's Poland. Any changes could thus have been noticed by readers, which must have been a source of additional tensions for the censor. Unfortunately, an overview of the available archival documents yielded only very general reports that fail to reproduce the full complexity of the situation.

Let us turn to first of all to three secondary reviews that were signed off with the same person's illegible signature. They feature the common complaint that the editors had failed to provide the dates of writing. This review of *Drzewo rozpaczające* was written on 15 March 1950:

This is a collection of poems written during the occupation when the author was in exile. The subject matter is largely personal – an atmosphere of nostalgia and oppression prevails. The publishers have failed to include the dates when the poems were written and as a result readers might develop mistaken views of the author. Any subsequent edition will require a minor change to ensure that the poems are accompanied by the dates they were written.

An aesthetically-pleasing edition.⁴¹⁵

The review of *Krzyk ostateczny* was signed on 21 March 1950.

A new edition of pre-war poems. The individual pieces should be accompanied by the date when they were written – the collection would thus be more transparent and more salient for the average reader.

This is a worthwhile publication.⁴¹⁶

The third review was of *Troska i pieśń* and bears the date 21 March 1950.

This is a new edition of the famous poet's pre-war poems. The publishers have failed to include the dates when the individual works were written and as a result readers might misunderstand the fairly pessimistic tone of the poems.

This is a worthwhile publication.⁴¹⁷

414 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376,teczka 31/54, pp. 686–687.

415 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/44 pp. 79–80.

416 AAN, GUKPPiW,146,teczka 31/44, pp. 170–171.

417 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/44, pp. 186–187.

The highly controversial war-themed volume *Bagnet na broń* also received significant praise in a review of its third edition. There is no mention of the cuts and abridgments made to the original Jerusalem edition: ‘A selection of poems about the war, occupation, longing for the homeland and Jewish suffering.’⁴¹⁸ This review was dated 31 December 1949.

More interesting are the sources relating to the volumes *Komuna paryska* and *Słowo o Stalinie* (these texts must have demanded greater sensitivity from censors owing to the subject matter). These individual works were reviewed together as they were published in a single edition. Particularly telling is the review dated 21 August 1950, signed by the censor Wołkowicz.

There are no concerns or reservations regarding this collection of Broniewski’s poetry. It is at the highest level yet encountered in Polish literature, both in artistic and ideological terms.

Any criticisms are groundless.

The publication is desirable and the maximum possible print run is the aim.

Meanwhile, two separate secondary reviews (that were written and dated simultaneously) of *Słowo o Stalinie* and *Komuna paryska* were signed on 30 September 1950 by the much more moderate censor Figlewska. The numerous corrections and stylistic improvements suggest that she worked tirelessly on her assessment of the former, owing to the subject matter no doubt.

The first stand-alone edition of the epic poem about Stalin. Its nine parts outline the various stages of the worldwide struggle for socialism, depicting Stalin as the leader of the struggles for a better tomorrow and peace. The aesthetic aspects of the poem and the layout are of a high standard. There is no date or signature.

The epic poem ‘Komuna paryska’ was published to mark Broniewski’s twenty-fifth anniversary as a writer (it was a jubilee edition). This edition is aesthetically attractive, published in a double format on wood-free paper, while the layout is well-designed (Stefan Bernaciński).⁴¹⁹

A second edition of *Słowo o Stalinie* (1953) was also assessed, with the review most notable for its creative word order.

The well-known, very good, inspired by his faith in socialism in the Soviet Union and Poland, and the whole world and in victorious peace as Stalin, whose name is still repeated [illegible] and connected to all this and thus leading.⁴²⁰

418 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/42, p. 413.

419 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/45, pp. 298–304.

420 AAN, GUKPPiW, 376,teczka 31/56, pp. 433–434.

As Feliksa Lichodziejewska's research has shown, the editions of *Troska i pieśń*, *Krzyk ostateczny*, and, in particular, *Bagnet na broń* and *Drzewo rozpaczające* published in Poland were significantly abridged. However, the GUKPPiW archives contain only superficial reviews full of praise that in no way give any indication of the dramatic nature of the situation. In all likelihood, the key decisions had been taken between 1945 and 1948 already, although there are no sources proving this. It is also possible that the decisions were taken without leaving any material traces of this procedure, with information communicated, for example, orally or by telephone.

The chief finding emerging from an analysis of the sources relating to the censorship of Władysław Broniewski's works is that while many changes were proposed, it proved relatively easy to avoid implementing them. The explanation for this could lie in the author's status, as he ranked highly among the literary stars of the era, and in his resistance to any interventions. Extensive archival analysis has shown that GUKPPiW offered lenient treatment to writers who enjoyed the party's support and were ascribed significant authority. As has been demonstrated, this was also the case with Jerzy Andrzejewski.

Broniewski faced some of the most critical accusations possible: glorifying the tradition of the legions, ideological inconsistency, deviation from the revolutionary path, presenting 'war and camp' elements, becoming ensconced in personal lyricism and pessimism. It is thus all the more surprising that the censors were willing to abandon their proposed changes so easily. The list of Broniewski's texts that censors expressed reservations about is impressive. Let us list them all: from the volume *Wiatraki* (1925): *Młodość*; from the volume *Dymy nad miastem* (1927): *Do towarzyszy broni* and *Szpicel*; from the volume *Troska i pieśń* (1932): *Bakunin*; from the volume *Krzyk ostateczny* (1938): *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga*, *Ulica Miła* and *Bar pod Zdechłym Psem*; from the volume *Bagnet na broń* (1943): *Bagnet na broń*, *Żołnierz polski*, *List z więzienia*, *Zamieć*, *Co mi tam troski*, *Damaszek*, *Nad rzekami Babilonu*, *Via dolorosa*, *Żydom polskim* and *Mazurek Szopena*; from the volume *Drzewo rozpaczające* (1945): *War Pictorial News*, *Monte Cassino*, *Mogiły*, *Targowisko*, *Homo sapiens* and *Ballada*; and from the volume *Nadzieja* (1951): *Cytadela*, *Dzwon w Płocku* and *Pod koniec maja*, while the poem *Radio* was cut completely from this collection. There are several poems in this list of over a dozen politically incorrect works that were not mentioned in Feliksa Lichodziejewska's list, although it should be noted that her research focussed on the wartime fate of the poems. What is evident is that the volumes written during wartime faced the strictest criticism from censors, with numerous poems from *Bagnet na broń* and *Drzewo rozpaczające* queried.

A significant portion of the censors' remarks on either individual works or the contents and order of volumes failed to leave a mark on the publications in the end. However, a number of the censors' demands were realized. The censorship archives verify the findings of Lichodziejewska's pioneering work on the abridgement of volumes that saw politically awkward poems removed. This chapter thus offers a modest supplement to the book *Broniewski bez cenzury*.

It was also possible to establish the existence of several interventions that have yet to be noted in existing research. At the express behest of the reviewer, the poem *Via dolorosa* was removed from the volume *Poezje wybrane* (1954). The pre-war poem *Młodość* was deemed to be ideologically lacking and pacifistic, meaning that it was cut from the selection of poems *Młodym do lotu*. The slight alteration in *Szpicel* from the collection *Wiersze zebrane* (1952) that saw 'ochrana' changed to 'ochrona' can be classed without doubt as a conscious intervention by GUKPPIW, rather than a misprint as Lichodziejewska claims. The most interesting finding is that the poem *Radio* (or, *Radiofonia – rzecz pożyteczna*) was cut completely from the small volume *Nadzieja*. This text was never published during the author's lifetime, a fact that might have been influenced by the censor's opinion that this piece was 'aestheticizing to an asocial degree'.

It is also worth noting again that the censorship of poetry is essentially limited to two types of changes: cuts made to particular texts and changes made to collections (removing entire poems or changing their order). Both options distort the author's intentions, although the first – making changes to individual poems – seems to be more dangerous because it runs the risk of altering the meaning of a work. A poem cut in its entirety or one moved to a different position in a volume nevertheless remains a complete and integral piece, leaving it open to being published in a different location and at a different time. A poem transformed by a censor becomes a mere imitation and parody of itself.

In Broniewski's case, there were few changes made to individual poems. Lichodziejewska has already established that 'Borysław' was changed to 'Wisła' in the poem *Nad rzekami Babilonu* and the epic *Bania z poezją* saw the line 'Die neue Ordnung, "nasza własť"' turned into 'W legend dni te będą kłaść'. To this I can also add the information about the change from 'ochrana' to 'ochrona' in the poem *Szpicel*. The small number of interventions into the texts and their limited nature stands in contrast to Broniewski's substantial output. This situation was undoubtedly shaped by the politically correct nature of the revolutionary themes of the new poems and the author's acceptance that the older works must not be republished.

It is worth repeating one of the hypotheses of this study, namely: censors' interventions in poetry were less significant for literature as a whole than their interventions into prose work. As Julian Kornhauser has argued, 'the censorship authorities dealt with prose differently than they did with poetry. Collections of poetry generally saw whole poems cut, whereas two of my novels appeared in significantly altered form'.⁴²¹ It has also been established that the authorities attached markedly less significance to censoring poetry as they believed it to be a form aimed at more sophisticated readers.

It is also necessary to outline relations between the writer and the censorship authorities. As the materials cited here show, the poet was unwilling to accept the suggested changes. However, the archival sources do not yield any simple answers. With so many poems appearing in multiple volumes, it is difficult to speak of a consistent and uniform attitude on the part of the poet.

While Broniewski protested against changes to particular poems (the GUKPPiW sources offer unique insight, with no notes of this kind appearing in relation to any other authors), he was more willing to remove entire poems from particular volumes. Several factors can be considered significant in this context. The majority of the poems that censors deemed unpublishable in their reviews had in fact already been published, meaning that they could not be cast completely into oblivion. As he had experienced censorship in several countries and political regimes, the author was willing to distance himself from the current situation and wait for further political changes (which, as it turned out, was not too far off). The fact that particular volumes were altered generally did not have a detrimental effect on them overall thanks to the fact that most poems were individual works and Broniewski rarely wrote cycles. The author's own conscious efforts to change his collections are also worth noting as he often removed poems that were no longer relevant.

Feliksa Lichodziejewska recapped her findings on 'the various editions of *Wiersze zebrane*', noting that

it is necessary to state that none of them offers a complete reproduction of the full contents of the individual volumes of Broniewski's poetry, while they include only a few of the works dispersed in various press publications. As far as his poetry from before 1945 is concerned, the richest text is the first edition from 1948, while his post-war verse is represented most fully in the publications from 1952 and 1955; the 1956 edition does include poems from the volume *Anka* but it excludes the pieces relating to Joseph Stalin. They were removed by the poet himself after the 20th Congress of the PZPR revealed the truth about Stalinist crimes.⁴²²

421 Cited in: Joanna Hobot, op. cit., p. 343.

422 Feliksa Lichodziejewska, *Wstęp*, in: W. Broniewski, op. cit., pp. 9–10.

To conclude, we should not overlook Broniewski's fiery character. While it is difficult to take it into account in academic research, his temperament sometimes offers the only explanation of the complex history of the poet's work and of his encounters with censors between 1949 and 1955.

4 Jan Brzechwa, Irena Jurgielewiczowa and others. Children's and youth literature

This chapter explores the ways in which children's and youth literature was censored between 1948 and 1958, with a particular focus on the transition years of 1949 and 1950. I have not employed all of the available archival sources to the same degree, as they were not all of equal interest. The most valuable materials for my research were, unsurprisingly, those emerging from specialist publishers in these fields, so *Nasza Księgarnia*, *Czytelnik*, *Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych*, *Książka i Wiedza*, *Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza* and *Iskry*. The materials of the Ministry of Culture and Art also provided important background context. In light of the extensive size of the archival collections, it was impossible to conduct a close examination of the censorship of a large number of texts. It is for this reason that I have decided to examine in detail two children's authors' struggles with GUKPPW, while offering a few more illustrations of other works for contextual purposes, thus demonstrating the complexity of the issue. The focus here will be on the publication and censorship of works by two outstanding children's authors, Jan Brzechwa and Irena Jurgielewiczowa. They are representative cases owing to their popularity and large number of works, with clear similarities evident in the way they took up subjects and adopted solutions that censors sought to stifle. Jurgielewiczowa also authored a text that was deemed so subversive that it was over seven years until it was approved for publication.

Investigating the censorship of children's and youth literature seems interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it is worth examining whether GUKPPiW officials neglected such texts by deeming them less relevant. It could be of interest to this study to examine how precise the checks on children's and youth literature were. Secondly, we can examine what censors sought to control in particular and whether these were the same subjects that they focused on in the case of works aimed at adult audiences. Did censors do anything differently in this case? It is also worth examining what strategies of self-censorship, if any, authors adopted in a situation where the readers were unlikely to understand their use of camouflage, extra-textual meaning, and Aesopic language, which were the typical means for communicating politically unorthodox ideas. Did authors try to communicate such content at all? It is also worth attempting to establish what

positive programme was created for children's and youth literature, i.e. what was deemed desirable for a younger readership, what content and forms met with approval from censors for reflecting the party's agenda and being particularly useful in shaping the young generation.

The Case of Jan Brzechwa

Jan Brzechwa published two collections of poetry for children before the war – *Tańcowała igła z nitką* (The needle danced with the thread) in 1938 and *Kaczka dziwaczka* (Strange duck) in 1939. During the occupation, he wrote numerous works for younger readers and the first part of his *Pan Kleks* (Mr Inkblot) cycle.⁴²³ In the post-war period, Anna Szóstak notes, Brzechwa opted to write children's stories as a form of *kitmān* to achieve intellectual independence.

Brzechwa found a gap marked 'children's literature'. Being a storywriter gave him the intellectual sovereignty he desired, while compromises with the authorities (in the form of commissioned and servile works) allowed him to function safely in conditions of total and overwhelming terror.⁴²⁴

This did not mean that he could publish all of his texts for children without difficulty. This was the case for both older works and new pieces.

The collection *Tańcowała igła z nitką* was submitted for review on 12 February 1949. The censor described it as a volume of 'nonsense poems lacking in educational value, based primarily on puns, with words selected because of their rhyme rather than meaning. The illustrations and cover are of a good standard.'⁴²⁵ The review concluded that the collection 'is not suitable for further editions'. Indeed, *Czytelnik* did not publish a new edition.

There were other assessments, however, alongside this negative review. The same month, the censorship office received a copy of the first edition of the collection *Latający dom* (The flying house), which was aimed at children. A print run of 15,500 was planned for this thirty-one-page book. The review was positive and permission for printing was granted, yet this book does not appear in any bibliography of Brzechwa's works.

This is an interesting little book and together with Szancer's nice illustrations it will certainly enjoy great popularity among children. The author introduces figures from

423 Anna Szóstak, *Od modernizmu do lingwizmu. O przemianach w twórczości Jana Brzechwy*, Kraków: Universitas, 2003, pp. 271–280.

424 Anna Szóstak, *Od modernizmu do lingwizmu*, op. cit., p. 184.

425 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/23, p. 128.

everyday life (including even a pioneer of socialist labour) in a nice way that is understandable for children without detracting from the fantastic aspects of the story.⁴²⁶

It seems that the directives issued at the Szczecin congress failed to reach all quarters, or perhaps the censor was indeed touched by the hero of socialist labour, whom Brzechwa skilfully employed in order to underline the value of the works submitted for review.

The same year, Brzechwa could celebrate a particular success. On 28 October 1949, his collection *ZOO*, 'a humorous outline of animals in a zoological garden in four-line verses', was recommended by the Ministry of Education for school libraries.⁴²⁷

Generally, though, positive reviews were few and far between. The Szczecin Congress laid the foundations for a concerted attack on Brzechwa's stories. '*Kaczka dziwaczka* features several poems for children', wrote censor Wiśniewska in a secondary review dated 26 March 1949. 'The poems are fundamentally lacking in educational objectives and are solely aimed at entertainment. The poems are written in revue-style rhyming couplets and recommending them for children would be a serious mistake.' These criticisms were repeated in a 'descriptive report' from the same month. 'In light of the nonsense content, it is not recommended for a new edition.'⁴²⁸ This opinion was affirmed in a note from a superior.

Likewise, permission was not granted for an expansion of the print run of *Skarżypyta* (Tell-tale). Both Świątycka (27 July 1950) and Kaniowa (14 August 1950) wrote negative reviews of the book, with the former writing:

This is a beautiful edition with very good illustrations by Olga Siemaszko. It seems to me, however, that there should not be a new edition. The poems presented in it are largely silly and are based on wordplays, with the words having different meanings to those given to them by the author. They are devoid of meaning. [...] Other poems are characterized by anthropomorphism of the very worst kind, with the author transferring all the traits of the philistine bourgeois onto the animals, such as snobbism, mannerism, pettiness, miserliness, and the desire to marry a wealthy man.⁴²⁹

The poem *Ptasie plotki* (Bird gossip) was deemed to leave 'a macabre aftertaste', according to materials from the Ministry of Culture and Art.

426 AAN, GUKPPiW, 148, teczka 31/67, p. 76.

427 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Literackiej, Wydział Wydawniczy, sygn. 704, not paginated.

428 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/23, p. 257.

429 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/26, pp. 177–180.

Kaczka Dziwaczka was again the subject of officials' attentions in 1952.

A collection of children's verses. The content is devoid of any educational value. Other than skilful wordplay there is generally nothing else to them. Furthermore, some of them, such as *Dwie gaduły* (Two gossips; its ending), *Stryjek* (Uncle) and *Dwie krawcowe* (Two dressmakers), are permeated by a completely alien atmosphere. I believe that there is nothing to be gained from publishing the collection and, at the very least, it should be abridged somewhat.⁴³⁰

The censor's negative review was, however, trumped by pressure from a superior who simply stated that the text had to appear since it is necessary *at the moment* owing to Brzechwa's status. 'Comrade Landsberg discussed the matter with Comrade Stefczyk. The work is still* necessary (due to the author)'. Czytelnik was granted permission for typesetting and printing a print run of 20,160. It is thus clear that even at the height of socialist realism GUKPPiW was under pressure and had to put up with certain restrictions.

The review of a new edition of the same volume in 1955 was clearly marked by the atmosphere of the thaw. I cite it in full here:

This is a new edition of the well-known and popular collection of children's verse, written with the author's characteristic sense of humour, which always remains a fresh and valuable work of children's literature. Thanks to its subject matter and sometimes paradoxical situations (*Kaczka dziwaczka*, *Pewna żaba* (A certain frog), *Konik polny i krówka* (The grasshopper and the cow) and *Sójka* (Jaybird)), the poems feature a large dose of comedy and humour, and they are easily memorized and liked by children. This collection also features poems with some educational value, including the wonderful poem about the two insufferable gossips, Madalińska and Gadalińska from Młyńsk, and the poem about Staś Pytalski who torments those around him with irrelevant questions. No reservations.⁴³¹

The archival materials reveal that Brzechwa sought to protect himself from criticism using other methods beyond simply biding his time. He wove content that the new authorities considered desirable into his works, thus altering his poems. One such example is the collection *Latający pogrzebacz* (The flying poker), which was given a brutally negative review. A director of the censorship office decided that it should be reviewed a second time, with the new censor treating the text somewhat more leniently, noting the improvements made by the author (it is difficult to establish whether this relates to previous versions of the text or to other works), since he now 'not only concentrates on form but also on

430 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375,teczka 31/30.

431 AAN, GUKPPiW, 375,teczka 31/35, p. 363.

content [...] that helps make children familiar with factories, labour competition, heroes of socialist labour, rationalization and efficiency drives.' The second censor proposed a series of changes, with one of them required because it related to the worker being overworked: after his night shift he worked privately, soldering housewives' pots and pans. Whether it was the author who carried out the changes himself or the editors, after agreeing the changes with the writer, cannot be established on the basis of the archival sources. *Dwie gaduły* was treated similarly, with Tadeusz Szyma noting that Brzechwa altered the protagonists of the poem in the 1950s, meaning that present-day editions should return to the earliest version.⁴³²

Latający pogrzebacz was considered to be a controversial text and as such was sent to the Ministry of Culture and Art. It received two positive reviews there, which nevertheless expressed some doubts. I cite here the rather characteristic conclusion of the summary report signed by Wanda Żółkiewska.

'Worthy of publication' – this is too much. This work can be published although it should be noted that it will almost certainly not perform the tasks that are currently demanded of pedagogy. This is a book that serves entertainment purposes rather than education. While it is harmless, it is by no means of any value. I do not believe that it will be possible to correct the text. Ideological errors.⁴³³

The Ministry informed GUKPPIW that it had accepted the text on 26 November 1949. The censorship office approved *Latający pogrzebacz* for printing on 5 December 1949. The secondary review that appeared almost a year later stressed the significant educational value of the work as it addressed contemporary issues related to 'labour competition, rationalization and increased production', although the assessment also noted that the 'thematic aspect is somewhat chaotic'.

Jan Brzechwa also created socialist-realist verses for children that drew on a favourite topic from the time – namely the Colorado potato beetle (*Stonka i Bronka*) and he even made an attempt at a didactic epic poem about collective farms (*Opowiedział dzięcioł sowie – As the woodpecker told the owl*).⁴³⁴ The latter received favourable reviews from GUKPPIW.

432 Tadeusz Szyma, *Dwie władze*. *Tygodnik Powszechny*, vol. 31, 1986, p. 6.

433 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Literackiej, Wydział Wydawniczy, sygn. 704, not paginated.

434 Zbigniew Jarosiński, *Nadwiślański socrealizm*, op. cit., especially the chapter: *Socrealizm dla dzieci* (Socialist realism for children), pp. 277–297.

Archival sources relating to the publishers Nasza Księgarnia include material on another of Brzechwa's thematically-relevant collections of poetry, *Rzemiosło* (Craft). While the reviews were not entirely enthusiastic, the head of department did not hesitate in granting permission for typesetting.

These are four-line verses sung by representatives of various professions. The majority have already featured in the play *Siedmiomilowe buty* (Seven-mile shoes). It is clear that Brzechwa is capable of thinking of what is in his interest, as the same was true of the collection *Na wyspach Bergamutach* (On the Bergamot islands). These poems are completely isolated from contemporary reality and could have been published before the war.⁴³⁵

The second review, which, interestingly (if we are to believe the dates), was written six months after the first, called for changes.

The book seeks to familiarize children with various kinds of human labour. The title of the book is a misnomer because tractor drivers, bricklayers and printers carry out professions rather than represent crafts. The book fails to include, for example, miners, textile workers, typists, and steel mill workers. The book tends to focus on service professions and crafts or cottage industries. In my opinion, the editors should be made aware of these shortcomings.

There is a note on this review: 'Discussed with editor A. Horska. One copy to be issued for fundamental reediting.'⁴³⁶ Whether this was carried out or not, cannot be established, since bibliographies do not mention a separate edition of the collection *Rzemiosła*. In all likelihood, they were not published as a standalone volume and thus appeared only as part of the play *Siedmiomilowe buty*.

Around the same time, the small volume *Na wyspach Bergamutach* was submitted for review. It was formed of poems more typical of Brzechwa's style, as they were based on wordplay and linguistic humour. The author clearly worked on volumes that were engaged in building the new order at the same time as he wrote poems that were in no way connected to this reality. The archives contain two primary reviews and one secondary review of this volume. Renata Świątycka's unfavourable review criticizes the lack of educational elements:

The book contains ten poems for children selected from various volumes that GUKPPiW at some point did not approve for publication. The majority of nonsense rhymes, some of which are harmful from an educational perspective (*Kwoka* (Mother hen), *Atrament* (Ink), *Kłamczucha* (The fibber) – their endings). The poems that are suitable for publication from this collection are: *Na wypach Bergamutach*, *Łata i dziura*

435 AAN, GUKPPiW, 378,teczka 31/70, p. 256.

436 AAN, GUKPPiW, 378,teczka 31/70, p. 257.

(The patch and the hole), *Leń* (Lazybones), *Grzebień i szczotka* (Comb and brush) and *Arbuz* (Watermelon).⁴³⁷

The subsequent review, however, was positive and features a note approving the collection for typesetting:

J. Brzechwa's small book *Na wyspach Bergamutach* features children's rhymes written in an inimitable style. There are ten of them. Nearly every one contains a moral that is communicated in a fun way as it makes fun of some foible or other. This collection is a good read suitable for younger readers. I have no objections.⁴³⁸

The conclusion to an extensive secondary review dated 29 December 1951 reads: 'taken as a whole, this is a valuable book both in artistic (fluid poetry, good illustrations) and education terms'.⁴³⁹ Świątycka's negative review had no influence at all on the content or fate of the volume. Perhaps other texts were useful in achieving this outcome. Even if censorship officials did not give the best reviews, the works were nevertheless approved for publication by directors as they recognized the need to fill a gap in the book market, as there were simply not enough poems for younger readers addressing contemporary issues.

In 1953, Brzechwa's *Wagary* (Playing truant), which addressed subjects that the authorities fully approved of, received three positive reviews. I cite here the least generalizing review:

The subject of this brochure, which also contains a play suitable for amateur school theatre performance, is everyday life at school. The author's chief aim was to mock and depict the consequences of failing to learn well at school and of skipping class. The content of the play is not only humorous but also educational as it contains many didactic elements and it absolutely deserves to be published.⁴⁴⁰

In early March, the play *Teatr Pietruszki* (Pietruszka's Theatre, lit. Parsnip's Theatre) was submitted to GUKPPIW. The work was based on the Russian original. As a text of 'special concern', it was approved for publication on the basis of a single review.

The particular scenes have been reworked by Jan Brzechwa on the basis of Soviet tales. Pietruszka is a protagonist from a former puppet theatre, a precursor of today's Obraztsov Puppet Theatre.⁴⁴¹

437 AAN, GUKPPIW, 378, teczka 31/70, p. 261.

438 AAN, GUKPPIW, 378, teczka 31/70, p. 262.

439 AAN, GUKPPIW, 378, teczka 31/70, p. 263.

440 AAN, GUKPPIW, 378, teczka 31/76, p. 43.

441 AAN, GUKPPIW, 378, teczka 31/76, p. 131.

Just four months later, the censors assessed and approved the well-known volume *Bajki i baśnie* (Children's stories and fairy tales) for typesetting. Even today, as it was then, this book is a source of controversy.

This collection of children's poems lacks any significant educational value. The children's stories about animals are humorous and their meaning is hard to discern, while some of them are hardly suitable for children owing to their confused endings.

Generally, the volume exudes a significant degree of formalism, taking pleasure in fanciful terms, comical proverbs, etc. Even if we accept that these are children's stories, it should be stated that their value is to be found largely in their rhythm and rhymes (meaning that they are easy to memorize). I believe that poems such as *Żuraw i czapla* (The crane and the heron), *Indyk* (Turkey), *Żuk* (Beetle), *Chrzan* (Horseradish) and *Jeź* (Hedgehog) are enough to justify this opinion.

Other stories have some didactic value as they condemn certain human failings – in parable form, using animals – that are typical of children, such as laziness in *Mrówka* (The ant), gossiping in *Sroka* (The magpie) and *Dwie gaduły* (Two gossips), and stupidity in *Wrona i ser* (The crow and the cheese). I suggest removing the overly formalistic poems, such as *Indyk*, from the volume, which would surely benefit from this.⁴⁴²

A superior deemed the proposed changes irrelevant and instead agreed to a large print run of 30,000.

Analysis of the archival materials in the Czytelnik files suggests that the publishers alternately submitted politically-correct works – which Anna Szóstak termed 'commissioned' and 'servile' pieces – and politically incorrect texts by Brzechwa for review. It is very likely that it did so in order to smuggle the politically questionable works through. It should be added that regardless of whether this was done consciously or not, the operation was entirely successful.

The censorship files containing materials from 1950 also include a rather curious note. While it concerns Brzechwa's entire oeuvre and not only his writing for children, it is worth citing in full. The premise for the note was the poet's socialist-realist poems in praise of the Six-Year Plan.⁴⁴³ Censor Wołkowicz noted that

Strofy o sześcioletnim planie (Verses about the six-year plan) consistently furthers the author's destructive influence on Polish poetry, the field in which he has sought, unsuccessfully, to establish himself for over two decades now. Large sales do not reflect the true poetic or ideological value of the works. This new collection of poems should be

442 AAN, GUKPPiW, 378, teczka 31/76, p. 300.

443 Waldemar Żyszkiewicz writes that censors did not approve the poem *Szóstka oszustka* (Number six, full of tricks) for publication because they saw in it a critique of the Six-Year Plan. Waldemar Żyszkiewicz, *Czerwona mgła. Solidarność*, vol. 40, 2000 p. 15.

considered to be yet further evidence of the misunderstandings that are typical of our publishing policy, as it offers nothing more than a series of carelessly and hurriedly written pseudo-poetic-“socialist” rhymes. [...] A nice poem that lacks any arrogance is *Liryczne intermezzo* (Lyrical intermezzo). The author writes: ‘Niechaj po mojej śmierci nie będzie minuty ciszy’ (Let there be no minute’s silence after my death). His fears are unnecessary – there will not be a fraction of a second, let alone a minute, only the joyous hubbub of readers, both adults and children, finally liberated from the terror of *Tańcząca igła z nitką* (*sic!*). [...] The only source of hope for readers is in the poem *W rozmowie z budowniczym* [In conversation with a builder] where he agrees to the bricklayer’s proposal and will ‘place his singing heart on the bricklayer’s trowel’ for it to be bricked up, meaning that Polish poetry will finally enjoy some peace and quiet at this juncture at least. Since the author is, for reasons unknown, tolerated and there is no end in sight to his rampage through the literary world, while the protests against publishing him are currently strictly platonic, I will refrain from any suggestions or decisions. *Habent sua fata libelli*.⁴⁴⁴

What was Brzechwa being accused of? Above all, it was a lack of didacticism, employing wordplays, anthropomorphization, promoting bourgeois values and enjoying good sales. The errors pointed out thus related to all aspects of a text’s existence. It is thus worth asking why, in light of such strong condemnation, his children’s stories were being published at all in the late 1940s and in the 1950s. ‘The children’s edition of socialist realism,’ wrote Zbigniew Jarosiński, ‘was based primarily in a turn towards particular subjects and issues, while also saturating works with an air of ideological zeal’.⁴⁴⁵ It seems that in light of the demands made by the new culture, poetry had a chance of succeeding only if it managed to fill the gap in the market for books aimed at younger children. In light of the lack of texts that could indeed meet the doctrine’s elevated demands and expected standards of ideological zeal, there was temporary acceptance of the presence of imperfect works by well-known authors. Over time, they were to be cleared from the shelves of bookshops and cleansed from the hearts of progressive young people.

One example of the actions undertaken with the goal of accelerating the arrival of the new literature aimed at younger readers was the Ministry of Culture and Art’s closed call for lyrics for a social-revolutionary song aimed at preschool children. It is worth noting that this competition was aimed at the same age group as Brzechwa’s poetry. The jury first met on 15 February 1950. The closed call invited 23 entries from writers including Wanda Grodzieńska, Hanna

444 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145,teczka 31/26, pp. 695–696.

445 Zbigniew Jarosiński, op. cit., p. 277.

Januszewska, Czesław Janczarski, Jadwiga Korczakowska, Maria Kownacka, Lucyna Krzemieniecka, Janina Porazińska, Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina, Julian Tuwim, and... Jan Brzechwa. However, not all of them wanted to participate, with ten authors submitting a total of 21 texts. No first prize was awarded, while Maria Kownacka (for *Ochocza drużynka* [The eager team]) and Karol Szpalski (for *Piosenka 1-majowa* – 1st May song) shared second prize.⁴⁴⁶ Both Brzechwa and Tuwim, another giant in the world of children's poetry, ignored the invitation.

The Case of Irena Jurgielewiczowa

Between 1947 and 1950, Irena Jurgielewiczowa was a lecturer in pedagogy at Warsaw University while also working as an editor at Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Wiedza (the Wiedza publishing cooperative, which later became Wiedza Powszechna). During this period, she developed an interest in children's literature, writing three volumes of prose and one play.

The first work was *Historia o czterech pstroczkach* (*Opowieść dla dzieci*) [The story of the four sparrows – A children's tale]. It was first published by Wiedza in 1948 and then in 1954 by Nasza Księgarnia under the modified title *O czterech warszawskich pstroczkach* (The story of the four Warsaw sparrows). She subsequently published all of her works with the latter publisher, which specialized in literature for the youngest readers. In 1949 and 1950, Jurgielewiczowa wrote a literary fairy tale titled *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* (About a boy who was searching for a home). It was held back by censors for seven years and first published in 1957.⁴⁴⁷ In the archives, I found no other examples of texts aimed at children that faced such an extensive delay.

The short piece *Wiewiórcza mama – Opowiadanie dla dzieci* (Squirrel mother – a children's story) appeared in 1950, while the short play *Osiem lalek i jeden miś* (*Sztuka w 3 aktach*) [Eight dolls and a bear (A play in three acts)] appeared a year later and was even awarded a prize by the Ministry of Culture and Art in the category of plays for young theatre-goers. She received a lifetime achievement award from the President of the Council of Ministers in 1958 for her children's literature.⁴⁴⁸ It seems that a second edition of *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* appeared in light of this award a year later.

446 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Twórczości Literackiej, sygn. 505, pp. 1–3.

447 My findings suggest that this fairy tale was completed in autumn 1949.

448 *Współcześni polscy pisarze*, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 449–452.

The archival sources that I have studied yielded information on all four texts mentioned above, although there are no documents available relating to the first edition of *Historia o czterech pstroczkach*. There are, however, two positive assessments of the new edition from 1954. The reviews emphasize the educational value of this tale about the lives of Warsaw sparrows. A print run of 10,000 was recommended.⁴⁴⁹

The short story *Wiewiórcza mama* was given a brief and general review on 22 March 1950 which stressed the improbability of the events depicted. Permission for printing was nevertheless granted without reservation.

There are three documents relating to the censorship reviews of *Osiem lalek i jeden miś*. I cite here only those fragments that attempt, in accordance with the objectives of this chapter, to present the educational value of the work. The review dated 28 May 1951 states that ‘thus, the play has educational value, as well as certain knowledge-based value.’⁴⁵⁰ The second review, signed in September 1951, is also positive: ‘The educational aspect of the play is the challenge it poses to egoism and arrogance (the doll Małgosia), as well as the solidarity it expresses in the realm of play and offering mutual assistance at moments of impending danger.’⁴⁵¹ A secondary review was written two months later: ‘The play has significant didactic value, it teaches the importance of caring for the common good, it demonstrates the significance of organized common endeavour, it makes fun of asocial individuals, and does all of this in a light, accessible manner using very simple means.’⁴⁵² Even during the harshest period of Stalinism, Jurgielewiczowa’s play managed to find a way through GUKPPiW’s filters without hindrance. This makes it all the more surprising that *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* was held back at the same time. Clearly, the author’s identity was not the reason for this but rather the content of the work.

The files of the Ministry of Culture and Art contain the oldest source relating to the censorship of the text. Interestingly, it was submitted for review by the small publishing house Światowid. The review was dated 19 October 1949, with the censorship official classifying it as a ‘story – fairy tale’. I cite it in full:

An original fairy tale based on children’s wartime experiences.

A young orphan boy named Czarus by his dead mother is wandering alone and meets a woman who takes him with her. They arrive at an abandoned village; the house

449 AAN, GUKPPiW, 378,teczka 31/77, pp. 140–141.

450 AAN, GUKPPiW, 378,teczka 31/72, p. 35.

451 AAN, GUKPPiW, 378,teczka 31/72, p. 36.

452 AAN, GUKPPiW, 378,teczka 31/72, p. 37.

is empty. The woman's two daughters, Kasia and Trusia, have disappeared. After the mother's search proved fruitless, Czarus decides to find them. He is assisted by the witch Miłorada who reduces him to the size of a gnome and grants him the ability to communicate with animals. Czarus risks a great deal: he must not be seen by any human being (this would mean that he would remain a dwarf forever), while only the mother of the children can break the spell and only if he finds the right magic word. Czarus sets off in search of the girls accompanied by the dog Kiwaj and after overcoming many challenges, he finds them 'in the old country' where they had been taken by 'bad people'. Thanks to his exceptional imagination and the support of animals, Czarus is able to lead the children home, waiting for the magic word that would break the spell, always without revealing himself to anyone. Finally the magic word 'son' is uttered by the mother, with Czarus restored to his old self and he finds a home in the girl's house.

The book *Chłopiec, który szukał domu* is one of the most outstanding books to have passed through the Department for Children's and Youth Literature. It is written to a high literary standard; it expresses original ideas and does so with subtlety, while the literary associations that it evokes point toward such esteemed works as Selma Lagerlöf's *Cudowna podróż* (*The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*). Alongside its literary value, it also has an interesting plot, while only the opening section lacks the dramatic tension that permeates the rest of the work, gripping the reader. Furthermore, the work is of significant educational value, as it demonstrates the value of friendship and courage, while it is also highly moving without being moralizing or sentimental.⁴⁵³

It is aimed at children aged eight to eleven, the reviewer states, noting in conclusion that this is 'a valuable book in literary and educational terms. It deserves to be published'. The signature is illegible. The review was accepted by a superior.

Knowing that the work was held back by censors for many years, this highly positive review must be a source of consternation. It is worth remembering, however, that neither the Ministry's decision nor that of GUKPPIW were inviolable. Furthermore, permission for typesetting or printing was only valid for three months. Any reviews written in autumn 1949 soon became anachronistic in light of the rapid Stalinization of literature.

It was Czytelnik that submitted the work to the censorship office, since Światowid's existence was put to an end in the typical manner, with private publishers being denied paper and licences, while printing of potentially profitable works was halted. It is also worth emphasizing, following existing research on the subject, that the abolition of publishers that were not part of the state's monopoly was closely connected to the crisis in the market for children's literature. As Stanisław Siekierski has noted,

453 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Twórczości Literackiej Sygn. 705, not paginated.

the restrictions and abolition of private publishing houses contributed significantly to the impoverishment of the publishing market in two areas in particular. The reduction in output was particularly keenly felt in the realm of children's books. This applied to a significant degree to writers who had already been accepted as children's authors yet had not been taken on by state-backed publishers. The closure of private publishing houses also weakened the market and readership of what was known as light or entertainment literature.⁴⁵⁴

GUKPPiW issued reviews of *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* that presented opinions that were the complete opposite of those issued by the Ministry. The first review was written on 15 February 1950 by censor Świątycka, while the second was signed by censor Kupraszwili on 17 February that year. Their criticisms were typical of the early 1950s. I will cite the two reviews in full. The first reads:

This is a book for older children. The story presents the adventures of a boy named Czarus, who lost his parents and home as a result of the war. Wandering, he met a woman in the forest who took him in. Enemy soldiers had taken away her children. Czarus decided to find them. To do so, he went to the witch Miłorada, who cast a spell on him. Czarus was shrunk to the size of a finger but he could thus speak to birds and animals, and he could understand them. With their help, he found his way to the land of the 'Cruel Leader' and saved the daughters of his adoptive mother.

Some of the details of the plot are clearly allusions to the last war. I see no reason to hide this fact behind dark symbolism. Older children who still remember the war can be told of this fact without veiling it. If the model for the Grey Country is Germany, then it is a significant ideological error that the hero only encounters one good person there.

The protagonists of this book are humans and animals alike – this is a plus.

It seems superfluous to grant animals the traits and cognitive abilities of humans, while casting a spell on the hero so that he can understand animals. The guiding principle of the book is some kind of universal human dignity, love and dedication – yet it is characterized by bourgeois pettiness and a degree of psychologization, which is unhealthy for children. An illustration of this is the following moment: Czarus tries to remind the girls of home and inspire them to escape, so he comes to them at night, when they are asleep and speaks to them meaning that they dream what he tells them. It seems that this idea is taken from Huxley's book *Brave New World*, a book that is not for children; this moment creates an unhealthy atmosphere, a feature that is repeated several times in the book.

These are the basic failings of the book and they seem shocking enough to me that Czytelnik ought not to publish it. It could also be added that this book would be the perfect read for prewar scouts.⁴⁵⁵

454 Stanisław Siekierski, *Książka literacka*, op. cit., p. 132.

455 AAN, GUKPPiW, 145, teczka 31/25, pp. 252–253.

The second review reads:

This is a long and contrived book about a boy who uses the spells of the witch Miłorada to do something unbelievable – he finds two girls who had been taken away by the soldiers of a cruel leader and returns them to their mother. The boy's determination as he faces the threat of never again living among humans if the girls' mother should fail to break the spell is the only valuable aspect of this book.

Should this book be published? It is not harmful and the plot is interesting. It should be stated, however, that such books will not raise children to be citizens of a socialist country. This is an entertaining run-of-the-mill tale lacking in educational and intellectual value. We have plenty of such books available.

Permitting the publication of such books carries a particular danger. We will not be able to force writers to produce books in our spirit through tolerance. Were the author to present the boy with a [illegible] challenge that he could meet thanks solely to his courage and endeavour, etc., and also locate the story in Poland, then we would be presented with a book that would be truly useful to us.⁴⁵⁶

Criticisms such as psychologizing, anthropomorphism (which would prove to be censors' chief enemy, alongside fantasy elements), and the lack of educational value, were enough to ensure a work would not be approved. The crushing payoff ('this book would be the perfect read for pre-war scouts') made the situation clear. There are no notes from superiors on the archived reviews, meaning that they most probably agreed with the censors' opinions.

Unfortunately, I was unable to locate any reviews that passed the fairy tale for publication in 1957. Perhaps they could be found in the course of further research.

The battle against Jurgielewiczowa's story seems to be part of a larger campaign that was generally opposed to fantasy literature aimed at children. Mariusz Zawodnik stresses that 'at the heart of proletarian pedagogics was the fundamentally primitive idea that stories had a negative influence on children's consciousness, interfering for many years to come with their sense of reality and their ability to deal with it'.⁴⁵⁷ Opposition to the use of symbolism, 'oversaturation with religious motifs,' anthropomorphism, 'clouding' meaning, insufficient educational and intellectual value – these were all commonplace in censors' reviews of other fairy tales and children's stories. Let us now turn to a dozen or so typical cases.

456 AAN, GUKPPiW, I/145, teczka 31/25, pp. 254–255.

457 Mariusz Zawodniak, *Królewicz i murarz (socrealistyczne potyczki z fantazją)*, *Teksty Drugie*, 1 (1994), p. 87.

Others

One review of Jan Grabowski's *Wilk, koza i kozłeta* (The wolf, the goat and the kids), a dramatized fairy tale (of which there were five reviews, with only one recommending not permitting publication; permission was given on 14 June 1949), presented a rather typical argument:

It is written fairly neatly and would be suitable for performance in a puppet theatre were it not for the work's completely unacceptable ideology, which is lacking any trace of a healthy sense of morality and is totally devoid of educational value. Again, there is unjustified anthropomorphism and an atmosphere of terror and dread – children would almost certainly have nightmares after viewing such scenes.* [* In light of the fact that this section offers an overview of the archives, I have opted not to document the sources used].

The work's unfortunate anthropomorphism is condemned, as are the use of mystery and dread, even though they are typical devices in fairy tales. The condemnation of the work was further emphasized in the subsequent descriptive report.

It is a short drama for younger children, depicting the adventures of young kid goats who defend themselves against a wolf that seeks to devour them. It is written fairly neatly and would be suitable for performance in a puppet theatre, were it not for the work's completely unacceptable ideology, which is lacking any trace of a healthy sense of morality and is totally devoid of educational value. Again, there is unjustified anthropomorphism and an atmosphere of dread – children would almost certainly have nightmares after viewing such scenes. A negative contribution to literature.

Interestingly, even fairy tales that were worked into a socialist realist form met with negative responses from GUKPPiW. In October 1950, there was a genuine storm around a new edition of Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina's *Baśń* (Fairy Tale). Ultimately, it was returned to its editor - Broniatowska. The text offers an updated, modern take on a classical story, with Cinderella marrying the shoemaker while steel mill workers rescue the princess trapped on the glass mountain. The usual accusations followed: bourgeois-philistine tastes, mawkish descriptions of misfortunes, and unsuccessful modernization of the story. According to censor Świątycka, 'the drawings are terrible. I believe that including such images in a book for children should be a criminal offence'. Her colleague Sabina Fleszar, meanwhile, proposed the following interventions:

Change the line on p. 35 that Marysia gave the beggar a penny – children should not be taught such "mercifulness" and change the verse (marked on p. 61) about work in the steel mill. The verse does not make sense. And one more change on p. 23 to the line: The silver bells are ringing in the crystal church. Why? – the wedding could just as well take place in a registry office.

A serious criticism levelled against any collection was that it lacked educational qualities. For example, *Baśnie z całego świata* (Fairy tales from around the world) by Wanda Markowska and Anna Milska was summarized thus by the censor: ‘The fairy tales forming this collection tend to be devoid of meaning and central ideas; educational value of the collection – none’. Despite the crushing review, it was still approved for printing.

Hanna Januszewska’s work *O kocie, co faję kurzył* (The cat that smoked a pipe) received a similarly critical assessment after it was submitted for review by Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza. ‘The book is devoid of educational and social value’. The censors called for an intervention in the story of the dreaming lazy boy, because such educationally-questionable attitudes should face the author’s explicit criticism, while the whole of the text of *O przepióreczce* (About a quail) was removed owing to its unacceptable representation of the military, which ‘only swings its swords, makes trouble and does no good’. Permission for printing was indeed granted but the censors at GUKPPiW were not entirely satisfied with the book, thus no new edition was permitted. The review signed by Bronisław Krawczenko on 24 March 1950 left no room for doubt.

The four stories rhyme awkwardly in the style of children’s stories. The content is neither interesting nor educational. The language is ornate and artificial. [...] These are stupid tales for children from “good homes”. They do not shape emotions, they offer no knowledge and are instead harmful.

Other volumes aimed at the youngest readers also provoked similar reservations: Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina’s *A... a... a... kotki dwa* (‘... two little cats’) was deemed to be ‘for entertainment purposes and lacking in educational value’, while Hanna Januszewska’s *O Flisaku i Przydróżce* was full of ‘symbolic-political tendencies that were hard to decipher’. Interestingly, despite such unfavourable statements, these fairy tales were published by Nasza Księgarnia. Meanwhile, Kornel Makuszyński’s *Bardzo dziwne bajki* (‘Very strange tales’) was not approved for publication, with the reviewer stating: ‘The stories lack a connection to reality and are devoid of educational elements’. The rejection was probably a consequence of the fact that the work was submitted by the private publishing house Gebethener i Wolff. It is also worth stressing that a large number of works aimed at children were indeed initially submitted by private publishers, who faced restrictions, including being denied paper, alongside other tricks designed to undermine private enterprise. The bans on publishing were usually lifted once a state-backed publisher submitted the work, although in some cases this did not work and the books faced longer delays.

As the above analysis shows, fairy tales caused the censorship office significant difficulties. They did not satisfy political demands and instead caused consternation with their 'regressive' educational content and disturbing fantasy elements. At the same time, this genre proved impossible to eliminate completely. Stanisław Siekierski has drawn attention to this matter, highlighting that while the traditional conventions of fairy tales were abandoned, there were no works of children's literature, which would reflect contemporary political demands.⁴⁵⁸ Publishers submitted a diverse range of works and proposed huge print runs, while the established tradition of fairy tales meant that they were given priority among texts aimed at the youngest readers. The damning censors' reviews of works that were nevertheless approved for publication were one upshot of this situation. Of course, less popular works – and new contributions to the genre in particular – were not approved if sufficient reason could be found. One such case was Jurgielewiczowa's *O chłopcu, który szukał domu*.

An initiative launched by the Ministry of Culture and Art sought to overcome such difficulties. Towards the end of 1949, it announced a competition for literary adaptations of Polish folk tales. There were eighty entries. Professor Julian Krzyżanowski, author of *Polska bajka ludowa w układzie systematycznym* (A systematic overview of Polish folk tales), prepared the five storylines that were to be adapted as part of the competition: how Bartek became a doctor; the boy, his cat, dog, and little lion; exceptional assistants; a wife in search of her long-lost husband; and an intriguing old woman. The fairy tales were to be aimed at children aged between eight and ten, while the new adaptations were to differ from traditional fairy tales, which were viewed with suspicion, by being based strictly in folklore.

The jury included Stefania Wortman and Julian Krzyżanowski, alongside representatives of the Ministry. As the minutes of one meeting state, the jury found that the submissions received in the first round did not meet the standards required of such publications.

Particular folklore-based aspects need to be reworked in many cases, including changing ideological motifs, while logical explanations need to be added and the likely psychological consequences made clearer. [...] The authors of the entries have made little use of elements purely from folk tales and they have not engaged with the specific nature of the genre; the majority have instead simply written a story and often adopted the tone of reports

458 Stanisław Siekierski, op. cit., p. 173.

The jury also repeated the common criticism that all authors seem to think that they are capable of writing for children.

The first round of the competition failed to yield any positive results. The report on the second round noted that in accordance with the jury's decree of 28 November 1949, the following authors were invited to participate in a closed competition: Hanna Januszewska, Irena Jurgielewiczowa, Mieczysława Buczkówna, Wanda Grodzieńska, and Janina Porazińska, as well as a joint entry from Anna Miłska and Wanda Markowska. These were the stars of children's literature at the time, although all of these female authors had also faced criticism from censors on several occasions. The winner was announced following the jury's deliberations.

Having read the material submitted and with the commission having established its ideological, social, educational, and artistic value, the jury has decided to award Hanna Januszewska the prize of developing a full volume.

The author received a cash prize and the resulting work was to be published with *Czytelnik*.

The censor reviewing the prizewinning folk tales in 1952 confirmed the jury's positive opinion, especially emphasizing the stories' educational value. 'All of these folk tales offer illustrations of protagonists who come from the people and who love the people – this is the key educational aspect of this collection.' *Baśnie polskie* (Polish folk tales) were approved for printing and new editions were allowed. Her success in the competition also enabled the author to publish other works. While three of four reviews of another collection of her fairy tales were negative in 1950 – facing the usual criticism that their content was devoid of value and educational worth in line with current demands, that they were moralizing along Christian lines and employed fantastic elements – her collection *Złota jabłko* (The golden apple tree), written after the competition, not only received three positive reviews but was also given distinctions. The stories in that collection, according to one censor, were written in neat, simple, and accessible language and should present readers of all ages with an interesting and valuable read.

It is worth considering at this point one criticism that appeared repeatedly in reviews of folk tales and fairy tales. Anthropomorphism was one of the more serious criticisms aimed at children's literature, with most comments on this stylistic device appearing in records dated from 1949 and 1950. The use of anthropomorphism was the chief reason why *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* was not approved, while it was also a cause of many of the problems that Brzechwa's poems faced with censors. Giving non-living objects human traits, something

that was typical of literature aimed at the youngest readers, was deemed an offence against a rational vision of the world.

In a highly critical note from March 1949 about Maria Kownacka's small book *Kamizele na niedziele* (Sunday best vest), the censor stated:

A rhyming story for small children about a tailor's storehouse run by hedgehogs, devoid of educational and literary value. This book unnecessarily anthropomorphizes animals, harming children's view of forests and life in them. This is a very weak work in literary terms – rhyming couplets written in careless Polish. Kownacka's little book is not suitable for new editions and it should not be included in the collections of either public or school libraries.

Despite this unequivocally critical assessment, the book was approved for printing.

Hanna Ozogowska's *O ślimaku, co pierogów z serem szukał* (The snail that wanted cheese dumplings) met with similar criticism. A censorship official concluded a note dated 31 March 1950 thusly: 'A tale for small children, about forest and garden animals, that involves unnecessary anthropomorphization. It is nevertheless written fairly neatly, making it a pleasant read for children.' In the Descriptive Report of the Research Department on the Publishing Industry for the first quarter of 1950, it was again stressed that

a notable change in publishing trends is evident, likewise for the first quarter, and in publishing policy relating to children's and youth literature, one that demonstrates a quantitative increase in the number of works examining reality, while there is a clear decline in the number of conventional stories and **anthropomorphizing** nature stories.⁴⁵⁹ [emphasis KB]

However, as researchers exploring this issue have noted, the opinion expressed by the censor is more of a wish than a statement of fact.⁴⁶⁰ Outlining the way in which GUKPPIW addressed anthropomorphism opens up several hypotheses. First of all, the condemnation of this device was a way of stigmatizing fantasy literature aimed at children generally. Highlighting this particular feature could be seen as a way for censors to comprehend a difficult subject. Mentioning magic spells, miracles, magical objects and figures did not seem appropriate for a serious review. Anthropomorphism thus became shorthand for this rather troubling realm, offering GUKPPIW a handy description for the shortcomings of the poetics of children's literature, with other ideologically questionable issues filed under this device.

459 AAN, GUKPPIW, 77, teczka 4/2a, p. 24.

460 Stanisław Siekierski, op. cit., Stanisław A. Kondek.

The fact that criticising the ascription of human traits to animals was short-lived also indicates that anthropomorphism was one of the fads that censors went through. Once one review was shown to have employed a particularly effective device, many imitators followed. This was also evident, for example, in the classification of Stanisław Lem's texts as youth literature. It has not been possible to check which censor first condemned anthropomorphism and when. What is clear, however, is that the idea caught on and for some years it appeared in almost every review of texts aimed at younger children. This was also the case even when a work, such as *O ślimaku, co pierogów z serem szukał* for example, was given a positive review overall and typesetting or printing was approved.

I have already indicated that my focus is primarily on new Polish books because they were written and published in the shadow of GUKPPiW. It is difficult to explore the subject, however, without addressing the broader context of children's classics. I will therefore briefly explore the censorship of two outstanding Polish authors, Stanisław Jachowicz and Maria Konopnicka.

Stanisław Jachowicz's collection of his most famous educational tales, *Pan Kotek był chory* (Mr Cat was sick), received two positive reviews. On 16 June 1950, it was approved for typesetting, although the censors had proposed interventions and called the value of the text into question. I cite here a typical extract from the review: 'The poems included here are mawkish, bland and terribly moralizing. [... T]hey will lead to children developing all the traits of a bohemian bourgeois.' Such radical views did not lead to approval for the book being rescinded, nor is there any indication of any changes being made to the text.

Meanwhile, censors agreed that Maria Konopnicka's views 'are erroneous and utopian', yet this did not prevent them from approving several editions of her works. The archival materials suggest that her texts formed a large portion of literature aimed at children under eight, meaning that there are plenty of often unenthusiastic reviews. On 1 September 1950, the Toruń-based censor Witold Lassota reviewed Konopnicka's *O Janku Wędrowniczku* (Janek the Wanderer). The full review reads:

This short collection of poems is suitable for preschool children; however, it does not demonstrate any particular educational value, nor does it contain any particular moral. The value of the volume is to be found in the engaging and nice literary form in which the content is presented. The lack of suitable alternative children's books demonstrates the need to publish this collection.

The censor's superior approved printing. Six months later on 8 February 1951, however, Comrade Rajaska did not approve publication of *Jak to ze lnem było* (The linen story). She used the figure of the King to argue her case. 'Perhaps

M. Konopnicka employs the King to embody a suitable leitmotif, but depicting him in this way is mistaken and educationally harmful'. Ultimately, though, the work appeared in a sizeable print run of 10,400.

The reports cited here and other similar sources create the impression that being classified as a 'children's classic' offered inviolability. Censors could criticize and complain about texts, declaring them devoid of value, while even suggesting that a work should not be approved for publication, yet the books would still be published quickly and in large print runs. It seems that the unwritten principle of maintaining the integrity of best-known texts was employed here, just as it was with nineteenth-century masterpieces, as I will show below. While texts for adult readers were given new, politicized introductions, this was rarely the case with prose and poetry for children. There were probably well-grounded fears that Konopnicka's readers might fail to understand such forewords as intended.

Children's literature and youth literature

In conclusion to this section, it is worth discussing the censorship of youth literature. Classifying it as a separate category of literature is justified both in terms of the theory of children's literature and on the basis of archival research.⁴⁶¹ A significant portion of the findings on the censorship of children's literature apply equally to works aimed at the youngest readers and to those aimed at teenagers. Some aspects of the work of GUKPPiW relating to these two types of literature did, however, differ and I will now examine those differences.

Analysis of the archival sources indicates that among texts aimed at 12–16 year-olds, older works outnumbered new literature, while the publication of foreign books was relatively more common. This situation was a result of the particularity of literature for this age group. Youth literature was focused on two typical genres: adventure stories and stories aimed at girls. This meant that more time was required for these works to adapt to the demands of cultural policy than was the case for prose and poetry aimed at younger readers. Writing a longer story is, at the most basic level, more time-consuming and labour intensive, hence the narrower spectrum of new Polish-language texts that emerged. Even during the Stalinist era, the lack of alternatives meant that foreign titles were given new editions even if they were the source of significant controversy. In his description of youth novels, Stanisław Frycie emphasized the schematic

461 Jerzy Cieślowski, *Literatura czwarta. O naturze i sposobach istnienia literatury dla dzieci*, in: Jerzy Cieślowski, *Literatura osobna*, Wrocław: Nasza Księgarnia, 1985, pp. 9–21.

nature of the earliest post-war Polish efforts which crowbarred in plots that presented a struggle against an enemy.

Efforts to reflect the changes in post-war Poland led to the formation of a genre of post-war Polish novels aimed at youths that replicated the new model of education, which was suited to the political-educational demands of the moment, yet was far-removed from everyday realities.⁴⁶²

The suggestion that fantasy and adventure should be abandoned in favour of everyday life was not put into practice. The selection of books for publication was fairly chaotic, as is evident in the context of Jules Verne's novels. *Łowcy meteorów* (*The Chase of the Golden Meteors*), published by Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, was given a crushing secondary review, the censor stating that

it is devoid of educational aspects. The engaging plot takes place at an undefined moment and depicts a carefree American society living prosperously. The whole thing lacks an educational take on the issues and any positive message.

Szkoła Robinsonów (*Godfrey Morgan: A Californian Mystery or A School for Crusoes*) received two unfavourable reviews and was not approved for publication. The conclusion of one assessment noted: 'A stupid, even stupefying, completely nonsensical story on a mindless subject'. Permission to publish *Dwa lata wakacji* (*Two Years' Vacation*) was also denied, with a superior agreeing with the decision. The reasoning reads:

It seems to be that currently, at a time of struggle against Anglo-American cosmopolitanism, this novel does not constitute essential reading for our youth, particularly if the novel is supposed to demonstrate the value* of reading books. There are other novels by J. Verne that can serve this objective.

However, the censor fails to name them. *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* did receive two enthusiastic reviews, one even describing it as a 'masterpiece'.

A new edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Wyspy skarbów* (*Treasure Island*) was also published out of necessity. It received a positive review on 14 November 1949, with a superior declaring the novel worthy of publication, even though the censor expressed a degree of resignation in conclusion: 'Stevenson's novel does not possess any outstanding educational qualities, although it does provide youth readers with popular literature'. A highly cautious

462 Stanisław Frycie, *O wzorze wychowawczym w młodzieżowej powieści obyczajowej*, in: Stanisław Frycie, *O szkolnej klasycy, lekturach współczesnych sprzed lat i książkach dla młodzieży*, Piotrków Trybunalski: Wyd. Akademia Świętokrzyska im. Jana Kochanowskiego, 2001, p. 255.

review of Jack London's *Biały kiel* (*White Fang*), which stated that the work's cruelty meant it was unsuitable for young readers, features a remark added following the secondary review: 'exaggerated review.' Alexandre Dumas' *Hrabia Monte Christo* (*The Count of Monte Christo*) was also published following a review from 5 April 1949 that remarked that 'the work should be judged according to its plot construction, since it is difficult to demand that Dumas' work should offer an ideological response to our current enemies.'

Mark Twain's *Przygody Tomka Sawyera* (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*) proved more controversial, as English-language literature was viewed in the most hostile terms. While admitting that the novel is very interesting, it was deemed to be devoid of educational value. This is a typical argument:

The novel is not suitable for our youth. A new edition is permissible but only in a few years' time once there are plenty of our own books and this kind of book will no longer exert influence on children.

Ultimately, though, the novel was published in 1949 with a sizeable print run of 15,000 copies.

Several of the cases cited above reveal the inconsistency and administrative powerlessness of the censorship authorities. The majority of reviews that stated that work was unsuitable for 'our' youth were followed by approval for publication. Censors' assessments did not influence the fate of classical works, which were often passed for publication with their tacit approval. The simplest way to describe this situation would be 'enforced waiting' until such time that works that are in accordance with the demands of the new culture would drive out any works that were too interesting and engaging.

The collective reports covering the pivotal year of 1949 described the desired changes:

There are clear efforts at introducing contemporary social and political issues (in the broader sense of the terms) into youth literature. Such books would address historical themes but without the previous fantastic or abstract approaches and instead offer takes that are in accordance with historical truth.⁴⁶³

It should be noted that works from the new era were also questioned by censors. A censor suggested an anecdotal intervention in the translation of a Russian novel about seventh-graders' lives, stating that 'the only objection relates to the passage suggesting that there are no watches in the Soviet Union.' The highlighted passage was indeed reedited.

463 AAN, GUKPPiW, 77,teczka 4/2a, pp. 152–153.

Maria Wardasówna's controversial novel *Zdobywcy Tatr* (The Tatra climbers) was referred for assessment to the Ministry of Culture and Art. Unimpressed by the novel, Mieczysław Fleszar stated forcefully that we should 'protect children from such poor writing even when it offers nice descriptions of the mountains.' He went on to add that 'it is not suitable in light of its false take on issues and people'. Nevertheless, a positive work for young readers was required, meaning that GUKPPiW did not dare to call the whole novel into question and instead shifted responsibility for publishing something classed as 'poor writing' to the Ministry. There is no indication of the work's subsequent fate, although there is no mention of it in any bibliography.

A positive programme

While GUKPPiW officials were unceasing in their campaign against elements of fantasy, adventure, religion, anthropomorphism and wordplays in children's and youth literature, any attempts at defining a positive programme or agenda were in no way simple. These features, typical of the majority of texts aimed at young readers, had to be replaced by other equally expressive elements that contrasted explicitly with the abovementioned qualities.

There were significant numbers of translations of children's literature from Russian, which was indeed the main language for [new] translations. On 21 November 1949, censor Światycka commented on Ulianova's *Dziecięce i szkolne lata Lenina* (Lenin's childhood and school years) that it is a 'nicely and pleasantly-written memoir by Lenin's sister reflecting on childhood. It is a very good read for children'. It had a print run of 50,000. The 'outstanding' work *Komsomolcy zwyciężają czas* (Komsomol members overcome time) was also approved for publication. The same reviewer noted in respect of the translation of Pushkin's famous poem 'The Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights' that there is 'a bit too much about God' in it and thus proposed interventions. Russian literature was also read critically and although, as the archives show, Pushkin's status was exceptional, there was no hesitation in suggesting changes to a classic text. Whether such changes were indeed carried out is a different matter.

Mayakovsky's poem *Kim chciałbym być* (What shall I be) was published in a print run of 30,000. A review dated 22 October 1949 noted that the text had the 'correct' message in declaring all work to be good and necessary. There were also positive reviews of Valetina Oseeva's *Czarodziejskie słowo* (The Magic Word) as 'the author clearly, straightforwardly and engagingly introduces educational aspects that seek to develop children's politeness and helpfulness'.

Światycka's review of Musatov's *Śniadanie na łące* (Breakfast on the meadow), dated 7 September 1950, assessed 'a story about the children of kolkhoz workers who brought their fathers breakfast into the fields as they cut the hay. I would not have any objections were it not for the fact that the author describes the breakfast and it is absolutely meagre'. Below the review, a superior noted 'not important'.

The privileged position of translations from Russian is confirmed by reports and summaries. One states

Among the books for older children and youths published during this period by Nasza Księgarnia, the elegant publication of the translation from Russian of Kononov's *Opowiadania o Leninie* (Stories about Lenin) deserves particular recognition for the way it convincingly and directly brings younger readers closer to the figure of Lenin.⁴⁶⁴

This was in 1950. In 1955, in a highly critical article titled 'O pracy nad książką dziecięcą' (The work on children's books) published in the Informational-Instructional Bulletin, censor Purowska noted that

it would be a mistake, of course, to condemn all the children's literature that is available in our bookshops. There are a number of good books. This is primarily the case with translations from Russian. We are familiar with the names Maltsev, Nosov, Gaidar and Illin, the leading and most popular children's authors. Among Polish writers there are some good books that are interesting for children, e.g. the works of Brzechwa, some of Porazińska's tales and stories, Broniewska's *Ogniwo* (The link) and several others.⁴⁶⁵

Native literary production thus enjoyed support. The positive review of Anna Lanota's short book *O 6-letnim Bronku i 6-letnim planie* (About six-year-old Bronek and the Six Year Plan) suggested only one, albeit familiar, change: 'The very meagre meals eaten by Bronek and his family are a source of some concern'. Helena Rychlewska's work *Przygody karpia* (The adventures of a carp) was also published, with a review dated 18 April 1950 stating:

This is an informative book for young people on the customs and physiology of the carp, with the author drawing younger readers' attention to the rational approach to fish farming. The book is written in a charming style that speaks clearly to children's imagination.

Other works that the authorities deemed valuable include Jan Sokołowski's *Obrazki z życia ptaków w zimie* (Images of bird's lives during winter), for which a print run of 10,000 was recommended.

464 AAN, GUKPPiW, 77, teczka 4/2a, p. 23.

465 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420, teczka 165/4, pp. 270–271.

This is a book for young readers which discusses in an accessible and popular, yet also artistic and engaging, manner the life of birds in winter. The book teaches and educates, meaning that it is valuable and worthy of promotion.

Another case was Irena Ruszkowska's *Kapuściana historia* (A cabbage story):

This story can be used to supplement lessons on nature for younger school classes. The author explains in an engaging manner the way cabbage can be farmed, presenting its "life" as it goes from a seed to being pickled. The story is nicely written, using correct language and it inspires a love of gardening in young people.

Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych submitted a brochure titled *Wielkie prace małej pszczoły* (A tiny bee's great work) by Cecylia Lewandowska, which was aimed at children aged seven to ten. It was approved by the Ministry of Education on 15 June 1950 for inclusion in the reading list on nature. This is one excerpt from the positive review: 'This book [...] emphasizes the bee's hard work, inspiring interest in its diligence and struggle against challenges. It teaches respect for bees and presents them as role models.'

There were also highly positive reviews of Janina Broniewska's politicized stories, *Filip i jego załoga na kółkach* (Filip and his team on wheels). This work was reviewed on 13 April 1949 and was approved for publication in a print run of 20,370. The book tells the story of a field kitchen and it could 'serve a useful role in making young readers familiar with the heroism and fraternity of both armies, Soviet and Polish.'

Marta Michalska's story for older children *Hela będzie traktorzystką* (Hela will be a tractor driver), received as many as four positive reviews. This was a rare case of multiple reviews of a children's story. The reason for this might be its strictly socialist-realist subject matter. Children participate actively in village life and its transformation, with the Six-Year Plan expanding their horizons. The book also explains what the planned economy is. In a note at the bottom of the page, a superior discusses the review and draws attention to the 'sloganeering and artificial nature' of Michalska's work, since children's literature was supposed to be light.

According to GUKPPiW, Zofia Charszczewska's novel *Franek, jego pies i spółka* (Franek, his dog and his crew) offers a very skilful depiction of children from impoverished families in pre-war Poland. Approval for printing was granted on 11 November 1950 based on the following justification:

The story's protagonists are not those that appear in books written today; they are not pioneers of socialist labour, leading scientists, or participants in summer camps, but rather impoverished "trash", the children of the unemployed. The content of the book makes clear the great social harm done by the capitalist system.

Of course, the contrast of the old and new proved particularly important.

Realistic books that explored everyday matters in a more or less subtle manner, encouraging children to engage with labour competition and develop a love for spending their time in a useful fashion, were thus encouraged. Some works had decidedly political overtones, such as Irena Ruszkowska's brochure on the fight against the Colorado potato beetle. *Stonka ziemniaczana* was recommended for primary schools and a new edition was published in 1950 with a print run of 20,000. This second edition was approved after changes and interventions were made to the 1946 original, including the addition of a passage claiming that the beetle was dropped by American imperialists. Other subjects that the authorities approved of were depictions of Soviet and Polish military cooperation during the Second World War and negative representations of pre-war realities.

Alongside such writing, some second-rate texts were published for the first time or were given new editions. As I have already noted, many reviews argued that a given work deserved to be published in light of the lack of suitable alternatives, hence the common use of the phrase: 'an equivocal book from a censorship perspective'. Works thus classified could remain on the market but they could not be given new editions nor could they be recommended for school libraries (the Ministry of Education ultimately had the final word in determining which books were desirable for such purposes). Another classification – 'politically and ideologically indifferent' – did not mean that a book thus classified could never find its way into a school library, just that the censor found it ideologically lacking.

When it comes to youth literature, the positive programme could be summarized in this fragment of a review of Bogdan Ostromecki's novel *Domy nad Wisłą* (Houses by the Vistula).

This book is far from being a fascinating adventure or full of artificial stimulation typical of books produced in capitalist countries; instead it describes in a highly realistic fashion the collective work of young people employed in the construction in Warsaw.

Another work deemed valuable was *30 koni Wicka goni* (30 horses chase Wicek), in which a grinding machine is not looked after properly by a young worker. 'This novel is aimed at young readers,' wrote a GUKPPiW official, 'and it seeks to make them conscious of the correct attitude that workers in a socialist state should have.'

Polish texts of course imitated Soviet achievements. Mikhail Illin's work *Fabryka – automat* (Automated factory) was given a print run of over 10,000 in December 1950. I cite the review by censor Zofia Haraschin in its entirety.

This contemporary story by a Soviet author is primarily aimed at young people in technical schools. It offers interesting and accessible, but above all educational, insight into the history of lathes. The author uses this as the context for a history of the workers' movement that presents economic changes as an outcome of the development of this machine. The novel is accompanied by numerous illustrations. No reservations.

This plot summary makes even the story of the polishing machine chasing Wicek in his dreams seem exciting.

It does not appear, then, that the programme for constructing a new canon of youth literature differed greatly from the recommendations made for somewhat younger readers. In both cases, realism was the key issue, with the focus on labour competition and efforts to encourage collective action at the forefront.

Children's literature was seemingly given more room for manoeuvre, both in terms of subject matter and style as it was allowed to describe a world that was familiar to the intended readers. Even at the height of socialist realism, works did appear that were interesting and written in a beautiful style.

In October 1950, a new edition of Maria Kownacka's *Plastusiowy pamiętnik* (The plasticine diary) was approved following a positive review. Censor Kania wrote her assessment in a manner that was lacking in political zeal, noting that

these are scenes from the lives of young schoolchildren seen from the perspective of a plasticine figure, written in a charming and humorous style. These pleasant stories teach children the value of order and cleanliness in school, as well as good behaviour and collegiality.

Interestingly, the reviewer deemed it to be a book typically suited for girls.

Youth literature, meanwhile, was more closely aligned to the socialist-realist norms of production novels, with just one major difference – namely, that the protagonists were much younger. In light of this, the popularity of Stanisław Lem's *Astronauci* comes as no surprise, as it differed so greatly from any other works appearing at the time thanks to its attractive subject matter and (relatively) fast-paced action.

It is difficult in a necessarily brief overview of the available sources to offer a clear assessment of the nature of the encounters between censorship and children's and youth literature in the period between 1948 and 1958. I will, however, attempt to formulate several hypotheses that could provide the basis for further research to verify them. In his discussion of children's and youth literature as the fourth estate of art, Jerzy Cieślowski presented its defining characteristic – a particular reader is inscribed in it. This means that such works are forced to focus on

selected subject matter and to simplify their arguments to some degree.⁴⁶⁶ If we also add that it is commonplace for literature aimed at younger readers to reissue the same works repeatedly,⁴⁶⁷ then we can assume that there were specific rules applied in censorship of children's and youth literature. I have already referred to the hierarchization of GUKPPiW officials, with lower status given to 'censors editing *Miś*' (the children's magazine) and the tendency for less intelligent officials to be given texts aimed at children and teenagers. As the sources cited here indicate, an exception was made for works written by the most famous writers and those texts submitted for assessment by the most valued state-backed publishers.

Firstly, it does not seem to have been the case that the censors themselves treated children's books with any particular disdain. Examining other sources has shown that superficial and over-generalized reviews appeared just as often in the context of works aimed at adults. Perhaps a degree of arrogance could be detected in the terms 'an equivocal book from a censorship perspective' and 'politically and ideologically indifferent', yet these classifications were accepted by superiors within the censorship office. It could be argued that the publication of works classified in such terms is indeed indicative of a failure to take works written for children seriously, although this seems to be part of a more complex structure of values and practice.

In her 1955 article on children's literature published in the Informational-Instructional Bulletin, censor Purowska outlined the value of such texts, writing that

children's literature has its own childlike particularity – it demands special, insightful and – in light of its role – stricter assessment than literature aimed at adults; above all it demands to be taken seriously regardless of whether it is aimed at three-year-olds or twelve-year-olds, whether it is ten pages long or a hundred.

She goes on to state that GUKPPiW employees have not been making enough effort as they have written highly generalized and very short reviews. She also noted the need for more precise and considered assessments, which would require more training and consultation, as well as greater understanding of the particularities of children's literature.⁴⁶⁸

466 Jerzy Cieślowski, op. cit.

467 Compare: Roman Waksmund, *Niepokonany dydaktyzm*, w: Roman Waksmund, *Od literatury dla dzieci do literatury dziecięcej (tematy – gatunki – konteksty)*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2000, pp. 392–423.

468 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, pp. 270–275.

Censorship officials were thus aware of the evident mess in this department and they sought to clear it up. Similarly negative voices were common, with censors regularly criticizing their own work and obsessively seeking perfection, before realizing that ultimately nothing had changed. The negative assessments of the way the censorship of children's and youth literature functioned seem to have been part of a broader tendency for self-criticism.

Secondly, it is possible in light of the materials examined here to present an outline of the subject matter that GUKPPiW most commonly sought to clamp down on. Things that were deemed unsuitable for literature aimed at adults were also queried, such as psychologizing, symbolism, bigotry, glorification of pre-war Poland, political incorrectness and formal experimentation. A particularity of the controls exerted on children's literature was the dislike of fantasy elements (including one of its forms, namely anthropomorphism) and the regular criticism that a work was devoid of educational value. The crusade against fantasy literature was connected to efforts to eliminate fairy tales as something embodying all that was anti-modern and 'backward' in children's literature.

Of particular interest is the fact that both desirable and undesirable works were permitted for publication at the same time. The small number of works professing the new ideological norms meant that GUKPPiW had to agree to what it thought would be a temporary compromise that permitted other works to enter the market. This strategy was by no means exceptional (it was used by censors working on scientific literature, for example), although the scale of the phenomenon in the realm of children's literature, including the number of imperfect works permitted to appear and the depth of the compromises agreed, is quite surprising. The majority of decidedly negative reviews in fact recommended publication without any changes. While the preferential treatment of works by the most outstanding authors proved to be a principle that was valid more generally, the category of 'equivocal books' deemed to be of little interest to censors did not exist in the context of books aimed at adults. It was thus something that was exclusive to children's and youth literature.

And how did children's authors themselves respond to the existence of GUKPPiW? It seems that they soon became aware of the chaos that had engulfed the publishing sector and they thus adopted a wait-and-see strategy: they moved their texts from publisher to publisher, waiting for a positive review and opportune moment. It was rare for a work to be held back for so long that this method was proven ineffective. *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* is the exception that proves the rule.

Did authors writing children's literature employ self-censorship strategies? This question can be answered with a cautious yes. Writers altered their texts

to make them more politically correct, as some of the poems by Jan Brzechwa and some of Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina's socialist-realist folk tales show. Many authors also created both politically-correct and more traditional texts in parallel. One illustration is that the Ministry of Culture and Art's competition that sought folk tales received a positive response even from authors who had faced strong criticism from GUKPPIW. Anna Szóstek has also noted how Jan Brzechwa employed 'Aesopic language' that saw children read the text literally, while adults would pick up on the allusions.⁴⁶⁹ This strategy was also applied by Irena Jurgielewiczowa in her work that was called into question by censors: 'the old country', 'bad people' and 'the cruel leader' were all symbolic representations of the Second World War. Furthermore, both layers of the text seem to have been aimed at young readers, with young children reading *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* as a fairy tale, while those a little bit older would also perceive the symbolic message. The work's oldest readers, GUKPPIW officials, also got that message, leading them to accuse the author of unnecessarily camouflaging the work and restricting its potential. What becomes evident here, then, is the unsuitability of Aesopic language in works aimed at children, which assessments issued by the Ministry of Culture and Art made explicit. At the conclusion of the positive review of Anna Świrszczynska's *Patałaszek* (Butterfingers), there is a note stating:

I would recommend giving this book to a teaching professional to review. I had so much fun reading this book that I can no longer be an impartial critic, while I think that the small number of deliberate errors are in order as they aid the rhyme and rhythm and just add to its charm, which of course is inappropriate since it is **children who are supposed to read Patałaszek**, rather than oldies. [emphasis KB]

Generally, though, using Aesopic language or other devices to mask particular content was rare. Children's authors tended to adopt a wait-and-see approach as they waited for changes and then exploited the censorship authorities' ambivalent stance towards this category of writing.

My archival research has led to some fairly surprising findings. The prevailing view that censorship treated children's literature as strictly as works aimed at adults between 1948 and 1958 can thus be queried. A clear gap between official statements and reality becomes evident. In accordance with the cultural policy of the time, 'children's literature serves as an important educational tool. It helps parents, schools and children's organizations. It should move, teach and educate, and not only through its content but also its form.'⁴⁷⁰ The Ministry of Culture and

469 Anna Szóstek, op. cit., pp. 194–195.

470 AAN, GUKPPIW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 272.

Art even created a special Department for Children's and Youth Literature. The library purge that was decreed on 4 July 1949⁴⁷¹ saw 562 children's books included on the list of books to be removed owing to 'bigotry and macabre elements'. The Department proposed new subject matter and published the handful of books that met the demanding criteria in huge numbers. However, the positive programme, as outlined above, was largely fulfilled through magazines, handbooks and lists of books approved for use in schools and libraries, as Zbigniew Jarosiński has noted.⁴⁷² The book market proved to be a highly challenging environment. Not only was there a shortage of books anyway, but those that existed were to be replaced by others at some point.

In the darkest period that was the early 1950s, Andersen's *Baśnie* (Fairy tales) were published by Książka i Wiedza in a print run of over 50,000, while over 20,000 copies of the new edition of Jan Brzechwa's *Kaczka Dziwaczka* found their way into bookshops. Less popular works received smaller print runs, but they still appeared regularly nonetheless. Child and youth readers could only benefit from the chaos.

471 Stanisław A. Kondek, op. cit., p. 146.

472 Zbigniew Jarosiński, op. cit., p. 277.

Part 3: Authors' strategies

1 A model response. Tsarist censorship and censorship in the People's Republic of Poland

The connections between Polish censorship and Soviet rule have been mentioned numerous times by researchers. They write of a system of direct control and the role of the Soviet military in organizing the first units of the censorship office. GUKPPIW was constructed using tried-and-tested structures and methods that were put in place under the watchful eye of the Soviet Union and its representatives.⁴⁷³ The first censors often used Soviet passports as identity documents. The matter has been addressed in detail and requires no additional commentary on my part, particularly since it is primarily of historical importance. For my study, what is more interesting is a different question relating to the numerous links between censorship in the PRL (People's Republic of Poland) and tsarist censorship enforced in the Kingdom of Poland before the First World War. There were, of course, no direct connections but there are, second degree connections between the institutions, particularly since Soviet censorship was organized along tsarist lines.⁴⁷⁴ There were also similarities in terms of responses to censorship resulting from an analogous situation. These responses are the primary interest of this study, with parallels in the structure of literary life, readership, the psychology of writing, and the formation of texts themselves being of importance. Here I will discuss the similarities evident at the level of *the formation of texts*.

References to the similarities between tsarist and communist censorship are fairly common in existing studies, although they function primarily as signposts or supplement arguments.⁴⁷⁵ One of the most influential researchers in the field, Michał Głowiński, asks: 'artists faced the same question that **had already been**

473 See, for example: *Dokumenty do dziejów PRL; Słownik realizmu socjalistycznego*, ed. by Zdzisław Łapiński and Wojciech Tomasik, Kraków: Universitas, 2004 – see the entry: 'Cenzura' by Krzysztof Gajda, p. 31.

474 Tomasz Goban-Klas notes that the search for interconnections is currently a very popular approach. See: Goban-Klas, *Literacki Guląg. Gławlit, czyli najwyższe stadium cenzury*, in: *Piśmienictwo – systemy kontroli – obiegi alternatywne*, op. cit., p. 58.

475 See for example: Michał Głowiński, *PRL-owskie mity i realia*, in: *Spór o PRL*, op. cit., p. 40. Jan Błoński, op. cit., p. 271; *Literatura przełomów politycznych*, op. cit.,

posed in nineteenth-century Poland: how can free art be possible in a country deprived of its freedom?⁴⁷⁶ (Emphasis KB) Jan Błoński has also stated that

ultimately, the rules of censorship are rarely created to serve the pursuit of an ideal; instead – **both in the nineteenth and the twentieth century** – they tend to find problems with particular words and sentences that could upset the public by offending against what is deemed sacred for the nation.⁴⁷⁷ [emphasis KB]

Ryszard Nycz's article *Literatura polska w cieniu cenzury (Wykład)* (Polish literature in the shadow of censorship – a lecture) offers a broader perspective. He presents a convincing argument about the similarities of forms that Polish literature developed in its struggles against both tsarist and communist-era censorship. 'While remaining under its [tsarist censorship's – KB] authority, Polish literature developed forms of resistance that then proved effective during forty-five years of communist rule.'⁴⁷⁸ Nycz also lists the most common strategies employed in masking politically incorrect content: bypassing censorship controls, using the textual markers signalling censorship interventions as secondary symbols, and employing particular stylistic devices. He compares these intra-textual strategies to those employed after the Second World War. While he could rely on secondary literature to highlight the responses to tsarist censorship, his comparative analysis of the similarities in the reactions to censorship in both the nineteenth century and second half of the twentieth century can be considered a truly pioneering piece of scholarship.

Joanna Hobot has reached similar conclusions, albeit at the margins of a study on another subject. Her study *Gra z cenzurą w poezji Nowej Fali* (Playing with censorship in Polish New Wave poetry)⁴⁷⁹ examines the organizational similarities between tsarist and communist censorship, including the ways in which visas were allocated and data was stored, the requirement for written records of assessments, the multiple levels of hierarchically-arranged control, and exertion of influence on textual material. She writes:

It is worth highlighting the identical impact of both censorship offices. The most serious consequences include "literary smuggling" or "evasion" of censorship restrictions; censorship interventions shaping the form of a literary work; and violation of writers' ethical code.⁴⁸⁰

476 Michał Głowiński, *PRL-owskie mity i realia*, op. cit., p. 40.

477 Jan Błoński, op. cit., p. 271.

478 Ryszard Nycz, op. cit., p. 7.

479 Joanna Hobot, op. cit., pp. 193–195.

480 *Ibid.*, p. 195.

The findings of both Nycz and Hobot are of immense significance to my research. In noting the similar *effects* of the activities of the tsarist and communist systems, they thus suggest that continuities and traditions played a role in the responses of Polish literature to the activities of GUKPPiW. In response to the crisis of PRL, Polish literature quite simply turned to tried-and-tested means of dealing with oppression that were established in the nineteenth century. It made use of ready-made models.

‘Tsarist censorship’ is not a homogenous concept and covers a significant range of phenomena that extend across a significant period of time. As Franciszka Ramotowska has noted,

the century-long history of government censorship in the Russian partition of Poland can be divided into several periods that differ in terms of the political conditions that pertained at the time, the way in which censorship was organized and the consequences that it had. These periods are: the two-year Russian occupation of the Duchy of Warsaw; the founding period of the Kingdom of Poland; the period with Paskevych as the *Namiestnik* (viceroy) of the Kingdom of Poland; the years around the [1863] January uprising; and the diverse period of unifying the administrative systems of the Kingdom of Poland and Russia that lasted until 1915.⁴⁸¹

These historical issues are not of primary significance to this study. The generalized conception of censorship under the Russian partition that guides this chapter permits freer use of less-than-precise terminology in presenting an initial outline of findings.

The relationship between Russian censorship and Polish writing (and, broadly speaking, culture) of the Romantic era, during positivism and modernism have already been discussed in sound scholarly research. A significant body of research already exists on the censorship of literary masterpieces in particular.⁴⁸²

481 Franciszka Ramotowska, *Sto lat „cenzury rządowej“ pod zaborem rosyjskim (1815–1915) – podstawy normatywne, instrumenty wykonawcze*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli*, op. cit., p. 122.

482 Stefan Górski, *Z dziejów cenzury w Polsce*, Warszawa: „Biblioteka Warszawska“, 1905, t. IV, z. 5.; *Świat pod kontrolą. Wybór materiałów z archiwum cenzury rosyjskiej w Warszawie*, ed. by Maria Prussak, Warszawa: Krąg, 1994; Krzysztof Kopczyński, *Mickiewicz w systemie carskich zakazów. 1831–1855. Cenzura, prawo i próby ich oficjalnego omijania. Pamiętnik Literacki*, vol. 3, 1992; Eugeniusz Sawrymowicz, *Kordian a cenzura krakowska w latach 1834–1835*, Kraków: PIW, 1959; Mieczysław Inglot, *Carska cenzura 1831–1850 wobec arcydzieł literatury polskiej, Ze Skarbca Kultury*, vol. 17, 1966.; Stanisław Zabierowski, *Popioły pod presją rosyjskiej cenzury. Zeszyty Naukowe WSP w Katowicach*, no. 34, Katowice: Wyd. Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1967, pp. 143–169; Barłomiej Szyndler, *Dzieje cenzury w Polsce do*

Comparison of the findings of existing studies with an analysis of the documents on GUKPPIW suggests that the similarities in the *responses* of Polish literature to both systems were a result of two key factors: the role of Russia and the role of literary tradition (particularly Romanticism). Tsarist and communist censorship both represented the interests of an aggressor speaking the same language and serving as a carrier of the same culture, even if it had been substantially reworked in the meantime to its own disadvantage. 'Putting Russia's interests first' was the guiding principle during both the period between 1795 and 1919 as well as the period between 1944/45 and 1989. It is worth noting that Polish writing enjoyed only a short interlude of sovereignty between these two periods. While GUKPPIW employees had Polish as their first language and did not have Russian citizenship, in contrast to their nineteenth-century colleagues (all Polish censors were replaced in 1864 by Russians following the January uprising⁴⁸³), in both cases what was Russian (or Soviet) was deemed to be a model and rated more highly than that which was Polish.

Another, and perhaps more crucial, similarity was the transmission of models for textual responses to censorship by means of nineteenth-century literature. The majority of the most outstanding works passed through the filter of the Russian partition. Through their fundamental influence on Polish literature of later periods, these works automatically, in effect, transmitted models for challenging Russian control. Such literature also helped form the myth of Russia and Russians as enemies of Polishness.

My aim is to demonstrate similarities and differences by going through the catalogue of content banned by both tsarist and communist censorship.

Mieczysław Inglot has cited the 1826 legal codex, which outlined content that could be banned: works that offended the ruling religion and clergy; and works that failed to respect the majesty of the government, state institutions and monarchy. The nobility was to be depicted in a positive light, too.⁴⁸⁴ These recommendations applied equally to Polish and Russian literature, with the former also required to temper its anti-Russian statements, its Catholicism (as a typically-Polish religion) and patriotism.⁴⁸⁵ Another researcher has argued that

1918 roku, Kraków: KAW, 1993; Małgorzata Rowicka, *O neurotycznym cenzorze, przebiegłym wydawcy i manipulowanym czytelniku, czyli Pan Tadeusz w Warszawie w okresie zaborów*, Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2004. Franciszka Ramotowska, op. cit., pp. 122–174.

483 Bartłomiej Szynkler, op. cit., p. 128.

484 Mieczysław Inglot, op. cit., pp. 100–101.

485 Maria Prussak, op. cit., p. 10 and 12.

the long-standing efforts to limit the influence of the Catholic Church, perceived by the tsarist authorities as a carrier of foreign culture, did not prove effective. Piotr Szreter highlights how religious content was perceived in political terms with the two aspects ultimately fusing.⁴⁸⁶ This is of key significance to this study. Tsarist censorship sought to clamp down on both the central idea of a text, i.e. the general message of both the main text and any foreword (as the censor reading the 1891 *Słownik bibliograficzno-balneologiczny* (Bibliographical and balneological dictionary) noted, for example, ‘the foreword is written in a Polish-patriotic spirit’⁴⁸⁷), as well as particular statements, phrases and words. Mieczysław Inglot even argues that it would be possible to create a dictionary of queried terms, which would almost certainly include: ‘ojczyzna’ (fatherland), ‘lud’ (the people), ‘mścić się’ (to take revenge), ‘tyran’ (tyrant), ‘okowy’ (shackles), ‘Polska’ and ‘Moskal’ (Muscovite).⁴⁸⁸ Following Szreter, other words that could be added to the list would include ‘Rzeczpospolita’ (the Republic or Commonwealth), ‘Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie’ (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), ‘naród’ (the nation), ‘kraj’ (the home country) and ‘schizma’ (schism).⁴⁸⁹

Janusz Kostecki and Małgorzata Rowicka’s article “*Dozwoleno s iskluczeniem*”. *Ingerencje rosyjskiej cenzury zagranicznej w latach 1869–1900* (Conditionally approved. The interventions of Russian foreign censorship) offers a systematic and detailed outline of content that was out of bounds for Polish writers. They verify the categories outlined by others, but do so on the basis of archival material. The researchers thus name twelve subjects that could provide grounds for an intervention: the essence of Polishness; Poland’s past; Poland’s current and future situation; faith, religion and the Church; the international situation; regime difficulties; social issues; Russia’s social and political issues; other partitioning powers’ social and political problems; obscenity; medical problems; and bibliographical issues (records containing banned works).⁴⁹⁰

486 Piotr Szreter, *Import wydawnictw zakordonowych w latach 1897–1914 w świetle danych cenzury rosyjskiej*, in: *Instytucje – publiczność – sytuacje lektury. Studia z historii czytelnictwa*, ed. by Janusz Kostecki, vol. 3, Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1989–1990, p. 228.

487 Cited in: Maria Prussak, p. 85.

488 Mieczysław Inglot, p. 130.

489 Piotr Szreter, *Cenzura rosyjska w Warszawie między powstaniem styczniowym a rewolucją 1905–1907. Strategie działania*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli...*, op. cit., pp. 250–268.

490 Janusz Kostecki and Małgorzata Rowicka, “*Dozwoleno s iskluczeniem*”. *Ingerencje rosyjskiej cenzury zagranicznej w latach 1869–1900*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli – obieg alternatywny*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 269–291.

Combining the findings of researchers examining communist-era censorship with my own archival research suggests that works that disrespected the ruling regime, government and state institutions, or the Soviet Union, texts that promoted religious ideas (censors clamped down most stringently on Catholic writing in light of the influence of the Church in Poland), and works deemed obscene faced being banned or cut. As under tsarist rule, it was the general message of a text as well as particular terms that were affected by censorship.

Comparison of research findings relating to both tsarist and communist-era censorship suggests that the strategies for controlling Polish writing were similar in both cases. Similar content was cut, with general ideas as well as particular subjects or words subject to restrictions. The differences between the two censorship regimes were most evident, however, in the approaches to religion and patriotism. Tsarist censorship imposed restrictions on Catholicism as a bastion of Polishness and although it also cut any unfavourable references to Orthodoxy, it was never opposed to religion as such, whereas communist-era censorship, for obvious historical reasons, defended atheism. The question of how patriotism was dealt with by censors can also be explained historically: in a country that was subordinated and subsequently Russified, any reference to calls for sovereignty had to be treated as a threat to the status quo. The situation after the proclamation of the July Manifesto in 1944 was not as clear. The Polish state maintained its sovereignty, albeit as a vassal state dependent upon the USSR. While patriotism was officially promoted, in practice, content was carefully combed for anti-Russian elements. Hence the rather selective take on Polish history and literary tradition, with a modified pantheon of heroes prevailing in People's Poland.

More significant differences between the two systems of censorship are evident in relation to extra-textual factors. Describing them would go beyond the remit of this chapter. I will thus mention them only briefly. Tsarist censorship functioned in a free market with publishers competing against each other as they sought to maximize profits, leading to detailed assessments of the chances that a book would be permitted to enter into circulation. The number of imported works in foreign languages, which were thus beyond the reach of Russian censors, was also larger.⁴⁹¹ It is also worth citing two further pieces of information drawn from Maria Prussak's research. In contrast to the communist-era, banned books could still be discussed in the press under tsarist rule, meaning that the content of a book could be gleaned from media discussions. Tsarist officials also complained that editors at publishing houses sought to depict life in

491 Piotr Szreter, *Import wydawnictw zakordonowych*, op. cit.

Russia solely in the darkest tones.⁴⁹² Research on GUKPPiW suggests the opposite, namely that employees of state-sponsored publishers rarely sided so decisively with the text.

I will now present several interesting examples from my archival research. The fate of works that were queried by both censorship regimes seems particularly interesting. The most outstanding piece of literature that fell foul of both tsarist and communist-era censors was Juliusz Słowacki's epic poem *Rozmowa z Matką Makryną Mieczysławską* (A conversation with Mother Makryna Mieczysławska). Maria Prussak cites the censorship report on the 1904 edition of the journal *Pamiętnik Literacki*, which states that passages referring to the patriotic activities of Mickiewicz and Słowacki were removed along with the whole of Słowacki's poem.⁴⁹³ A similar archival record was produced in 1952, when the reviewer of the March 1952 issue of the same journal (*Pamiętnik Literacki*) recommended removing Słowacki's epic in its entirety, as well as an accompanying article. At the bottom of the report there is a note confirming the intervention and one stating that it was 'removed in consultation with IBL [the Institute of Literary Research – PV]'.⁴⁹⁴ Evidently, then, a work depicting the nuns of the Order of Saint Basil the Great from the Vitebsk area, who were persecuted by the tsarist authorities, appeared very dangerous – and highly anti-Russian – in the eyes of GUKPPiW censors at the height of Stalinism.

An article about tsarist censorship was cut from one issue of the periodical *Prosto z Mostu* in 1957, together with some humorous poems on the subject that were written before Poland had regained independence after the First World War.⁴⁹⁵ What this suggests is that GUKPPiW identified with tsarist censorship to some degree, meaning that it was shrouded in silence along with any other reference to literary censorship. Similarly, when the Literary Museum in Warsaw applied for permission to print 300 posters featuring the texts of Cyprian Kamil Norwid's poems *Siła ich* (Their strength) and *Czynownicy* (Officials) in 1958, it was refused in light of the poems' anti-Russian tone.⁴⁹⁶

It is worth emphasizing that many authors who had made their debuts during the pre-World War I partition era remained active after the Second World War.

492 Maria Prussak, op. cit., pp. 62–63.

493 Ibid., s. 116. The tsarist censor gave the title as *Makryna Mieczysławska* while also presenting incorrect information suggesting that Mother Makryna was the head of the convent in Vilnius.

494 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, p. 641.

495 AAN, GUKPPiW, 594, teczka 62/1, pp. 14–16.

496 AAN, GUKPPiW, 594, teczka 62/2, p. 329.

The most notable names in this group include Leopold Staff, Antoni Słonimski, Julian Tuwim and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz. My archival research yielded many interesting documents produced by GUKPPiW on these masters of Polish poetry and prose. In the case of Leopold Staff, it is possible to compare these sources with materials produced by tsarist censorship. It should be stressed that the majority of Staff's literary career was spent under Russian rule or in a regime where Russian-dominated censorship existed. It can be assumed that he developed a strategy for writing seemingly politically-correct texts in respect of Russophile censors.

It is again worth drawing on Maria Prussak's outstanding research. She refers to sources relating to the censorship of the 1905 volume of poetry *Ptakom niebieskim* (For the heavenly birds), which a tsarist official approved for publication following cuts to pages 103 and 115. These affected the epic poem *Modlitwa* (Prayer), with the censor arguing that there were 'moments of a blasphemous nature, namely the author's challenges to Jesus Christ'.⁴⁹⁷ There is a notable error from the censor, who rechristened the third part of the epic poem *Jęk wyklętych zamków* (The cry of cursed castles) rather than *Jęk wylęktych zaułków* (The cry of fearful backstreets), as it should have been.

The GUKPPiW archives contain numerous traces of the censorship of later collections, including suggestions for cuts and interventions.

The file named 'PIW 1950' contains six reviews, both primary and secondary, of Staff's *Wybór pism* (Collected writings), with the reviews dating from July to December that year. The volume features works written between 1915 and 1944. The censors acknowledged Staff's status as a 'classic' and attempted to offer a historical justification of the need to publish poetry that was not engaged in the construction of socialism. As one official stated:

Today, we could discuss at great length Staff's approach to life and poetry, since the poet is a typical representative of Polish neo-Romanticism whose slogans are long since obsolete. It is for this reason that his works should be treated historically, as the literature of a bygone era.

Another censor stated explicitly: 'This is not the kind of poetry that we are keen to promote, but it should be published in light of the author'. Two interventions were proposed that affected the poem *Pomnicie* (You will remember), originally from the volume *Ucho igielne* (The eye of a needle).⁴⁹⁸ PIW did not publish anything called, or even resembling, Staff's selected writings either in 1950 or

⁴⁹⁷ Cited in: Maria Prussak, p. 123.

⁴⁹⁸ AAN, GUKPPiW, 152, teczka 31/121, pp. 427–436.

the following year. Most probably, the work in question was the three-volume selection *Poezje* edited by Mieczysław Jastrun. The poem *Pomnście* does not feature here, thus the information about the interventions seems to be erroneous. I could find no indication that any changes were made to that particular poem in the next, expanded, edition of Leopold Staff's collected poetry, *Wiersze zebrane* from 1955. 'Pomnście' appears in exactly the same version as in pre-war volumes, with the only difference being in spelling and punctuation.

The secondary review from 1950 is included in PIW materials relating to 1951.

The poems lack any social dimension – they are largely reflexive, loaded with philosophical-religious issues, highly personal, lyrical, or descriptive. The selection of poems dedicates a large amount of space to poems that involve deliberations on religious subjects. Aside from this, the selection is good, giving a full impression of Staff's interwar writing. The poems are of a high artistic standard, although they might be difficult to understand for novice readers owing to their content being overloaded with philosophical reflection.

The censor's conclusion was that it should be 'published in a small print run after removing a number of the poems that address religious subjects.'⁴⁹⁹ The precise changes are not specified in the review or the superior's notes.

In 1954, preparations began for a five-volume edition of Staff's *Wiersze zebrane* (Collected poems) that was to have a print run of 60,000. All of the reviews on file are positive, although one sounded particularly mysterious.

While I am aware of the narrow and formal perspective presented in this poetry, which becomes increasingly classicized, in light of the nature of the review, I consider it sufficient.⁵⁰⁰

Permission for typesetting the individual volumes was granted over a period spanning November and December 1954. Page 17 of the poem *Wysokie drzewa* (High trees) raised some doubts and the matter was discussed with editor Szymańska.⁵⁰¹ This page also includes the opening of the poem *Łachmany* (Rags), which offer a naturalistic depiction of poverty of the kind that would usually meet with resistance from GUKPPiW officials.⁵⁰² However, comparison with the first edition published by Mortkowicz in 1932 show that no changes were made to the text (beyond updating the spelling and punctuation).⁵⁰³ The criticisms that

499 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/122, pp. 68–69.

500 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/125, p. 992.

501 Ibidem.

502 Leopold Staff, *Wiersze zebrane*, vol. 5, Warszawa: PIW, 1955, pp. 17–19.

503 Leopold Staff, *Wysokie drzewa*, Warszawa: Wyd. J. Mortkowicz, 1932, pp. 14–16.

Staff faced from GUKPPiW seem rather typical for the time and they have been mentioned in this study many times already: obsolescence of the subject matter, religious dimensions, formalism, and the difficulty that general readers might encounter. As was the case with other outstanding authors belonging to the older generation, no changes were made to the texts despite the complaints.

Does such a modest number of sources provide sufficient basis for establishing a hypothesis regarding the ways the poet adapted to writing in the shadow of tsarist and communist-era censorship? It could be argued, albeit cautiously, that one particular strategy involved rarely addressing political subjects and avoiding engagement with social reality by instead seeking an escape in classicism. At the same time, however, these might simply have been the core elements of the poets' perception of the world and his sensibility towards it.

The *textual strategies* used by authors during periods of national subordination are a highly significant and complex issue. A systematic description of the modifications made by particular authors and in particular works would be beyond the scope of a single study. For the purposes of this investigation it is sufficient to name the measures, dividing them into intra- and extra-textual strategies. The former relate to the threads from which a text is woven: the subject matter and the form; the latter concern, for example, the place and time of publication, the size of the print run, whether authors used their real names or pseudonyms, and – potentially – whether an author opted to stop or abandon publication. It is also worth mentioning that in many cases, extra-textual factors were completely independent of authors as they were determined by publishers.

Researchers who have explored relations between partition-era censorship and nineteenth-century literature have noted a degree of homogenization of highly differentiated works that were submitted to the same restrictions.⁵⁰⁴ In some cases, this was evident in a conscious turn to restraint and generalization, or mimicry, to use Grażyna Borkowska's term.⁵⁰⁵ This was the most general strategy that concerned the style of a work. As Maria Prussak has argued, 'the existence of censorship imposed external restrictions on authors who practiced self-control, knowing that addressing certain issues would automatically prevent a work from gaining approval for publication.'⁵⁰⁶ This, then, indicates another strategy: avoiding particular subjects and favouring others (turning to

504 Mieczysław Ingłot, op. cit., pp. 131–133.

505 Grażyna Borkowska, *Cudzoziemki. Studia o polskiej prozie kobiecej*, Warszawa: Wyd. IBL PAN, 1996; see especially the chapter: *Orzeszkowa i strategia mimikry* (Orzeszkowa and her strategy of mimicry), pp. 149–181.

506 Maria Prussak, p. 7.

ancient times, for example, while avoiding national uprisings). At the most basic level, i.e. the language used, writers turned to figurative language, omissions, understatement, allusion, clever titles and ‘the final word’ to get past censors.⁵⁰⁷

Many studies have noted the textual strategy of employing Aesopic language. As Stanisław Zabierowski has argued in relation to the years following the 1863 January Uprising, ‘under such political conditions, a particular kind of language necessarily emerged, one driven by the contingencies of the national instinct, that was known as “the prison style” or, in more academic terms, “Aesopic language”’.⁵⁰⁸ According to the dictionary definition, Aesopic language is

a way of formulating statements in which the content, often moralizing or satirical, is not stated directly but is instead masked by allegory, symbols or ambiguous plots; [...] it is often used in poetry written for special occasions, [...] political commentaries and literature that has been submitted to significant censorship restrictions.⁵⁰⁹

Such a broad definition means that all intra-textual masking devices used by authors come under the term ‘Aesopic language’, including figurativeness, allegory, symbolism and ambiguous storylines, among others.

When it comes to extra-textual strategies, research on nineteenth-century censorship is generally in agreement that they were employed in various ways. Piotr Szreter, for example, has described the way in which books were submitted for assessment under false names with the real name appearing in the index, while books that had been rejected once were resubmitted under different titles.⁵¹⁰ It is necessary to add that similar strategies were used in ancient literature, as Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa has noted.⁵¹¹ It is thus clear that some means of avoiding censors’ cuts had emerged long before Poland was deprived of its national sovereignty.

Małgorzata Rowicka’s study on the publication history of Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz* has a whole chapter on this issue. She argues that publishers prepared various versions of the epic poem that were adapted to the demands of particular markets, with the most limited versions appearing in the Russian-controlled Kingdom of Poland. They also sought to mask the cuts made by publishing outside the Kingdom’s borders supplements containing the fragments cut from

507 Stanisław Zabierowski, p. 145.

508 Ibid., p. 144.

509 *Słownik terminów literackich*, op. cit., p. 134.

510 Piotr Szreter, *Dostępność książki w Rosji w latach 1897–1918 w świetle danych cenzury zagranicznej*, in: *Institucje – publiczność*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 114.

511 Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa, op. cit.

Warsaw editions.⁵¹² However, these were strategies adopted by publishers rather than the authors themselves.

Another extra-textual strategy is revealed in Piotr Szreter's article *Cenzura rosyjska w Warszawie między powstaniem styczniowym a rewolucją 1905–1907* (Russian censorship in Warsaw between the January uprising and the revolution of 1905–07). In it he describes the significant public resonance that the press serialization of Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Trylogia* (Trilogy – formed of *With Fire and Sword*, *The Deluge*, and *Fire in the Steppe*) had. The patriotic tone of the text did not impress tsarist censors who decided, after the fact, to impose the requirement that the entirety of the historical novels should be presented for review before the first instalment appeared.⁵¹³ It is not entirely clear if it was a conscious act by the publishers or the author to ensure that the fragments forwarded for review were those that failed to reveal 'the author's overall attitude,' much to the censors' chagrin, or whether this was merely a consequence of the work being written in instalments. Nevertheless, the consequences were entirely positive for the trilogy. Interestingly, similar concerns to those expressed by tsarist censors emerged in GUKPPiW's work on serialized literature, with the censorship office creating a series of restrictions that were intended to prevent politically-incorrect content being smuggled through by way of press publications.⁵¹⁴

One very interesting case illustrating how an author adopted a variety of methods in relation to tsarist censorship is Stefan Żeromski's novel *Popioły* (*Ashes*). It is particularly important to examine his writing because GUKPPiW sources reveal that he was viewed in a particularly positive light by communist authorities and was presented as a model progressive author. As Stanisław Zabierowski has argued in an article that explored this novel in detail, Żeromski was contractually-bound to write his work in such a way that it would be approved for publication by censors. Firstly, Zabierowski notes, censorship conditions influenced the fragmented nature of the author's work on the novel. Secondly, Żeromski employed a long-standing strategy, namely shifting the setting to a different political and geographical space while introducing numerous elisions when the action was explicitly set in Poland. The author thus managed to avoid the sensitive terms 'Moscow', 'Muscovite', 'Cossack' and 'Russia'. He also

512 Małgorzata Rowicka, pp. 63–68.

513 Piotr Szreter, *Cenzura rosyjska w Warszawie*, p. 266.

514 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Twórczości Literackiej, sygn. 487 (Komisja do spraw Literatury Odcinkowej, 1949–1950)- (Source from the Ministry of Culture and Art's Commission on Serialized Literature).

reworked his text several times as censorship restrictions became less severe, meaning that he could, for example, include the figure of General Dąbrowski and his legions (mentioned in the Polish national anthem), as he had been deemed publishable in the meantime.⁵¹⁵

Many researchers have highlighted Polish writers' use of nineteenth-century strategies in their encounters with communist-era censorship. Ryszard Nycz notes that the most popular device involved employing historical parabolas and allegory, while many years of censorship meant that Aesopic language became commonplace in artistic attempts to communicate forbidden political and historical content.⁵¹⁶ Similarly, Joanna Hobot has argued that 'Aesopic language has a rich tradition in Polish literature. It was particularly common in nineteenth-century realist novels that emerged after the January uprising'. She adds that censors 'treated winter as an allegory of the suffering of the Polish nation, an allegory that was not only rooted in tradition (since Grotter's time) but also updated by events on the Baltic coast [in 1970]'.⁵¹⁷ Meanwhile, Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz states that it was not only the use of particular styles in communist-era literature (i.e. Aesopic language) that was adopted from the tsarist period, but also the preference for particular subjects and genres, such as historical novels.⁵¹⁸

My archival research suggests that Polish writers of the 1940s and 1950s applied traditional strategies in their struggle with censorship. They needed official approval as this was the only way of securing readers, hence their submission to demands that resulted in impoverished literary communication. However, they also chose to use means that would enable them to circumvent some of these rules.

A certain paradox should be highlighted at this juncture. Following Hanna Gosk, it can be argued that the dissemination of literature was intended as the main means for opening up the achievements of national culture to all between 1945 and 1948.⁵¹⁹ As other sources also show, the Romantic and realist traditions (Żeromski, for example) were most popular and received the greatest amount of official support. In all likelihood, though, officials failed to spot that certain politically-incorrect and outdated views and values were encoded in these traditions, the most significant being dislike of Russia and anything Russian, as

515 Stanisław Zabierowski, pp. 143–169.

516 Ryszard Nycz, pp. 16–17.

517 Joanna Hobot, p. 54 and 103.

518 *Literatura przełomów politycznych*, p. 17.

519 Hanna Gosk, pp. 83–84.

well as clear models for challenging (often successfully) tsarist restrictions on freedom of speech.

Establishing which of the strategies developed in the nineteenth-century were used by authors in the communist era and how they modified these traditions, if at all, will be one of the concluding goals of this study.

2 Aesopic language and porcelain puppies. Authors' strategies for dealing with censorship

This chapter aims to outline several observations on the strategies adopted in the 1940s and 1950s by Polish writers not only in relation to the actions of censors, but also in respect of the very existence of official restrictions imposed on literature. This is a very broad issue, thus it is worth focusing on those questions that have emerged thus far in the course of this study while suggesting topics for further research. The potential scope is significantly expanded by turning to the GUKPPIW archives.

In this sketch, I would like to focus on several questions. One aim is to establish the typical strategies adopted in encounters with censorship between 1948 and 1958. I will compare them to those employed in nineteenth-century tradition. I will also consider the reasons why some options were more popular than others, while likewise taking into account self-censorship.

Following the approach used in previous chapters, I will first examine existing studies before comparing their findings with those produced by analysing archival sources. Firm conclusions can be drawn only in relation to those authors who were examined in greater detail earlier on in this study, i.e. Jerzy Andrzejewski, Stanisław Lem, and Władysław Broniewski, as well as, to a lesser degree, Jan Brzechwa and other children's authors.

At this point I would like to point out that analysing this material is very tricky and runs the risk of over-interpretation. It is worth citing Krzysztof Mrowcewicz's analysis of the censorship of Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński's works where he outlined the general difficulty of distinguishing conscious acts of self-censorship.

It is as difficult to speak of censorship as to believe in the absolute freedom of the writer, painter or sculptor. While we might manage to find incontrovertible documentary evidence of the censor's "crime", we can, though, never establish how much "fear" of censorship or a desire to meet its expectations actually shaped a work.⁵²⁰

520 Krzysztof Mrowcewicz, *Szarzyński oceniany? Kilka uwag dla przyszłego wydawcy poezji Mikołaja Sępa Szarzyńskiego*, in: *Autor, tekst, cenzura*, p. 113.

Establishing incontrovertible documentary evidence of self-censorship also seems impossible in the context of contemporary literature, as Joanna Hobot has demonstrated in the case of Ryszard Krynicki's *Co pewien czas* (Every now and again).⁵²¹ Another no less significant difficulty is how to differentiate that which is 'merely' part of artistic creativity and what was an intentional element of struggles against censors.⁵²² Again, it is easy to overstate the case in academic analyses. For example, how is it possible to classify any abstract metaphor with certainty?

Here I would turn to theories applied in editorial studies, where researchers focus on establishing the version of a text that is 'in accordance with the author's intentions'. Jan Trzynadlowski thus writes that

the author's intention is a primarily psychological factor [...] that can be manifested in two ways: in formulation and immanently. A formulated intention, i.e. one presented explicitly, is a more or less definite statement on a given subject. It could be contained in notes, rough drafts and literary sketches made by the author, or in letters, diaries and first-hand reports. [...] More complicated is the realization and interpretation of immanent intention, i.e. intention manifested in the structure and construction, or any other aspects, of a text left behind by an author.

Trzynadlowski adds that

the category of the "author's intention (will)" is, from a methodological perspective, completely justified and legitimate; it is a phenomenon that demands significant levels of professional competence as well as analytical insight and subtlety when it is subject to practical interpretation.⁵²³

I have presented a critique of this definition of 'immanent intention' elsewhere,⁵²⁴ although I recognize that his general framing of the issue is quite accurate.

Censorship scholars tend towards the view, as demonstrated by Joanna Hobot, that responses to restrictions imposed on the freedom of expression are located 'at the boundary of literature and life,'⁵²⁵ or in the 'psychosocial realm', as

521 Joanna Hobot, pp. 230–234.

522 Ibid., s. 6.

523 Jan Trzynadlowski, *Edytorstwo. Tekst, język, opracowanie*, Warszawa: Wyd. Naukowo-Techniczne, 1976, p. 36.

524 Kamila Budrowska, "Tekst kanoniczny", „intencja twórcza" i inne kłopoty. *Z zagadnień terminologicznych tekstologii i edytorstwa naukowego. Pamiętnik Literacki*, vol. 3, 2006, pp. 109–121.

525 Joanna Hobot.

Czesław Karolak has put it.⁵²⁶ The notion of the 'author's intention' forms a bridge linking the theories applied in academic editorship, on the one hand, and censorship studies on the other. It seems that this concept, which has proven useful in attempts to reconstruct texts to produce what was once known as 'canonical' versions, is also useful in attempting to outline the strategies employed by authors in their encounters with institutionalized restrictions on their writing. We can thus search for information on the strategies used both in *formulated* statements produced by the author (notes, letters and other noted by Trzynadlowski), as well as in the various, changing versions of a work, although I would avoid using the term 'immanent' traces in this case. The specificity of the subject matter means, I would argue, that we can also base our arguments as to which strategies were used on the explicitly *formulated* views of censors. However, in reading these sources we should always be aware of the possibility that they sought to ascribe to authors particular sins that they never in fact committed.

Among the many studies addressing the strategies employed in struggles against censorship, particularly noteworthy are those that work towards collective analyses, going beyond single works and authors. This is, as I have myself experienced, no easy task, with the evidence rarely making it easy to build broader arguments.

Leszek Szaruga has presented some far-reaching conclusions on the subject of the struggle against restrictions on the freedom of expression in his study *Wobec totalitaryzmu. Kostium kościelny w prozie polskiej; Wobec cenzury* (In relation to totalitarianism. Church costumes in Polish prose; In relation to censorship).⁵²⁷ His findings are particularly interesting in the context of the strategies adopted by Jerzy Andrzejewski. Szaruga's study focuses on the way in which Polish literature donned clerical costumes in order to mask historical truths. His research covers a long period, thus it reveals the variations on this strategy adopted in the context of changing external factors, including more and less liberal censorship regimes and shifting artistic trends. Szaruga argues that clerical or historical costumes were adopted in Poland as a result of the fact that it was impossible to speak openly about the present day. The turn to Church-related content was linked to the evident parallels between communist and Catholic ideology. It was for this reason that authors turned to the darkest moments in the history of the Church, such as the inquisition (*Ciemności kryją ziemię*), the crusades (*Bramy*

526 Czesław Karolak, *Wprowadzenie*, in: *Cenzura w Niemczech w XX wieku*, op. cit., pp. 7–33.

527 Leszek Szaruga, *Wobec totalitaryzmu*.

raju) and pogroms against Jews (Strykowski's *Przybysz z Narbony* [The man from Narbonne] and Szczypiorski's *Msza za miasto Arras* [A Mass for the city of Arras]). All of these novels not only adopted a historical costume but also shifted the setting far from Poland, which can be seen as yet another camouflaging device. Hidden behind the mask of novels set a long time ago and far, far away were some home truths about contemporary Poland that were quite evident to readers who shared similar experiences to the author, i.e. the intelligentsia, as Szaruga argues. However, he also notes that this recognisability was also a weakness of this strategy, as was the fact that the uniqueness of the present moment was also overlooked.⁵²⁸

What Szaruga's study shows is that there were a huge number of variations to the strategies employed by authors, with another version potentially produced each time it was used by a different author. While bearing this in mind, it is nevertheless possible to establish the key features of each strategy that became evident with each use. Szaruga describes the clerical and historical costumes in broader terms as 'cloaks of non-reality' that had descriptions of that which was crucial to Polish society yet otherwise unpublishable at its core, while the setting was shifted to another, ideally very distant, historical reality.

Another aspect of the construction of author's strategies in relation to censorship has been highlighted by Jerzy Smulski. In his research, he has considered whether these costumes were necessarily inscribed in the structure of particular works or whether they were instead a matter of reception. While certain aesthetic and formal devices were indeed a result of conscious deployment of costumes (structure), he argues, identifying them and filling them with allusions took place in the course of reception, with the outcomes entirely dependent upon the competence of particular readers.⁵²⁹ This is a crucial observation that could be expanded to take into account one more particular reader, namely the censor. In the course of my research I have found cases where the use of Aesopic language and structures was noted solely by overly sensitive and suspicious censors. In reality, the device had not been consciously employed. Other researchers have also noted such cases, often highlighting the humorous dimensions of such readings. As Aleksander Pawlicki has stated, 'the spectre of Aesopic language sometimes became an obsession. GUKPPiW noted with relief

528 Ibid.

529 Jerzy Smulski, *Jak niewyraźalne staje się wyraźalne? O języku ezopowym w polskiej prozie lat pięćdziesiątych*, in: *Literatura wobec niewyraźalnego*, ed. by Włodzimierz Bolecki and Erazm Kuźma, Warszawa: Wyd. IBL PAN, 1998, pp. 145–164.

that the translation of the French original of a literary adaptation of the life of Paul of Tarsus did not contain "allusions to the contemporary Arab-Israeli situation".⁵³⁰ Is it thus possible to speak of a failure of authors' strategies in cases where the censor recognized that they had been used? How should we interpret the ultimately numerous censors' reviews where GUKPPiW officials recognized the use of 'prison language' yet failed to push through interventions that would have ensured its complete removal? Were they aware of this outcome of their actions? I will suggest some answers to these questions in the following parts of this chapter.

Smulski's study highlights another issue, namely that we can either work on the assumption that the struggle against censorship was conducted using various strategies or that there was just one overriding strategy, namely employing Aesopic language, and authors either used it or did not. According to this second interpretation, the various options open to authors could not be classed as separate strategies in the struggle against censorship but should simply be classified as artistic devices that served this aim. This argument is particularly useful in light of my archival analysis, as it helps to avoid becoming bogged down in excessive detail. By adopting this definition of author's strategies, research questions can thus focus on whether there is evidence in the sources that an author adopted a principle of struggling against censorship; where this was the case, then the task of the researcher is to identify the particular devices used.

I will avoid stating definitively here whether just one strategy or many strategies were available in the struggle against censorship. The works that I have studied here suggest that both answers are possible. Further research on this question is definitely worthwhile, to ensure that theory can catch up with practice, i.e. to identify the approaches adopted by authors. For the purposes of this study, I work under the assumption that there was one grand strategy in the struggle against the institutionalized restriction of the freedom of expression, which was accompanied by particular formal devices and tactics.

What were the reasons for writers choosing particular methods of opposing censorship restrictions and not others? Joanna Hobot claims that authors always made their choices with the potential response of the other party in mind, meaning that a 'game' developed between the two sides involved in this particular mode of literary communication. Censors overlooked aesthetic issues and instead focused on the ideological and political suitability of a work:

530 Aleksander Pawlicki, p. 110.

GUKPPiW officials juxtaposed the multiplicity of interpretative possibilities with an understanding of a work that bound it to the current socio-political situation. The censor's strategy of reception was thus based on the principle that poetic allusions, symbols and allegories led readers to associations with particular political events and thus offered a moral judgment on the event or phenomenon.⁵³¹

Her findings show that senders' strategies were strictly dependent upon institutional recipients. This meant that deciding which particular strategy to adopt was very difficult for an author because, firstly, it was a matter of relating to an imagined response and, secondly, it was a one-time-only decision: once a work had been deemed unpublishable, it was very difficult or indeed impossible to secure its publication. Authors thus had to avoid any mistake in calculating potential responses. Adopting a particular strategy in their struggle against restrictions of freedom of expression was thus necessarily grounded in *anticipation* of censors' thinking. This in itself can be seen as a victory on the part of the censorship authorities, since the game was played according to their rules.

Another important question relates to self-censorship. While I examined the question of authors' responses to 'direct censorship', to use Stanisław Zabierowski's phrase,⁵³² in earlier parts of this chapter, I will now focus on the indirect censorship emerging from the fact that GUKPPiW existed at all. Existing research on this subject is already very thorough, which means that I will focus here on only the most crucial factors.

Michael Kienzle believes that censorship proves effective only when direct and indirect forms are combined. 'The actual impact of censorship emerges from the fact those who were subject to censorship or faced the threat of censorship have internalized its norms and applied self-censorship in order to avoid the previous external censorship'. According to this conception of it, self-censorship is 'an internal psychological defensive mechanism against potential state or social sanctions'.⁵³³ Kienzle goes on to argue that authors' self-imposed restrictions could be more dangerous than institutional censorship because it entangles the author in fruitless conflicts with mutually-exclusive demands.

Antonina Kłoskowska has noted similar difficulties in a minor part of her exploration of symbolic freedom. She acknowledges the complexity of self-censorship

531 Joanna Hobot, p. 137.

532 The categories of 'direct' and 'indirect' censorship were introduced by Stanisław Zabierowski in his 1967 study of Żeromski's *Popioły* and its treatment by Russian-tsarist censors. See: Zabierowski.

533 Michael Kienzle, *Logofobia. Cenzura i autocenzura w RFN. Rys historyczny*, trans. Wojciech Król, in: *Cenzura w Niemczech w XX wieku*, op. cit., p. 216 and 218.

mechanisms and the difficulty of recognizing it while also arguing that having a 'captive mind' is highly heterogeneous and manifests itself in various forms that are determined by the cause of this state of mind:

The restriction of this right [to freedom of thought – KB] through various forms of censorship and repressive measures is an obvious and easily observable fact. It produces dissonance between people's consciousness and actions. More complex is the disruption of consciousness, which in fact equals the enslavement of the mind. There are various sources and motives for such enslavement or captivity, while it can also relate to diverse phenomena.⁵³⁴

I would like to draw attention here to the explicit argument that self-censorship is a state of mind, i.e. a psychic disposition. If we accept this claim, one that seems irrefutable in light of this research, then we need to ask how we can examine the translation of states of mind into the actual brutal reality of a text. It seems that the same materials that have proven useful in establishing creative strategies can also prove useful in attempts to find traces of self-censorship, or strategies of resignation. In both cases, then, it is direct statements from authors and censors, alongside different versions of a text, that are useful.

Turning to the findings from my own research, I will focus on the following issues: the difficulty in identifying text-based sources illustrating the struggle against censorship; the difficulty in differentiating 'mere' artistic devices from conscious efforts to oppose censorship; the formation of the 'prison style' in the course of reading; failed authorial strategies and devices; the dependence of the senders' strategy on the imagined reception; and self-censorship as a state of limited and limiting freedom of thought. There are details of the strategies adopted by particular authors spread throughout the previous chapters of this study. I will now examine them again, but from a different perspective.

Jerzy Andrzejewski

In the second part of this book, I termed Jerzy Andrzejewski's work in the shadows of GUKPPIW as being located 'between accommodation and resistance'. I will attempt to explain this concept now by first recalling the facts of the matter.

The further he distanced himself from communist ideology, the greater the restrictions Andrzejewski encountered from GUKPPIW. In 1959, the censorship authorities prevented the serialized publication of his novel *Bramy raju*

534 Antonina Kłoskowska, *Kontrola myśli i wolność symboliczna*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli – obiegi alternatywne*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 15.

as officials recognized that the work had donned a clerical costume, leaving its criticism of the totalitarian system clearly visible beneath this cloak. The official reason given for calling the work into question was its supposedly pornographic nature. The matter was ultimately settled behind closed doors, with the novel being approved for publication by the elite periodical *Twórczość* before appearing as a book. However, Andrzejewski was required to make changes to pages 43, 105 and 109 prior to publication, although we cannot be sure of the extent of the changes. *Idzie skacząc po górach*, meanwhile, was read as a roman-à-clef. The censors again sought to cut what they deemed obscene: some vulgar expressions and explicit erotic scenes, while the scenes with Marek Kostka (representing Marek Hłasko) were also subject to minor changes. The promised serialization in *Twórczość* never came to be, with Andrzejewski editing the queried passages before the book was sent for print. Analysis of the manuscripts shows that one extensive 'Soviet' scene also disappeared from the published version. Censors most probably never got to read this scene as it seems impossible that they would have failed to mention such a significant matter in their reviews. This means that the scene from the opening of the exhibition must have been cut at an earlier stage of work.

It seems fairly safe to argue that there were at least two works, *Bramy raju* and *Idzie skacząc po górach*, where Andrzejewski consciously adopted a strategy of struggling against censors. He dressed up the story about the illusion of all ideologies in a clerical costume, producing a novel about a childhood crusade, while in *Idzie skacząc po górach* he donned an exotic costume, masking important questions about freedom and artistic inspiration. I should note at this point that this device was much more effectively and consistently employed in *Bramy raju*, which is, generally speaking, a significantly better text anyway. That this particular strategy was used even finds confirmation in censors' reviews, as officials noted that

the nature of the story could also be interpreted as an allusion to our times in terms of the construction of socialism; Can Andrzejewski's novel be read as a condemnation of religious faith? This question must be answered in the negative [...]; The book is a classic example of what is known as a "roman-à-clef", with attentive readers easily able to decode that the central protagonists come from the French artistic and intellectual elite, with Pablo Picasso as the central figure.

The censors easily established the author's intentions and thus made reference to the novel's deeper-lying motifs.

Iwaskiewicz's letter can also be treated as an authorial statement that gives a clear indication of the conscious efforts to smuggle through unpublishable

content. The editor-in-chief of *Twórczość* noted that the obscene elements would be 'an ideal pretext for them', reminding his colleague of the threatening and inevitable presence of one particular reader, the censor. Iwaszkiewicz also assumed that Andrzejewski had taken into account this presence as he wrote.

Can making changes suggested by a censor be considered part of a strategy of fighting restrictions on freedom of expression? On the surface it would appear not. However, I believe the matter is significantly more complicated. After all, as my archival research shows, censors did not always act as co-authors who suggested specific changes; instead they could simply request changes while leaving it up to editors and authors to carry them out. If we define strategies of challenging institutional restrictions on freedom of expression as any efforts to smuggle politically-incorrect ideas into a text, then we cannot rule out unpublishable content remaining in the revised version; it might simply be presented in a slightly more moderate form. It is worth exploring this idea further.

When it comes to the novel about Pablo Picasso, it is possible to trace the ways in which Jerzy Andrzejewski responded to the very existence of GUKPPiW and direct censorship. A good example is evident in the history, reconstructed above, of the writing and disappearance of the opening-night scene. This rather weak passage could have been written, on the one hand, out of genuine conviction and engagement, expressing a desire to show the presence of Soviet elites in the salons of Europe; on the other hand, it might have been part of a strategy of resistance, providing a degree of camouflage that would have helped convince censors to turn a blind eye to more suspect passages. I have already given an indication of a useful analytical concept drawn from existing literature on the subject, namely the 'porcelain puppy strategy'.

This strategy involves an author deliberately including an extensive and obviously unpublishable scene in a work, knowing that it would attract censors' attention. The author has completely no interest in retaining a scene that is as exaggerated and superfluous as the said porcelain figure, hence its removal is easily accepted. The particular passage is simply intended as a distraction from other politically-incorrect content dispersed throughout the work, while giving the censor a sense of satisfaction.⁵³⁵ Whether the missing opening-night scene was indeed intended as material for such a strategy cannot be established with complete certainty, although it would seem quite likely. My findings suggest,

535 *Daleka droga do książki. Doświadczenia pisarzy z cenzurą w NRD*, ed. by Ernst Wiechert and Herbert Wiesner, trans. Wojciech Król, in: *Cenzura w Niemczech w XX wieku*, p. 349.

however, that this passage never reached GUKPPiW and it was cut during the editing stage.

In *Idzie skacząc po górach* Andrzejewski did not adopt an unequivocal stance towards censors' demands. He was both for and against them, donning the exotic costume while also including Polish protagonists and casting relations between Russia and the West in the appropriate light. Perhaps he was counting on a highly intelligent readership, capable of bringing these elements together.

At this point, I would like to return to the question of the strategies that GUKPPiW officials did indeed identify while failing to intervene in a work so significantly as to remove all traces of their use. Andrzejewski's novel is a clear case in point. The censors did indeed *recognize* the costumes that were adopted – the clerical cloak in *Bramy raju* and the exotic one in *Idzie skacząc po górach*. However, the censors failed to transform the parts of the novels masked by strategies as they targeted their cuts in completely different places, with the novels facing difficulty in securing approval for publication as a result of being perceived as pornographic. It could thus be argued that the censorship authorities found the plots sufficiently attractive on the literal level (the children's crusade or the critique of the Parisian artistic elite) that they turned a blind eye to the less politically correct content hidden beneath the surface. The costumes were almost certainly decoded in the course of reception, thus it must have been assumed that only a very small number of readers would find a critique of ideology or the lack of artistic freedom in the novels. Should a less intellectual reader have happened upon the two novels, then he or she could always enjoy the works on a superficial level, which seemed to satisfy the authorities because of the apparent critique of the Church or Western elites.

Was Andrzejewski's strategy successful? To some degree it was, although it is difficult to claim that the author enjoyed a resounding victory in his games with GUKPPiW.

Stanisław Lem

Existing studies have been fairly consistent in claiming that Lem's strategy was to hide behind the mask of fantasy, which enabled him to easily escape the demands of socialist realism. The archival sources that I have examined verify such claims, although it is worthwhile presenting a more differentiated take on the matter. As I did in the case of Jerzy Andrzejewski, I will first restate the basic facts relating to the publication of the first works he submitted for assessment as a young author.

Wywiad i atomy was first published in the press, but was blocked by censors in 1949 because, to simplify somewhat, it showed the activities of Western rather

than communist intelligence agencies. The short story *Człowiek z Marsa* was published in *Nowy Świat Przypód* in 1946 but it was also rejected for ideological reasons, with censors criticizing its use of escapism and failure to offer sufficient condemnation of American capitalism. The realist novel *Szpital Przemienienia* was not approved for publication in 1948 or the following year, with Lem subsequently adding increasingly more publishable sections. It was published as a trilogy (*Czas nieutracony*) as the thaw began to take hold in 1955, a full seven years after the first part was written. Lem's actual debut book was *Astronauci*, which was given positive reviews and classified as a science-fiction novel for young readers. The subject matter proved fruitful and Lem's subsequent works, the collection of short stories *Sezam i inne opowiadania* and the novel *Obłok Magellana*, were approved without changes and were published in large print runs.

This brief overview already indicates that it is with *Astronauci* that it becomes possible to speak of the science-fiction costume being adopted as a strategy for challenging censorship in People's Poland. It is reasonable to argue that that work marked the starting point of Lem, as a young writer, consciously and consistently adopting this strategy of masking subjects that were crucial to contemporary Poland. I have already mentioned this, though I would again repeat my argument that the refusal to grant permission to publish his first three works had a direct influence on the paths Lem subsequently chose to take as a writer, namely that he adopted the costume of non-reality.

That it was a conscious decision on his part to challenge restrictions on the freedom of expression is verified in a document of the highest significance and reliability, namely a direct statement by the author. It is enough to cite the abovementioned interview with Tomasz Fiałkowski, where he stated explicitly that 'Aesopic language' assisted him in his struggle with censors.⁵³⁶

Censors' reviews also give a clear indication that they recognized that masks were being employed in his works. One censor listed 'the central issues' addressed in *Astronauci*: '1) humans' struggle to dominate the forces of nature; 2) condemnation of wars and acts of destroying human lives; 3) faith in constant progress, love of humanity and life'. Officials likewise focused on the ideological aspects of *Sezam i inne opowiadania*. 'Lem's collection of short stories is based on fantastical elements. However, the author's main objective is to criticize socio-political relations under capitalism, with a particular focus on the USA'. *Obłok Magellana*, meanwhile, earned rather naïve praise that simultaneously revealed the censors' awareness that the fantasy elements had been employed as a cover:

536 *Świat na krawędzi*, p. 67.

The value of Lem's book, as with his previous works, lies in his depiction of potential technological developments and his view that there is a need to prepare adequately for any profession, as well as in the fact that he reminds young readers of familiar yet oft-forgotten truths. Collective effort, energy, and passion, combined with thorough knowledge, lay the ground for great achievements possible.

The fantastical element is also valuable as it is based on existing scientific achievements that reveal the broad horizons of the future.⁵³⁷

Let us now consider how the text changed over time. We know for certain that Lem made changes to *Człowiek z Marsa*, *Szpital Przemienienia* and *Obłok Magellana*. However, in each case there is no complete record available that would enable us to even come close to the truth as to which strategies Lem adopted in his struggles with restrictions on the freedom of expression. It should also be stated that *Szpital Przemienienia* has a completely different status, since it is the only work of the three that lacks any elements of the fantastic whatsoever. Thus, even if more detailed archival sources were to be discovered, there is no chance of them showing that Lem considered adopting the cloak of non-reality as part of his struggle to get past censors with this work. Perhaps, though, such sources would reveal a completely different strategy for working in the shadow of GUKPPiW.

Małgorzata Szpakowska believes that the author's decision to turn to science fiction constituted both a theoretical and practical error on his part. However, it is worth highlighting a few things before accepting the argument that he used such elements to distract censors' attention. Firstly, censorship officials had no difficulty in lifting the mask to reveal the actual subject matter. Secondly, the science-fiction elements were not subject to significant criticism, with any demands for changes (in *Wywiad i atomy* and in *Człowiek z Marsa*) relating to other issues. Censors were thus aware of the costume that had been donned and were even willing to leave it intact. Why this was the case cannot be established with any certainty, however.

It seems that the censors only reached one level below the surface of these texts, hence their willingness to approve them for publication without changes. The fantasy elements left this level of the text visible enough, revealing the themes of opposition to war, the struggle to master nature and questions of scientific and technological development. These were acceptable enough and could be published. Yet the censors failed to go even deeper into the text to reveal what was camouflaged for all but the most intelligent readers. Here *Astronauci*,

537 AAN, GUKPPiW, 385,teczka 31/19, pp. 863–864.

Obłok Magellana and, to a lesser degree, *Sezam*, were all dominated by a sense of pessimism and doubt – something that was, as we know, impermissible under Stalinism.

The problem with the author employing this double encoding so successfully, I would argue, is evident in the fact that his works were classified as youth literature despite the author having no intention of contributing to this sector. This meant that intelligent young readers likewise failed to follow Lem's difficult strategy that was intended to create meaning outside the censor's reach because such readers were not accustomed to picking up on Aesopic language.

Władysław Broniewski

Having examined some interesting cases of struggling against restrictions imposed on the freedom of expression in prose works, it is now worth turning to strategies employed in the realm of poetry. I should immediately point out that while it is highly likely that both Jerzy Andrzejewski and Stanisław Lem employed a considered and relatively homogenous set of strategies in their texts, this was not necessarily so in the case of Władysław Broniewski. It has not proven possible to find direct statements from the author (which doesn't mean they do not exist) regarding the strategies he employed in his encounters with censorship as a poet. Based on the available archival materials, however, it can be argued that he was pragmatic, employing methods that were appropriate at the time and relevant to the particular situation. His response to GUKPPiW restrictions was thus based on direct *reaction* to any difficulties and complaints, rather than on *anticipation* of them.

It is clear, though, that he did indeed resist censors' cuts, as shown by sources produced by GUKPPiW.

The poems *Cytadela* and *Co mi tam troski* should not appear in this edition, although if the author should insist on their inclusion our Office will not issue sanctions. [...] the poem *Na śmierć Andrzeja Struga*. The editors will leave this poem in place in light of the author's extremely strong opposition. I stated that the office will not apply administrative sanctions and I have left the poem at the publisher's disposal.⁵³⁸

Here the censors highlight Broniewski's unwillingness to accept the proposed changes, with research showing that the texts mentioned here were indeed left untouched in the published editions.

538 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/124, p. 869.

In the chapter exploring Broniewski's oeuvre, I described how particular poems travelled between volumes and noted censors' remarks relating to over twelve of them. It has been established that what is most painful and damaging to poetry is making changes to particular lines and words within poems. It is worth noting again the case of the small group of texts where it was possible to find material evidence of the changes made. Thus, as Feliksa Lichodziejewska has noted, in the poem *Nad rzekami Babilonu* the town of 'Borysław' was changed to 'Wisła', while the epic poem *Bania z poezją* changed the lines 'Die neue Orndnung, "nasza włast"' into 'W legend dni te będą kłaść'. GUKPPiW documents also offered evidence that in the poem *Szpicel*, the Russian-tinged word *ochrana* was changed to the Polish 'ochrona'. It is clear that all of the noted (and published) alterations relate to the effacement of any potential awkwardness in the depiction of relations to the USSR. If we accept the argument that this was a conscious strategy on Broniewski's part, then it could be seen as a variation on the porcelain puppy. Agreeing to interventions relating to the most sensitive subject, the USSR, meant that the integrity of the rest of the texts could be preserved.

It is also worth considering whether Broniewski's responses to the institutionalized restriction of freedom of expression were of an intra- or extra-textual nature. While it is clear that the transformation of particular lines in the three cases mentioned above was an intra-textual operation, it is difficult to classify the act of agreeing to move entire texts between volumes or temporarily removing entire poems from particular volumes in the same way.

In the chapter on the responses of Polish writers to tsarist censorship, I noted that the actions taken by authors and publishers during times of national subjugation, such as those relating to the place and time of publication, the size of print runs, the inclusion of authors' real names or opting for pseudonyms, and stopping or resigning from publication, can be classed as extra-textual strategies in the struggle against restrictions imposed on expression. Of course, many of these strategies have a much longer history, reaching further back than the partition of Poland. It should also be noted that while writers could distance themselves completely from these strategies in the nineteenth century, leaving them entirely up to publishers, in the 1940s and 50s, however, the situation was very different. In cases where the decision over whether to approve a work for publication had turned into a genuine battle, only the author was in a position to exert influence. This is particularly important to bear in mind in relation to publication abroad or in the unofficial, underground realm. Even if these significant issues are not central to this study, it would certainly be worth examining them more closely elsewhere.

Sources produced by the censorship authorities reveal that Broniewski gave or refused permission on several occasions to remove certain poems from volumes, meaning that he took a direct decision on the time and place of publication, while indeed deciding himself whether a work would appear at all. In light of the fact that he rarely wrote cycles, the realignment of particular volumes rarely had a significantly detrimental effect. His individual poems thus formed separate wholes, meaning that in this case the strategies he employed were extra-textual.

My research shows that Broniewski did respond to direct censorship. But was this also the case with its indirect forms? Documents from the GUKPPiW archives do not give a clear answer. It seems, however, that a sensible approach to take in search for an answer to this question would be – as suggested by the case of the poem 'Radiofonia rzecz pożyteczna' – to explore poems that were not published in the poet's lifetime but were included in the later critical editions. Sources from the author's personal archive could be helpful and would provide inspiration for worthwhile further research.

My re-examination of relations between Broniewski and GUKPPiW has also suggested that not all writers adopted strategies in respect of institutionalized censorship restrictions. This is quite obvious in the case of authors of unproblematic works that were passed without difficulty and did not intend to cause any. However, as becomes evident in light of Broniewski's oeuvre, which did face significant cuts, even controversial authors did not always have a strategy. There is further evidence for this in other sources. Indicative of this are the cases of authors who were viewed negatively by GUKPPiW, but not so negatively that the majority of their works could not appear. The most obvious case in point were the 'old masters', i.e. recognized authors enjoying particular standing who were critical of reality without openly fighting it.

It is worth recalling one of the guiding principles of censors' work – namely that classics should not be cut. The censorship authorities' recognition of a particular author as a 'classic' (however imprecise and broad this concept) meant that he or she enjoyed a degree of artistic freedom and was thus not required to adopt a particular strategy in relation to GUKPPiW. The archival sources suggest that writers including Staff, Słonimski, Tuwim and, to some degree, Broniewski too, fought against proposed changes and sometimes agreed to them, while leaving part of their least politically-correct writings in their desk drawers. In such cases, then, it seems that the only observable *systematic* response to censorship restrictions was self-censorship.

Jan Brzechwa and other children's authors

Following Jerzy Cieřlikowski, I have already argued that the fundamental feature of children's literature is the fact that a particular reader is inscribed in the text which in turn entails a certain simplification of the argument. Using complex strategies to challenge restrictions on expression would thus engender certain difficulties in this genre. There is evidence to support this argument in the fact that Aesopic language was only rarely employed in children's literature (with Jurgielewiczowa's *O chłopcu, który szukał domu* and Brzechwa's *Szóřtka-oszustka* being two exceptions to this rule). Researchers have also argued that in such cases, children read the literal layer of the text, while adults got the allusions.⁵³⁹ There is also evidence of more superficial intra-textual measures being adopted, including weaving into a work opinions that the new authorities deemed desirable and altering earlier works in this way. There were also cases of extra-textual devices being employed, such as writing completely acceptable and less acceptable works in parallel in order to secure enough credit to ensure the latter were published; transferring works that received bad reviews with private publishers to state-backed competitors; and delaying publication by waiting for 'better days'. The relatively common use and success of such strategies was made possible by censorship officials' ambiguous stance towards children's literature.

In Jan Brzechwa's case, it is also possible to point to another holistic strategy employed in the struggle against censorship restrictions. As Anna Szóřtak has noted, the author opted to write children's literature as a way of securing intellectual autonomy. GUKPPIW sources show that other writers who were exhausted by constant battles with censors also turned to children's literature. They saw it as a way of improving their chances of being published. This was the case with Mieczysława Buczkówna and Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, two authors who would be worthy of further study.

If, as other researchers suggest, poetry* [* As Prof. Janusz Maciejewski stated at the conference *Umysły zniewolone: Literatura pod presją* ('Capitve minds: Literature under pressure'), held by IBL PAN in Konstancin-Obory on 27–29 May 2009] offered the best opportunities to circumvent censorship, then the chances must have been even better with children's poetry. Regardless of the fact that, in contrast to Buczkówna or Iłakowiczówna, Brzechwa's poetry for adults was not of a high artistic standard, his strategy did prove successful. However, it is not possible to state convincingly whether or not Brzechwa's

539 Anna Szóřtak, pp. 194–195.

decision to focus on writing for children was a deliberate strategy for fighting against censorship. I was not able to find any statements from either the author or censors that would offer further insight into the question. He did write works for children before the war, including some famous tales, and during the war, while after 1945 he also produced, sporadically, some works for adults, including *Strofy o sześćcioletnim planie* (Verses about the Six Year Plan), which received a damning review from censors. Perhaps his intention was to adopt a twin track approach, similar to the one adopted by Stanisław Lem. In both cases, the censorship authorities played a crucial role in shaping the authors' decision to specialize in a particular genre.

This literature review and the four case studies on the strategies (or simply methods) adopted by authors in their struggles against institutional restrictions on the freedom of expression have led to several findings.

The cases outlined here do not suggest any logical commonalities. The comparison of the relations between GUKPPIW, on the one hand, and Jerzy Andrzejewski, Stanisław Lem, Władysław Broniewski and various children's authors, on the other, was not intended as a way of creating a systematic typology. Instead, the selection of these case studies was determined by the availability of source materials. Simply put, it was in relation to these authors' works that the archives yielded interesting and relatively complete sets of records. Thus, a description of the strategies employed by these particular authors could not be expected to produce a coherent image.

Many of my findings are supported by other sources that I encountered during my archival research. These materials suggested strategies similar in many respects to those employed by Andrzejewski, Lem, Broniewski and Brzechwa. I thus assume that were I to conduct further research on other authors, then a clear pattern would emerge as to the strategies employed by Polish writers in the 1940s and 50s in relation to the existence and actions of the censorship office. Joanna Hobot has argued in the case of the New Wave poets, for example, that there they employed a universal strategy, while Leszek Szaruga found something similar in relation to what was known as Lumpenproletariat prose. In my study, the exploration of authors' strategies vis-à-vis censorship was intended as a concluding element of my central argument, meaning that it was not ultimately possible to produce a universal model. While this is something that future research could work towards, it was not the aim of this work.

Another hypothesis emerging from my findings is that there were similarities between the responses of Polish writers to tsarist censorship and restrictions imposed between 1948 and 1958. They are most clearly evident in relation to

works that addressed issues related to the Soviet Union. This was a subject that aroused authors' traditional antipathy on the one hand, while being the most sensitive issue for censors. All things Russian or Soviet had to be thought through very carefully before being included in a text, which meant that this subject was often simply avoided. One example of this was the scene from the opening night of an exhibition that was artificially added to Andrzejewski's *Idzie skacząc po górach* before being removed by the author. The altered Soviet-related lines in Broniewski's poetry are another case in point.

There were also similarities in the strategies applied to writing texts during both periods of restricted national sovereignty. It seems that after the Second World War, no strategies emerged that were not already familiar, barring minor modifications, from nineteenth-century Polish literature. Ryszard Nycz has argued that during the partition and after 1948, adopting historical or exotic costumes were the most popular solutions. This is verified by my findings. The reason for the similarity is probably to be found in the fact that this approach made it possible to camouflage the transmission of political content that was important to society at the time.

In the introduction to my book, I considered whether experienced writers and relative novices used similar strategies or whether they differed in their approach to GUKPPIW. It would also be worth asking whether there were differences in the approaches employed in particular literary genres and also whether any gaps between the time a work was written and when it was reviewed were of particular significance.

My analysis and interpretation of the censorship authorities' records shows that there was no need for authors who were held in high regard by the authorities to develop a holistic or universal strategy in their relations with censors. Such authors were often part of the older generation of writers. This chapter illustrated the point with the case studies of Władysław Broniewski, who was well-regarded by the communist authorities, and Jan Brzechwa, who was generally held in high esteem as both an expert on copyright law and as an outstanding translator of Russian literature. This was a highly advantageous situation for the authors as they could incorporate it into their calculations of the responses of GUKPPIW to their attempts to mitigate restrictions. Adopting a strategy was essential in the case of texts that were directed against the system. This was particularly so in the case of Jerzy Andrzejewski, who increasingly distanced himself from communism. And a strategy was also crucial for debutant authors, who were treated arrogantly by the censorship office, as Lem's experience shows. What becomes evident is that it was not the author's generation that was the significant factor in determining which strategies were employed, but rather a given author's position

in the official ranking of approval (a key factor for the censorship authorities) and, to a lesser extent, in the ranking of artistic greatness.

On the basis of the cases explored here, it can also be argued that it is easier to establish which intra-textual strategies were adopted in the case of prose than in the case of poetry. More important to protecting the integrity of a poetic text, however, were extra-textual factors that could, for example, prevent an author or text from becoming irrelevant. This would be a high price to pay for adopting complex strategies in struggling against censorship.⁵⁴⁰ Generally speaking, it seems that authors of lyrical poetry behaved very differently to authors of epic poetry in the face of the inevitability of censorship. Some strategies applied in the struggle against censorship were better suited to lyrical texts than to epics. This seems quite obvious if we consider that the strategies adopted were inscribed in the structure of a work. Such issues are particularly interesting, although I could only touch upon them briefly here. They would be worthy of more detailed examination and further consideration.

Differences in the choice of strategy in relation to temporal factors are, simply put, related to the varying severity of censorship restrictions that I outlined above. There were some works that were shelved for several years during the Stalinist era before gaining censors' approval. This leads to another issue, namely that of texts that were so politically incorrect that they would remain unpublishable regardless of the strategies adopted towards the GUKPPiW. I have in mind those works that addressed the most sensitive matters. Between 1948 and 1958, such subjects included Polish-Soviet relations, recent history, and criticism of the new socio-political system. The only strategy open to the shelved works was to wait. I have illustrated such cases in the realm of children's literature. I would argue, then, that Aesopic language could only mask content that was either politically incorrect to a small degree or so deeply hidden that even the censor would not spot it. This, though, left the work at risk of not being understood, as happened with Lem.

Exploring the archives, I got the impression that GUKPPiW officials were surprisingly often fully aware of the strategies that authors had adopted. They recognized many devices, described them – albeit in somewhat awkward language – and tolerated them. I would thus argue that many games with the censors took place according to rules established by the censorship authorities. Answering why this was the case would go beyond the scope of this study and stray into the realm of the sociology of artistic production. My indirect answer

540 See: Joanna Hobot, p. 222.

to the question is indicated in my reference to the factors outside the text that the censorship office employed when assessing a work, such as the status of the author and the publisher. This is another question that deserves further attention.

I would like to present another hypothesis that is crucial to my study. I believe that the author of every book published officially in communist Poland had censors in mind when writing, since every book published had to gain their approval. This means that each author *always* employed some form of self-censorship, while also, in some cases, adopting additional strategies.

Part 4: Contexts

Context 1: Literary studies

Sources concerning the censorship of works in the field of literary studies during the early years of communist Poland are contained in the files relating to the leading academic publishers. Some other sources are also spread throughout assessments relating to the press, fiction, popular science and textbooks. In this chapter, I will focus on the short but intensive transition period of 1948–1950. This was a very interesting period that saw the revival of academic life as institutions, universities and higher education institutes and journals were founded, although people were still counting their personal and material losses. It was a time of relative freedom of expression, although signs that a clamp-down was approaching were always in the air. 1948 also saw the start of the process putting science and research under state control, including the imposition of strict planning, increasing ideological pressures – particularly evident in the preparations for the First Polish Science Congress and the abolition of Polska Akademia Umiejętności (the Polish Academy of Learning; PAU), which was replaced by the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN).⁵⁴¹ At the turn of 1949, the sphere of private publishing, independent of state sponsorship, was being suffocated.

Analysis of the records of the censorship office for 1948–1950 confirms the validity of exploring this particular intervening period. The archival sources provide evidence of the way external influences gradually tipped the balance in favour of such academic studies where a degree of creative freedom and open argument had given way to vulgar political demands. Sources from later years suggest something completely different as they reveal the sudden regression of Polish science. It is worth remembering that the early 1950s saw censors' reviews become significantly more critical with the number of interventions increasing. This can be explained most simply by referring to the principles outlined by Aleksander Pawlicki – information bias (the subordination of the circulation of information to the current political situation) and presentism or up-to-dateness (changing the assessment of content in light of the contemporary situation).⁵⁴²

541 Piotr Hübner, *Polityka naukowa w latach 1944–1953. Geneza systemu*, vol. 1, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1992, p. 120.

542 Aleksander Pawlicki, p. 52.

The oldest documents available relating to the censorship of academic publications are from 1947. They are held in a collection titled 'Wiedza Powszechna 1947–1950'. Other materials that I draw on here come from the files 'Ossolineum 1948–195', 'Książka i Wiedza 1948–1950', 'Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1948', 'Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe 1948–1951' and 'Wydawnictwa różne na T 1948–1956' (Various publishers beginning with T). Additional reports used here were filed as 'Sprawozdania opisowe Wydziału Badania Ruchu Wydawniczego 1949–1950' (Descriptive reports of the Department of Research on the Publishing Industry). The archives of the Ministry of Culture and Art covering the years 1949–50 offer interesting descriptions that reflect a different perspective. This chapter also draws on files described as 'Materials of the national conference of directors of voivodeship offices and political employees of GUKP held on 13–14 December 1952' because they are largely focused on the situation that pertained in the preceding years. Furthermore, in light of the dearth of materials preceding 1948, this chapter necessarily focuses on the sources from 1948 to 1950. It is worth noting that PWN, the most significant academic publisher, was not established until 1951 as a result of the agglomeration of the remnants of the publishing houses of institutions of higher education and scientific societies. PWN was thus an outcome of the efforts to limit academic freedom.⁵⁴³ The sources relating to this publisher proved less interesting because it largely published 'progressive' works, particularly in its early period, that were closely bound up with doctrine. Consequently, I have not used these materials in my study.

This chapter explores two key questions: what influence did censorship mechanisms have on the formation of models for perceiving reality? And how did censors' assessments influence what was considered scientific truth? I am interested here primarily in the impact of direct interventions, rather than in the indirect effects of censorship as a tool of political repression. I will also focus on the situation in the humanities, with a particular focus on literary studies.⁵⁴⁴

543 For more detailed studies on this subject, see: Stanisław Adam Kondek, p. 25; Leon Marszałek, *Początki Państwowego Wydawnictwa Naukowego. Księgarz*, vol. 1, 1984, pp. 28–32.

544 The censorship of academic publications in the field of literary studies has been explored by scholars including: Jadwiga Czachowska, *Zmagania z cenzurą słowników i bibliografii literackich*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli – obiegi alternatywne*, vol. 2, pp. 214–236 and Krystyna Tokarzówna, *Cenzura w „Polskiej Bibliografii Literackiej“*, in: *Piśmiennictwo – systemy kontroli – obiegi alternatywne*, vol. 2, pp. 237–250.

The arguments presented here are guided by several assumptions: firstly, that in light of the open interpretations they permit, the humanities and social sciences were, like economics, subject to particular measures and increased controls; secondly, the humanities and social sciences were particularly important in creating a sense of continuity with pre-war science and academia. As P. Hübner has argued, ‘the traditions of Polish science were expressed primarily by humanities scholars, which makes our scientific tradition somewhat exceptional’⁵⁴⁵; thirdly, and finally, the state of literary studies was directly connected to the state of literature. I argue that establishing the extent to which and the ways in which the *object* of literary studies was censored makes it possible to produce a typology of the ways in which such studies were themselves subject to restrictions.

There have been plenty of studies on the humanities under communism in Poland. Many works make general claims about the restrictions imposed by GUKPPiW,⁵⁴⁶ although detailed research has not been conducted, despite many suggestions to do so. I will cite one typical example. Stanisław Kondek has written that

the outcomes of censorship practices are familiar, as evidenced by books that were accepted and published. The degree of negative selection can easily be established on the basis of literary classics. Meanwhile, the degree of selection applied in contemporary literary studies, scientific publications, and journalistic works that were submitted for assessment will be made possible through analysis of the GUKPPiW archives. The fact that censorship also intervened in the creative process should not be overlooked. The self-censorship that shaped published books cannot be distinguished from external interventions that are more clearly perceptible because they have left archival traces.⁵⁴⁷

Many authors have highlighted the disadvantageous situation that science faced in totalitarian systems, presenting comparisons between Russia after 1917, Germany after 1933 and Poland after 1945. Scholars have noted shifts in the language used in research, as the boundaries between scientific and other perspectives on the world became blurred as ideology and science were fused

545 Piotr Hübner, op. cit, vol 1, p. 7.

546 For example: Jerzy Holzer, *Historia najnowsza i nauka na pograniczu polityki*, in: *Ideaty nauki i konflikty wartości. Studia złożone w darze prof. Stefanowi Amsterdamskiemu*, ed. by Ewa Chmielnicka, Jerzy Jedlicki and Andrzej Rychard, Warszawa: Wyd. IFiS PAN, 2005, pp. 323–330; Jerzy Adamowski and Andrzej. Kozieł; *Spór o PRL*, introduction by Piotr Wandycz, Kraków: Znak, 1996; Stanisław Żak, op. cit.; Marta Fik op. cit.; *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, ed. by Zbigniew Romek, op. cit.

547 Stanisław A. Kondek, *Władza i wydawcy. Polityczne uwarunkowania produkcji książek w Polsce w latach 1944–1949*, Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1994, p. 34.

using the methods of social engineering. Regime-controlled science was thus degraded, as the principle of the objective search for truth was the first to be distorted by the demands of a Manichean model.⁵⁴⁸ The career of the Soviet biologist Lysenko offers a particularly interesting example illustrating all of the pathologies of that system. His experiences make patently clear the processes that threaten the survival of academic life, as science is closely bound to economics and politics within a totalitarian system. It resulted in ignorance and nihilistic positions being adopted towards existing knowledge, casting doubt on existing scientific authorities.⁵⁴⁹ As Janusz Goćkowski has noted,

it is difficult enough to be a scholar under conditions of normality. It is exceptionally difficult and indeed almost impossible when abnormality becomes the norm. Meanwhile, whether someone is indeed a scholar depends on whether science, in the proper sense of the term, exists or whether some kind of ersatz version of it is in place.⁵⁵⁰

In People's Poland, academic writing that supported the Party elites was promoted, while activities undermining the legitimacy of communist rule were suppressed. However, it should be noted that hard-line periods of stricter repression did give way to more liberal periods that saw scientific horizons broadened, and vice versa. Periods of liberalization served as a form of safety valve, releasing built-up pressures and frustrations to prevent possible protests. The late 1940s were one such moment.

It should be stated clearly that the fate of scientists was more restricted in the Soviet Union and Third Reich – they could choose between either collaboration and expressing loyalty to official views, or they could face repression, imprisonment, labour camps or even death camps and the death penalty; in Poland, the authorities engaged in an intellectual game whose rules permitted a degree of unorthodoxy.

There was no intention of completely destroying science because it was only by maintaining at least a semblance of normality that a form of academic activity could emerge that would strengthen communist rule in Poland. The Partyocracy controlled science, yet its rule was also dependent upon it. Communist ideology required

548 See, for example: *Nauka. Tożsamość i tradycja*, ed. by Janusz Goćkowski and Stanisław Marmuszewski, Kraków: Universitas, 1995, pp. 8–11.

549 See: Stefan Amsterdamski, *O patologii życia naukowego: casus Łysenko*, w: idem, *Tertium non datur? Szkice i polemiki*, Warszawa: PWN, 1994, pp. 155–203.

550 Janusz Goćkowski, *Dwie role – dwie tradycje: „scholarstwo“ i „eksploracja“*, in: *Nauka. Tożsamość i tradycja*, op. cit., p. 117.

academic legitimation, while scientific rationality was an indispensable element of the communists' techniques.⁵⁵¹

The materials on the December 1952 national congress of the directors of voivodeship-level censorship offices feature an exchange of views between the head of the Krakow department and the director of the department of non-periodical publications at GUKPPiW. It offers a clear illustration of the complexity of such tactics, with the Krakow censor complaining of insubordinate academics.

There are other publishers, too. It is worth speaking a little bit about the publishing house of the Department of Slavonic Studies of the Jagiellonian University. This year, Slavonic Studies published [the journals – PV] *Pamiętnik Słowiański* and *Rocznik Slawistyczny*. The latter is focused entirely on Slavonic linguistics. *Rocznik* features numerous valuable articles, although the publishers also sought to include an article by Lehr-Spławiński titled *Z zagadnień metodologicznych językoznawstwa historyczno-porównawczego* (Methodological issues in historical-comparative linguistics). Many of the author's statements called into question the validity of Soviet research in the field of linguistics. It is quite telling that the publishers offered a highly positive assessment of this article. The author's claim that he had conducted research in this field much earlier was judged by the publishers to be evidence of the highly progressive nature of Polish research, thus something that deserved to be emphasized.⁵⁵²

The head of the Department of Non-Periodical Publications, Helena Landsberg, recognized the importance of the problem and stated openly that

the problem that Krakow faces is exceptionally difficult. Publications produced in Krakow usually come from scientific societies. Of course, this brings with it particular difficulties because discussing these matters with professors who do not share our beliefs is no simple matter. [...] Nevertheless, we should remind ourselves again that when it comes to contacts with institutions such as PAU, with which not only KUL [the Catholic University of Lublin – PV] but all the reactionary professors in Poland are associated, then we must give them a bit of room to speak because some of them could still prove useful to People's Poland given their experience and skills, which is why we must adopt certain tactics in relations with them. It is sad but true that Prof. Lehr-Spławiński will never start speaking our language. On the one hand, we will never pass a book that is unacceptable under our conditions but, on the other hand, we are open to compromise. And this would be the response to Comrade Gutkowski's objections to the fact that depoliticized things are being passed. And that they will continue to be passed. If it is something like that article on linguistics then of course we will not allow it, but as far as

551 Janusz Goćkowski and Stanisław Marmuszewski, *Pomieszanie i udawanie w kulturze nauki w PRL*, in: *Nauka. Tożsamość i tradycja*, op. cit., p. 268.

552 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/6, p. 174.

a host of other things are concerned that do not contain any harmful statements but are merely distanced from reality, then we must be patient for many more years to come. [...] In such cases, it is necessary to adopt the appropriate tactic each time, applying some degree of diplomacy.⁵⁵³

One such example of this particular interpretation of diplomacy is the discussion provoked by the publication of Julian Krzyżanowski's *Przewodnik po wystawie pamięci A. Mickiewicza w 150 rocznicę urodzin* (A guidebook to the exhibition in memory of Adam Mickiewicz on the 150th anniversary of his birth). The reviewer from the Ministry proposed numerous corrections before stating with resignation in conclusion that 'this sketch is not of the required and correct type but nevertheless, in light of the impossibility of ensuring that the text would be ready in time after making the proposed corrections, it may be published'. These complaints continued in a letter from the Directorate of Museums (Naczelna Dyrekcja Muzeów), the institution responsible for organizing the Mickiewicz exhibition. A document dated 9 May 1949 addressed to the Ministry of Culture and Art stated, with no small degree of 'scientific' language, that

for a text that is supposed to promote public engagement, this work, particularly its first part, is somewhat elitist in tone. I am assuming, though, that this can no longer be changed which means that, regretfully and troublingly, it can be approved.

The letter goes on to list the errors that are to be corrected with particular emphasis on the need to alter the interpretation of *Pan Tadeusz*. The conclusion of the communiqué states that these remarks were to provide assistance for 'the conference with Prof. Krzyżanowski'.⁵⁵⁴

The response on 18 May 1949 from a certain Michalski, director of the Department of Artistic Output at the Ministry, indicates that the author of the brochure faced only a delicate degree of pressure. Officials from the Department read a new version of Krzyżanowski's text and came to the conclusion that not all of the controversial issues had been resolved. They continued to argue that Mickiewicz's epic poem had been interpreted incorrectly. Michalski did not relent and despite the pressure of time, proposed applying further 'diplomatic' measures in discussions with Krzyżanowski. The available sources do not reveal what fate ultimately befell this publication, although it is fairly safe to assume

553 AAN, GUKPPIW, 421,teczka 197/6, pp. 239–240. This was cited in: John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*, op. cit., p. 102.

554 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Twórczości Literackiej, sygn. 705, non-paginated.

that its author could consciously disregard certain corrections proposed by the censorship authorities.

Analysis of the archival files titled 'Wiedza Powszechna 1947–1950', 'Ossolineum 1948–195', 'Książka i Wiedza 1948–1950', 'Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1948', 'Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe 1948–1951' and 'Wydawnictwa różne na T 1948–1956' (Various publishers beginning with T) will enable differentiation and description of the issues on which censors focused their attentions. These included making changes to primary sources, numerous and meticulous corrections to monographs, negotiating differences of opinion between censors regarding a particular text, reading texts through the lens of the status of its author (whether they were well-regarded or rejected by the authorities), reading texts through the lens of the subject matter (whether the subject was promoted or suppressed by the authorities), and deferring to Soviet science. Among the many assessments of humanities scholarship recorded in the archives, I have selected the most typical cases for presentation in this analysis.

For censors, humanities scholarship was effectively limited to three types of text: editions of literary works (Polish or foreign) or historical sources; monographs aimed at intellectually-advanced readers; and analyses serving educational aims. In the case of editions of primary sources and critical editions, censors paid most attention to the ideological tone of the introduction and footnotes. The archival records I have explored again suggest a degree of dissatisfaction:

The commentaries do not, generally speaking, present the issues from a Marxist perspective, while in most cases they fail to adopt a position on socio-political questions. What is typical is that when we have concerns regarding a work and contact representatives of this or that publishing house, then we find that our remarks are received unwillingly and are often given the response that the works are aimed at advanced scholars for whom highlighting such issues is unnecessary. The question of aligning commentaries in purely academic publications thus remains unresolved.⁵⁵⁵

Highly specialized monographs were published in small numbers, which ensured that the readership could be limited to specialists in a given field. GUKPPiW argued that small print runs thus counterbalanced the contravention of directives and guidelines. This relatively lenient approach was of course impossible to apply in the case of works intended for use in schools or those aimed at broader audiences. Censors intervened more significantly in such cases, working precisely on corrections in order to avoid corrupting innocent minds.

555 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/6, pp. 172–173.

Wiedza Powszechna 1947–1950

This publishing house was a spinoff of Czytelnik. It focused on publishing popular science works in many fields, including medicine, biology, history, literary studies, linguistics, film studies and psychology, as well as issuing many biographies.

One work submitted for assessment was Stefania Skwarczyńska's brochure *Juliusz Słowacki*. The three reviews available in the archives are all positive, yet one of them did not approve the work for publication. Ultimately, though, the work was accepted for publication without changes, although the print run was reduced from the suggested 30,000 to 20,000. The chief complaint was fairly surprising, with a censorship official complaining that Słowacki was being turned into a 'progressive' and 'radical' by force. The moderate censor Morawska wrote that

Słowacki can either be treated as a creator of Polish poetry of the highest standard, or his life and work can be examined in the context of his epoch, highlighting the guiding principles that he lived his entire life by; but artificially turning him into a radical and social activist fighting for the unity of Polish émigrés and a class revolutionary struggling against the nobility seems merely to be a deliberate act of deceiving readers.⁵⁵⁶

Czesław Zgorzelski's study *Lermontow*, a contribution to the series *Literatura światowa w wieku XIX* (World literature in the nineteenth century), was subject to a detailed critical review. It was not approved for publication, a decision confirmed by a superior on 30 September 1948. Lermontow's work and character, the reviewer argued, were 'presented incorrectly', with Zgorzelski accused of referring to 'inappropriate' researchers. This was just one of many complaints. The work was assessed again in 1949. The accusation that a 'liberalistic' rather than Marxist approach had been adopted was repeated, although the censors now recognized the arguments in favour of publishing the book. In all probability they had received a corrected text, yet they proposed further changes and these were made before the book could be approved on 7 September 1949. The conclusion of the secondary review was full of praise, calling it a 'good and necessary work'.⁵⁵⁷ However, this referred to a version of the text that had been subject to at least two rounds of significant changes.

The series *Dobra książka – informator dla czytelników* (Good books – a readers' guide) offered a digest of a great number of Soviet books alongside

⁵⁵⁶ AAN, GUKPPiW, 153,teczka 31/127, pp. 121–122.

⁵⁵⁷ AAN, GUKPPiW, 153,teczka 31/128, p. 56.

classics of Polish and world literature, thus creating something of an unintended juxtaposition. Among the brochures produced as part of this series that required reworking following review were Maria Żmigrodzka's piece on Lucjan Rudnicki and Maria Straszewska's study of Kraszewski's *Stara baśń*. Włodzimierz Maciąg's work *Emil Zola i jego powieść Germinal* also received a negative review. Censor Rajska wrote on 27 October 1950 that 'the author has a false conception of Zola's ideological attitude. [...] We ought to adopt a positive attitude to Zola, yet this does not emerge from this study.'⁵⁵⁸

Ossolineum 1948–1951

The reviews contained in this file are reliable and well preserved. GUKPPiW paid significant attention to this publishing house. There are significant numbers of sources relating to critical editions of literary classics, which reflects Ossolineum's profile.

Particularly interesting are two reviews from 1948 of the second volume of Juliusz Kleiner's study *Zarys dziejów literatury polskiej 1831–1918* (A history of Polish literature). The publication was intended as a textbook for older middle school pupils and students of courses in literary history. The first review suggested numerous interventions and argued that it was impossible to approve the book for use in schools. It was deemed 'unsuitable for schools and ideologically lacking'.⁵⁵⁹ The second review was signed off by Stefan Żółkiewski himself, a literary historian and member of the Central Committee. I cite his review in full, omitting only the page references:

The book is completely unsuitable for publication. I attempted to mark false and unclear sentences as I read the work. This proved futile. There is literally not a single sentence in the book that could remain untouched. It is a manifestation of backwardness, religiosity, and routine rather than a textbook.

For example, please see the way in which Adam Czartoryski is portrayed, or the interpretation of the third part of [Mickiewicz's – PV] *Dziady* [*Forefathers' Eve*] as the search for a miracle, the depiction of Towiański (the motives behind leaving for France!!!), the assessment of Sienkiewicz, how much space is dedicated to Dembowski (and what is said about him), the assessment of the Stańczyks and their blessed cultural role, at least according to Kleiner. The book is formed entirely of such statements. The hierarchy of authors is unacceptable. Decadent bourgeois literature of the imperialist epoch is presented as a new golden age in Polish art that finally offered "truth" because it was non-tendentious poetry. What the author has to say about the workers' movement (for

558 AAN, GUKPPiW, 153,teczka 31/128, pp. 890–891.

559 AAN, GUKPPiW, 163, p. 3.

example his assessment of Limanowski) is worthy of inclusion in a cabinet of curiosities. The author is completely incapable of dealing with literary phenomena, he cannot interpret or assess them. Cosmopolitanism and bourgeois objectivism reigns supreme here. The author fails to take a stance on facts that are obviously ideologically alien to him (for example, assessment of A. Górski and Przybyszewski's literary programme). The long comparison of Mickiewicz and Słowacki as two spiritual models is the height of pointless sophistry, as it fails to explore any clear questions. The author sneaks in his reactionary favourites (Lutosławski) without ensuring suitable selection of the names for inclusion, something that is crucial for schools. Declaring Brzozowski to be a 'heretic of socialism' and 'a free-thinking Marxist' is evidence of the author's complete nonchalance in respect of new Marxist findings in the field of literary studies. This is a nightmare, not a book. It must not be published under any circumstances.⁵⁶⁰

It is necessary to note that because this review was written by someone who in practice determined the fate of Polish studies inside the country, it was binding. Stefan Żółkiewski was a member of the Central Committee of the PZPR (and PPR before that) and had served as a representative on the Krajowa Rada Narodowa (KRN; State National Council) and in parliament, while he was also a founder and director of IBL PAN, the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Literary Studies. In this case, Żółkiewski acted as a super-reviewer. We can work on the assumption that he was called in as a reviewer in this case in order to offer a sufficient counterweight to Prof. Juliusz Kleiner's standing as an academic. Such harsh criticism and the outright rejection of the work could only come from someone with greater authority than an ordinary GUKPPIW employee. Analysis of further materials from the censorship office's archives indicates that this was a common strategy, with experts from the same field called in to write elaborate reviews to support campaigns that targeted the works of some of the best-regarded figures in Polish academia.

Another review of Juliusz Kleiner's work appeared in 1949. While changes had most probably been made, they were not enough to save the work from another crushing assessment that declared it 'a typical work for a bourgeois literary scholar'.⁵⁶¹ The book was reviewed again in 1950, with one of the most insightful censors around, Dr Kania, approving publication on condition that substantial changes were made.

The sources suggest that the second volume of Kleiner's literary history was subject to three rounds of significant revisions. It is also worth noting that in October 1951, Ossolineum was stripped of the right to publish school textbooks

560 AAN, GUKPPIW, 163, p. 10.

561 AAN, GUKPPIW, 163, p. 157.

with no right to appeal the decision. There is no information on what happened to books that had already entered the publication process.⁵⁶²

Another of Kleiner's works likewise received an unfavourable response. A new edition of his prewar study *Beniowski*, published as part of Ossolineum's *Biblioteka Narodowa* (National Library) series, received a negative secondary review on 5 May 1949. This meant that in practice no further editions would be permitted.

The archives also contain a very detailed note dated 1 December 1949 on Julian Krzyżanowski's introduction to Słowacki's *Dzieła* (Collected works). A handwritten comment on the document stated, 'Very urgent? Immediately? The censor remarked positively on the fact that the author 'avoids all "influcnology"'. However, her most serious concerns related to 'the overly earnest and uncritical approach to the issue of Słowacki's mysticism while underplaying the influence that the July and February revolutions had on both Słowacki and Mickiewicz, as well as the excessive praise for Prof. Kleiner's achievements'. The review suggested a number of interventions, yet the censor's superior presented a diametrically opposed assessment, permitting the work for publication without interventions, merely advising that it was necessary to 'draw Ossolineum's attention' to some matters.⁵⁶³

As the sources I have examined show, similar situations emerged surprisingly often. Following a well-argued negative review, a superior would unexpectedly offer an alternative opinion, approving a text that had been criticized for publication without alteration. This illustrates the complexity and contradictory nature of directives, while also giving an indication of the hierarchical structure of the censorship office. One case in point is the seventh edition of *The Iliad*, prepared for publication by Tadeusz Sinko. On 20 February 1950, a censor proposed far-reaching changes to the introduction. The director, however, agreed to publication without changes, although he added a note to his decision stating that 'I approve publication without the changes as they seem to go too far in relation to Prof. Sinko. 26 February 1950'.⁵⁶⁴ However, the same author was made to completely rework his introduction to Krasiński's *Irydion*. It is thus hard to find a consistent approach to the actions of the censorship authorities.

Another typical illustration of the style of censors' criticisms is evident in the nonchalant statement from Renata Świątycka, summarizing Juliusz

562 See: Stanisław A. Kondek, *Papierowa rewolucja*, op. cit., p. 41.

563 AAN, GUKPPiW, 163, pp. 136–137.

564 AAN, GUKPPiW, 163, pp. 250–251.

Kleiner's summary of Słowacki's *Dzieła wszystkie* (The complete works). On 11 October 1951 she wrote,

From a political perspective the text is not a cause for significant concern – although it does completely overlook the latest findings in our research on Słowacki, it was never likely that a student would gain such insights from Prof. Kleiner anyway. [...] It is as if our knowledge of Słowacki had since then only been enriched by new information regarding where commas should be placed in his texts.⁵⁶⁵

Nevertheless, her superior passed the introduction for typesetting without any reservations.

Książka i Wiedza, 1948–1950

In 1948, the publisher was still known as Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Wiedza (Wiedza Publishing Cooperative). The following year it was merged with Książka to form a new entity that enjoyed the support of the Party, gaining a privileged position in the publishing market. At one point, Książka i Wiedza accounted for one quarter of all output in this sector.⁵⁶⁶ The publishing house issued many works presenting scientific issues from the Marxist perspective, while also promoting publications by left-leaning researchers, who usually belonged to the younger generation. What is also striking is the number of studies relating to the works of Adam Mickiewicz. This is perhaps indicative both of the pressing need to create a 'correct' take on the literary canon and of the intensive preparations for the Year of Mickiewicz in 1949. The earliest available sources, relating to 1948, are all archived in a single file containing around forty documents.

On 5 October 1949, GUKPPiW received Mickiewicz's *Dziady drezdeńskie* (the third part of *Forefathers' Eve*), as edited by Henryk Szyper, for review. The subsequent assessment was decidedly negative.

The editor's comments are exceptionally harmful and irresponsible. The matter of Mickiewicz's delayed arrival to Poland during the uprising is presented in an unclear and misleading manner, with the author getting tangled up in contradictions. This part of the analysis is clearly influenced by Kleiner. The depiction of his attitudes towards Russians is very unclear.⁵⁶⁷

565 AAN, GUKPPiW, 163, pp. 569–570.

566 Stanisław A. Kondek, *Papierowa rewolucja*, p. 27.

567 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146, teczka 31/41, p. 535.

The same censor was also given the volume *Dziady wileńskie* (the second part of *Forefathers' Eve*), which was also edited by Szyper. The introduction was again deemed problematic.

The introduction is most inappropriate for *Książka i Wiedza*. The author offers a detailed yet highly superficial analysis of the drama in the style of bourgeois Polish studies scholars, whom he also cites very often. [...] This edition of *Dziady* would have been suitable in pre-1939 Poland, but not today.⁵⁶⁸

Książka i Wiedza was also responsible for publishing the first study issued by the new Institute for Literary Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IBL PAN). *Mieszczanstwo* (The bourgeoisie), edited by Maria Janion and forming the opening volume of the cycle *Kultura okresu pozytywizmu* (Culture of the positivist era), received highly favourable reviews.

Indeed, all works that adopted a strictly – or even vulgar – Marxist approach were given positive reviews. One example was Wiktor Gomolicki's 'Marxist biography of the bard', which explored Mickiewicz's experiences in Russia. Another was Jan Kott's short study *O 'Lalce' Bolesława Prusa* (On Bolesław Prus' *The Doll*). In a review of the third edition from 20 October 1950, the censor even added a poetic flourish, noting that

Kott's study is the first post-war work that has brought *Sturm und Drang* elements to the quietist atmosphere of traditional Polish studies; it is thus an important moment in the history of our literary criticism and reveals the prospects for a Marxist approach to research on our literature.

The second reviewer was more cautious, stating that

Kott's short essay was forged in the flames of the struggle for a Marxist methodology in literature. Hence its forceful, polemical, and courageous (sometimes overly courageous) nature. This is also the reason why it contains certain simplifications and exaggerations, of the kind that are necessary in this form of publication.⁵⁶⁹

On 28 July 1950, censor Wołkowicz wrote a typical review of Mickiewicz's *Wybór pism* (Selected writings). This was one case where changes to source texts were proposed, with the censor suggesting omitting excerpts of Mickiewicz's works. However, analysis of a large number of sources from the GUKPPiW archive relating to the period from 1948 to 1950 suggests that far-reaching interventions, such as altering texts or cutting passages, in the most important nineteenth-century Polish texts were not commonplace. Nevertheless, during periods of

568 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/42, p. 215.

569 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/47, pp. 190–193.

increased political repression, certain works that were considered more problematic were not reissued. I cite the document in its entirety:

Mickiewicz's *Wybór pism* includes almost all of his poetic works, dramas, publications and lectures. Of the proposed interventions, it would be worthwhile submitting the following: from the part titled 'Dramaty' – the interpretation of part III of *Dziady*. The mysticism and messianic tone of this analysis could invite undesirable comments from less politically and literarily advanced readers. Its removal would not be to the detriment of the work as a whole.

Including *Księgi Pielgrzymstwa i Narodu Polskiego* (sic!; *The Books of the Pilgrimage and the Polish Nation* – the censor made an error in the title) in *Wybór pism*, which is a popular publication, is a highly risky strategy given the current political situation. *Ks. N. i P. P.* are suitable for an academic edition but in no way appropriate for a mass edition. Owing to their biblical style and significant dosage of mysticism, *Ks. Pielgrzymstwa* could become the subject of the most fantastical, socially and politically damaging interest and commentaries, or even conclusions. It could be particularly dangerous in relation to the peasant milieu where reactionary clerics remain dominant. It is also worth considering whether it is appropriate to publish *Skład Zasad* (Set of principles; p. 416), particularly its second part. The lack of political analysis, particularly in the prose section, is a significant oversight. These are basically all of the remarks I have relating to *Wybór pism*.⁵⁷⁰

The archival sources do not reveal the subsequent fate of the publication. However, examining the book confirms that *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* and *Skład zasad* were both in fact omitted.

One censorship official, meanwhile, proposed changes to Sienkiewicz's *Latarnik* (*The Lighthouse Keeper*), including toning down certain religious aspects in it. However, superiors ignored this overzealous suggestion.

Another striking case emerging from the archival records explored in this chapter relates to the inconsistent approach taken to Adam Mauersberg's edition of Mickiewicz's letters from 1817–1831 (*Mickiewicz. Zbiór listów, wierszy i rozmów z lat 1817–1831* – Mickiewicz. A selection of letters, poems and conversations). Surprisingly, while his literary works were deemed inviolable, his correspondence was treated less stringently, meaning that fragments relating to Pushkin's supposed intellectual ignorance were cut.

The author presents an inaccurate take on the encounter itself, particularly the description of Pushkin as someone lacking in education and erudition, since without these traits he would not have got far.⁵⁷¹

570 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/46, p. 48.

571 AAN, GUKPPiW, 146,teczka 31/43, pp. 289–297.

The extensive cut passage can be found in the archival document. In the secondary review, a different official issued a reminder about the presence of Pushkin in Mickiewicz's letters.

Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych 1948

This publishing house, as its name suggests (State School Publishing Company), focused on textbooks and educational materials for schools. It often engaged leading Polish academics as authors, employing original research as a way of bringing accurate and objective knowledge to readers regardless of their level of education. Books that were to be used in schools required approval from the Ministry of Education. This meant that those that reached GUKPPiW had already been through one stage of selection. In practice, the censorship office read these materials very closely and sometimes produced assessments that contradicted those of the ministry. The particular interest in content intended for children and teenagers was influenced by the political objective of shaping and educating a 'new society'.⁵⁷² This approach was influenced by the conviction that various forms of education were integral to this objective, with each form and each individual treated equally seriously. In censoring materials destined for younger readers, officials worked according to the principle of stratified informational requirements. What was permissible in a publication aimed at adults was not necessarily suitable for pupils and students.⁵⁷³

One work that was approved by the Ministry of Education but queried by censors was Adam Bochnak's book *Wit Stwoszcz w Polsce* (Veit Stoss in Poland). Reviewing it on 23 February 1950, the censor found it highly ideologically problematic.

This work is about Wit Stwoszcz and his epigones. It adopts a false, non-Marxist perspective – it is traditionalist and formalistic. The book is intended for teachers and has been approved by the Ministry of Education. It could have appeared unchanged before the war.⁵⁷⁴

This crushing criticism was followed by proposals for changes, of which the reviewer's superior accepted only four. Many similar cases are recorded in the archives, suggesting that, on the one hand, the censorship office enjoyed a large degree of autonomy in its relations with the ministry, while indicating, on the

572 See, for example, Joanna Wojdon, *Propaganda polityczna w podręcznikach do szkół podstawowych Polski Ludowej (1944–1989)*, Toruń: Wyd. Adam Marszałek, 2001.

573 See: Aleksander Pawlicki, p. 52.

574 AAN, GUKPPiW, 144,teczka 31/14, p. 158.

other hand, that GUKPPIW was unwilling to see works removed from publishing schedules. This is why officials also explored the possibility of correcting even the most unorthodox or politically-incorrect text.

It is also worth noting that in November 1947, the Ministry of Education established an Advisory Commission on Publication. Its role was to control publications to ensure they met the demands and needs of the new political order. It is not possible to state on the basis of GUKPPIW's archival records whether or not the commission worked effectively and thoroughly by reading all scientific publications and journals. The files from the censorship office only mention the ministry's approval and nothing else. Examining the possible influence of the Advisory Commission on Polish academic publications in the context of institutionalized censorship seems to be an interesting subject for future research.

What is also worth highlighting is that deeply Marxist works, written from the new post-war perspective, were likewise subject to criticism. The numerous and extensive reviews of the textbook *Materiały do nauczania historii literatury polskiej dla klasy XI* (Materials for teaching the history of literature, 11th grade), edited by Kazimierz Budzyk and Jan Z. Jakubowski, are full of serious complaints about the incomplete nature of the work and the omission of certain literary figures, including, for example, Maria Konopnicka. However, this did not stop censors recognizing the innovative nature of a volume whose goal was to 're-evaluate some of our literary phenomena from a Marxist perspective'.⁵⁷⁵

Censorship officials placed significant value on Soviet academic publications. Censors tended to be more lenient towards Polish authors' own views if they had managed to include more or less relevant and convincing references to the achievements of Soviet scholarship. In the humanities, however, such measures often seemed to be completely misplaced; yet the censors remained resolute. I have already drawn attention to this in my comments on the removal of Prof. Lehr-Spławiński's article from the journal *Rocznik Sławistyczny*. It is worth restating that a piece of Polish scholarship could never claim to be more innovative than the work of Soviet researchers. Another illustration comes from the archival documents relating to Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych. An edition of Shakespeare's *King Lear* by Halina Jasińska was not approved for publication because it failed to refer to the work of a Soviet scholar, while the introduction and interpretation were also deemed ideologically questionable. The review dated 23 December 1950 concludes that 'publishing such analysis for

575 AAN, GUKPPIW, 144,teczka 31/14, pp. 376–380.

high school children and teachers at a time when Morozov's exceptionally valuable study is available is unacceptable.⁵⁷⁶

Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe 1948–1951

I have already noted the more lenient treatment received by texts judged to be highly significant for Polish culture. This meant that censors were not authorized to carry out any changes proposed to the most outstanding literary works. However, they were still given other directives to follow. They were expected to ensure that works were interpreted in the correct manner, so that 'a neutral text would become one of our texts'.

Typical in this respect was the positive review, dated 19 March 1949, of Andrzej Boleski's study *Juliusza Słowackiego liryka lat ostatnich (1842–1848)* – (Juliusz Słowacki's late lyrical works).

Besides their purely literary value, the author finds in them [Słowacki's lyrical poems – KB] significant social values, namely an affirmation of life, zealous faith in the realization of the highest values, and calls for individuals and collectives to engage in dedicated struggle for them. The only cause for concern is the author's argument that the abovementioned traits were typical of all of Polish mysticism at the time.⁵⁷⁷

In 1952, Boleski's lexicon *Spośród słownictwa Króla Ducha* (On the vocabulary of *The Spirit King*) also received a positive review.

To conclude, it is interesting to contrast two censors' reviews, one expressing far-reaching criticism triggered by a supposedly false conception of scientific principles, and another that is full of explicit praise as a result of the review focusing on extra-textual factors in its assessment.

An illustration of the first type is provided by the criticisms of Stanisław Czajkowski's 1949 book *Studia nad podstawami filozofii Kartezjusza* (Studies on the basic principles of Cartesian philosophy).

This work contains many original ideas and adopts a political stance towards various interpretations, albeit from an extreme idealist position, which means that its objective value seems to be minimal. Descartes' materialist philosophy of nature is almost completely ignored, which, of course, distorts the image of the broader system and his role in the history of philosophy.⁵⁷⁸

576 AAN, GUKPPiW, 144,teczka 31/15, p. 222.

577 AAN, GUKPPiW, 159, p. 15 (the pagination of this file is inconsistent).

578 AAN, GUKPPiW, 159, p. 24.

A work that received significant praise was Jan Z. Jakubowski's essay *Z zagadnień literatury polskiej epoki imperializmu* (On Polish literature of the imperialist era), which was reviewed on 10 September 1951.

This work is a printed version of the author's lecture given at the first scientific session of the University of Łódź on 25 June 1950. The author offers an overview of research on literature from the imperialist era. [...] Applying a Marxist theory of social development, the author presents some of his own findings on a period within the abovementioned era.

The most important argument in favour of the book was restated, namely that 'it employs a Marxist methodology'.⁵⁷⁹

Wydawnictwa różne na T 1948–1956

This collection, dealing with various publishers beginning with T, includes files relating to many academic societies (*towarzystwa*), with the most interesting case being that of Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie (Warsaw Scientific Society). Interpreting these censorship records offers insight into the increasing restrictions imposed on the Society's publishing activities before they were ultimately suppressed.

One typical example is the review of Maria Rzeuska's prewar study '*Chłopi Reymonta*' (Reymont's *The Peasants*). In January 1949 the censor wrote that

There are no formal reasons for intervention or to refuse permission to print the book; nevertheless, the appearance of this work should ring alarm bells signalling the need for criticism to take the new path of Marxist analysis.⁵⁸⁰

The second review, signed off six months later, was not favourable. The author was accused having a 'fundamentally false' conception of Reymont's epic, while it was also suggested that the work could be moved to another publisher. At the bottom of the page, however, is a note stating: 'Approve for print. Agreed with Prof. Michajłow'.⁵⁸¹ The secondary review dated 26 September 1950 levelled the accusation that

publication of this kind of work by Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie in 1950 clearly demonstrates the Society's hostile political stance. It is fortunate that the book appeared in such a small print run.⁵⁸²

579 AAN, GUKPPiW, 159, p. 11.

580 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, p. 146.

581 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, pp. 229–230.

582 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, pp. 352–353.

However, permission to publish the Society's *Rocznik* (Yearbook) was refused on 5 April 1949. The review on file includes the note: 'Refuse permission. Decision of director Bida.' At the top of the page there is, though, an interesting handwritten record of an agreement:

On 21 September 1949, I discussed the possibility of publishing the yearbook with the publisher. They agreed to the following: 1. To control all of their publications in advance; 2. To remove from obituaries (biographies) anything that glorifies scholars' political activities if they had been National Democrats [before the war], etc.; 3. To include progressive scholars, such as Krzywicki and Handelsman, among the biographies; 4. To completely [illegible] some biographies; 5. To include in the reedited contents page and index the names of those scholars, so that GUKP can get a general impression.⁵⁸³

The editors must have kept to the agreement because one of the five censorship reviews includes a note stating 'Approve for printing', with a date of 21 September 1949.

Further insight into the way the Society was perceived by the censorship office can be drawn from censor Fleszar's review of *Sprawozdania z posiedzeń Wydziału I TNW* (Reports from the meetings of the First Department of TNW).

I am not a Polish studies scholar, thus it is difficult for me to engage in discussions with the authors of the majority of the essays and articles that are on a variety of subjects. However, I have the impression that they all relate to a discussion that is grounded in the principle "you can do your thing and we will carry on regardless doing things our way" as far as the discussions between the Marxist school and older Polish studies and literary studies experts, such as Kleiner and Szmydtowa, is concerned. [...] There are no concerns about printing this volume, although I do believe that it should be sent to someone with greater expertise in the field of Polish studies, while it would also be worthwhile drawing Marxist literary scholars' attention to it in order to guarantee significant criticism following its publication.⁵⁸⁴

The review was signed on 26 June 1950, with the censor adding below that the best solution would be to send the work to Stefan Żółkiewski. It was approved for typesetting nonetheless.

In July 1950, the same censor reviewed the Society's subsequent yearbook for 1949. When compared to other extremely critical reviews, this one seems to stand out because of its exceptionally aggressive tone and threatening conclusion. I cite it in full.

583 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, p. 194.

584 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, p. 338.

The proposed yearbook constitutes one of the bigger political scandals that I have been asked to review. The list of ordinary, extraordinary and corresponding members contains as many as twelve names whose address is given as London or some other UK and US address. These émigrés include: 1. Kot Stanisław – the former ambassador to Rome; 2. Halecki Oskar – the famous *Voice of America* presenter; 3. Kucharzewski Jan – the well-known anti-Soviet “historian” in New York; 4. Kukiel Marian – lecturer in modern history at the Jagiellonian University – the yearbook discretely fails to mention the general’s functions in the London “government”.

Furthermore, several professors are listed as working and living in Lwów [Lviv – PV], for example Dąbkowski Przemysław (address...), Makarewicz Juliusz (address), but these are without doubt professors who are currently not in Lwów and do not lecture there.

It is difficult to treat such facts as mere oversight. This is deliberate sabotage, openly hostile political action. It would be worthwhile not only denying approval to publish the yearbook, but also informing the security services and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of this matter. It is high time that this state-funded society decides whether it is with People’s Poland or against it. I also draw attention to the fact that the list of foreign members of the society includes several Romanian and Bulgarian scholars who were all accepted between 1933 and 1936, so during a period when fascist cliques ruled these countries. Furthermore, there are many English and French names, including infamous enemies of New Poland such as Francastel, a former cultural attaché at the French embassy in Warsaw.

Completely unsuitable for publication.

Note: the Society undoubtedly maintains postal correspondence with its émigré members. This is evident in the fact that the address of former ambassador Kot was changed from Switzerland to Paris in the Society’s yearbook.⁵⁸⁵

From 1950, the attacks on the individuals associated with the institution and its publications became more evident. Reviews of the next edition of the yearbook proposed significant numbers of interventions, in particular the removal from the index of the surnames of unwelcome individuals. Numerous political remarks were also aimed at the Society’s *Rocznik*. Elsewhere there is a note regarding Kazimierz Bulaś’ article *Dziesięciolecie wykopalisk prehistorycznych we Włoszech* (Ten years of prehistorical digs in Italy), stating that ‘the ministry should decide whether the article should be printed in light of the author’s status as he is currently in Italy.’⁵⁸⁶ There is also a disrespectful remark regarding Wiktor Weintraub, who was described as ‘a **formerly** Polish literary historian who is currently abroad’ (emphasis KB).⁵⁸⁷ Tracing the documents relating to the publications of TNW reveals the decline of free academic life under the influence

585 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, pp. 340–341.

586 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, p. 846.

587 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, p. 904.

of external pressures. As it inherited the intellectual legacy of pre-war scholarship, the Society was unable to survive in changing political circumstances. The pressure exerted by GUKPPiW and the refusal to approve publication in 1949 and 1950 were the first steps towards the abolition of the institution in 1952.

Does analysing a particular portion of the GUKPPiW archives expand our knowledge of the circumstances in which Polish literary studies found themselves at the turn of the 1950s? Does it in some way verify previous research? I would offer a cautious affirmative response to these questions. It seems, though, that only by analysing all the available materials will it be possible to formulate a hypotheses. This means that at this juncture I will propose several assumptions.

The humanities pose a certain danger to totalitarian regimes because research in these disciplines can undermine Party rule.⁵⁸⁸ 'One of the reasons for the idealization of Polish science,' writes Piotr Hübner, 'was the dominance of the humanities and thus the leading status of humanities scholars in scientific institutions.'⁵⁸⁹ It is for this reason that humanities scholars were targeted for extermination to a more significant degree by both occupying powers, accounting for 40 % of losses among all academics.⁵⁹⁰ On the other hand, humanities scholars run greater risk of being bound up in politics and losing sight of their objectivity. By definition, humanities scholars are involved in creating hierarchies of cultural output as they offer assessments of works' significance and seek to define particularly important traits and values.

What role did censorship mechanisms play in the formation of models for perceiving reality in scholarship? And what influence did censors' reviews have on shaping concepts of what was deemed common scientific truth? While I have not examined the particular changes that censors made to works of scholarship, it is nevertheless possible to establish their intended direction.

Censorship officials clamped down on references to Western scientific achievements, with particular emphasis on avoiding citations of Anglo-Saxon scholarship. This restriction was perhaps less significant for literary studies, but it nevertheless led to the isolation of Polish scholarship. Examining what was known as 'imperialist' literature was deemed particularly suspect, with Shakespeare being the only apparent exception to this rule. In turn, emphasis was placed on intensifying the number of references to Soviet scholarship and literature. Interestingly, efforts were made to ensure not only that literary studies

588 Janusz Goćkowski and Stanisław Marmuszewski, op. cit., p. 268.

589 Piotr Hübner, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 29.

590 Ibid., pp. 52–53.

scholars engaged with the works of Maxim Gorky and Vera Panova, for example, but also to increase Polish readers' general awareness of pre-revolutionary Russian literary masterpieces.

When it comes to Polish culture, similar strategies were in place to those employed in relation to literature. Some subjects were out of bounds, with political changes determining what was blacklisted. Generally speaking, between 1948 and 1950 there were two categories of restrictions: historical and aesthetic. The historical themes that were banned were related to the interwar Second Republic, Polish-Soviet conflicts and some events from the Second World War (such as 17 September 1939, the Home Army and the Warsaw Uprising, among others). In the aesthetic realm, decadentism, psychologism, mysticism and some ideological perspectives, particularly analyses of the religious dimensions of Polish literature, were subject to restrictions.

A problem that decision-makers found irresolvable was how to describe texts and phenomena that were of the highest cultural significance, yet did not fit within the framework of the one true ideology.⁵⁹¹ In an article titled *Dzieje romantyzmu w PRL-u (najkrótszy kurs)* (A history of Romanticism in PRL – the shortest course), Jan Tomir (a pseudonym for Michał Głowiński) wrote that

in the immediate post-war period, Mickiewicz was readily cited and indeed presented as a model (this was the stance adopted by journalists at *Kuźnica*). What they presented, though, was a particular take on Mickiewicz, who was treated as a classical poet with particular focus on his revolutionary writings, while other poets and thinkers were largely ignored.⁵⁹²

The author also mentions how a significant portion of the Romantic legacy was cast into oblivion while arguing that ignoring Romanticism will not be possible in Poland in the long run.⁵⁹³

Other scholars have reached similar conclusions. Mariusz Zawodniak argues that because the Romantic tradition was very evident during the wartime occupation it could not subsequently be effaced. It is for this reason that the definition of literary classics was subject to manipulation by means of selection of

591 After 1965, censorship of works originally published before 1850 and of classics previously reviewed was abandoned. Cited in: Aleksander Pawlicki, p. 41.

592 Jan Tomir (real name Michał Głowiński), *Dzieje romantyzmu w PRL-u (najkrótszy kurs)*. *Kultura Niezależna*, vol. 32, 1987, pp. 22–23.

593 *Ibid.*, pp. 21–27. See also: Michał Głowiński, *Kanony literackie. Od socrealizmu do pluralizmu*, in: *Dzień Ulissesa i inne szkice na tematy niemitologiczne*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000, p. 59.

authors for inclusion, determining with which publishing house works were to appear, shaping the form new editions were to take, and determining the size of print runs. Adam Mickiewicz was afforded a particularly privileged position in this process.⁵⁹⁴ John M. Bates also stresses Mickiewicz's significance in this respect, with officials seeking to restrict the evidence of his anti-Russian views and mysticism.⁵⁹⁵

Examining the archival record produced by GUKPPIW verifies such findings. Even the most obstinate state official knew, on the one hand, that no work referring to Romanticism could fail to mention Mickiewicz or Słowacki, while remaining aware, on the other hand, that finding traces of politically-desirable content in their work was no easy task. Efforts were thus focused on shaping the interpretations of texts to ensure that they at least headed in the right direction. Introductions and footnotes were the main objects of such efforts, resulting in varying degrees of success. There were no clear directives, while the internal contradictions inherent to such activities meant that the most vulgar interpretations of works appeared alongside accurate readings that revealed the truth of outstanding works such as Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* or Słowacki's *Beniowski*.

Existing studies of the role of censorship in People's Poland have already explored the abovementioned issues in several places. What is perhaps most important here, though, is that these findings are verified by the archives. However, the sources I have explored also reveal new facts that do not always correspond with established views. What is surprising is how often far-reaching contradictions between censors discussing the same text emerge and just how often reviews not only by low-ranking censors but also those produced by ministries [not just of Culture and Art, but also Education] were ignored. What is also clear is that censors were fundamentally aware of the simplifications that they were demanding from particular works of scholarship. The censorship office was not interested in banning works, as I have already mentioned, but always sought (with the exception of blacklisted authors) to rework and change works so that

594 Mariusz Zawodniak, 'Żywy Mickiewicz'. *Socrealistyczny obraz wieszczów (kilka wstępnych uwag)*, in: *Osoba w literaturze i komunikacji literackiej*, ed. by Edward Balcerzan, Władysław Bolecki and Ryszard: Nycz, Warszawa: Wyd. IBL PAN, 2000, pp. 177–185.

595 John M. Bates, *Projection and Denial: The Party's Attitudes Towards Mickiewicz in the Stalinism Era, 1948–1955*, *Blok*, vol. 3, 2004, pp. 163–178. I am grateful to the author for also giving me access to an extended version of the article.

they would become acceptable. GUKPPiW thus emerges from the archival analysis as a master of compromise.

The most significant finding here, I believe, is that there is no evidence that censors altered canonical Polish texts between 1948 and 1950 (of course, this does not rule out such cases occurring later). Indeed, there is actually evidence of censors taking care to ensure the integrity of works by Mickiewicz and Słowacki.

The reviews in the source collections relating to the Ministry of Culture and Art include a typical assessment regarding the second edition of *Pan Tadeusz* edited by Stanisław Pigoń. It was supposed to appear with the private publishing house M. Kot. The negative review from 1948, signed by Katarzyna Wawrzynkiewicz, only prevented publication of the introduction and not of Mickiewicz's work itself.

Prof. Pigoń's introduction would create the most negative social and political resonance in light of particular elements of its interpretation of Mickiewicz's works, particularly *Pan Tadeusz*, and this would be all the more true were it to appear in this jubilee period when all our efforts are focused on drawing out the desirable aspects in representations of the poet.

She goes on to list Pigoń's 'false' conceptions, including his emphasis on religious moments, his false interpretation of the epic poem as an 'ode to the nation', his false take on Mickiewicz's Russian period, including exaggerating his hatred of all things Russian, and his defence of the nobility. In conclusion, the censor stated that

even carrying out changes to those points mentioned in section 11 of the report would not make a difference – this piece is written so perfidiously that it would have a negative impact in any case.⁵⁹⁶

There is confirmation here, then, of the principle that introductions to editions of classic works were read closely. In this case, however, this approach had a somewhat surprising effect, namely the complete rejection of the introduction. The suggestion that a classic text should be published without any contextualizing piece is noted very rarely in archival sources. Despite Pigoń's introduction being banned, the censors did not propose any interventions in *Pan Tadeusz* itself. A separate issue is whether this edition saw the light of day at all in light of the concerted attacks on private publishers. The conclusion to the review cited above includes a further reason that could be used to justify the decision that

⁵⁹⁶ AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Wydawniczy, sygnatura 706, non-paginated.

Pigoń's *Introduction* may not appear – the decision not to grant approval can be justified along the grounds that so many editions have already appeared that the series *Biblioteka Arcydział Poezji i Prozy* (Library of Poetic and Prose Masterpieces) should include only the texts themselves. The text of *Pan Tadeusz* should be permitted for publication without Pigoń's introduction.

This particularly perfidious advice was most probably aimed at GUKPPiW officials who would be responsible for contacting representatives of the publishing house.

Another clear example of the defence of the integrity of nineteenth-century masterpieces is evident in the review of the collection titled *Poematy Dantejskie (Anhelli, Poema Piasta Dantyszka o piekle)* – (Dantean epics – Anhelli and Piast Dantyszek's poem about hell) by Juliusz Słowacki. The publishers (unnamed in the report) intervened in the texts that Eugeniusz Sawrymowicz had edited, cutting the digressions from the second epic poem. The reviewer from the Ministry, Stanisław Czernik, was angered by the cut to *Poema Piasta Dantyszka* and wrote on 10 August 1949:

This cut has removed a quarter of the text, namely those passages that present a digression from the main subject. This operation provides grounds for the most serious complaints in several respects:

1. it suggests a lack of necessary respect for Słowacki's texts. It is unacceptable to treat classic texts so flippantly,
2. such practices could set a harmful precedent for further "castrations",
3. removing the so-called 'digression' from Dantyszek is particularly inappropriate as it violates a typical aspect of Słowacki's work. The entire value of *Beniowski* lies in such digressions.
4. publishing this "circumcised" version of the epic poem is pointless. It is relatively short, so – all or nothing.

[...] shortening this piece was not done with socio-political objectives in mind, but rather with the aim of making it more accessible.⁵⁹⁷

If, as other researchers have suggested,⁵⁹⁸ cutting Romantic masterpieces was already practiced before the declaration of socialist-realism in Poland, then such decisions must have been taken at a higher level than GUKPPiW or the Ministry

597 AAN, MKiS, Departament Twórczości Artystycznej, Wydział Wydawniczy, sygn. 705, non-paginated.

598 Jan Tomir, op. cit.; on the subject of changes to the texts of Zygmunt Krasiński see: Zbigniew Sudolski, *O cenzurze z perspektywy doświadczeń edytora romantyzmu*, in: *Autor, tekst, cenzura*, op. cit., pp. 239–246.

of Culture and Art (perhaps by the Party?) or the directives were issued orally. This issue might have been so sensitive that censors perhaps sought to avoid leaving behind material traces of any interventions. This question is of fundamental significance in establishing the state of Polish literary studies at the time and as such it demands in-depth research that would lay the grounds for firm conclusions. My archival research suggests that *changes to canonical texts were certainly made after 1950*, albeit rarely. One case in point is the second volume of Słowacki's *Dzieła* (Works) where the author's own apparently anti-Russian footnote on Suvorov was cut. Permission for this had to be granted by officials of the highest rank, namely by the director of GUKKPiW Chaber and the director of IBL PAN Stefan Żółkiewski.⁵⁹⁹

Analysis of archival materials shows that even during more lenient periods, scholarship was forced to conform to certain artificial demands and rules. This was indeed a time of fragmented reality full of gaps and blind spots. This prevented the humanities from carrying out their basic and fundamental tasks, namely ordering the totality of cultural works into a coherent hierarchy and passing judgement on individual works in the context of the whole of culture, because the field was restricted to exploring only selected elements of reality. However, scholars were not involved in a struggle to develop their disciplines.

Planning, collective work, and strict alignment of the scholarly workforce to the state were to lay the foundations not only for official science (including Party institutions of education), but also, in the long run, for all scholarship and academic work in Poland. Science was becoming one of the spheres of state activity or, to put it more precisely, it was becoming the subject of policies on science and scholarship that were determined by the government's monopoly on power.⁶⁰⁰

There is another important issue worth highlighting, even if it is less central to the focus of this study. In the archival materials I have examined, I encountered several documents testifying to attacks on Polish scholars as well as academics' courageous and uncompromising attitudes towards censorship and the totalitarian system more generally. I have already mentioned the unfavourable opinion that GUKKPiW had of the rector of the Jagiellonian University Prof. Tadeusz Lehr-Splawiński. There were similar efforts to discredit the achievements of Prof. Juliusz Kleiner.

599 AAN, GUKKPiW, 396,teczka 32/14, pp. 12–14.

600 Piotr Hübner, vol. 1, pp. 305–306.

One example from outside the humanities is the biased negative review of the book *Liczę i myślę* (Counting and thinking), which was aimed at young people. Censor Fleszar wrote on 14 July 1950:

This book by Witold Wilkosz, a former professor of the Jagiellonian University, offers the clearest evidence that mathematics is neither apolitical nor indifferent to the Party, and that it can in fact be conceived in completely reactionary terms. I am unfortunately not a mathematician and I am not entirely familiar with scientific knowledge, but several of the more general sentences in the book clearly demonstrate the author's exceptionally reactionary attitude.⁶⁰¹

The work in question was sent to the Ministry of Education for editing.

In the materials relating to Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe (Łódź Scientific Society), there are threatening statements relating to Waław Fabierkiewicz's study *Typy gospodarki planowej i kierowanej i prawa w nich rządzące* (Types of planned and directed economy, and the laws guiding them). The work was not approved for publication, with the following justification given:

People like Fabierkiewicz should not be allowed to be members of faculty nor should they be permitted to publish such a harmful and reactionary "short theory". Under no circumstances should this or any other of his "valuable" works be permitted for publication, nor should summaries of his "valuable" ideas be allowed. This matter is not up for debate.⁶⁰²

The review was signed on 27 October 1948.

When censors intervened too severely in Stanisław Srokowski's *Geografia gospodarcza ogólna* (General economic geography) by calling into question the information about the above average consumption of potatoes in rural Poland and the 'cachexia' resulting from this, while also accusing the author of failing to give sufficient respect to the USSR, Srokowski replied with a courageous and extensive response to the accusations that can be found in the archives.⁶⁰³

Among the source material examined, there is also a firm but friendly letter from Prof. Jan Adamus, author of *O monarchii Gallowej* (On the Gallic monarchy), to his publisher with his response to censors' complaints. While accepting some changes, he circumvented others by skilfully turning the argument on its head.

601 AAN, GUKPPiW, 144,teczka 31/15, p. 59.

602 AAN, GUKPPiW,159, p. 4.

603 AAN, GUKPPiW,144,teczka 31/12, pp. 16–35.

Since the reviewer does not claim that the findings presented in my work contradict Marxism and since the accusation is formulated in somewhat general terms, I am inclined to believe that no changes are being proposed in this regard.

The archives contain plenty more responses in this vein.⁶⁰⁴

Similar questions were addressed at the national conference of the heads of voivodeship censorship offices and political employees of GUKP held on 13–14 December 1952. The vast majority of Polish scholars neither wanted to write in a way that was acceptable to the authorities, nor did they then want to accept the changes proposed by censors. This was the reason for the head of the voivodeship office in Kraków exerting pressure on PAU's publishing house. "These works are typified by their focus on purely theoretical matters and their isolation from everyday life."⁶⁰⁵ In studies in the disciplines of medicine and archaeology, academics largely referred to Western scholarship and isolated themselves from Soviet science, while also only writing summaries in English. A high-ranking official complained that "there is no evidence in PAU's activities that it is seeking to combine science with everyday practice."⁶⁰⁶ Krakow publishers complained of difficulties caused by having to regularly reedit articles, the official noted. He then asked rhetorically why this was the case, before answering himself: "Simply because the corrections that the authors make to their works are unacceptable, they are repetitions of the same ideas that we had removed through our interventions."⁶⁰⁷

Context 2. Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Thaw* and Polish censorship

In July 1953, five months after the death of Stalin, Beria was removed from the Politburo by his comrades, with Malenkov and Khrushchev sharing power. The leadership of the Union of Soviet Writers – Fadeyev, Simonov, Rurik, Korniyuchuk, and Surkov – was encouraged by the new rulers and declared its support for the new direction being taken. They organized a conference where they publicly condemned "sugar-coated" novels that presented an idealized image of the lives of the Soviet people. The Party guaranteed writers broader freedom of expression while also promising to organize the Union's first congress since 1934, which ultimately took place in December 1954.

604 AAN, GUKPPiW, 176, pp. 589–590.

605 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/6, p. 171

606 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/6, p. 172.

607 AAN, GUKPPiW, 421,teczka 197/6, p. 174.

It was in this enthusiastic climate that Ilya Ehrenburg wrote his article *The Work of the Writer*, which was interpreted as the first signal of a revival. One after another, *Novy Mir* published increasingly radical assessments by various authors.⁶⁰⁸ Piotr Fast has argued that

between 1953 and 1956, literary criticism, particularly in the journalism and critical literary analyses of Vladimir Pomerantsev, Mark Shcheglov, Mikhail Lifshitz, Fyodor Abramov and others, sought to challenge the principles of non-conflict, the sugar-coating of reality, and schematism that prevailed in cultural and literary policy at the time.⁶⁰⁹

The Party leadership was observing matters closely.

In April 1954, Ehrenburg's *The Thaw* was published in the press, provoking significant discussion and casting him into the limelight. Western journalists latched onto the title and made it a synonym for the entire period of destalinization.⁶¹⁰ The novel was written in early 1954, with the second part written in 1956. It enjoyed huge success and popularity among readers. Alongside Vera Panova's *Seasons of the Year*, Vladimir Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* and Daniil Granin's *Those Who Seek*, it was among the first works in Soviet literature to reflect the start of a process initiated by the death of Stalin. It became an illustration of the discussions taking place on the new roles expected of literature and it was a call for honesty. 'Ehrenburg manifested the demands of radically-minded literary critics of the early 1950s', states Andrzej Jankowski, 'who were wholeheartedly engaged in the revival of contemporary Soviet literature.'⁶¹¹ The novel also offered a reflection of Ehrenburg's own sense of the thawing conditions.⁶¹²

In *The Thaw*, he avoided writing an epic and panoramic novel. Instead, he focused on creating a small number of protagonists, setting the plot in a single location (a town somewhere on the Volga with a workers' housing estate and factory at its heart) while restricting the timeframe almost to the present day (the years 1953 and 1954). This was a chamber-like, psychological and everyday novel that avoided distancing itself from the phenomena being described as it presented

608 Ewa Zarzycka-Berard, *Burzliwe życie Ilji Erenburga. Rosyjski los, żydowskie szczęście*, trans. by Agata Kozak, Warszawa: Iskry, 2002, pp. 263–264; Andrzej Jankowski, *Twórczość powieściowa Ilji Erenburga*, Kielce: Wyd. Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Kielcach, 1982.

609 Piotr Fast, *Od odwilży do pierestrojki. Studia i szkice o najnowszej literaturze rosyjskiej*, Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski, 1992, p. 11.

610 Ewa Zarzycka-Berard, op. cit.

611 Andrzej Jankowski, op. cit., p. 218.

612 Ibid., s. 216.

an image of all aspects of everyday life. Ehrenburg focused his attentions on the negative aspects of the reality depicted, demonstrating the consequences that the Stalinist period had for the lives and minds of the protagonists.⁶¹³ The most important artistic goal of the book, however, was to draw attention to the subject of artistic expression itself, becoming a plea for the right to freedom of expression.

Soviet critics' response to the work was decidedly negative. Ehrenburg was accused of being a 'nihilist' and 'naturalist'. Simonov published his programmatic text, 'What can be discussed and what not', where he accused the author of having a destabilizing impact. Ehrenburg was under attack and he wrote to the Central Committee (not for the first or last time in his life), asking to be granted the right to issue a public defence. His request was approved and he outlined his position at the Second Writers' Congress in December 1954. He clearly distanced himself from the progressive milieu centred upon *Novy Mir*. The second part of *The Thaw*, which was artistically flawed, was the outcome of his contrition.⁶¹⁴

Before he came to be seen as the eulogist of the change of course, Ehrenburg had spent many years writing socialist-realist novels. This genre was established in Russia in the late 1920s already. Some researchers state that it was created along with the first Five Year Plan in 1929, while others trace its origins to 1932, when the Central Committee ratified the document *O perestroike literaturno-khudozhestvennykh organizatsii* (On the reconstruction of literary and artistic organizations).⁶¹⁵ Ehrenburg's oeuvre was formed of the works *The Second Day* (1934) and *Without Pausing for Breath* (1935), as well the artistically more ambitious political novels *The Fall of Paris* (1942), *The Storm* (1945) and *The Ninth Wave* (1952). His output was thus significant, as Polish censors would note.

From today's perspective, it is clear that the thaw in Russia did not produce a significant artistic breakthrough, although it did induce a shift in the type of narratives produced from the auctorial to the personal. As Piotr Fast states,

all of these works, in particular Ehrenburg's *The Thaw*, followed the conventions of socialist-realist novels, with the only exception being that they shifted their focus or, to put it another way, they inverted the values expressed, inserting different judgments into the same socialist-realist structures. [...]

613 Ibid.

614 Ewa Zarzycka-Berard, pp. 265–269.

615 Piotr Fast, *Poetyka rosyjskiej powieści produkcyjnej (1929–1941)*, Katowice: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1981, p. 11.

The thaw-era novels thus pose and solve problems in such a way that they offer an unequivocal critique of existing solutions to socio-political problems, with the novels constructed around the premise of critiquing distortions of an essentially good system.⁶¹⁶

Even if deeper analysis does reveal numerous ideological similarities between *The Thaw* and classic socialist-realist factory novels, it is nevertheless worth remembering that at the time, in 1954 and the following years, this text was seen as an iconoclastic novelty.

Ehrenburg's novel was published in Poland by PIW in 1955, with the second part following in 1956. It was translated by Jan Brzechwa and Stanisław Strumph-Wojtkiewicz. A very short excerpt was published earlier in 1955 in issue no. 33 of *Głosy znad Odry*, together with a note remarking that this novel had provoked 'a genuine torrent of discussion' in the USSR.⁶¹⁷

The publisher's imprint notes that the first part was typeset on 15 January 1955 and approved for printing on 18 February 1955, with the print run completed on 9 March 1955. The second part was typeset on 28 June 1956 and approved for printing on 8 October 1956, with the print run completed in that same fateful month. The first volume of *Odwilż*, the Polish title of *The Thaw*, had a print run of 20,000 and the second volume half that.

The directives and guidelines for Polish censors' work were influenced significantly by political changes, particularly in relations to Soviet Russia. Immediately after the death of Stalin, censorship restrictions became stricter before gradually becoming more lenient from 1955 until the eighth plenary session of the Polish Central Committee in October 1956 moved to tie censors' hands again. The increasing liberalization of censorship directives was cut short almost immediately after Gomułka's appearances at the ninth plenum in May 1957.⁶¹⁸

There was a great deal of arbitrariness in the work of the censorship office during the period of destalinization. This resulted in some genuinely curious assessments and interventions, with some absolutely politically-incorrect works approved for publication. The translation of Ehrenburg's *The Thaw* was itself one paradoxical case, with the work quickly condemned in the USSR, while in Hungary it had a print run of just 100 copies that were limited to high-ranking

616 Piotr Fast, *Od odwilży do pierestrojki*, op. cit., p. 12.

617 See: *Głosy znad Odry*, a cultural supplement in the newspaper *Trybuna Opolska*, no. 33, 1955, p. 1.

618 See also: Jerzy Adamowski and Andrzej. Koziół, pp. 57–71; John M. Bates, *Cenzura w epoce stalinowskiej*.

party officials.⁶¹⁹ In Poland, though, the first volume of *Odwilż* had a print run of 20,000!

The records relating to the publication and censorship of this novel that lent its name to the wave of political liberalization and, subsequently, social and cultural life in the Soviet Union and other communist countries, are held in the archival collection on Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy at AAN. The files are made up of three reviews and a transcription of a discussion about the novel. *Odwilż* was submitted to GUKPPIW in January 1955. At one point a print run of 100,000 copies was even considered, which was not entirely unusual in the case of Soviet authors being published in Poland. All three reviews were extensive, exhaustive and written urgently, with the review form including the note 'very urgent'. They all agreed that the novel should be published unchanged. It was passed for publication very quickly on 11 January 1955 already. The third review was in fact written by an intern, with the review having more influence on the career of the budding censor than on the publication of Ehrenburg's work. Permission for printing was granted on 17 February 1955. I will cite the reviews extensively here.

The first review is dated 10 January 1955 and was by W. Zawistowska.

This book about the lives of Soviet citizens has attracted significant attention from critics and was the source of lively discussion at the second congress of Soviet writers. Surkov submitted *The Thaw* to critical analysis in his lecture, examining whether the book gives a true representation of the lives of Soviet people or whether the image was in fact distorted. What is my impression after reading the novel? The author describes people's experiences not only in the production process, not only in their battle to build socialism, but also in their everyday lives. He has brought together a large number of weaker, limited people who have little in common with the pathos of great Soviet figures. [...]

A central motif of the book is dissatisfaction with life. Tanechka, a second-rate actress who was stripped of her ideals of a pure life through her experiences in a provincial theatre, where climate of intrigues and mendacity prevailed; a painter of extraordinary talent who has been forgotten by everyone and thus condemned to a life of poverty and hunger, as he is deprived of all support from the state and party, suffers the ennui of a small town. In many cases, the experiences of ordinary people do overshadow the true image of life in the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, the author stresses that even bad people in whom the relics of bourgeois ideology still prevail (the desire for an easy life, effortless success, indifference towards those for whom they are supposed to care) are capable of noble feelings and gestures that in part justify their heartlessness and egoism (Zhuravlev's desire to

619 Ewa Zarzycka-Berard.

fulfil the plan and his behaviour during a fire). The author does not condemn pettiness and moments of egoism (Zhuravlev borders on baseness) nor does he thrust noble protagonists into the foreground. At times, there is even a sense of understanding and empathy with these negative protagonists. Such depictions of people are akin to photographing them without judging them. Perhaps it is a step too far to attribute people's actions to the single motive of love (this could of course be a controversial issue).

It is necessary to emphasize the originality of the perspective offered by this book. The author does not sugar-coat the failings of reality in the Soviet Union (nepotism, a lack of civil courage, submission to figures of authority, selfishness, etc.). However, the accumulation of negative aspects of Soviet life could nevertheless surprise readers and raise fears as to how little has been achieved so far in the Soviet Union in raising the younger generation in the new spirit (Volodya's cynicism, Tanechka's suffering and boredom, Sonia's overly practical nature that leaves her unable to sense the pathos of her father's altruism, etc.).

I have no concerns as censor. A great writer has developed an original literary form that makes use of irony, humour, brilliance and rich language – all of this contributes to the immense value of this work.⁶²⁰

The second review was by M. Burczyn. It is dated 11 January 1955 and written in handwriting that is difficult to decipher.

The protagonists of the novel are ordinary working people in a small industrial town – the old and young generations of the technical intelligentsia and educational intelligentsia, doctors, artists – women and men, who are all bound by their longstanding emotional conflicts. The book is marked by an exceptionally condensed plot, with nearly every sentence constituting an issue in itself. It will have a powerful impact on readers since it offers a different perspective on the Soviet people, one that is closer and more understandable than those eternal monoliths who live only for their output and whose only problem is building socialism. [...]

The author's depiction of the younger generation shows them as a product of one-sided socialist education, an outcome of the effects of the entire social conditions of their milieu, as a socio-cultural issue. Ehrenburg offers a very powerful criticism of this influence, judging it to have impoverished young people, denying them a whole world of emotional experiences having forced them to employ artificial discipline in their thinking throughout their lives so far; this is best shown in the case of Sonia, Puchov's daughter, who defends herself against her feelings, despite understanding what lacking them means.

Perhaps this exaggerated take on the problem serves to emphasise just how close to Ehrenburg's heart the matter of a fully humanist education for the Soviet people is.

He uses the other protagonists to show that the source of a certain degree of ossification and of the difficulties in achieving genuine contact with other people can also be found in this 'discipline in their thinking and feelings' and that breaking through this

620 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386,teczka 31/126, pp. 21–22.

and seeking to fill a certain void and lack in the soul can cease once they thaw outwardly and approach people with an open heart. In the case of Zhuravlev, the factory director, the author presents a repugnant image of a leader who has misunderstood the idea of the discipline of thought and emotion, someone who has a single-minded, production-oriented, soulless sense of reason instead of actually living a life under Soviet conditions.

This is a highly courageous book and rather clumsy reviews can hardly do justice to the questions that it poses forcefully and courageously about morals, customs and the educational values of the Soviet people. This book in a sense sounds the alarm; it is highly thought-provoking as it, of course, sheds a critical light on these issues.

While it leaves a little to be desired on the literary level – the style is telegraphic, merely sketching certain problems – it makes a very clear and significant impression.⁶²¹

The third review was by Stanisław Dąbrowski and is dated 16 February 1955.

Ehrenburg's novel *Odwilż* will surprise readers thanks to the complete novelty of its psychological approach, its courageous efforts to uncover conflicts where there was previously a fear of looking for them, and thanks to its subject matter that focuses on solving particular political and production-related issues but with a focus on the personal and even completely private experiences of the protagonists. There is not a trace of schematism, avoidance of controversy or sugar-coating in *Odwilż*. On the contrary – the book offers the complete and utter inverse of schematism in any form. [...] The young generation does not have any clear goals in life, it cannot engage vigorously with any ideals, it considers passionate emotions to be a relic of the past that should be resisted. [...] Having read the novel, I am overcome by a certain sense of pessimism and hopelessness. Thus in response to the question posed at the outset, I would answer in the affirmative – the author has indeed presented the negative aspects of life and of the character of the Soviet people, and he has thus distorted the actual proportions between good and evil. But in spite of this, and perhaps even because of this, *Odwilż* possesses significant educational value. [...] There are many shortcomings and errors in life that the novel highlights, they are shortcomings and errors that we often do not perceive precisely because they do not always manifest themselves as clearly as they are depicted by the author. It is for this reason that a certain exaggeration of negative aspects in Ehrenburg's book will allow us to get a more precise impression of their manifestations in miniature in life, thus to perceive and challenge them.

It is also worth pointing out another moment that increases the value of *Odwilż*. It is often claimed that where there is no clear class enemy then there can be no conflict. That this is a false conception is shown clearly by the author of *Odwilż*. There are no class enemies of the Soviet system there, no spies or imperialist agents – on the contrary, all of the protagonists are Soviet people seeking to achieve the same goals, yet there are still many conflicts and tensions between them. It is brave to uncover and depict such conflicts, this is the author's great achievement as a true realist. Ehrenburg shows that many such conflicts should not exist as they are currently irrelevant and absurd. [...]

621 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/126, pp. 23–24.

Having offered a defence of the author in respect of possible criticisms that could be made against *Odwilż* (some of which might be justified) and taking into account its significant artistic value (rich, colourful language, an exceptionally exciting plot, the depth of the depictions of protagonists' psychological experiences), it should be stated that this will be a valuable and original contribution to the translations of foreign literature available in Polish. This high print run (100,000 copies) is completely justified.

Demonstrating the zeal typical of novices, this official wrote a lot and with surprising depth, meaning that he fully deserved his superior's praise. At the end of the form the assessment is evaluated in a note written in different handwriting. This remark offers important insight into what was expected of censors at that point in time.

This is an interesting review showing that the reviewer has thought through the difficult issues presented by E. and has taken up a position in relation to them. His views are justified in relation to the majority of the issues examined. Sometimes the review is somewhat overstated, although this is a matter of a reviewer's individual response and taste. Some of the minor inconsistencies in the review have been discussed in person. The style of the review – despite its rough edges – is not bad at all, it is fresh and free of clichés. For a review by an intern, it deserves a high grade.⁶²²

The three reviews of the Polish translation of Ehrenburg's *The Thaw* can be considered very positive. It was commonplace for the censorship office to give special treatment to Soviet literature. Censors were more open to reviewing Polish works critically, even though they were less prepared to suggest changes to those written by the most famous names, as I have already suggested. In censors' informal ranking of authors, Soviet writers were, like their home country, afforded privileged status. This novel must have enjoyed the Soviet state's support (as Ehrenburg was himself aware) because it was selected for translation, while it also proved untouchable in its encounters with GUKPPiW. The forms given to censors reviewing *Odwilż* were marked 'very urgent!' by a superior. This seemingly influenced the reading process while ensuring that the novel enjoyed lightning fast acceptance for typesetting and printing.

It is worth pointing to two issues at this juncture. Firstly, the officials were aware that the novel had initiated a wave of debate in the USSR but this did not prevent servility in their responses. Old habits proved stubborn as censors failed to demonstrate their awareness of impending changes. This is why the reviews were fairly shallow in terms of content yet full of praise. In the course of my archival research, it was only in relation to other Soviet works that I have

622 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/126, pp. 25–28.

encountered such servile statements along the lines of our ‘rather clumsy reviews can hardly do justice to the questions that it poses forcefully and courageously’. While they were willing to be harsh on Polish literature, employees of the censorship authorities were, in early 1955 at least, still rather sheepish when faced with the achievements of Soviet authors.

An undated typescript stamped by the Poznań voivodeship censorship office outlines a rather tempestuous discussion of the novel. This text must have been written after December 1954 because one of the contributors makes a reference to the second congress of Soviet writers. The most likely date is February 1955, with *Odwilż* still held up in the censorship office even though it had been approved for printing. While the censors’ reviews sought to underplay the key difference between Ehrenburg’s latest novel and his early socialist-realist efforts, the participants of the discussion openly addressed sensitive issues. It was not common practice for GUKPPiW or the regional offices to discuss censors’ reviews in such detail. This was the case, though, with particularly notorious and controversial works, as censors feared taking decisions themselves and thus sought institutional support. ‘Sudden political turns left censors with a particularly large headache’, writes Aleksander Pawlicki, ‘since they could not always wait for new directives from the Party’.⁶²³ Analysis of the Informational-Instructional Bulletin shows that between 1952 and 1955 such discussions formed a part of censors’ training. The central office sent regional offices copies of works that were more difficult to assess, instructing officials to organize meetings where all the censors at a given institution were expected to express an opinion on the text. The Bulletin reproduced the minutes of such discussions on several occasions, presenting them as instructional guidelines. Unfortunately, I have not found any reference to the discussions about *Odwilż*.

It is difficult to state for certain whether the Poznań discussion took place as part of training or whether it was (also) intended as a critique of the work of their Warsaw colleagues. I should stress that my archival research has revealed a certain degree of rivalry between censorship offices as they took pleasure in highlighting each other’s mistakes. This was almost certainly influenced and stoked by the general atmosphere of labour competition, as well as an urge to avoid any mistakes.

The document recording the debate over the novel is simply titled ‘Discussion on Ehrenburg’s novel *Odwilż*’.

623 Aleksander Pawlicki, p. 45.

Comrade Schmidt: likes the book not because of its form, since in this respect it gives the impression of an incomplete novel or a sketch for a novel, but rather because of the way it depicts people. They are not negative figures but complex humans full of doubt, for example Volodya Pukhov – he is a new kind of protagonist in Soviet literature. It would seem that a painter and artist should have a specific role and job etc. in the Soviet Union. Volodia, however, does not know what to do with himself. What she also likes about this novel is the fact that Ehrenburg presents everything through the prism of love – everyone loves someone else or is loved, even Sonia, who resists love, submits to it. This is how it is in life, too – not just work and grand ideals. In *Odwilż*, Ehrenburg shows true life as it is.

Comrade Makowski: also likes the book, particularly its fresh perspective. He had been under the strong influence of Soviet literature and even though he likes *Odwilż*, it seems to be too much of a leap. For example, the artist Saburov – until now, Soviet literature had presented the issue of creative types and artists in a way that suggests they enjoy significant support from the state. Meanwhile, Saburov cannot flatter people and does not seek out opportunities through nepotism and despite his great talent, he remains in the shadows, unknown and poor, yet he creates genuinely beautiful things. This is a bit of sudden shift and rather unexpected. Furthermore, the novel seems underdeveloped, perhaps unfinished.

Comrade Borkowicz: she is familiar with Ehrenburg's work, she has read a great deal of his books and has enjoyed them; she recalls a quote from Kalinin who said that "Ehrenburg beats the occupier with all his might... etc.". She mentions this because fighting is Ehrenburg's most typical trait. This novel, though, does not reveal Ehrenburg the fighter, only the problems troubling Soviet society, but Ehrenburg stands somewhere on the sidelines. His protagonists adopt a similar stance. For example, Sokolovski learns that Zhuravlev is undermining him yet he does not oppose him or challenge him. All of these figures step aside and do not fight. Similarly, Zhuravlev is removed from his post by the Central Committee, yet we do not see the lower-level rungs of the Party in action in relation to this matter. The figure of the teacher is quite interesting as he is awaiting death already. He was a party revolutionary, someone who fought his whole life but now even he does not really fight. He is a pensioner of the revolution. But at least he has some kind of future perspective. He has no more goals, so he simply adapts. Volodia, Sonia and others are the same. Sonia does not like certain things, she escapes to a different place but she does not fight. People there at least offer mutual support, but they do not fight for better relations. All those who fight against evil are somewhere else, on the outside. They are invisible, while Ehrenburg himself has not taken up a particular position, he does not fight, he merely records facts.

Comrade Fiksiński: he likes the novel because it shows new things that have not been seen before in Soviet novels. The lives of particular protagonists seem to be incompletely depicted. This creates the impression that this is more of a sketch for a novel that lacks completion. However, what the author does show offers a fresh perspective and is in no way schematic. I am not sure if shortages in supplies for the internal market have been mentioned before. The entire novelty of the work seems to rest on the fact that the negative aspects of Soviet life are also shown.

Comrade Borkowicz: disagrees with Comrade Fiksiński. Korniychuk also shows similar things. This was mentioned at the plenary discussion and while his protagonists are also not schematic, they at least fight. The protagonists in his work develop and grow, just like the masses. But in Ehrenburg the masses are completely absent, there are only individuals who point to certain issues.

Comrade Raczyński: He agrees with Comrade Schmidtowa. *Odwilż* indeed offers a new direction, it is something of a yardstick for new literary works. This is the way issues will be addressed now, clearly and openly.

Comrade Wierzbiński: He does not agree that this is a new direction in literature. *Odwilż* is being discussed everywhere but Ehrenburg's book cannot be considered a yardstick for a new direction. Until now, we had been shown Soviet people as perfect, unwavering people and yet during the occupation and liberation Soviet soldiers stole watches [two words are blanked out here – KB]. On the basis of literature, however, I have developed a completely different perspective. I could not square the two. Literature has excessively idealized the Soviet people. This is why Ehrenburg's book seems like a revelation to us. The final word, however, should be left to the Soviet people. It is difficult to believe that it really is the case that there are no internal and grassroots aspirations to fight against evil, that the intervention of the Central Committee is necessary. Having contrasted the book with, for example, Korniychuk's *Wings* he does see the difference. That work does show struggle against evil. There is no pessimism, yet in Ehrenburg there is nothing that would suggest that these are phenomena that are destined to die out. Our literature and the congress of the Union of Soviet Writers have offered a negative assessment of this book. It lacks artistry, the author fails to adopt a clear standpoint and there is no resolution. It is left somewhere in the margins. The novel might even be termed a libel of Soviet society.

Comrade Rakowska: It is difficult to speak about this novel. She has read a lot of Ehrenburg and did so passionately. He is one of the best Soviet writers. His perfect and great protagonists were never schematic. Here in *Odwilż* they are different. If the name of the author had not been provided, it would have been unlikely that someone would have ascribed the work to Ehrenburg. The work has its aesthetic shortcomings. There are some failings. It is more like a sketch for a novel. Nevertheless, she very much liked the book. It is difficult to put down – not just because it is something new. It sheds new light on people and their lives. Life is complex here and true, it does not follow familiar paths, as is the case with the majority of Soviet novels where everything was perfect and ideal, where the fate of the protagonists could easily be foreseen. Here not all of the loose ends are tied up, but does the author need to do so? Ehrenburg can, for example, leave things up for discussion. The novel is not lacking in subjects for several more novels. They just need to be developed. She does not agree with Comrade Borkowicz that Ehrenburg himself is not engaged or involved. While Ehrenburg might not offer a complete solution to all of the conflicts, he does suggest a way out since everywhere on the horizon the dawn of something new is visible. For example, Sonia and her technical education that goes against her passions – this is not an exception but rather a typical phenomenon. Here in Poland, too, the technical schools are full. Sonia wants to be a great person, she wants to achieve something great and does not open herself up to love. But we know

that she will submit to it. Volodia the artist is not very talented, thus he opts for an easy life. Wandering and lost he becomes conscious of his condition and comes to appreciate Saburov's great art. This also anticipates that he, too, will find his own path through life.

Comrade Janasek: He starts by mentioning Korniychuk (*Frontline*) and Bek (*Volokolamsk Highway*). Comrades have presented the matter in such way as to suggest that Soviet literature has never before presented any negatives. For example 'Frontline' – the war – the need to mobilize all available positives, but there is criticism of leaders there. In *Volokolamsk Highway*, the matter of a deserter, someone who is fearful and flees the front at a difficult time when the Germans are at the gates of Moscow, is presented with subtlety. Let us go back to the books of Alexei Tolstoy. In Soviet literature there are many true and great novels. Korniychuk's *Wings* – an object of criticism – shows the collapse of agriculture in Ukraine. Does this mean that these books can be compared to Ehrenburg's *Odwilż*? No. Because Ehrenburg does not depict the Thaw at all. That Sonia found herself in love is not a thaw. There is no sense of spring coming, just Ehrenburg's disappointment. Must disagree with the opinion that Ehrenburg is absent from the novel, as Comrade Borkowicz has claimed. In previous novels Ehrenburg did indeed fight and he was completely present in his novels. Here too he is visible but he does not have faith in the people around him. The foretaste of spring comes from above. In Korniychuk, it comes from above and from below. In Ehrenburg's novel there is no sense that the people are fighting. There is only the impression that it is only those people who had been involved in the revolution directly who can do something; he has faith only in them. It is said that it offers something novel because it challenges schematism, yet the people depicted in it are simply flawed individuals – not the broad masses. Here there are no problems and many issues are left unresolved, but a writer should offer resolutions. Comrade Rakowska says that these people do fight, that they have some prospects – this is not true. This novel leads to the conclusion that people in the Soviet Union do not fight, with the exception of the old revolutionaries who are now passing on. Others do not. Each person is only interested in themselves – is this what Soviet people are like? Is this really a struggle against schematism? No, this image is not typical of the Soviet Union, these are not Soviet people. When it comes to difficulties, many novels describe them. What is new in Ehrenburg is that the novel is full of a pessimism that is alien to Soviet literature, suggesting that there is no way out. And it is for this reason that there is no "thaw" in the novel. Ehrenburg is going through a period of uncertainty. Previous novels revealed him to be full of engagement, but here his pessimism is revealed. This is why it cannot be considered to have taken the right path for fighting schematism. I cannot believe that there is a large social group in the Soviet Union formed of the kind of people who are the protagonists of Ehrenburg's *Odwilż*. People should not take away the positivity that Soviet people have built up in their hearts.⁶²⁴

Archival research shows that the participants of the discussion were employees of the Poznań censorship office. They were much more cautious in their

624 AAN, GUKPPiW, 386, teczka 31/126, pp. 29–31.

assessments than their Warsaw colleagues who reviewed the work before publication. The Poznań censors refer more regularly to the negative opinions of Soviet literary critics. As Comrade Wierzbiński stated, 'Our literature and the congress of the Union of Soviet Writers have offered a negative assessment of this book', though it is difficult to say what exactly he means by 'our literature'. It is worth noting, however, that they never discuss whether Ehrenburg's controversial novel should be published or not. Given the numerous unfavourable voices (Borkowicz, Wierzbiński, and Janasek), this suggests that they were discussing a work that had already been published or at least approved for print.

The discussion takes a strange form and it is difficult to consider it purely instructional. It is more of an open exchange of opinions where more cautious claims about the unfinished or undeveloped nature of the novel are presented alongside more radical arguments that are actually politically subversive. As censor Wierzbiński noted, 'Literature has excessively idealized the Soviet people'. Censor Rakowska follows this up, stating that 'Life is complex here and true, it does not follow familiar paths, as is the case with the majority of Soviet novels where everything was perfect and ideal'. The censorship office must have been particularly sensitive about the passage mentioning Red Army soldiers taking watches during the war. The participants of the discussion also used the concept of the 'thaw' – as an adjective and noun – as they considered whether the novel meets the criteria of a non-schematic piece of literature. The opinions exchanged can be divided into three categories: *Odwilż* is a work by an outstanding author, albeit in this case an incomplete work (the conservative perspective); Ehrenburg tells the truth about Soviet society which is not as ideal as it had been presented until this moment (the reformist perspective); and that this is not an 'thaw' novel at all, as the author merely offends Soviet society (the attacking stance). It is hard to say that one particular opinion prevailed in the discussion, although the minutes do give the impression that the final statement, attacking Ehrenburg, was intended as a summary offering the final word.

Articles addressing a similar subject published in the Informational-Instructional Bulletin in summer and autumn 1955 set this discussion in an interesting context. I would like to cite two statements – B. Papiernik's *Kilka słów o odwilży (artykuł dyskusyjny)* – ('A few words on the "thaw"' (an article for discussion)) from issue no. 6 and Jerzy Klejny's contribution to issue no. 10, *O sztuce dla dorosłych* (On art for adults), the title of which alluded to Ważyk's seminal *Poemat dla dorosłych* ('A poem for adults'). Papiernik focused largely on Jerzy Andrzejewski's short stories, deeming the publication of *Wielki lament papierowej głowy* (The great lament of the paper head) an oversight by censors.

He called into question the legitimacy of 'the general attack on the basic principles of the trajectory of development of our literature,'⁶²⁵ before going on to argue that

the honesty of the thaw is not, however, producing satisfactory results, since it is based on false assumptions. At the foundations of honesty there must be a conviction as to the legitimacy of the trajectory of development in our life, in our art; this honesty must stem from a particular ideology, from a particular worldview.⁶²⁶

Kleyny's text, meanwhile, also considers the publication of Ważyk's epic poem to be an oversight. While he criticizes directly many literary and journalistic texts appearing in the first half of 1955 for their critical tone in settling accounts with the past, he does not mention Ehrenburg's novel once.

Perhaps it would be overstating the case to claim that the print run of 20,000 for the Polish edition of *The Thaw* was also an oversight on the part of censors. It seems that servility towards a Soviet author who enjoyed his Party's support was the main reason for the novel receiving positive reviews and then being approved for typesetting and printing so rapidly in Poland. Had Polish censors read the novel more critically, which they were not in the habit of doing in the case of Soviet texts, then they would have noticed the disturbing traces of the 'new' that Ehrenburg himself was already trying to moderate by early 1956. The attempts to camouflage the role of an outstanding Soviet writer in this turn went so far that he was not mentioned once in the contributions to the Bulletin even though this publication was intended solely for GUKPPiW employees.

Officials at the voivodeship censorship office in Poznań had, it would seem, better political instincts. However, their discussion had no practical influence on the matter and remained merely a record of the doubts and tempestuous debates that were typical of the thaw period.

625 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 328.

626 AAN, GUKPPiW, 420,teczka 165/4, p. 331.

Conclusion

The hypotheses presented in this study might not be entirely confirmed, as a result of the fragmentary nature of this investigation, which was focused on a limited time period and based on incomplete archival records. It also seems that the book could have been given a different structure if the archives had yielded more information on the literary works. Since all of the texts explored here had such rich histories relating to their encounters with censorship, they could easily be extended to form the basis of individual chapters in future research.

The first surprise that I experienced in analysing the archival materials was how they were ordered. They were organized by publisher, rather than by author or the title of particular works. This makes research much more difficult, although it does reflect the logic of how the censorship office functioned, thus providing deeper insight into the institution. Also surprising were the gaps in the records and their disorganized nature. While other researchers had mentioned this, the extent of the problem was something I was previously unaware of. Having spent several years working with these sources, I am now able to find many relevant items, although this is often down to chance, with any findings always having to be qualified by mentioning that a full set of sources were not available. Those cases when a full set of documentation is available are thus all the more pleasing.

Examining the materials more closely has also made clear that there are significant inconsistencies and numerous contradictions between particular documents. Many censors' reviews that refused permission to publish a work are accompanied by information confirming that it was indeed approved and published. While this is something that previous studies have mentioned, just how widespread this practice was must be a source of consternation to researchers. Many decisions regarding whether a work could be published or not were taken on the basis of extra-textual factors, including the status of an author, the reputation of the publishing house, the nature of the intended readership and the historical circumstances pertaining at the time a work was being assessed. This argument thus renders the censorship of texts because of their content less significant. In many cases, the same subject matter could be simultaneously publishable and unpublishable depending on the context of a particular publication.

In contrast to what is generally claimed, it does not seem to have been the case that all censors were short on intelligence and lacking in knowledge of literary traditions. Such claims can certainly be countered in the case of censors tasked with assessing works submitted for publication by the most serious publishing

houses. Of course, censors made plenty of eminently stupid and, what is worse, obstinate statements. I have found numerous examples, although I will mention just the most naïve here: ‘The enemy attacked from the other side and the censor failed to parry the attack’; ‘The two dull poetic works are damaging for life today owing to their libellous content’; ‘In the quote relating to sin that is scarlet red, I think the comment is superfluous. Until now, sin has always been black’. Alongside these ‘diagnoses’, there were plenty more insightful commentaries. It is enough to recall the high standard of language used in many reviews or the fact that in almost all of the cases explored in this study, the censors recognized the textual strategies being employed by the authors. This was genuinely surprising for me.

Despite the degree of chaos and inconsistency that was typical of the institution, all works that were published during the period examined here were subject to censorship. In the case of works of significant artistic value being published for the first time, I have been able to establish that cuts were recommended to the majority of them. However, it was also the case that the majority of proposed interventions were not carried out. Still, an atmosphere of *recrimination* was clearly evident.

What influence did the activities of the censorship office have on the development of Polish literature? How was this influence reflected in particular texts and in the general trajectory of literary developments? It seems that the threat of interventions and preventing a work from being published did influence the choices that writers subsequently made.

In one chapter, I focused on those shelved works whose content meant that they were not approved for publication at all. It is worth considering why such cases were relatively rare. On the one hand, this situation emerged because of directives issued by the censorship office stating that a text should be reworked for as long as it takes to make it politically correct. On the other hand, it seems that ideas for works that would be unpublishable were largely abandoned during the creative process. Self-censorship thus came into play. The possibility that information relating to a ban on publication might simply have been covered up in the archives should not be discounted.

In the course of my archival research, I also encountered a number of works that were not approved at all and, in contrast to works that were merely shelved for a period of time, never appeared. References to such texts appear throughout the archival records and in some cases the manuscripts and typescripts could be found in the files. The collections of the Ministry of Culture and Art proved particularly fruitful in this regard, as were the files under ‘Sztuki wycofane różne’ (Various withdrawn plays) in the GUKPPiW collection.

While I found only a few such unpublished works by outstanding authors, and these tended to be pieces that were not of significant artistic value, their existence might nevertheless be an indication that there was in fact a rather more significant number of works that were not approved at all by GUKPPiW and thus still remain completely unknown. It is probably worth looking again at the archival record in respect of this. In a related study, Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa states:

The history of censorship in communist Poland is formed in equal measure of bans and repressive measures, on the one hand, and of the ways of circumventing these restrictions, on the other. Censorship both resulted in lost and destroyed books, as well as in “cleansed” works that had been adapted to the prevailing norms and restrictions. But it also produced, to some extent, works that were never ultimately published.⁶²⁷

I believe that it is the duty of researchers examining the communist period to establish the truth not only about texts that were transformed by the censorship office, but also about those that were never published and even – although this is a substantially more difficult task – about ‘potential’ texts that were aborted during their conception or abandoned in the course of the creative process.

Stanisław Siekierski has noted that communist-era censorship in Poland considered the most dangerous element to be the author and not the text itself.⁶²⁸ My archival research verifies this view. A small number of the works that were not approved at all did subsequently appear without the impact of advance censorship. Sometimes such works could be published immediately, albeit abroad, as was the case with émigré authors; in other cases, they appeared in Poland later, from the mid-1970s, once the unofficial sphere of ‘the second circulation’ (*drugi obieg*), as it was known in Poland, emerged. Many writers thus quickly realized that the most unpublishable thing about their works was the name on the front cover.

In the course of my archival analysis, I made another finding crucial to my study, namely that from the mosaic of small changes made to individual texts it is possible to put together a larger image revealing a much more significant change. The many minor cuts and changes, which seemed to be of meaning only to the individual texts, when viewed collectively give an impression of the state of Polish writing and literature in the 1940s and 1950s as a whole. Many of the changes went against the authors’ intentions.

My analysis of part of the archival record of GUKPPiW has enabled me to verify many hypotheses that were presented in earlier works in censorship studies

627 Paulina Buchwald-Pelcowa, op. cit., p. 237.

628 Stanisław Siekierski, *Drugi obieg*, op. cit., p. 26.

and literary history, including those suggesting that: authors avoided contemporary subject matter; the second circulation that began in 1976 was a result of the omnipresence of censorship; and that the dominant mode for reaching understanding with readers in Polish literature was Aesopic language. This study has developed these arguments at many points. Here I would again like to draw attention to Ryszard Nycz's article *Literatura polska w cieniu cenzury* (Polish literature in the shadow of censorship) because it manages to offer a complete take on the subject while opening up new horizons. Nycz presents a history of communist-era censorship, noting its links to nineteenth-century traditions, as well as an outline of its guiding principles at its Stalinist high point, before tracing its decline and the subsequent changes that emerged in Polish literature after 1989. He argues that after the abolition of censorship, several differences became immediately evident: Aesopic language was abandoned, literary hierarchies were transformed, and the perception of the role of the author was transformed.⁶²⁹ It seems that in highlighting these fundamental differences, Nycz gives an indication of the scale of influence that the activities of the censorship office had on the formation of what was termed 'contemporary Polish literature'.

I was able to write most extensively about those authors and works where I also had access to the writers' own archives. In those cases, I had the impression that truly significant insight on the subject of authors' strategies in their struggle against restrictions on the freedom of expression could only be gained by also looking at documents produced by both sides involved in the struggle. The GUKPPiW archives thus proved to be insufficient alone. This is why the chapter describing authors' strategies should, at this point, be considered a sketch offering pointers towards further research that would make comparative use of both censorship archives and authors' private papers.

My archival analysis suggests that the final decision as to whether certain texts could be published was taken not at the censorship office but elsewhere. Most often, the decision makers could be found at the PZPR Central Committee's Department of Culture or in other party units. However, GUKPPiW always ensured that it gave the impression to both editors at publishing houses and authors that it was responsible for any decisions. I would like to emphasize that any changes to a text are recorded in the archives of the censorship office. It is the GUKPPiW archival collections that offer a deep reservoir of knowledge on the transformations that particular works underwent.

629 Ryszard Nycz, op. cit., pp. 22–23.

It is up to readers to decide whether my study has been objective. It has been my aim to establish the truth of the matter, even if this truth is ultimately ambiguous. I hope that this book does not give the impression that it supports a conspiratorial theory of history, or in this case literary history. Ultimately, power in communist Poland was exerted obliquely. It is now necessary to present the past transparently in order to better understand both it and the present. This is the first time in history that the documentary record produced by the communist system can be examined openly in order to work towards a fuller understanding of it.

Finally, I would like to remind today's scholars of the editorial duties incumbent upon them. It is necessary to publish works that were affected by censorship in their integral form. As it stands, considering all literary works published in Poland between 1944 and 1989 as a whole, they could be defined as *editio purificata*.⁶³⁰

630 This term was used by Roman Loth to describe the literature that had been reshaped by GUKPPiW. Roman Loth, *Podstawowe pojęcia i problemy tekstologii i edytorstwa naukowego*, Warszawa: Wyd. Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2006, p. 86.

Afterword. Ten years later

1. The translation of this book is based on the original Polish publication from 2009. I have opted against making significant changes to it, nor have I sought to update it with references to the ever-expanding body of literature that has emerged since then. The reason for this is that doing so would have required completely rewriting the study. Instead, my aim has been to offer English-language readers a translation of a work that has proven a success in Poland. The book has been cited extensively and has been published in two further editions, both of which sold out. Indeed, the study has been recognized as a ‘classic work’. While it was not the first exploration of literary censorship in the People’s Republic of Poland, a fact I have repeatedly stressed, my book was responsible for initiating a series of further broad, cultural studies-based works on the history of post-war Polish literature, as a result of which censorship became a mainstream subject in academic investigations. The methodology that I employed continues to be applied by scholars today.

Since completing the first edition of the Polish version of this book, my insights into many of the issues addressed in it have expanded and become more precise, in part thanks to my own further studies and, more importantly, by engaging with works produced by other researchers. It is also worth emphasising that the conclusions presented in the book have not been called into question, meaning that they have indeed withstood the test of time.

What, then, are the key findings that my book has contributed to literary history and to cultural studies more generally?

Firstly, it helped **expand the canon of texts**. Following the publication of my study, this canon came to include some of the previously unknown (or fragmentary) literary works that I found in the archives. In the case of some of the works examine in my book, their publication date was revised (sometimes by as many as twenty years, as was the case with Anna Świrszczyńska’s *Miłość na wczasach* [Holiday romance]), while some poems and novels saw cut fragments restored.

Secondly, my book contributed to better understanding and **re-evaluation of writers’ thematic and aesthetic choices**. It did so by describing the ways in which censorship restricted the development of some subject matter and some aspects of poetics. This was the case both for more obvious options, such as contemporary political novels, and for avant-garde poetics. Censorship also impacted on more unexpected themes, too, such as ‘women’s novels’ and literary

representations of the Second World War and the Holocaust, which after 1949 were deemed 'irrelevant'.

Thirdly, my study described the ways in which state control of literary expression **destroyed writers' careers and the broader potential of literature**. This situation contributed directly to the fact that between 1948 and 1958 few outstanding works of Polish literature were published relative to what would have been expected in this period. It should also be noted that the state's restrictive practices were met with diverse responses from writers and artists. They ranged from full engagement with communism and subordination, on the one hand, to absolute negation, resistance, silence and emigration at the other end of the scale.

2. What developments have there been in research on censorship since 2009?

It is worth mentioning some of the most important research that has contributed to the expansion of knowledge on the subject and thus provided more precise insight into the impact of state-imposed restrictions on the freedom of literary expression in People's Poland. My selection is rather subjective and thus limited to the studies and articles I consider most significant. By order of appearance, these works are: Zbigniew Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce. 1944- 1970* [Historical research and censorship in Poland, 1944–1970; 2010], the edited volumes forming the series *Niewygodne dla władzy* [Troubling for the authorities], edited by Dorota Degen and Grażyna Gzella [starting in 2010], Marzena Woźniak-Łabieniec, *Obecny – nieobecny. Krajowa recepcja Czesława Miłosza w krytyce literackiej lat pięćdziesiątych w świetle dokumentów cenzury* [Present/absent: The domestic reception of Czesław Miłosz's work in literary criticism in the 1950s – a study based on censorship documents; 2012], Piotr Nowak, *Cenzura wobec rynku książki. Wojewódzki Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Poznaniu, 1946 - 1955* [Censorship and the book market: The Voivodeship censorship office in Poznań, 1946–1955; 2012], Bogusław Gogol, *Fabryka fałszywych tekstów'. Z działalności Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Gdańsku. 1945–1958* ['The fake text factory'. The activities of the voivodeship censorship office in Gdańsk, 1945–1948; 2012], Kamila Budrowska, *Zatrzymane przez cenzurę. Inedita z połowy wieku XX* [Banned by censors. Unpublished works from the mid-twentieth century; 2013], John M. Bates, *Cenzura literatury angielskiej w Polsce. 1948–1967* [The censorship of English literature in Poland, 1948–1967; 2013], Paul Vickers, *Peasants, Professors, Publishers and Censorship: memoirs of rural inhabitants of Poland's 'Recovered Territories'* [2014], Tomasz Strzyżewski, *Wielka księga cenzury w dokumentach* [The grand book of censorship – documentary sources; 2015, in particular Zbigniew Romek's introduction], Robert Looby, *Censorship, Translation and English Language Fiction in People's Poland* [2015], Kajetan

Mojsak, *Cenzura wobec prozy nowoczesnej, 1956–1965* [Censorship and contemporary prose. 1956–1965; 2016], Elżbieta Dąbrowicz, *Cenzura na gruzach. Szkice o literackich świadectwach życia w PRL-u* [Censorship in ruins: Essays on literary testimonies to life in the People's Republic of Poland; 2017], Agnieszka Kloc, *Cenzura wobec tematu II wojny światowej i podziemia powojennego w literaturze polskiej 1956–1958* [Censors' attitudes towards the subject of the Second World War and the armed underground in Polish literature from 1956 to 1958; 2018], Anna Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk, *'Czytelnik' ocenzurowany. Literatura w krypto tekstach – recenzjach cenzorskich okresu stalinizmu* [Censoring the Czytelnik publishing house: Literature in crypto-texts and censorship reviews in the Stalinist era, 2018], and Kamila Kamińska-Chełminiak, *Cenzura w Polsce 1944 –1960. Organizacja – kadry – metody pracy* [Censorship in Poland from 1944 to 1960: Organization, employees, and working methods; 2019]⁶³¹.

631 Zbigniew Romek, *Cenzura a nauka historyczna w Polsce. 1944- 1970*, Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2010; edited volumes in the series *Niewygodne dla władzy*, edited by Dorota Degen and Grażyna Gzella, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2011–2019; Marzena Woźniak-Łabieniec, *Obecny – nieobecny. Krajowa recepcja Czesława Miłosza w krytyce literackiej lat pięćdziesiątych w świetle dokumentów cenzury*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego 2012; Piotr Nowak, *Cenzura wobec rynku książki. Wojewódzki Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Poznaniu. 1946 - 1955*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, 2012, Bogusław Gogol, „Fabryka fałszywych tekstów”: *Z działalności Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk w Gdańsku. 1945 – 1958*, Gdańsk: IPN, 2012; Kamila Budrowska, *Zatrzymane przez cenzurę. Inedita z połowy wieku XX*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Badań Literackich PAN, 2013, John M. Bates, *Cenzura literatury angielskiej w Polsce. 1948 – 1967*, in: *Literatura w granicach prawa (XIX – XX w.)*, ed. Kamila Budrowska, Elżbietą Dąbrowicz, Marcin Lul, Warszawa, Wyd. IBL PAN, 2013, pp. 225–242; Paul Vickers, *Peasant, professors, publishers and censorship: Memoirs of rural inhabitants of Poland's "Recovered Territories"*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Glasgow 2014; Tomasz Strzyżewski, *Wielka księga cenzury w dokumentach*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo PROHIBITA, 2015, introduction by Zbigniew Romek, pp. 9–27 Robert Looby, *Censorship, Translation and English Language Fiction in People's Poland*, Lublin: Brill: Rodopi, 2015; Kajetan Mojsak, *Cenzura wobec prozy nowoczesnej. 1956 – 1965*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Badań Literackich PAN, 2016; Elżbieta Dąbrowicz, *Cenzura na gruzach. Szkice o literackich świadectwach życia w PRL-u*, Białystok: Uniwersytet w Białymstoku, 2017; Agnieszka Kloc, *Cenzura wobec tematu II wojny światowej i podziemia powojennego w literaturze polskiej 1956 – 1958*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IPN, 2018; Anna Wiśniewska-Grabarczyk, „Czytelnik“ *ocenzurowany. Literatura w krypto tekstach – recenzjach cenzorskich okresu stalinizmu*,

This is a broad and diverse selection covering a variety of aspects of issues related to the institution of state censorship, its connections to the regime and its impact on particular works and authors. These selected studies also provide insight into the multiple stages involved in the censorship process, as well as the variety of actors involved in it, including editorial boards, publishers, literary associations and the writers themselves (in the form of self-censorship). The works mentioned here go beyond the 1940s and 1950s, the period I focused on, to outline the transformations of relations between the censorship authorities and literature in subsequent decades.

Again, I would like to stress that my selection of works is subjective, as is my summary of their most important findings, which is shaped by my own particular interests, knowledge and perhaps too by a particular attachment (perhaps excessive) to certain concepts.

- Research on censorship in People’s Poland has shifted in line with the patterns of changes evident in the humanities more generally. The most significant change in this respect is reflected in the broader shift in conceptions of the communist era, with the tone of discourse and debate calming down and – to some degree at least – moralizing evaluation becoming less common.
- Increasingly, censorship is being approached not as a separate issue but, to varying degrees, as a core element of studies on the communist period as such.
- Censorship studies have served to undermine trust in texts published in that era. There has been a revolution in academic publishing and editing of communist-era works that were previously considered closed and fixed pieces of literature.
- The above-mentioned works have produced significant findings on the way censorship institutions functioned, with the key insight being that censorship sought to transfer its activities onto others, including editorial boards, publishers, editors and translators. Thus, the censorship office (GUKPPiW) gradually abandoned its founding ideological principles and became more pragmatic.
- In terms of censorship’s impact on the overall shape of Polish literature and culture, it was not particular interventions by censors that led to the impoverishment of Polish literature but rather the very existence of the institution of

ensorship and the self-censorship that this necessarily entailed. This halted the development of many talented writers, eliminated a large number of texts forever (including older works, owing to the break in tradition) and resulted in many new works never being published.

3. The prospects for the further development of the field of censorship studies are promising. While it is important to place censorship in its broad historical contexts (taboos, regionalism, genealogies and broader studies of communism), detailed, ‘practical’ studies on single authors or texts nevertheless remain valuable as they influence the form of new editions and can lead to the restoration of texts to their original state, prior to censors’ interventions. One example of this is evident in the 2018 edition of three novels by Stanisław Grzesiuk where previously cut fragments were printed in bold.⁶³²

The most important challenge that now faces research on censorship, is opening up to international collaboration and producing comparative studies. Complete freedom of speech is, of course, utopian, which means that there are and have been forms of censorship and self-censorship in all societies. Particular historical systems restricting expression can be observed in a host of other societies, ranging across the spectrum from repressive to liberal. The most relevant comparisons, as far as censorship in communist Poland is concerned, can be made with the censorship system in the USSR and in other state-socialist countries. This challenge is one that should be met.

Kamila Budrowska, Białystok, March 2019

632 Stanisław Grzesiuk, *Boso, ale w ostrogach, Pięć lat kacetu, Na marginesie życia*, [Barefoot but wearing spurs; Five years in the camp; On the margins of life.] Warszawa, Prószyński i S-ka, 2018.

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Index

A

Abramov, Fyodor A. 315
Adamus, Jan 100, 313, 345
Anders, Władysław 200, 204
Andersen, Hans Christian 252
Andrzejewski, Jerzy 21, 52, 59, 60,
81, 82, 90, 91, 103, 105, 109, 116,
117, 126, 137–143, 145–152,
154–156, 158–160, 162, 163, 165,
187, 218, 266, 268, 272–275, 278,
282, 283, 326, 343, 345, 355,
357–359, 362–365, 368
Arct, Zygmunt 99

B

Babel, Izaak E. 144
Bafia, Jerzy 76
Bakunin, Michaił A. 204, 209,
210, 218
Baliński, Stanisław 91
Bardach, Juliusz 100
Bardanowska, J. 53
Bartelski, Lesław M. 135, 345
Bates, John M. 17–19, 29, 34, 41,
47, 48, 55, 58, 76, 84, 86, 101, 107,
109, 117, 137, 292, 309, 317, 327,
336, 337, 356
Bazańska, Krystyna 55
Beckett, Samuel 61
Bek, Aleksandr A. 325
Bereś, Stanisław 169–171, 173, 180,
191, 356, 369
Beria, Ławrientij P. 314
Berland, Marian 48, 345
Berman, Jakub 34, 35
Bernaciński, Stefan 217
Bida, Antoni 38, 40, 305
Bieniasiewicz, Leontyna 209

Bierut, Bolesław 53, 352
Bikont, Anna 28, 61, 63, 66, 356
Billy 53
Błoński, Jan 36, 65, 73, 253,
254, 356
Bochnak, Adam 301, 345
Bogucka, Maria 101, 356
Boleski, Andrzej 303, 345
Borejsza, Jerzy 132
Borkowicz 106, 323, 324–326
Borkowska, Grażyna 262, 356
Borowski, Tadeusz 18, 48,
52–55, 65, 71, 76, 93, 117, 345,
346, 363
Brandys, Kazimierz 66, 116, 117,
187, 346
Bratny, Roman (Roman
Mularczyk) 29, 66, 67, 98, 346
Breza, Tadeusz 58, 346
Broniatowska 235
Broniewska, Janina 245,
246, 346
Broniewski, Władysław 81, 82, 91,
199–221, 266, 278–280, 282, 283,
346, 347, 351, 363, 370
Bryczek, Bogumił 134
Brzechwa, Jan 221–231, 233, 235,
237–239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249,
251, 252, 266, 281–283, 317, 347
Brzozowski, Stanisław 296
Buchwald-Pelcowa, Paulina 24, 263,
331, 357
Buczkowski, Leopold 52, 59–61,
347, 357
Buczówna, Mieczysława 347
Budzyk, Kazimierz 302, 347
Bulas, Kazimierz 306
Burczyn, Maria 97, 192, 214, 319

Burkot, Stanisław 137, 139, 357
Bursa, Andrzej 173
Buryła, Sławomir 18, 52, 53, 59,
345, 357

C

Chaber, Ferdinand 132, 312
Charszczewska, Zofia 246, 347
Cieślowski, Jerzy 241, 248,
249, 281
Cis, Kazimierz 66
Cocteau, Jean 155
Czajkowski, Stanisław 303, 347
Czartoryski, Adam 295
Czermińska, Małgorzata 19, 119,
358, 365
Czernik, Stanisław 311
Czeszko, Bohdan 123, 347

D

Dąbkowski, Przemysław 306
Dąbrowska, Maria 83–86, 100, 131,
347, 348, 365
Dąbrowski, Jan Henryk 265
Dąbrowski, Stanisław 320
Dembowski, Leon 295
Dmitruk, Krzysztof M. 104,
145, 358
Dobraczyński, Jan 78, 95
Dobrzyński 51
Dostojewski, Fiodor M. 91, 351
Drewnowski, Tadeusz 18, 20, 22, 24,
52, 55, 126, 345, 358
Dudintsev, Vladimir D. 315
Dumas, Aleksander 243, 348
Dygat, Stanisław 81, 82, 97, 98, 113,
123, 144, 348

E

Erenburg, Ilja G. 315, 348,
361, 370

F

Fabierkiewicz, Waclaw 313
Fast, Piotr 315–317, 359
Feuchtwanger, Lion 144
Fiałkowski, Tomasz 171, 197,
276, 369
Figlewska, Zofia 129, 192, 217
Fik, Marta 18, 23, 60, 104,
289, 359
Fiksiński 323, 324
Filipowicz, Kornel 81
Fleszar, Mieczysław 58, 116, 135,
244, 305, 313
Fleszar, Sabina 235
Francastel, Pierre 306
Frycie, Stanisław 241, 242, 359
Furmanik 207

G

Gałczyński, Konstanty Ildefons 76,
81, 88–90, 121, 348
Gawliński, Stanisław 53, 112,
186, 359
Gebethner, Jan 59, 95, 98, 99, 176,
177, 179–181, 343, 347, 355
Geppert, Maria 86
Głowiński, Michał 53, 73, 106, 113,
249, 250, 304, 355, 359, 365
Goćkowski, Janusz 286, 287, 303,
356, 360
Godard, Jean 151
Goetel, Ferdynand 74
Gołubiew, Antoni 95, 344
Gombrowicz, Witold 64–66, 70,
168, 344
Gomolicki, Wiktor 295
Gomułka, Władysław 6, 49, 313
Gosk, Hanna 12, 22, 29, 261, 356
Górski, Artur 292
Grabowska, Marcelina 40, 131, 344
Grabowski, Jan 231, 345

Granin, Daniil (Daniil
A. German) 311
Grodzińska, Wanda 107, 225, 234,
348, 349
Grottger, Artur 261
Gutkowski, Bohdan 287

H

Halecki, Oskar 302
Handelsman, Józef 301
Haraschin, Zofia 243
Heiden, Erhard 52
Herbert, Zbigniew 18, 61, 62, 106,
151, 270, 345
Herod 129
Hertz, Paweł 75, 76, 131, 344, 345
Heska-Kwaśniewicz, Krystyna 74,
261, 356, 359
Hitler, Adolf 44, 48, 52
Hłasko, Marek 64, 66, 108, 117, 118,
151, 152, 154, 155, 161, 269, 345
Hobot, Joanna 18, 19, 76, 103, 105,
110, 210, 220, 254, 255, 265, 267,
270, 271, 282, 284, 360
Hoffmann, Paweł 79
Hołuj, Tadeusz 74
Horska, A. 222
Hübner, Piotr 283, 285, 303,
308, 357
Hussarski, Roman 92
Huxley, Aldous 229

I

Iłjin, Michail (Ilja J. Marszak) 345
Iłłakowiczówna, Kazimiera 74, 83,
84, 277, 345
Inglot, Mieczysław
251–253, 258, 357
Iwaszkiewicz, Jarosław 57, 77, 131,
155, 156, 157, 159–161, 256, 269,
270, 341, 345, 362

J

Jachowicz, Stanisław 236, 345
Jakubowski, Jan Zygmunt 298,
300, 345
Janasek, Lidia 321, 322
Janczarski, Czesław 226
Janion, Maria 295, 347, 357
Jankowski, Andrzej 311, 357
Januszewska, Hanna 226, 232,
234, 345
Jarosiński, Zbigniew 16, 57, 133,
135, 197, 221, 225, 248, 357
Jarosz, Dariusz 14, 38, 366
Jarzębski, Jerzy 166, 168–171, 176,
185, 187, 190, 357, 366
Jasieńska, Halina 298
Jasiewicz, Leon 126
Jastrun, Mieczysław 77, 101, 102,
104, 105, 257, 345, 348, 350
Jurgielewiczowa, Irena 57, 58, 217,
219, 221, 223, 225–227, 229–231,
233–235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245,
247, 277, 345, 346

K

Kaden-Bandrowski, Juliusz 91
Kalinin, Anatolij W. 323
Kamieńska, Anna 93, 108, 350
Kaniowa, Zofia 131, 223
Kańska, Lucyna 149
Kapeniak, Józef 145
Karolak, Czesław 36, 268, 357, 358,
362, 365
Kartezjusz (René
Descartes) 303, 347
Kazimierska 60
Kazimierz the Great 95
Khrushchev, Nikita S. 314
Kienzle, Michael 159, 271, 362
Kijowski, Andrzej 68, 362
Klauze 179

- Kleiner, Juliusz 295–298, 305, 312, 350, 353, 354
 Kleyny, Jerzy 83, 136, 210, 326, 327
 Kłoskowska, Antonina 271, 272, 362
 Kondek, Stanisław Adam 15, 17, 78, 119, 239, 252, 288, 289, 297, 298, 362
 Kononow, Andriej N. 350
 Konopnicka, Maria 240, 241, 302, 350
 Konwicki, Tadeusz 19, 20, 58, 59, 61, 62, 109, 110, 350, 356, 365, 367
 Kopański, Stanisław 204
 Kopińska 97
 Korczak, Janusz 144
 Korczakowska, Jadwiga 230
 Kornhauser, Julian 22, 220, 362
 Korniyuchuk, Nikolay W. 314, 324, 325
 Kossak, Zofia (Zofia Kossak-Szczucka) 27, 48, 49, 50, 93–95, 350, 361, 363, 365, 366
 Kostecki, Janusz 33, 257, 357, 358, 360–362, 365, 366, 368, 369
 Kościuszko, Tadeusz 95
 Kot, Stanisław 306
 Kott, Jan 299, 350, 351
 Kownacka, Maria 230, 239, 248, 350
 Koźniewski, Kazimierz 42
 Krasiński, Zygmunt 297, 311, 350
 Kraszewski, Józef Ignacy 39, 100, 295
 Kraško, Wincenty 134
 Krawczenko, Bronisław 236
 Królik 87
 Krynicki, Ryszard 22, 267
 Krzemieniecka, Lucyna 230
 Krzywicki, Ludwik 305
 Krzyżanowski, Julian 237, 292, 297, 350, 353, 354
 Kubik, T. 115
 Kubik, Roberta 213
 Kucharzewski, Jan 306
 Kudroń, Kazimierz 183, 184
 Kukiel, Marian 306
 Kuncewiczowa, Maria 92
 Kupraszwili, Jadwiga 135, 233
 Kuprin, Aleksandr I. 133, 134, 351
- L**
- Lagerlöf, Selma 232
 Landsberg, Helena 39–41, 99, 210, 224, 291
 Lanota, Anna 245, 351
 Lassota, Witold 240
 Lec, Stanisław Jerzy 78
 Lehr-Spławiński, Tadeusz 291, 302, 312
 Lem, Stanisław 61, 98–100, 166–177, 179–181, 183–187, 189–191, 193–195, 197, 198, 240, 248, 266, 275, 278, 282, 351, 360, 361, 367, 369, 370
 Lenin, Vladimir (Vladimir I. Uljanow) 114, 136, 154, 244, 245, 350, 355
 Lermontov, Mikhail J. 294, 355
 Leszczyński 51
 Lewandowska, Cecylia 246, 351
 Lewicka, Irena 136
 Lichodziejewska, Feliksa 199–202, 206, 212, 218–220, 279, 363
 Lifshitz, Mikhail A. 315
 Limanowski, Bolesław 296
 Lisiecka, A. 182, 184
 London, Jack (John Griffith London) 243, 351
 Loth, Roman 59, 77, 333, 357, 363
 Lubczak 64
 Lutosławski, Wincenty 296

Ł

Łazaburek 141
 Łysenko, Trofim D. 290, 356

M

Mach, Wilhelm 123, 351
 Maciąg, Włodzimierz 151, 295, 345, 363
 Mackiewicz, Stanisław 91, 351
 Majakowski, Władimir W. 351
 Majchrowski, Stanisław 47, 363
 Makarewicz, Juliusz 306
 Makowski 323
 Makuszyński, Kornel 236
 Malenkov, Gieorgij M. 314
 Mann, Thomas 144, 185
 Marczyński, Antoni 145
 Markowska, Wanda 236, 238, 351
 Marx, Karl (Karl Heinrich Marx) 158
 Matejko, Jan 96
 Mauersberg, Adam 300, 352
 Meissner, Janusz 92
 Michajłow 304
 Michalska, Marta 246, 351
 Michalski, Hieronim E. 98, 142, 292
 Mickiewicz, Adam 100, 107, 108, 255, 259, 263, 292, 295, 296–301, 308–310, 337, 348, 350, 352, 353, 356, 362, 366, 371
 Mikołajczyk, Stanisław 37
 Miłska, T. 212
 Miłska, Anna 236, 238, 351
 Miłosz, Czesław 68, 70, 78, 92–94, 336, 337
 Mitosek, Zofia 150, 364
 Molisak, Alina 18, 70, 364
 Morawska 294
 Morcinek, Gustaw 29, 79
 Morozov, Mikhail M. 303
 Mortkowicz, Jakub 100, 261, 346, 347, 354

Mrowcewicz, Krzysztof 266, 364
 Mrozek, Sławomir 105, 352
 Musatow, Aleksiej I. 352

N

Nałęcz, Daria 13, 20, 23, 28, 33, 34, 40, 358
 Nałkowska, Zofia 42, 48, 50, 51, 52, 71, 81, 84, 86, 352, 366
 Napierałówna, Helena 48
 Newerly, Igor 144
 Norwid, Cyprian Kamil 259, 352, 358
 Nosow, Nikolay N. 245
 Nowak, Paweł 111, 119, 364
 Nowakowski, Marek 97, 352
 Nycz, Ryszard 20, 21, 77, 254, 255, 265, 283, 309, 332, 359, 363, 364, 370, 371

O

Okopień-Sławińska, Aleksandra 107, 365
 Olchowicz, Stefan 177
 Oramus, Marek 170, 365
 Orliński, Wojciech 170, 365
 Osiejewa, Valentina A. 352
 Osóbka-Morawski, Edward 35
 Ossendowski, Ferdynand Antoni 78
 Ostromecki, Bogdan 247, 352
 Ostrowski, Jerzy 203
 Ożogowska, Hanna 111, 239, 352

P

Panova, Vera F. 308, 315
 Papiernik, B. 116, 326
 Pareto, Vilfredo 36, 365
 Parnicki, Teodor 100
 Pasternak, Boris L. 144
 Pawlicki, Aleksander 13, 14, 20, 22, 24, 25, 29, 47, 76, 102, 104, 107, 114, 133, 269, 270, 287, 301, 308, 322, 365

- Peiper, Tadeusz 144
 Perkowski, Piotr 18–20, 58, 62, 77,
 109, 365
 Perruchot, Henri 155
 Picasso, Pablo 137, 151, 155,
 273, 274
 Pieszczechowicz, Jan 103
 Pietrzak, Michał 131
 Piętaś, Stanisław 116, 353
 Pigoń, Stanisław 100, 107, 310,
 311, 352
 Piłsudski, Józef 73, 78, 85, 87,
 88, 204
 Porazińska, Janina 230, 238, 245
 Prokop, Jan 214, 365, 366
 Prussak, Maria 17, 255–260, 262,
 366, 369
 Przyboś, Julian 68, 81, 108, 144, 353
 Przybyszewski, Stanisław 296
 Purowska, A. 79, 103, 196, 206,
 245, 249
 Puszkina, Aleksander S. 349
 Putrament, Jerzy 180
 Pyszny, Joanna 84, 85, 88, 362
 Pytlos, Barbara 89, 362
- R**
 Raczyński 320
 Rakowska, Krystyna 320, 321, 322
 Ramotowska, Franciszka 251,
 252, 362
 Rayska (Rajska) 207
 Rej, Mikołaj 91
 Remarque, Erich Maria 50, 141
 Rodziewiczówna, Maria 35
 Rolleczek, Natalia 140
 Romek, Zbigniew 42, 72, 93, 285,
 332, 333, 352, 353
 Rostworowski, Jan Michał 39
 Rowicka, Małgorzata 252, 253, 259,
 260, 358, 362
 Różański, Jacek 205
 Różewicz, Tadeusz 18, 57, 60, 61,
 64, 66–70, 76, 77, 102, 103, 113,
 127, 349
 Rudnicki, Adolf 44, 52, 53, 70, 98,
 99, 349
 Rudnicki, Lucjan 291
 Ruszkowska, Irena 242, 243, 349
 Rutkowski 85, 113, 137
 Rybakov, Anatolij N. 108
 Rychlewska-Wojciechowska,
 Helena 349
 Rzeuska, Maria 300, 349
- S**
 Samozwaniec, Magdalena
 (Magdalena z Kossakow
 Starzewska) 25
 Sartre, Jean-Paul 152
 Sawrymowicz, Eugeniusz 251, 307,
 350, 363
 Schloesser, Friedrich Christian 142
 Schmidt, Bronisław 319, 320
 Sęp, Szarzyński Mikołaj 262, 360
 Siekierski, Stanisław 16, 29, 33, 35,
 40, 42, 43, 69, 73, 74, 92, 228, 229,
 233, 235, 327, 363
 Siemaszko, Olga 219
 Sienkiewicz, Henryk 35, 44, 89, 260,
 291, 296, 349, 362
 Simonov, Konstantin M. 310, 312
 Sinko, Tadeusz 293, 345, 346
 Skarga, Piotr 91
 Skwarczyńska, Stefania 290, 349
 Słapa, Aleksander 173
 Sławiński, Janusz 111, 113, 114, 120,
 122, 123, 352, 354, 356, 363
 Słomczyński, Maciej 96
 Słonimski, Antoni 83, 256, 276, 349
 Słowacki, Juliusz 129, 140, 255,
 290, 292–294, 299, 305–308, 341,
 349, 350
 Smulski, Jerzy 21, 53, 269, 270, 367

- Smuszkiewicz, Antoni 169, 170, 195, 367
Socrates 144
Sokołowski, Jan 245, 354
Srokowski, Stanisław 313
Staff, Leopold 81, 87, 108, 109, 260–262, 280, 354
Stalin, Joseph 144, 158, 165, 205, 206, 208, 213, 220, 314–317
Starski, Jan 56
Staszewski 58
Stefańska, Regina 129
Stefczyk 224
Stevenson, Robert Louis 242, 354
Stępkowski, A. 155, 157, 158, 164, 165
Strasser, Wilhelm 98, 142, 148
Straszewicz, Czesław 68
Straszewska, Maria 295
Strug, Andrzej 68, 70, 91, 204, 205, 209, 210, 218
Strumph-Wojtkiewicz, Stanisław 317, 348
Strykowski, Julian 61, 269, 354
Strzyżewski, Tomasz 130, 336, 337, 364, 368
Stwosz, Wit 80, 90, 301, 345
Surkov, Alexey A. 314, 318
Suvorov, Aleksandr W. 312
Synoradzka, Anna 141, 143, 151, 158–160, 368
Szancer, Jan Marcin 222
Szaniawski, Jerzy 81, 82
Szaruga, Leszek 20, 46, 148, 197, 268, 269, 282, 368
Szczepański, Jan Józef 61–63, 119, 184, 354
Szczepkowska, Ewa 61, 181, 368
Szczęsna, Joanna 28, 52, 60, 61, 63, 66, 345, 356
Szczypiorski, Andrzej 269, 354
Shakespeare, William 56, 302, 307
Szelburg-Zarembina, Ewa 100, 104, 230, 235, 236, 251, 354
Szmaglewska, Seweryna 50, 75, 354
Szmydtowa, Zofia 305, 352
Sober, Stanisław 92
Szpakowska, Małgorzata 198, 277, 368
Szpalski, Karol 230
Szreter, Piotr 257, 258, 264, 368
Szulkin 196
Szyma, Tadeusz 225, 369
Szymańska, Irena 96, 97, 102, 103, 210, 261
Szyper, Henryk 298, 299, 352
- Ś
- Śniadecki, Jędrzej 144
Śpiewak, Jan 99
Świątycka, Renata 54, 55, 94, 121, 125, 157, 158, 223, 226, 227, 233, 235, 244, 245, 297
Świerczewski, Karol (pseud. Walter) 205, 206, 208, 213
Świrszczynska, Anna 251, 335, 354
- T
- Tolstoy, Alexei K. 325
Tomasik, Wojciech 105, 107, 253, 367, 369
Tomir, Jan, pseud. (Michał Głowiński) 308, 311, 369
Towiański, Andrzej 295
Trębicki 64, 186, 188
Truchanowski, Kazimierz 61
Trznadel, Jacek 78, 369
Trzynadłowski, Jan 267, 268, 369
Turski, Stefan 133
Tuwim, Julian 81, 230, 260, 280
Twain, Mark (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) 243, 355
Tyrman, Dorota 203, 206
Tyrmand, Leopold 61, 68, 70

U

Uljanowa, Anna I. 355
 Umiński, Władysław 177

V

Vadim, Roger 155
 Verne, Jules 177, 180, 189, 190,
 242, 355

W

Walentyłowicz, Antoni 113
 Wardasówna, Maria 86, 244, 355
 Wawrzynkiewicz, Katarzyna 310
 Ważyk, Adam 83, 90, 115, 126, 326,
 327, 355
 Wednarowicz, Marian 135, 355
 Weinfeld, Irena 131
 Weintraub, Wiktor 199, 306, 370
 Welfel 203
 Wida 131
 Wielowieyska, Helena 178, 179
 Wierzbiński 324, 326
 Wilkosz, Witold 313
 Williams, William Carlos 155
 Wirpsza, Witold 92, 355
 Wiśniewska, Lidia 53, 367
 Witkacy (Stanisław Ignacy
 Witkiewicz) 123
 Wittlin, Józef 68, 69
 Władysław IV 49
 Wojdowski, Bogdan 18, 68, 70, 364
 Wojdyga 37
 Wojnarowski, Emil 144
 Wołkowicz, Karol 133, 217, 228, 299

Woroszyński, Wiktor 29, 55, 66, 346
 Wortman, Stefania 237
 Wójcik, Andrzej 168, 169, 172,
 174, 370
 Wroczyński, Kazimierz 55
 Wydrzyński, Andrzej 134
 Wygodzki, Stanisław 145
 Wyspiański, Stanisław 123

Z

Zabierowski, Stanisław 255, 263,
 264, 265, 271, 370
 Zabłudowski, Tadeusz 37
 Zagórski, Jerzy 66
 Zawieyski, Jerzy 49, 50, 355
 Zawistowska, Władysława 130, 318
 Zawodniak, Mariusz 88, 234, 308,
 309, 370, 371
 Zborowska, Janina 166
 Zgorzelski, Czesław 294, 355
 Zola, Emil 295
 Zych, Gabriel 97

Ż

Żeromski, Stefan 43, 170, 264, 265,
 271, 355
 Żmichowska, Narcyza 133
 Żmigrodzka, Maria 295
 Żółkiewska, Wanda 225
 Żółkiewski, Stefan 295, 296,
 305, 312
 Żukrowski, Wojciech 79, 184
 Żuławski, Jerzy 177
 Żywulska, Krystyna 94, 355

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