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Polish Migration Writing in Britain and Ireland since 2004

Polskie pisarstwo migracyjne w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii po 2004 roku

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CONTENTS

Some texts are double-numbered: in addition to the original page numbers,
thesis-specific page numbers have been added at the bottom centre of each page.

Introduction

The idea for this thesis was born when I came across Meave Binchy's book *Heart and Soul* on the bestseller shelf of an Eason Bookstore in Dublin in 2008. The novel tells the story of Ania Prasky, a poor, young, uneducated migrant from a village in the southern Poland, who tries to start a new life in Ireland. Maeve Binchy, often called a modern-day Jane Austen, was one of Ireland's most widely read writers. Her works have been translated into thirty-seven languages and have sold millions of copies worldwide. Remarkably, her books have outsold those of James Joyce or Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney (McKervey 2022). Thus, her portrayal of Polish migrants has found its way into thousands of homes. Over the years, other prominent and up-and-coming Irish and British writers, such as Dermot Bolger, Chris Binchy, Roddy Doyle, Marian Keyes, Polly Courtney, Sarah Crossan, John Lancaster, Marina Lewycka, Rose Tremain, Uilleam Blacker, James Hopkin, Cynan Jones, Owen McCafferty, Nicola Werenowska, among others, have depicted the experiences of Poles in their countries.[1]

Their works proved the influence of Polish post-EU-accession migration on British and Irish literature and made me wonder whether Polish migrants themselves had written about their experiences. Inspired by this question, I asked Prof. Jerzy Jarniewicz if he would guide me in my research endeavour. His continuous, kind and enriching support over the years has enabled me to complete this extensive project. My thesis covers a period of twenty years, from 2004 to 2024, and analyses the works of over one hundred authors. It examines recent migration, the effects of which are still being felt, and discusses the largely unexplored and ever-growing body of work. The study formulates a definition of "migration writing" and examines this writing in many different contexts and from various perspectives. It identifies the unique contributions that Polish migration writing brings to the study of both literature and migration and, by the same token, addresses significant research gaps that are discussed later in this introduction.

[1] Some of the works by Irish writers that tackle the issue of post-2004 migration of Polish people to Ireland include: Dermot Bolger's *The Ballymun Trilogy* (2010), Chris Binchy's *Open-handed* (2009), Meave Binchy's *Heart and Soul* (2008), Roddy Doyle's *The Deportees* (2008) and *The Bandstand* (published in instalments in *Metro Éireann*, 2009), Marian Keyes's *The Brightest Star in the Sky* (2009) Colm Liddy's short story "The bride is crying in a toilet cubicle" in *40 Fights Between Husbands and Wives* (2009). The books by British writers that have been published since 2004 and talk about Polish immigrants in the UK include: Uilleam Blacker's *Bloody East Europeans* (2014), Joanna Czechowska's *The Black Madonna of Derby* (2008) and *Sweetest Enemy* (2012), Polly Courtney's *Poles Apart* (2008), Sarah Crossan's *The Weight of Water* (2012), James Hopkin's *Winter Under Water* (2008), Karola Gajda's *Are My Roots Showing?*, Catherine Grosvenor's *Cherry Blossom* (2008), Cynan Jones's *Everything I Found on the Beach* (2011), John Lanchester's *Capital* (2012), Owen McCafferty's *Quietly* (2012), Marina Lewycka's *Two Caravans* (2008), Anya Lipska's *Where the Devil Can't Go* (2013), *Death Can't Take a Joke* (2014), and *A Devil Under the Skin* (2015), Libby Purves's *Continental Drift* (2003/2004), Rose Tremain's *The Road Home* (2008), Nicola Werenowska's *Tu I Teraz (Here and Now)* (2013).

The main aim of my thesis is to catalogue Polish migration writing in the UK and Ireland from 2004 to 2024 and analyse it in literary, social and historical contexts, with two objectives in mind. Firstly, to examine how the post-EU-accession migration has influenced the writing of Polish migrants, and secondly, to explore the new insights this writing provides in the fields of literary, sociological, and migration studies.

The thesis was originally intended as a book, but since it was funded by various research grants, the findings needed to be published on a regular basis. This influenced its format: the chapters were adapted to meet the requirements of different journals and monographs. Nevertheless, the seven publications that comprise this thesis correspond to the original chapters, and collectively offer a coherent and comprehensive analysis of Polish migration writing in the UK and Ireland since 2004. All papers were published in prestigious journals or by reputable publishing houses in Poland, Ireland, the UK, Germany and Switzerland between 2016 and 2023. The overarching question these publications address is: How has the post-2004 migration of Polish people to the UK and Ireland influenced their writing?

In an attempt to answer this, each paper within the thesis tackles more specific questions. The 2022 article, "Defining Migration Writing," published in the *Journal of Literary Theory*, explores how to define "migration writing" and outlines its research potential. The subsequent article, "Polish Migrant Literature in Britain and Ireland: Signs of a New Literary Trend?" published in the 2016 issue of *Zeitschrift fur Slavische Philologie*, investigates whether the writing produced by Polish migrants in Britan and Ireland constitutes a new literary trend in Polish literature. The paper seeks to answer who the Polish migrant authors are and for whom they publish. While this text focuses mainly on authors publishing in Polish, the next article, "Liberated from Their Language: Polish Migrant Authors Publishing in English," included in the 2017 issue of *Open Cultural Studies*, presents Polish writers who publish their works in English. It analyses the challenges that these authors face when they attempt to establish themselves in the local literary markets, the strategies they employ to achieve recognition, and finally, how writing in a non-native language influences migrants' work.

What follows are three papers that examine literary representations of the countries central to this thesis: Poland, the UK, and Ireland. The chapter titled "A Country Constructed from Memories: Representations of Poland and Poles in Migrant Writing in the Twenty-First Century" is part of the 2023 monograph *Polish Culture in Britain*, edited by Maggie Ann Bowers and Ben Dew, and published by Palgrave. "The Contribution of Polish Writers to the

Brexit Debate" is included in the 2022 monograph *Brexit and the Migrant Voice: EU Citizens in Post-Brexit Literature and Culture*, edited by Christine Berberich and published by Routledge in London. It explores the pre- and post-Brexit representations of Britain and the British. "Turning the Foreign Land into a Homeland: The Representations of Ireland and the Irish in Polish Literature" is a chapter in *Ireland in the European Eye*, a 2019 book edited by Gisela Holfter and Bettina Migge, published by the Royal Irish Academy. These three chapters attempt to answer several questions: How do Polish migrants represent their country of birth (Poland) and their host country (the UK or Ireland)? What do these representations reveal about the attitudes of Polish migrants towards their home and host countries? What knowledge do these representations offer about Poland, Britain, and Ireland, and the interrelations between these countries? How have these depictions evolved over time? How do these portrayals perpetuate or dismantle stereotypes?

The concluding article of the thesis, titled "Writing by Poles in the UK and Ireland: The Transnational Turn in Polish Literature," was published in a 2018 issue of *Teksty Drugie*, a journal of the Literary Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The article examines how the new aspects of transnationalism – such as advances in transportation, the breaking down of barriers to the flow of people, the development of electronic media, and the globalisation of economic and social relationships – have influenced contemporary writings by Polish migrants. It addresses the questions: What insights does Polish migration writing provide on globalisation and multicultural societies? How does migration influence literature?

Overall, the thesis first defines the concept of "migration writing." Then it outlines the characteristic features of the migrants' works to determine whether they can be considered a new literary trend. Subsequently, it introduces Polish migrant writers in the UK and Ireland and attempts to identify their intended readership. From there, the thesis goes on to examine the representations of home and host countries in the works of Polish migrants to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, the dynamics of migration, multiculturalism and global processes triggered by migration. The final part of the thesis summarises how living between two countries has influenced migrants' writing.

To finance my research, I initiated and designed a project entitled *Polish Emigration Literature in Ireland and Great Britain since 2004*,[2] which received funding from the National Science Centre. This project, which we carried out with Prof. Jerzy Jarniewicz from 2011 to 2015, aimed to establish whether migration experiences have influenced writers' production

[2] *Polska literatura emigracyjna w Irlandii i Wielkiej Brytanii po roku* 2004, DEC-2011/01/B/HS2/05120.

and to find out how these experiences have been expressed in literature. As part of this endeavour, I set up a virtual archive that presents our findings, accessible at http://archiwum-emigracja.uni.lodz.pl/en/. The follow-up research was made possible thanks to small grants for young researchers from the Ministry of Higher Education in Poland, which I received in 2015, 2016, and 2018. The funding that enabled me to complete the study came from two grants led by Prof. Karolina Prykowska-Michalak, *Theatrical Heritage of Polish Migrants: Interdisciplinary Research on Polish Culture Abroad*, [3] and *Digital Atlas of Polish Theatrical Heritage Abroad*, [4] both of which I have participated in as an investigator. Bringing together funding from a variety of sources gave me the opportunity to design and conduct a large-scale, longitudinal study of contemporary Polish migration writing, the results of which are presented in this thesis.

Mapping the methodology

My research was mainly qualitative in its nature, but also incorporated some quantitative elements. The design included five main stages: conducting surveys and interviews, compiling the bibliography, analysing the collected texts, and integrating secondary sources.

In the initial phase of the study, surveys and interviews were carried out with Polish migrant authors, Polish associations in the UK and Ireland, as well as British and Irish writers who had written about Polish migration. Three distinct questionnaires were prepared to collect data from these different groups of respondents. The questionnaire for Polish writers (see Appendix 2) aimed to gather a wide range of information about the writers' migration experiences, their creative endeavours, and their literary involvement. It provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by Polish authors living abroad and their contributions to various literary and cultural landscapes. The questionnaire for associations (see Appendix 3) was addressed to organisations that associate Polish migrant authors and promote their works. It was structured to gather information on the role and activities of these organisations and how they support Polish migrant writers. Finally, the questionnaire for Irish and British writers (see Appendix 4) was devised to investigate local perceptions of Polish migrants and their integration into host countries. It explored Irish and British writers'

[3] *Teatralne dziedzictwo polskich migrantów. Interdyscyplinarne badania kultury polskiej za granicą,* NdS/538415/2021/2022.
[4] *Cyfrowy atlas polskiego dziedzictwa teatralnego poza krajem*, NPRH/DN/SP/0040/2023/12.

connections with Poland, their views on migration, and the portrayal of Polish migrants in their literary works.

After completing the questionnaires, the respondents participated in in-depth, open-ended interviews. These conversations allowed me, among other things, to learn more about the writers' inspirations, their texts, literary activity and lives. They also gave me a better understanding of the motivations for and implications of post-2004 migration. Overall, I interviewed fifteen Polish migrant writers[5] and fifteen members of institutions or associations.[6] To provide a local perspective, five British and three Irish writers, who had written about the migration of Polish people to their respective countries, were asked to complete questionnaires and were subsequently interviewed.[7] All of these interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed between 2012 and 2016. Some have also been edited and published.[8] Although the selection of both writers and institutions relied on convenience sampling, the sample was diverse and large enough to draw valuable conclusions. Additionally, I attended the book launches of seven Polish migrant authors, which included readings and interviews. After these events, I had enriching follow-up conversations with the writers.[9]

The questionnaires and interviews gave me a better understanding of the wider socio-political, cultural, and historical contexts for my research. They also helped me to adjust my initial research questions and formulate hypotheses. But most of all, they allowed me to compile a bibliography of migration works, which is the main subject of analysis in my thesis.

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[5] The following authors filled out the questionnaires and were subsequently interviewed: Agnieszka Bednarska (2013), Marta Brassart (2012), Piotr Czerwiński (2012), Wioletta Grzegorzewska (2012), Maria Jastrzębska (2012), Piotr Kasjas (2012, 2013), Marek Kazmierski (2012), Jan Krasnowolski (2016), Tomasz Mielcarek (2012, 2016), Anna Maria Mickiewicz (2012), Adam Siemieńczyk (2012), Tomasz Wybranowski (2012), Anna Wolf (2012), Aleksy Wróbel (2016), Magdalena Zimny-Louis (2012). The years in brackets indicate when each interview was conducted. Some respondents were interviewed twice.

[6] I visited and interviewed members of various institutions and associations in both the UK and Ireland. In the UK, these included: Instytut Polski w Londynie (Polish Cultural Institute in London), Ognisko Polskie (The Polish Hearth), Polski Ośrodek Społeczno-Kulturalny w Londynie (The Center for Polish Arts and Culture in London), Polskie Towarzystwo Naukowe na Obczyźnie, Związek Pisarzy Polskich na Obczyźnie, Głos Polskiej Kultury, Koło Młodych Poetów KaMPe, Poezja Londyn, Literary Waves Publishing House, OFF-Press Publishing House. In Ireland, I visited: Biblary, Polska Ambasada w Dublinie (Polish Embassy in Dublin), Polski Ośrodek Społeczno-Kulturalny w Dublinie (The Center for Polish Arts and Culture in Dublin), Polish Theatre Ireland, Towarzystwo Irlandzko-Polskie (Irish Polish Society). The above institutions were first visited in 2012. Some of them were revisited between 2013 and 2016 to update the research material. Much help was also received from both the Irish Embassy in Warsaw and Beata Karbownik, whose blog *Beti Czyta* presents books written by migrants.

[7] These authors included: Uilleam Blacker (2016), Polly Courtney (2012), Joanna Czechowska (2012), Marina Lewycka (2012), Nicola Werenowska (2016), Chris Binchy (2012), Dermot Bolger (2012), Roddy Doyle (2012).

[8] The publications include interviews with Uilleam Blacker, Dermot Bolger, Joanna Czechowska, Roddy Doyle, Wioletta Grzegorzewska, Tomasz Mielcarek, and Anna Wolf.

[9] I attended the book launches of Tomasz Mielcarek (Łódź, 2013), Łucja Fice (Łódź, 2014), Daniel Żuchowski (Dublin, 2014), Agnieszka Bednarska and Ada Johnson (Gloucester, 2018), Wioletta Grzegorzewska and Agnieszka Dale (Portsmouth, 2019).

The bibliography, listed in Appendix 1, covers 215 works of prose, poetry, drama and non-fiction published in print (or, in the case of drama texts, written and staged) between 2004 and 2024. Although the predominant language of these writings is Polish, several works were published in English or in bilingual Polish-English volumes. That a particular work is available in English is indicated in brackets in the bibliography. The works were published (or staged) in Poland, Ireland or the UK and were written by either: Poles living in the UK or Ireland; Polish migrants who lived and worked temporarily in the UK or Ireland; or Polish authors whose relatives or friends migrated to the UK or Ireland. To describe these works, various terms are used interchangeably throughout the thesis, including "migration writing," "migrant writing," "migrants' writing," "migrant literature," "migration narratives," "migrants' narratives," "migration works," "migrants' works."

Although books by British and Irish authors that deal with Polish post-accession migration provide important context for my research, they are not the primary focus of analysis in this thesis. Another significant source of contextual material, but not a subject of thorough examination, is digital migration writing published on the Internet. Additionally, adaptations of existing Polish plays, even though they were staged by migrant theatres (for example, Julia Holewińska's *Bubble Revolution* or Radosław Paczocha's *Scent of Chocolate*, both produced by Polish Theatre Ireland but written by playwrights living in Poland) are excluded from the research material. As the thesis focuses on written dramatic texts rather than theatrical productions, the bibliography includes only the plays that are authored by Polish migrants.

While compiling the bibliography, I simultaneously read and analysed the works to identify the key themes, motifs, symbols, narrative structures, and linguistic choices. Then these elements were categorised into larger groups to highlight the recurring topics, narrative patterns, character types, distinctive features of migrant dialects, representations, and so forth. This content and thematic study was followed by a contextual analysis, in which the migration works were examined in literary, demographic, psychological, linguistic, cultural, sociological, historical, political, and anthropological contexts.

Literary theory has been instrumental in describing concepts such as "migration writing" (Deleuze and Guattari, Filipowicz, Ganeri, Mardorossian) or the "literary trend" (Fokkema, Głowiński, Kronfeld, Opacki). Demographic studies have helped to describe the Polish literary scene in the UK and Ireland (ONS, CSO, Burrell). Psychological research has shed light on the motivations behind migrant writers' attempts to publish in English (Baumeister, Leary). Research on bilingualism, multilingualism and translation (Altarriba,

Jarniewicz, Pennycook) has been useful in analysing the language used in migration narratives. Cultural critiques of representation and memory laid the foundation for chapters discussing migrants' representations of home and host countries (Hall, Moscovici, Höijer, A. Assmann, J. Assmann). Sociological and political studies on migration, multiculturalism, globalisation, and Brexit provided analytical tools for interpreting migration works (Hayton, Henderson, Jancewicz, Kloc-Nowak, Steger, Slany, White). The historical context deepened the understanding of themes, motifs and symbols in migration writing and their evolution (Barker, Davis, Kaliński, Jankowski). Anthropological research helped to trace the impact of transnationalism on literature (Vertovec, Lima). In addition, the methodologies that provided important lenses for interpreting migration narratives included postcolonial criticism (Bhabha, Kołodziejczyk, Said), feminist criticism (Fidelis, Ksieniewicz, Titkow), cultural studies (Hall) memory studies (Anton, A. Assmann, Locke), and the sociology of literature (Burge, Durkheim, Jay).

In analysing the migrants' works, I sought out their biographical notes, interviews and podcasts, as well as reviews of their work, articles on migrant writing and Polish migration to Ireland and the UK. These materials were gathered from a variety of newspapers, magazines, journals and websites. The sources included, among others, *Cooltura* (a Polish-language magazine published weekly in the UK between 2004 and 2018), *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Gazeta.pl*, *The New York Times*, *Guardian*, *Irish Times*, *Dziennik Polski*, *Boundless Magazine*, *Wasafiri*, *Litro Magazine*, *Stylist*, *YouTube*, *Emigranglia.com*, the writers' and publishers' websites. This collection of materials allowed me to cross-check and supplement the findings derived from the primary data.

The research scope is centred on Ireland and the United Kingdom since these countries were the most popular destinations for Polish migrants when Poland joined the European Union in 2004. In contrast to the majority of EU15 states, which implemented transitional arrangements to restrict migration from poorer countries, Ireland, the UK and Sweden opened their labour markets to new member states.[10] But despite its open borders, Sweden attracted a notably smaller number of migrants compared to the other two countries (Zaiceva 2014, 2). As a result, the scale, dynamics, and impact of Polish migration – including its influence on literature – have been far greater in Ireland and the UK than in other European countries.

[10] In May 2004, eight Central and Eastern European countries (EU8) joined the European Union (EU15): the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, as well as Cyprus and Malta. Bulgaria and Romania (EU2) followed in January 2007, and Croatia joined in July 2013. To hinder large waves of migration from the poorer countries, the EU15 members introduced transitional arrangements to restrict the free movement of workers from the new member states. Only Ireland, Sweden, and the UK opened their labour markets to EU8 workers from the beginning.

Migration of Polish people to the UK and Ireland

The United Kingdom was a well-known destination for Polish migrants long before the era of post-EU-accession migration. Dating back to the nineteenth century, there have been several waves of Polish migration to Britain. The first major influx occurred after the November Uprising in 1831. This armed rebellion against the Russian Empire in partitioned Poland forced a number of rebels to seek refuge in England. The defeat of the January Uprising (1863-1864), the next Polish insurrection against Russian rule, led to a further influx of Polish political exiles to Britain. Another large wave of Poles came during World War II.[11] They travelled to the UK as military émigrés and joined the British forces to fight against the Nazis. Although the war ended, the decisions made at the Yalta Conference resulted in what was essentially Russia's occupation of Poland. As the Poles were unable to return safely to their homeland, the British Parliament enacted the Polish Resettlement Bill in 1947. This legislation permitted Poles to remain in the UK. The result was that, as evidenced by 1951 UK census, about 162,000 Polish people settled in Britain (Burrell 2002, 59). The post-war imposition of the communist government in Poland led to political repression, the lack of civil liberties, and economic stringency. The regime targeted political opponents, intellectuals, former members of the Polish armed forces who had fought against the Nazis, and in the 1960s, the Jewish minority, forcing many to flee. There was also a modest economic migration to the UK, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s when passport regulations were slightly liberalised in Poland.[12]

However, compared to previous waves of migration, the influx following Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 was unprecedented. According to the reports by the Office for National Statistics, the number of Polish nationals living in the UK skyrocketed from around 69,000 in 2004 to 853,000 in 2014 and 984,000 in 2016 (Hawkins et al. 2016, 4). Since these figures exclude Polish migrants who have obtained British citizenship or the children of Polish migrants born in the UK, it is estimated that there were about one million Polish nationals living in the UK in 2016 (Garapich 2019, 13; Pędziwiatr et al. 2018, 2), which accounts for 1.4% of the UK population (Hawkins et al. 2016, 7). The Brexit referendum

[11] "Wielka emigracja," Encyklopedia PWN, accessed June 5, 2024, https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Wielka-Emigracja;3995636.html; "Klęska powstania i Wielka Emigracja," Zintegrowana Platforma Edukacyjna Ministerstwa Edukacji Narodowej, accessed 5 June 2024, https://zpe.gov.pl/a/przeczytaj/D128rGQLH?prevProjects=P4QTvnjsD

[12] Edward Kołodziej, "Emigracja zarobkowa z ziem polskich," Wirtualny Sztetl, Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich POLIN w Warszawie, accessed 5 June 2024, https://sztetl.org.pl/pl/slownik/emigracja-zarobkowa-z-ziem-polskich

shifted this trend: in 2016, more Poles returned to Poland than migrated to the UK (Kisiel et al. 2019, 134). The most recent statistics, as of 2021, report 696,000 Polish residents in the UK. This decline can be explained in two ways: while some migrants returned to Poland or moved to other countries, others acquired British citizenship and are no longer counted as Polish nationals. If the number of British passport applications from Polish migrants stood below 2,000 in 2011, it surged to 6,200 in 2016 (Pędziwiatr et al. 2018, 2). As a result, official data fails to fully capture what can be considered the Polish population of the UK. Although Poland has dropped from the first place in the 2021 statistics, exceeded by nationals from India, it remains the top country of citizenship among foreign nationals in the UK (Stickney 2021).

Unlike Britain, Ireland hosted only a handful of Polish residents until the end of the 20th century. The country was simply too impoverished to attract significant migration. Moreover, for a long time there were no diplomatic relations between Poland and Ireland. Despite overtures from the communist government in Warsaw, Ireland maintained relations with the Polish government-in-exile until 1958. Due to Soviet repression and persecution in Poland, the Irish government did not recognise the communist regime. It was not until democracy was restored in Poland in 1989 that the Irish government opened an office in Warsaw, and a Polish embassy was established in Dublin in 1991 (Keown 2015, 97). As a result, the Polish community in Ireland comprised individuals who often settled there by accident. It included a small group of post-WWII immigrants, who mostly relocated from the UK, and young Polish people who came to study at Irish universities, either from the UK or Poland, during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1977, the Jesuit Fr. Klaus Cieszyński scoured the phone books for Polish surnames and found only 37 people. He reached out to them and organised a meeting, which sparked the idea of establishing the Irish Polish Society (Towarzystwo Irlandzo-Polskie): it was formed in 1979 prior to the visit of Pope John Paul II in Ireland. Hanna Dowling briefly introduces this group in “Polish immigrants in 20th century Ireland.” Among its members were Jan Łukasiewicz, who began teaching at the Royal Irish Academy in 1946 and later became head of its Logic Department; Andrzej Wejchert, the architect who won the competition to design a new campus for the University College Dublin in 1964; or Henryk Lebioda, an engineer who was a founder and long-time president of the Irish Polish Society (Dowling 2012, 20-21).

In 2002, the general census revealed that 2,137 Polish citizens were living in Ireland. During that same year, 2,645 newcomers from Poland applied for the Personal Public Service (PPS) number, which is necessary to take up legal employment in the country. This brings the

total number of Polish residents in Ireland to 4,782 in 2002. In the following years, the influx of Polish newcomers increased and reached its peak in 2006 when 93,364 Poles had the PPS number issued (Kloc-Nowak 2019, 33). However, data analysis indicated that there were many more Poles present in the country who did not obtain the PPS number. Estimates suggested that approximately 200,000 Polish people were residing in Ireland in 2006, constituting about 5% of the Irish population (Szast 2023, 101).

The 2008 financial crisis led to a breakdown in public finances and a surge in unemployment in Ireland. Contrary to expectations, this did not trigger a significant wave of Poles returning to their homeland, but it did alter the dynamics of their migration. Since 2009, more Poles have been leaving Ireland than arriving. The 2016 census conducted by the Central Statistics Office documents 131,788 people with Polish citizenship, including 9,273 individuals who have both Polish and Irish passports (Kloc-Nowak 2019, 37). According to the most recent census, held in 2022, the number of Poles has further declined and now stands at 106,143 (Central Statistics Office 2022). However, the number of people with dual Polish and Irish citizenship has increased significantly to 80,636 (CSO 2022). These figures suggest that there are now 186,779 residents in Ireland who have a Polish passport. The rise in dual citizenship indicates that many Polish migrants have integrated into local society and may never return to live in Poland.

The scale of Polish post-accession migration to Ireland and Britain surprised all countries involved. Before the UK opened its labour market to new member states, including Poland, it was estimated that the total number of all EU migrants arriving in the country each year would be 13,000 (Duszczyk and Wiśniewski 2006, 8). As the extent of Polish migration turned out to be much larger than anticipated, so was its impact. While the demographic, economic, sociological, political, historical, anthropological and geographic implications of post-2004 migration have been well researched and documented, there is still relatively little written about the impact of this most recent Polish migration on literature.

Literary research on Polish migration writing

That literary studies have not yet formed a significant part of migration research is evidenced by *Raport o stanie badań nad migracjami w Polsce po 1989 roku* (The Report on Migration Research in Poland since 1989), published in 2018 by the Committee on Migration Research of Polish Academy of Sciences. In addressing the limitations of this publication, its editors, Anna Horolets, Magdalena Lesińska and Marek Okólski, note that: “The report fails to present all the academic fields and subfields that have studied migration processes in recent

years. Important disciplines that are missing include literary studies, linguistics, intercultural psychology, law, pedagogy, international relations and culture studies" (Horolets et al. 2018, 18).[13]

In the introduction to the report, Horolets, Lesińska and Okólski observe that the recent growth of interest in migration from and into Poland has resulted in a large number of research projects and publications in various fields, ranging from law to literature. Apart from the obvious advantages, this enormous, still growing number of researchers and materials has its dangers, one of which is the fragmentation of migration studies. Different fields and subfields are becoming more specialised and, in effect, autonomous. A corollary of this tendency can be what Horolets and her colleagues term "the forcing of the open door": the theories, methodologies and findings that are old and well-researched in one field can be presented as something new and groundbreaking in another. Not only does this hinder the development of migration studies, but it also renders them a less reliable source of information for policymakers, the media and public opinion.

This is why Horolets, Lesińska and Okólski, among many other scholars, are determined proponents of linking up different fields, subfields and research perspectives. In pursuit of this goal, the Committee on Migration Research of Polish Academy of Sciences (KBnM PAN) undertook the spectacular task of creating a database which encompasses publications, research projects, academic institutions and researchers engaged in the study of Polish international migration since 1989. This extensive database provided the foundation for the abovementioned *Raport o stanie badań nad migracjami w Polsce po 1989 roku*; a publication whose main aim is to draft an interdisciplinary map of contemporary migration studies in Poland. While the report devotes separate chapters to migration research in fields such as demography, economics, sociology, political science, history, anthropology and geography, the field of literature is only briefly discussed in the introduction.

In order to add some new lines to the map of migration studies and to situate my PhD thesis within a broader context, this section outlines the contours of literary research on Polish migration writing. The focus is on the critical works discussing the Polish migration literature in the UK and Ireland since 2004. These works include a 2016 issue of *Teksty Drugie* subtitled "Migrant literature," nine book chapters, and six journal articles. However, the section's range

[13] "W raporcie nie udało się przedstawić wszystkich dyscyplin i subdyscyplin naukowych, które w ostatnich latach zajmują się procesami migracji. Wśród ważnych nieobecnych są literaturoznawstwo, lingwistyka, psychologia międzykulturowa, prawo, pedagogika, stosunki międzynarodowe, kulturoznawstwo." Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Polish are by Joanna Kosmalska

of reference is much wider, as it alludes to the more general theoretical criticism of Polish migration writing as well as to the books and articles on contemporary literature produced by Poles in Germany, Canada, and the United States. By teasing out certain issues from the critical works under discussion, my aim is to briefly sketch out the research developments, indicate scholars working in the field, and identify some of the gaps that my own research and publications fill.

The section is quite long because it attempts to provide an exhaustive overview of critical studies on contemporary Polish migration writing in the UK and Ireland. Such extensive coverage is possible since there is still a relatively limited number of publications on the subject. However, the process of mapping this subfield is far from complete. As more and more scholars – both in Poland and abroad, and across different disciplines – analyse literary production inspired by migration, it is simply impossible to draw up a closed list of names and titles. Nevertheless, the body of criticism presented in this section is comprehensive enough to provide insight into the main strands of criticism on contemporary Polish migration writing.

The starting point for my map is the 2016 issue of *Teksty Drugie*, subtitled "Literatura migracyjna" ("Migrant Literature"). The Polish edition was translated into English and published in 2018. The volume opens with Anna Nasiłowska's exploration of the differences between émigré literature and migration literature. Nasiłowska notes that the context of émigré writing was political, while contemporary migration writing is rooted in global culture. This dissimilarity apart, she asserts, there are many analogies between the two: one of them is the attention to cultural difference.

In a subsequent article, Dariusz Nowicki offers a critical reconnaissance of migration prose, drawing upon twenty books. His initial examination of the selected novels and short story collections aims to establish a typology of migration prose. By the end of his article, he sets out the criteria by which he distinguishes three types of migration writing: (1) "lament" prose, documenting the often harsh lives of migrants; (2) the prose of "ambitious Polish women," featuring successful stories of women who moved to the British Isles; and (3) informative-formative prose, recounting the experiences of young migrants who left their homeland in search of adventures and enjoyment.

What all these types of migration writing have in common, Mieczysław Dąbrowski argues, is a rebellion against Romantic ideals, such as the Messianic role of the Polish nation or the necessary sacrifice of individual happiness for the wellbeing of the nation. The migrants' defiance of the national ethos is the point of departure for Dąbrowski's analysis of

Polish migration writing in the light of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's notion of a minor literature, that is, a literature written in a major language by a minority group that engages in polemics with the mainstream political and social assumptions. Dąbrowski's central thesis is that Polish migration literature, created in revolt against the Romantic code and in the context of a foreign country, can be seen as a contemporary form of Polish "minor literature."

While Nowicki and Dąbrowski provide an overview of migration prose, Anna Kałuża focuses on migration poetry. Her study of books by eleven migrant poets concludes that Polish migration poetry has much more in common with the conservative movements than with avant-garde or progressive ones. Instead of being engaged in the political and social activity, it is rooted in the conviction that "poetry is a matter of personal sensitivity, autobiographical confession and nostalgic recollections of the past" (2018, 163).

The broad outline of migration writing is completed by Elwira Grossman, who discusses nine plays that tackle the topic of Polish migration to the UK or were performed by Polish migrants. She analyses the content, psychology and reception of each play in order to identify their common characteristics, such as "emphatic imagination" (the capacity to deeply understand someone else's situation), bilingualism or multilingualism, and transculturalism. Grossman puts forth the thesis that we may be witnessing the emergence of a new culture, which is similar to the formation of Chicano culture that arose from the blending of American culture, languages and traditions with those of Mexican and Spanish origins. Since Chicano has earned its own name and separate fields of study, Grossman suggests that globalisation processes might lead to the formation of a new transnational culture.

This transnational culture is closely linked to a new vision of the world that Dorota Kołodziejczyk calls "cosmopolitics." Shaped by the forces of globalisation, this vision is characterised by intermittent nomadism, global capitalism, an emphasis on locality and the transcending of national and ethnic borders and identities. Using Piotr Czerwiński's fiction as a case study, Kołodziejczyk explores how contemporary mobility goes beyond the traditional nation/migration dichotomy. She situates her discussion of "cosmopolitics" in migration writing at the intersection of post-dependence and postcolonial studies.

Tomasz Dobrogoszcz also employs postcolonial theory – specifically Homi Bhabha's concepts of colonial stereotype, mimicry and hybridity – to critically examine the stereotypical representations of Poles that have dominated perceptions of Polish migrants in Britain. These stereotypes, Dobrogoszcz argues, play an influential role in the formation of migrants' identity.

The discussion of identity, both individual and collective, is continued by Joanna Ślósarska, who observes that migrants repeatedly use self-narration as a tool to comprehend, interpret and adapt to the host society. In the process, they forge new social and family identities.

Anna Kronenberg further develops this argument, suggesting that the autobiographical narrative becomes a way for some migrant women to reclaim their voice and sense of self. In addition to self-narration, Kronenberg examines a number of related issues, including the formation of women's communities aboard, the reproduction of female stereotypes, different types of female migration, and traumatic events shared by migrant women.

Migrants' traumas, as well as painful memories, are the focus of Borbála Faragó's article. In it, she investigates manifestations of memory, especially of traumatic or painful events, in the poetry of Wioletta Grzegorzewska to see how they affect the process of identity formation.

A further investigation into the darker sides of labour migration is conducted by Kris Heuckelom. His astute analysis of Agata Wawryniuk's graphic novel *Rozmówki polsko-angielskie* (Polish-English Phrase Book) leads him to the conclusion that the experience of labour migration, despite its doom and gloom, may have the potential for positive outcomes. The story of Agata Wawryniuk serves as a case in point. While her trip to the UK revolves largely around performing the so-called 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous and dull), which are way below the level of her qualifications, her graphic novel about these experiences turns her into a well-known and critically acclaimed author in Poland.

A similar paradox is noted by Dirk Uffelmann. He argues that Polish migrant writers, especially men, tend to denigrate their protagonists or themselves in order to garner recognition as artists. Uffelmann uses the term "self-proletarianization" (2018, 201) to describe this paradoxical mechanism of elevating oneself through the portrayal of economic self-degradation. He traces examples of "self-proletarianization" not only in the literary texts, but also in the biographical notes and blurbs of books published by Polish migrants living in the UK and Germany.

Małgorzata Zduniak-Wiktorowicz, in turn, examines the writing of Polish migrants in Germany and the UK to compare their life circumstances and literary production. Her study reveals some differences, such as the context of migration, and many more similarities, such as autobiographical elements in the narratives, the perspective of the Other, living in-between countries and cultures, and "the climate of the impossible." Zduniak-Wiktorowicz describes "the impossible" as "the incredible events (e.g., supernatural, imagined histories, nightmares,

etc.), strange, unsettling, emotive characters (such as "evil people," demons, madmen, wise-men who have come to terms with their lot and are hiding terrible secrets, dissenters, and those with dual identities, e.g., sexual) and narrative forms which are intended to carry across a well-known tale of self-realization in a space where anything can happen" (2018, 247). She traces the literary convention of "the impossible," which presents real events of migrant life in a surreal light, in the books of migrant writers in both Germany and the UK.

Another compelling example of a comparative study is Declan Kiberd's article, which examines the various points of intersection between Polish and Irish migration and how these are expressed in literature. After an insightful analysis, Kiberd sadly concludes that Irish society is now more atomised than in the past, the telling sign of which are gated communities in cities designed to protect people from unintended encounters. His overall observation is that, despite globalisation and mass migration, it is harder for people to meet and interact with "the other." The result is that in Europe "(n)arrow nationalisms are on the rise, as a response to economic insecurity but also to the compulsory internationalism of the later twentieth century, which offered little more than a glib consumerism" (2018, 130). Kiberd hopes for a thinker and writer of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's genius to show Europeans the new ways of thinking about the "European project."

One of the fundamental tensions in the "Europen project" has been the relationship between the West and the East. Barbara Korte, Eva Urlike Priker and Sissy Helff draw attention to this issue by titling their 2010 monograph *Facing the East in the West*: *Images of Eastern Europe in British Literature, Film and Culture.* In this book, Joanna Rostek and Dirk Uffelmann slightly recast the question once posed by Gayatari Chakravorty Spivak and ask in chapter 20: "Can the Polish Migrant Speak?" (2010, 311) To answer this question, they examine, among other things, a selection of novels and short stories written by Polish migrants. They register a variety of migrant voices and different ways in which they are allowed to be heard in Britain and Poland. What they infer from the works they analyse is that one of the most natural ways to give "subaltern" migrants a voice is to provide a common ground on which the newcomers can build communication and cooperation with local people and institutions.

Rostek and Uffelmann's collaboration, which began with a conference they organised in 2009, resulted first in the abovementioned article and then in the 2011 post-conference book on *Contemporary Polish Migrant Culture and Literature in Germany, Ireland and the UK*, jointly edited by both scholars. The articles in the book are grouped around the three countries specified in the title. The sections on Ireland and the UK open with an article by

Dirk Uffelmann on "Self-Orientalisation in Narratives by Polish Migrants." Drawing on Edward Said's *Orientalism*, in which the Palestinian-American author notes that people from the East tend to be portrayed as mysterious, exotic, dangerous and barbaric, Uffelmann defines "self-Orientalisation" in his chapter as "the cultural self-definition of migrants from Slavic countries (…): the ironic, sarcastic, subversive stylization of people from the East as barbarian, uncivilized, and wild" (2011, 107). He traces the use of this device in the works of Polish migrants and observes that it is more prevalent among male writers than among female ones.

The subsequent chapter, authored by Urszula Chowaniec, analyses novels by migrant women in light of Julia Kristeva's theory to illustrate how exclusion can, on the one hand, destabilise identity, and on the other, facilitate the construction of a new identity. Chowaniec argues that there has been a shift from stable to variable identity and highlights the importance of glocality in this process.

The themes of identity and self-orientalisation are taken up again by Kinga Olszewska, whose chapter investigates the in-betweeness of Polish migrants' lives and their varying degrees of identification with Polishness. Alfred Gall contributes an additional layer to her analysis: he examines the same novels as Olszewska – Iwona Słabuszewska-Krauze's *Hotel Irlandia* and Magdalena Orzeł's *Dublin, moja polska karma* – but concentrates on the international nature of both books. He notes that the works in question record the transcending of national distinctions and the emergence of a "culture of internationality" in global society (196).

The articles by Dirk Uffelmann, mentioned earlier, were translated into Polish and incorporated into his 2020 book *Polska literatura postkolonialna* (Postcolonial Polish Literature). This publication offers an interpretation of Polish literary works through the lens of postcolonial theory. The sixth chapter, entitled "W obliczu migracji*"* (In the Face of Migration), is devoted to the writings of post-EU-accession migrants. In one of the subsections, entitled "Wrong Sex and the City. Polska migracja zarobkowa i męskość podrzędna" ("Wrong Sex and the City: Polish Work Migration and Subaltern Masculinity"), Uffelmann highlights the impact of migration on the reconfiguration of male roles and the challenges posed by the social degradation of migrants. He analyses a number of novels and short stories and reaches the conclusion that the migrant men, who work below their qualifications and lack fluency in English, fill in the role of the "unheard subaltern" in host societies.

"Wrong Sex and the City" was initially published in the 2013 book, titled *Polish Literature in Transformation*, edited by Ursula Phillips, Kris Van Heuckelom, and Knut Andreas Grimstad. In this volume, echoes of Uffelmann's observations resonate in Kris Van Heuckelom's chapter on "Polishness in Crisis? Migration and Inter-ethnic Coupling." As Heuckelom observes, it is common for male authors to portray Polish migrant men as those who experience different kinds of rejection and, as a result, feel marginalised in both diasporic and domestic spaces. On the contrary, for female characters, migration often signifies liberation from traditional gender roles imposed by patriarchal society in Poland. Consequently, male authors tend to portray migration as a form of downward social mobility, whereas women describe moving abroad as an upward social mobility.

Another important contribution to the debate on migration writing is Elwira Grossman's chapter entitled "Transnational or Bi-cultural? Challenges in Reading post-1989 Drama 'Written outside the Nation'." By conducting a thorough analysis of two migration plays – Janusz Głowacki's *Antigone in New York* (1992) and Catherine Grosvenor *Cherry Blossom* (2008) – Grossman singles out key features of intercultural drama. The last chapter in *Polish Literature in Transformation* devoted to migration writing is Urszula Chowaniec's "(E)Migration and Displacement: Melancholy as a Subversive Gesture in Prose by Women," which was subsequently incorporated in her 2015 monograph *Melancholic Migrating Bodies in Contemporary Polish Women's Writing.*

In this book, Urszula Chowaniec examines short stories and novels published by Polish women writers since the beginning of the democratic transition in Poland in 1989. What binds together the literary works selected by Chowaniec are the recurring and developing themes of migration (in its various forms, such as asylum-seeking, labour migration or modern nomadism), portrayals of the "ruined" body that is partial or in decay (2015, 8), and melancholy stemming from political and cultural oppression, historical transformations or social changes. Chowaniec is interested in the subversive potential of these "ruined" cultural images of the body as melancholic ways of challenging tradition and normative culture.

Another point on the map of migration literary critique is Mieczysław Dąbrowski's *Tekst międzykulturowy* (Intercultural Text), in which the author traces the evolution of emigration narratives. Instead of analysing migration works separately, Dąbrowski recommends addressing them as a whole – as a "joint migration text,"[14] as a "collective work

[14] "łączny tekst migracyjny"

of art."[15] He introduces the notion of the "intercultural text"[16] as opposed to "'classic' émigré literature"[17] (2016, 11) and defines it as a work written between (at least) two national cultures that originates from the writer's experience of home and foreign cultures (2016, 86). The intercultural text is written from the perspective of a migrant who, unlike an emigrant or immigrant, constantly moves between two countries and cultures.

The centrality of movement in migration writing is discussed by Przemysław Czapliński in his introduction to *Poetyka migracji* (The Poetics of Migration), the 2013 book he co-edited with Renata Makarska and Marta Tomczok. The authors of the individual chapters explore a variety of concepts, including heterotopia,[18] collective memory, transitivity, in-betweenness, "the third space," nomadism and interculturality. The scholars illustrate these ideas with reference to the literary works of Polish migrants who fled the Communist Poland in the 1980s. In their analysis, they employ a range of methods, including memory studies, sociolinguistics, gender studies, cultural geography, and postcolonialism. Their overall attempt is to craft a new research perspective for analysing migration writing. They define "the poetics of migration" in three ways: firstly, as a set of features that are typical of migration works; secondly, as a transdisciplinary research perspective; and thirdly, as the process of creating oneself anew because migration forces the migrants to form a new self. After all, they need to find a new job, learn a new language and culture, adjust to the new society and place.

As it engages with similar topics and often yields similar conclusions, *Poetyka migracji* can be seen as a continuation of the discussion initiated by the authors of *Narracje migracyjne w literaturze polskiej XX i XXI wieku* (Migration Narratives in Polish Literature in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Century), the 2012 post-conference book edited by Hanna Gosk. In the opening chapter, Dorota Kołodziejczyk explores the fundamental issues of migration – such as hyphenated identities, transcending borders, hybridity, cultural translation, cosmopolitanism, and globalisation among many others – through the lens of postcolonial theory and literature. She skilfully captures the fluidity and instability of the migration experience.

[15] "dzieło wspólne"
[16] "tekst międzykulturowy"
[17] "klasyczna literatura emigracyjna"
[18] Heterotopia is a concept introduced by Michel Foucault to describe certain cultural, institutional and discursive spaces that are somehow "other": disturbing, intense, incompatible, contradictory or transformative. Heterotopias are worlds within worlds, reflecting and yet upsetting what is outside. Foucault offers various examples, including ships, cemeteries, bars, brothels, prisons, gardens of antiquity, fairs, Muslim baths, among others.

Dorota Kołodziejczyk's chapter is part of the section titled "Kategorie. Translacje. Reinterpretacje" (Categories. Translations. Reinterpretations) which gathers concepts (for instance, Małgorzata Czermińska writes about the constructing an "autobiographical place"[19] (2012, 44) and Dorota Kozicka analyses the "residency prose"[20] (2012, 91) of Polish writers who won the International Writing Program scholarship in the United States) and methods (for example postcolonial studies, post-dependence studies or new historicism) that may be employed to examine migrant narratives. The subsequent chapters focus on topics promised by their section titles: "Migracje animowane doświadczeniem II wojy światowej" (Migrations Inspired by World War II), "Narracje przesiedleńcze/osiedleńcze" (Narratives of Resettlement/Settlement), "Migracje żydowskie" (Jewish Migrations), "Doświadczenia migracyjne kobiet" (Migration Experiences of Women); and the closing section draws attention to the importance of "Przestrzenie" (Spaces) in migration literature.

The chapters by scholars already mentioned, such as Dorota Kołodziejczyk, Joanna Rostek, and Dirk Uffelmann, along with those to be discussed later in this section, including Martyna Bryla, are featured in the recent monograph *Polish Culture in Britain: Literature and History, 1772 to the Present* (2023), edited by Maggie Ann Bowers and Ben Dew. This book brings together historians and literary scholars to examine how historical events have shaped writing on Poland and *vice versa*. Broadly chronological in its structure, the publication offers coverage of Polish culture in the UK from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first.

In addition to the books, several articles shed light on the current dilemma surrounding contemporary migration writing. In "Możliwa historia literatury" (A Possible History of Literature, 2010), Ryszard Nycz recognises the need to create an innovative methodology to capture the complexity of modern multicultural, multilingual and multi-layered reality. Dorota Kołodziejczyk's "From Exile to Migrancy: Eastern and Central European Models of Cosmopolitical Writing" (2018) can be seen as a response to this need. Her article analyses, among other things, the shifting role of the writer within changing models of migration writing. Once Poland joined the EU in 2004, Kołodziejczyk aptly notes, the émigré writer no longer enacted the role of a national bard, and a new kind of writing emerged.

Jolanta Paterska makes a similar observation in her 2019 article "Modele polskiej prozy „unijnej". Próba klasyfikacji" (Models of Polish 'Union' Prose. An Attempt at Classification), in which she distinguishes three types of migration writing: intercultural, postcolonial, and contestatory. The intercultural model focuses on the adventures of young

[19] "miejsce autobiograficzne"
[20] "proza pobytowa"

people who describe the culture of the host country and reflect on questions of identity. The postcolonial model explores the dialectic of postcolonial liberation, in which oppressed migrants attempt to conquer the new country in order to transform themselves from the "colonised" to "colonisers." The contestatory model includes works that criticise dominant historical and political narratives, such as narrow-gauge nationalism or multiculturalism.

The study of similarities and dissimilarities between emigration and migration writing is furthered by the 2023 article "Pierwsza i ostatnia emigracja. Próba porównania" (The First and the Recent Emigration: A Comparative Attempt), in which Mieczysław Dąbrowski compares literary works depicting two economic emigrations: one from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the US and Brazil, and the other at the turn of the twenty-first century to Western Europe, primarily the UK and Ireland. Dąbrowski highlights several disparities, including authorship (the former migration was documented by positivist writers, whereas the latter is described by migrants themselves), concentration (modern-day migrants are more dispersed throughout the host country than their predecessors) and language (members of the forgoing diasporas sought to keep their Polish "pure," while contemporary migrants embrace multilingualism as a new mode of expression).

The intricacies of multilingualism are explored by Karolina Prykowska-Michalak and Izabela Grabarczyk in their 2023 article "'English with a Polish Accent and a Slight Touch of Irish': Multilingualism in Polish Migrant Theatre." This study analyses Kasia Lech's adaptations of two Polish plays, *Dziady/Forefather's Eve* and *Bubble Revolution*, for Irish and British audiences. The scholars examine bilingual and multilingual practices, including translation techniques and accent shifts, employed in the staging of these plays.

In their paper, Prykowska-Michalak and Grabarczyk allude to Kasia Lech's insights from "Acting as the act of translation. Domesticating and foreignizing strategies as part of the actor's performance in the Irish-Polish production of *Bubble Revolution*." This 2019 article highlights the underlying concepts behind the adaptation of *Bubble Revolution*, a monodrama written by Julia Holewińska and translated from Polish into English by Artur Zapałowski. The play was directed by John Currivan and starred Kasia Lech. In her paper, Kasia Lech delineates the various layers of translation that are employed in the staging of *Bubble Revolution*, including linguistic, contextual and performative.

The theme of translation also takes centre stage in Jerzy Jarniewicz's "Przekład a doświadczenie emigracji. Studium przypadku" (Translation and the Emigrant Experience. A Case Study, 2014). His astute analysis of Wioletta Grzegorzewska's poetry volume "Pamięć Smieny/ Smena's Memory," translated into English by Marek Kazmierski, illustrates how the

translator creates the author he is translating. In this case, as Jarniewicz aptly observes, the translator attempts to erase the poet's linguistic and cultural otherness so that her work appeals to the local readers in the UK.

Wioletta Grzegorzewska's poetry is the subject of Jakub Czernik's article "Koniec jako początek. Migracja i przekraczanie granic egzystencjalnych i tożsamościowych" (The End as a Beginning: Migration and the Crossing of the Borders of Existence and Identity, 2018). In it, he examines Grzegorzewska's 2017 volume *Czasy zespolone* alongside other works that touch on the theme of migration, such as Richard Flanagan's *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and Paul Auster's *4321*, to argue that moving to another country leaves a rift in the lives of migrants: many of them either end the old life and start anew, or lead two parallel lives, which inevitably shapes their identity.

An illustration of this process can be found in Magdalena Jaremek's article "Tożsamość współczesnych nomadów jako problem polskiej literatury migracyjnej" (The Identity of Contemporary Nomads as the Problem of Polish Migration Literature, 2017). Her study traces the formation of migrants' in-between identity, which is stretched between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. By the end of her article, Jaremek refers to Ewa M. Thompson's concept of the "surrogate hegemon" and further elaborates on this idea in her 2019 paper "Fantazmat zrealizowany a postkolonialny wstyd – polskie narracje migracyjne na Wyspach Brytyjskich" (A Fantasy Coming to Life and the Postcolonial Shame – Polish Migration Narration in the British Isles). At the root of the "surrogate hegemon" concept lies the observation that the shame and humiliation endured by Polish people at the hands of their occupiers during the Partitions in the eighteenth century and under Communism in the twentieth century led Poles to create a fantasy of the idealised West. Consequently, they came to perceive themselves as inferior to Western Europeans. Jaremek argues that despite political and economic transformation, Polish migrants are still struggling to overcome this ingrained inferiority complex.

One reason for this is that the new identity absorbs a person's past identity, as Martyna Bryla argues in her 2020 article "Weeding out the Roots? Migrant Identity in A.M. Bakalar's Polish-British Fiction." Focusing on the difficult relationship of Magda – the main protagonist in A.M. Bakalar's novel *Madame Mephisto* – with Poland, Bryla examines the role of national identity in the process of migrants' cultural adaptation in the host country. She observes that migrants' roots are too deep to be fully weeded out, even among those like Magda who openly wish to cut themselves off from their homeland.

The complex relationship of Polish migrants with their host country is investigated in "Rubble and Resurrection: Contextualising London in the Literature by Polish Migrants to the UK" (2013). In this article, Nora Plesske and Joanna Rostek explore the ambivalent attitude of Polish migrants towards London. On the one hand, the migrants portray the city as harsh, unforgiving and hostile; on the other, they describe it as a colourful and vibrant place full of opportunities.

A similar ambiguity marks the attitude of Poles towards the experience of migration, as Agnieszka Nęcka illustrates in her 2015 article "'Ostatni zgasi światło.' Polska proza po 2000 roku wobec problemu migracji unijnej" ("The Last One will Turn Off the Light." Polish Prose Written after 2000 with regard to the Problem of EU Migration). Nęcka explores how some migrants perceive moving abroad as an exciting adventure, while others see it "a necessary evil"(Nęcka 7).

Much the same themes and concepts, as those mentioned above, are explored in numerous critical studies of Polish migration writing from countries other than Ireland and the UK. For example, Polish migrant literature in Germany is the focus of Brigita Helbig-Mischewski and Małgorzata Zduniak-Wiktorowicz's bilingual, German-Polish, book *Migrantenliteratur im Wandel/Literatura migracyjna w procesie* (Migration Literature in the Process, 2016). The fourth issue of the academic journal *Transfer. Reception Studies* (2019), edited by Anna Majkiewicz and Monika Wolting, offers critical readings of literary works by Polish authors living in Germany and Austria.

A discussion of Polish writing in Canada can be found in the 2014 collection of essays *Niuanse wyobcowania. Diaspora i tematyka polska w Kanadzie* (The Subtleties of Alienation: Polish Diaspora and Themes in Canada), edited by Anna Branach-Kallas, and the 2022 monograph *Figura domu. Szkice o najnowszej anglojęzycznej literaturze emigrantów z ziem polskich i ich potomków w Kanadzie* (The Figure of Home: An Outline of Recent Literature in English by Emigrants from Poland and their Descendants in Canada) by Dagmara Drewniak. A critical study of contemporary Polish-American novels, which depict the struggle of women against patriarchy, is provided by Grażyna J. Kozaczka in *Writing the Polish American Woman in Postwar Ethnic Fiction* (2019).

There is also a plethora of articles that delve into the contemporary writing of Polish migrants in Germany (see the works of Mieczysław Dąbrowski, Brigita Helbig-Mischewski, Renata Makarska, Agnieszka Palej, Hans-Christian Trepte, Dirk Uffelmann, Małgorzata Zduniak), Canada (Dagmara Drewniak), and the United States (Grażyna J. Kozaczka). The comparisons and contrasts made between the works of Polish migrants from different

countries are useful to widen the angle of vision and help explain the issues and processes connected to contemporary migrations.

If we look at the literary research outlined in this section, the theories that have been employed in the analysis of contemporary Polish migration writing include postcolonialism, postmodernism, new historicism, border studies, feminist criticism, Marxism, sociolinguistics and translation studies. Among the recurring research topics are: the need for terminological change from "emigrant" to "migrant" writing; proposals of new methods and concepts for the analysis of migration writing; different typologies of migrant literary works; autobiographism in migration literature; the exploration of nationalism, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, interculturalism and globalisation; the investigation of individual, diaspora and national identities and the formation of hybrid identities; the transcending of various borders and boundaries; the psychological examination of migration experience; the processes surrounding adaptation in a new country; and the life in multicultural societies.

Locating gaps in the existing research

The above overview of critical works demonstrates the study of migration writing is quite rich and diverse. However, Amy Burge identifies some important gaps that remain in existing research. She observes that most scholarly attention has been given to high-brow literary fiction, while popular literature has been neglected. She argues that incorporating the latter into research, and analysing it alongside interviews, can uncover less visible and more nuanced discourses on migration that reflect contemporary events and social anxieties.

Furthermore, research has mainly focused on fiction, leaving other literary genres, such as poetry, drama and comics, underrepresented. Another under-researched area is digital literature. Studying digital texts, such as Facebook or Instagram posts, Tweets, and YouTube videos, can reveal new lines of influence and dissemination. This area, Burge argues, has received relatively little attention from the humanities. Finally, literary critics have tended to focus on the interpretation of migration texts, while aspects of production, readership, and marketing have been under-theorised.

This thesis contributes to filling some of these gaps. It examines high, middle, and low-brow prose, poetry, and drama, as well as non-fiction. Consequently, it covers a wide variety of genres, ranging from crime stories and romance to graphic novels, memoirs, and reportage. The fiction and nonfiction works are viewed not in isolation but in relation to one another, regardless of their different factual status. Thus, interpretations of novels, short

stories, poems or plays take their place alongside examinations of memoirs, essays, and interviews. This technique allows for a more comprehensive analysis of migration writing.

Although digital works are not the subject of direct interpretation, the thesis explores how migrant writers' reliance on the Internet for communication and online writing has influenced their creative process, the form and language of their books, and their marketing strategies. It examines how migration writing is produced, published and distributed. It sheds light on Polish migrant writers, their publishing endeavours, and their contributions to literary scenes in Poland, Ireland and the UK. It also illuminates the readership, reader reception of migration works, and their role in shaping these narratives.

Other issues that the thesis discusses are outlined in the following section. The section offers a brief summary of each chapter, highlighting their structure, objectives, key findings, and conclusions, along with some relevant contextual background.

Outlining the thesis

The first article in the series, "Defining Migration Writing," attempts to formulate a definition of "migration writing" through three lenses: *theme-oriented*, *ethnic-oriented* and *text-oriented* approaches. Using these approaches, it examines the concept of "migration writing" in relation to other literary terms, such as exile literature, refugee literature, foreigners' literature, guest worker literature, Kanake literature, "allochthonous" literature, ethnic literature, minority literature, diasporic literature, hyphenated literature, multicultural literature, intercultural literature, émigré/emigrant literature, immigrant literature, migrant literature, the literature of migration. These notions are viewed in the proposed definition as different strands within the broader category of "migration writing."

Then the article links the concept of migration writing to the phenomenon of globalisation to establish a timeframe for its emergence. It argues that globalisation processes drive contemporary migrations and those, in turn, inspire migration writing. Following Steger and James's assertion that the term "globalisation" started to be used by journalists and scholars in the 1990s, the article identifies this period as the beginning of "migration writing."

As a result, the term "migration writing" is used by me to describe a wide range of literary and non-literary texts published since the 1990s. These texts either deal with the theme of migration or emerge from the experience of migration (but not necessarily address the subject of migration). It is also not necessary for the authors to be migrants: what matters is that their work is inspired or influenced by migration experiences and is imbued with a vision of cosmopolitan, transnational, hybrid society and the globalised world. Given the

broad scope of this definition, it seems best to define the genre as a constellation of many different types of texts which are connected to one another by a set of characteristic features. These characteristics include: the real-life nature of the writing, creolization and multilingualism in the text, references to multiple cultures and/or geographical locations, the impact of the Internet and online communication on the structure of the work, common themes and motifs. The article ends by illuminating the research potential of migration writing.

The second article, "Polish Migrant Literature in Britain and Ireland: Signs of a New Literary Trend?," examines whether works published by Polish migrants since 2004 represent a new literary trend in Polish literature. In the absence of an unequivocal definition of a "literary trend," the article provides a working definition, based primarily on the explanation found in *Zarys teorii literatury* (The Overview of Literary Theory) by Michał Głowiński et al., along with research by Chana Kornfeld, Henryk Markiewicz, Ireneusz Opacki, Douwe Fokkema and Elrud Ibsch. A *literary trend* is thus defined as a cluster of ideological, compositional, thematic, and linguistic characteristics that recur in literary works produced within a given historical period. Following this definition, the article is divided into five parts.

Part one offers an overview of Polish migrant authors in Ireland and the UK, analysing their motivations for writing, their target audiences (Polish or English-speaking readers), and the aims of their writing. It explores whether these authors share similar views, ideas, and goals. Part two investigates the interdependencies between different genres produced by Polish migrants, concluding that prose is the most prominent genre, followed by poetry, with drama being the least popular. The analysis also reveals the emergence of the "migration novel." This narrative has a typical structure: it begins with the protagonists' departure from their homeland, then describes the challenges they face in the new country, and ends with one of two possible endings. In the optimistic scenario, the characters overcome the challenges and settle in the new place. In the pessimistic ending, the protagonists return to their homeland, move to another European country, or commit suicide. Migration novels often feature three recurring character types: the determined and resourceful female immigrant, the isolated male emigrant, and the emotionally torn migrant.

Part three examines whether the collected works revolve around similar themes, motifs, and symbols, and introduces common issues that are central to the writers' interest. Part four, in turn, focuses on the linguistic features in the migrants' works, such as phonetic transcriptions, code mixing and switching, the addition of Polish inflectional endings to English words, neologisms, etc. These features are indicative of the development of a hybrid

dialect that migrants use both in their everyday communication and in their writing. Part five provides an overview of the migrants' efforts to establish publishing houses, such as OFF-Press and Stork Press, and literary associations, such as KaMPe or PoEtry London.

The convergence of authors' worldviews, recurring patterns in the structure of migration books, typical characters, the emergence of the migration novel with its common themes, motifs, and symbols, the development of a hybrid dialect, and the formation of associations and publishing houses suggest that Polish migration writing constitutes a new literary trend.

Alongside numerous Polish migrant authors who publish for Polish-speaking audiences, a small but growing group of writers publish their work in English. This group is the focus of the third article, "Liberated from Their Language: Polish Migrant Authors Publishing in English." The article begins with a brief analysis of the publishing industry in the UK and Ireland for two main reasons. First, to highlight the close ties between the book markets in both countries to justify why the British and Irish publishing industries can be referred to as "one market." Second, to provide an informed assessment of how difficult it is for Polish migrant authors to establish themselves in this literary market. This is no easy task, given that translated books account for only 3% of all literature published annually in the UK and Ireland, and publishers often label texts submitted by first-time migrant authors as "foreign literature," even if they were originally written in English.

Despite the obstacles, the writers persist in their efforts to reach British and Irish readers. They enter literary competitions, submit their texts to literary journals, collaborate with local writers or self-publish their work. The article describes examples of these initiatives and then discusses how the process of publishing a book in a non-native language engages the writers: they tend to adapt their texts for an international audience, become involved in the translation process, try their hand at writing in a foreign language, and prepare bilingual promotional materials.

Why they feel the need to publish in English is a question broached in the next part of the article. One reason is the desire to belong to the local community. Another is the need to leave a legacy for their descendants, who may not speak Polish. Some authors also want to showcase their cultural heritage, which – as they admit – stems either from vanity, pride or patriotic feelings, or a combination of these emotions. Additionally, publishing in English opens up international book markets for writers, interestingly not only those in English-speaking countries.

The closing section explores how the fact that their writing is a translation affects the reception of the writers' work. The writing of Polish migrants goes beyond mere linguistic translation: it carries over aspects of Polish culture into English, it renders a set of migrant voices and experiences for the local readers, it helps the authors to invent their own hybrid identities, and it reflects the national identity of British and Irish people. As more and more books in Britain and Ireland are produced by bilingual and multilingual, rather than monolingual, authors, a multiplicity of "Englishes" coexist, clash, permeate, and superimpose on one another. This supports Alistair Pennycook's thesis that English has become a transcultural language which is in a constant process of translation.

After defining migration writing and introducing the writers, the thesis moves on to three chapters that explore representations in Polish migration writing. The first chapter examines depictions of Poland and Poles, the second focuses on portrayals of Britain and the British, and the third analyses representations of Ireland and the Irish. Drawing on Stuart Hall's theories, the chapters use the term "representation" in its broad sense to describe the written depiction of an idea, object, person, or event and how this depiction produces and conveys meaning through language.

Inspired by Suskiewicz's observation that "if you want to learn something about Poles, you shouldn't go to Warsaw or Cracow, but to Victoria Station in London," (2009, 93) the article entitled "A Country Constructed from Memories: Representations of Poland and Poles in Migrant Writing in the Twenty-First Century" explores how contemporary Polish migrant authors construct representations of their homeland and its citizens, and how a life of migration influences these depictions.

The writers create images of Poland based on their reminiscences. As a result, their depictions are displaced both in time and space: the authors describe their native land drawing on memories from the recent and distant past while being physically away from the country. Though inherently selective, much like memory itself, these representations form a surprisingly consistent portrayal of Poland in the 1990s and early 2000s.

The migrant writers depict Poland of this period as a place of limited opportunities, a consequence of the country's turbulent history. World War II, Nazi occupation, and Soviet invasion plunged Poland into poverty and chaos. When the Solidarity movement led to the collapse of communism in the 1980s, the country underwent a rapid transition from a centrally steered to a market economy, which resulted in price inflation, a decline in sales and production, and high unemployment. The migrant characters note that this led to the

instability of employment, poor working conditions, low wages, little social security, and the poor workplace culture in Polish companies.

Additionally, they complain about internal social divisions and an obsession with the past. The older generations, who lived through the communist regime, tend to see the quest for historical justice as a way of reworking the trauma they had experienced and structuring the chaos that had surrounded them for years. In contrast, many members of the younger, post-communist generations feel exhausted by what seems to them as an obsession with the past that hinders progress and fosters narrow ethnicity. These issues, which migrant characters see as a legacy of the communist era, become apparent when they encounter British and Irish realities.

The relationship between Poland and the Catholic Church is another recurring theme in the migration narratives. The writers analyse different approaches of Polish people towards religion. For some, Catholicism embodies the highest values of traditional Polish life: they see the Church as a noble ideal rather than an institution or people. For others, religion is a set of rituals that provides social stability. Yet others view the Church as a rigid structure run by conservative priests. In addition, Wioletta Grzegorzewska notes the unique, idiosyncratic nature of Catholicism in rural areas, where people combine the elements of Catholicism, common knowledge, Polish culture and history into a personalised religion. These different narratives developed around the Church reveal that Catholicism in Poland is a complicated blend of various, often contradictory, beliefs and opinions. What these different discourses share, however, is the conviction that religion is largely about society, which echoes Emile Durkheim's theory of religion as "something eminently social" (2012, 10).

The social benefits of religion are also sought by Polish migrants living in the UK and Ireland. In their narratives the Catholic Church is often portrayed as an institution that has developed a network of ethnic parishes that serve as centres of support and a nucleus of Polish culture for newcomers. They provide spiritual and material help and are places for socialising with fellow compatriots.

Part of Poland's religious and historical heritage is the myth of the Mother Pole, another theme analysed by migrant writers. The article traces the evolution of this lofty ideal and quotes the critique mounted by migrant characters. They depict this myth as a force that oppresses women and drives many of them to emigrate. Female protagonists struggle to achieve freedom in a society where traditional patterns of living, despite certain criticism and weakening, are still generally valued and sustained.

The power of ingrained tradition is another pervasive theme. Confronted with other cultures, the migrant characters become increasingly aware of their Polish identity, something many of them rarely acknowledged while living in Poland. As a result, they begin to create what Anne White calls "Polish society abroad," which "can be considered to some degree a microcosm of Polish society in Poland" (2018, 186). Memories of their homeland provide migrants with a shelter from which they launch their new lives abroad. The foreign country, in turn, becomes a social laboratory in which migrants examine Poland and Polish people amid foreign realities, and in doing so, gain a deeper understanding of their native land and themselves.

The axis around which the next article revolves is the 2016 referendum in the UK. Entitled "The Contribution of Polish Writers to the Brexit Debate," it analyses pre- and post-Brexit works published by Polish migrant writers to provide insight into how Poles portray Britain and the British, and how this portrayal has changed as a result of the Brexit campaign. What the juxtaposition of pre- and post-referendum works by Polish migrants reveals is that the idea of Brexit was not a sudden development but a continuous, incremental process.

For most Poles, knowledge of Britain preceded the actual experience of it. The British Council opened an office in Poland in 1938 to promote British culture and the English language, and, as mentioned above, there had been several waves of Polish migration to Britain since the 19th century. The activities of the British Council, together with the stories of Polish emigrants, contributed to an idealised perception of the UK in Poland. The idea of the UK as a dreamland that assures freedoms of all individuals, promotes tolerance and offers well-paid jobs persisted into the 21st century. This image has encouraged thousands of Polish people to migrate when Poland joined the European Union in May 2004.

Coming from a relatively ethnically homogeneous country, Polish writers, were often astonished by the blend of races, religions and cultures in Britain, especially in London, and their works explore how all these different strands are interwoven in British society. According to their accounts, British people, accustomed to multiculturalism, were initially very welcoming to newcomers from Eastern Europe. However, this positive attitude faded over time, especially among the working class, who felt that migration undermined their economic situation and cultural traditions.

Polish authors observe that British society has been held together by a shared reverence for certain values. One of these is the obedience to laws, both enacted and customary, which is instilled from childhood. This foundation creates a natural sense of harmony, which was shattered by the ignorance of newcomers who, unlike people from

former British colonies, lacked intimate knowledge of British mentality and customs. Worried that their familiar world might fall apart, the British have begun to try to reclaim the land they once knew.

The migrant writers also note the British tendency to define the world through stereotypes, which helps them to erect a scaffolding of rationalism, consistency, pragmatism and tradition around a messy reality. However, this reliance on stereotypes often places migrants at a disadvantage. The authors point out that the stereotypical Poles are both helpful and harmful to the local society: they are usually young, healthy and hard-working, yet somehow burden the welfare system. Therefore, Polish migrant writers feel a constant need to challenge the clichés that scale them down to flat, often patently ridiculous figures. British representations of Polish migrants, the writers argue, reveal a severely limited understanding of Poles and their culture.

In their basic portrayal of the British people, Polish migrant writers also mention the composure, serenity and extreme politeness of the British. However, many Polish authors warn newcomers not to mistake this kindness for openness and acceptance. Living on an island has shaped the British mentality. Although they were part of the European Union and they have belonged to many international organisations, they have always been reluctant to assimilate with their partners, because they feel naturally isolated from the rest of the world.

According to Polish writers, the Brexit campaign brought to light two divisions in British society: one between globalists and nationalists, the other between the British and "the others." During the referendum campaign, the writers were alarmed by the open hostility towards migrants: the slogan "Britain for the British" caught on, racist flyers and hate cards, such as "Leave the EU. No more Polish Vermin" were delivered to houses, migrants were accused of damaging the NHS, and a crusade against foreigners was launched on the internet.

Although the animosity waned over time, it has led the writers to conclude that in multicultural countries, such as the UK, different ethnic groups, despite living side by side in relative harmony, might never develop closer ties, shared goals and values that would give them a sense of unity. The British had grown accustomed to a multicultural landscape, but they have not incorporated foreign elements into their idea of national identity. This can have serious implications for migrants. Even if they assimilate fully into the local culture, acquire high levels of cultural literacy, and gain British citizenship, they may never be perceived as true members of the nation: a foreign accent, in conjunction with the absence of social networks from school and college, will always mark them as "the others."

The final section of the article explores how Polish migrant writers have contributed to the Brexit debate. Their writings addressed issues of mass migration, isolationism, Euroscepticism and divisions in British society long before the EU referendum. Although it only becomes clear in retrospect, Polish migrant authors largely foresaw what was to come and tried in their works to unleash a plurality of voices to draw attention to the issues that led to Brexit. Also, they placed Brexit in an international context, encouraging readers to evaluate it from a global, rather than a national, perspective. In doing so, they added an important layer to the already complex discussion. Viewing Britain's withdrawal from the EU through the eyes of Polish migrant writers offers valuable insights into contemporary Britain.

The subsequent article, "Turning the Foreign Land into a Homeland: The Representations of Ireland and the Irish in Polish literature," traces how Ireland grew from an unknown territory into a well-researched land by Polish migrants at the turn of the twenty-first century. It opens with a brief overview of the links between Ireland and Poland from 1698 – when Bernard O'Connor published his *History of Poland*, the first account of Polish history in English – to the year 1990 when the band Kobranocka released the song "Kocham cię jak Irlandię" (I love you like Ireland). The story behind the song illustrates how little the general public knew about Ireland. The lyricist, Andrzej Michorzewski, adopted the country as a symbol because it was as distant and mysterious as the girl for whom he had fallen. He never suspected that a decade later the country would become a home to thousands of Polish people.

At the beginning of the millennium, Polish news reports and the first personal accounts of migrants portrayed Ireland as a paradise: a promise of global capitalism and an easy life. Implicit in these portrayals was a pervasive sense of unreality. As if the place were too good to be true. But these representations had become the basis of the common perception of Ireland that had prevailed in Poland for a few years before it was dismantled by a surge of new journalistic articles and books by migrants.

The updated, more realistic literary portrayals of Ireland depict it as a country of "new money," where memories of emigration are still vivid and where juxtapositions of poverty and wealth, of backwardness and progress, of provincial and cosmopolitan, of rural and urban, and of conservative and liberal life lurk in the landscape. The writers also chronicle how, during the boom years, Dublin attracted large numbers of young people who came here from all over the world. The result was the transformation of the city into a vibrant, multicultural metropolis that facilitated liberal lifestyles. But this metamorphosis also brought with it

excessive consumerism and hedonism: the authors explore the alarming propensity of young city dwellers to compulsive shopping and binge drinking.

Virtually all Polish migrant writers offer the same portrait of the Irish as cheerful, convivial, laid-back, hospitable, friendly and tolerant minimalists. They gave a warm welcome to thousands of newcomers, they have generally avoided mixing local economic issues with the subject of ethnic minorities, they set little store by material possessions, they focus on the present moment rather than muse about the future. However, their qualities, admired in personal relationships, are criticised in the work context. Their laid-back attitude leads to delays, their strong social circles tend to favour locals over newcomers, their personal affability clashes with business assertiveness. Despite their minor frustrations, however, Polish migrants extol the Irish lifestyle since it renders into reality a place where, as Słabuszewska-Krauze's notes, cashiers are in no hurry, officials are humane, and passers-by smile at one another.

In their rudimentary portrayal of the Irish, Polish authors also mention jocularity, garrulousness and a predilection for tradition. Everything and everyone is a source of wise-crackery in Ireland, but the jokes always walk a fine line between jocosity and mockery, with the result that they are caustic but never humiliating. The jokes are often woven into larger stories, for the Irish are a nation of gifted tale-tellers who spin their colourful stories for hours on end. Although the Irish have a vibrant contemporary culture produced by numerous professional and amateur artists, they have also retained a penchant for their Gaelic tradition of folk music, dances, songs and tales, which are all bound together by the Irish language.

Some of the recurring analogies between Ireland and Poland that have been explored by Polish writers include history (fighting against the oppressor for national independence and the experience of forced and economic migration); religion (the powerful influence of the Catholic Church in the country); and culture (which emerged from the folk life of a rural society). In their writings, Polish authors also indicate a set of similarities between the experiences of the Irish and Polish migrants: the people who left were young, well-educated, eager to integrate into a developed economy and similar in appearance to the local people. The countries in which they settled differed from their homeland in several important ways, but the underlying realities were, in fact, strikingly similar.

Once the Celtic Tiger dream (or nightmare, as some writers would argue) was over, Irish society awoke to a reality in which people were poorer, more secular and more ethnically diverse. If the Irish successfully defined their national character in relation to Britain in the last century, they now face an even more complex task: to negotiate their identity in relation

to the ethnic minorities that have become part of their society. But the migrant writers also register the astonishing capacity of the Irish to embrace foreign elements. This is one of the reasons why so many Poles feel at home in Ireland.

The final article in the series, entitled "Writing by Poles in the UK and Ireland: The Transnational Turn in Polish Literature," is a studious conclusion of the thesis. It examines how the "new" aspects of transnationalism have influenced Polish migration writing.

While transnationalism as long-distance travel, exploration and trade networks has a long history, the advent of quick and efficient transportation, communication, and economic flows has fundamentally transformed the contemporary world. In a relatively short period of time, global social, political and economic relations between countries have intensified; the Internet has created a parallel virtual reality; and nation-state borders have grown blurred and porous. Large-scale migrations have become part of everyday life, but unlike previous generations, the "new migrants" maintain stronger ties to their homeland while integrating into host societies faster than their predecessors. Metaphorically speaking, they stand with one foot in their home country and the other in their new place of residence.

Suspended in a virtual space between two countries, migrants conceive their "private homeland." This invented land, shaped by their personal experiences, is not confined by any geographical, political or social borders. Piotr Czerwiński captures the elusive nature of this place in *Międzynaród* (Internation), where he writes: "Our homeland can be anything and anywhere. Our homeland might not exist at all. Maybe, Poland is not a country. Maybe, it is a state of mind" (2011, 329). This remapping of Poland's mental borders has brought cross-border exchanges, connections and practices to the attention of authors. Consequently, their works present a myriad of foreign locations, ethnically diverse characters, and non-native traditions.

The migrant writers emphasise the importance of producing contemporary literature that, on the one hand, will help other ethnic groups to understand Polish people, and on the other, will broaden the horizons of people living in Poland. Such transnational literature embraces multi-locality, interacts with other cultures, and combines national and cosmopolitan values.

The platform for producing these transnational works is often the borderless space of the Internet. Many writers use blogs as a writing tool, a space where they collect and organise their thoughts to later publish them in book form. This process inevitably affects their works. The first reviews reach the authors while their work is still "in progress," as readers post comments on various websites. By the time the book appears in print, it has often been

appraised and, to some extent, shaped by its readership. The culture of blogging also brings with it an ethos of independence: since the authors set up their websites themselves, they have complete control over content and layout. They maintain this freedom by largely relying on self-publishing or small, independent publishers. Another similarity between blogs and migration writings is their journal- and journalism-like nature. Mark Termayne observes that the most common types of blogs are "online diaries," which follow the bloggers' private stories, and "filter blogs," which comment on events by "filtering" information from other sources. Many migrant books are a combination of these two types of blogs. In addition, some books are divided into short, topic-oriented sections reminiscent of blog posts. The writers, like bloggers, often use first-person narration and a distinctive writing style that Nina Wakeford and Kris Kohen describe as "spontaneous and revelatory" (2008, 308).

Living in Britain and Ireland's multi-cultural, predominantly English-speaking environment has also led to the creolisation of the Polish migrants' language. It has resulted in the incorporation of Anglicisms, loan-blends, translation equivalents, phonetic transcriptions and code-switching into their writing. This unique idiom skilfully captures the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic exchanges that occur under the forces of migration.

Another influence of migration on literature is the greater commodification of migrant literary narratives and their further universalisation. The closer economic and social relations between Poland and Western Europe have provided new spaces and new ways of creating literary narratives (as part of transnational, collaborative projects), their advertising (by combining literary, music and art events) and the dissemination of books (through Polish shops, publishing houses and literary groups abroad).

With an increasing number of migration books on the Polish market being written outside the country's borders, it seems plausible to conclude that there has been a transnational turn in Polish literature. The expansion of EU borders and the availability of affordable flights have led to Polish contemporary writing being increasingly produced in a range of geographical, cultural, linguistic and virtual spaces. Migrants' works synthesise elements of multiple places and nationalities, engage in a multifaceted exploration of the intersecting effects of migration and globalisation, and express transnational identities and experiences. These texts function simultaneously in various social and literary systems and should be analysed in relation to such. If these aspects are ignored, the meaning and value of migration writing will be reduced and possibly misunderstood.

While the thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of Polish migration writing in the UK and Ireland since 2004, it has some limitations that should also be acknowledged. As

previously mentioned, the need to publish findings regularly due to research grants led to the adaptation of the thesis to meet the standards of journals and monographs. Consequently, some information had to be repeated in different articles, and each text had to be formatted differently. The result is that the narrative flow may not be as seamless as in a traditional monograph.

However, the regular publication of these articles has also had significant advantages. The feedback from editors and reviewers encouraged me to elaborate on several important themes and clarify some of my ideas. The interest generated by the research led to invitations to participate in international projects[21] and to give lectures in Brussels, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Switzerland and the UK.[22] The questions and comments from the audience have expanded and enriched my study. Finally, the publication of the thesis has allowed me to take an active part in the fascinating, ongoing debate on migration writing.

Conclusions: The significance of migration writing and future research

The international debate on migration writing closely links literature and social issues. After all, migration narratives often document and draw on the authentic experiences of migrants. When real-life events inspire works of fiction, these works create alternative realities that allow readers to engage with situations and experiences beyond their own. Such texts offer a space for experimentation, where readers, confronted with new aspects of a seemingly familiar reality, are encouraged by the writers to critically reassess their understanding and perception of the world in which they live.

In *Writing-between-Worlds*, Ottmar Ette strongly argues that "there is no better, no more complex way to access a community, a society, an era and its cultures than through literature" (2016, XXI). Literature, he asserts, is always in motion, moving freely across different kinds of borders: national, linguistic, cultural, social, geographical, etc. It employs a range of logics and spans different disciplines, teaching the readers to think "*polylogically*

[21] I was invited to participate in the following undertakings: the research project "Talking Transformations: Home on the Move," coordinated by Manuela Perteghella and Ricarda Vidal (King's College London), with funding support from Arts Council England; and two research networks – "Cultural Literacy and Social Futures," led by Robert Crawshaw (Lancaster University), and "Experiential Translation: Meaning-Making Across Languages and the Arts," led by Ricarda Vidal (King's College London) and Madeleine Campbell (Edinburgh University) and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

[22] The following institutions invited me to deliver lectures: University of Passau (2015), German-Polish Research Institute (run by Europa-Universität Viadrina and the Adam Mickiewicz University) (2015), KU Leuven (2016), Lancaster University and Free Word Centre (2016), Polish Academy of Sciences (2016), King's College London (2018), University of Groningen and Jagiellonian University (2018), Polish Embassy in London (2018), Justus-Liebig-Universität (2018), University of Portsmouth (2019), Universität Bern and Universität Fribourg (2019), Goethe-Institut Irland (2019), the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute in Warsaw (2023).

rather than monologically." (2016, XXII). Since literary work is immersed in different areas of knowledge and various cultural, social, political and psychological contexts, it captures the complexity, diversity and vibrancy of the communities it describes. Ette concludes that the humanities – rather than confronting natural sciences – should enter into a serious dialogue with them to create a "contrastive *and* complementary web of knowledge" (2016, 292).

This diagnosis is vindicated by Amy Burge, who illustrates how migration literature fills significant gaps in migration studies. Much of the research in economics, demography, and political science (as well as some in sociology) is quantitative and statistical: it focuses on collectives rather than individuals and pays relatively little attention to the socio-cultural changes brought about by migration. These gaps are addressed by the study of migration writing. Migration works often focus on individual experiences, exploring in depth issues such as newcomers' perceptions of their host country, integration into new places and cultures, emotions accompanying migration, the creation of multicultural societies, relationships between people in a globalised world, the formation of new individual and collective identities, and other important aspects of the contemporary world. An active exploration of these issues allows for the challenging of dominant (usually stereotypical) narratives about migration and migrants; a redefinition of concepts such as nationality, ethnicity, identity; and a rich, historical documentation of long-term patterns of migration and their literary representations. As a result, the study of migration writing enriches our understanding of the long-term effects of migration and the forces shaping contemporary multicultural societies.

What migration writing captures brilliantly are the transformations – sometimes slow and gradual – that take place in a country. These changes are often driven by migration itself, as the movement of people in and out of social systems inevitably alters them. Migration writing documents these alterations: it highlights the individual cases that deviate from societal norms; it transgresses the socially and politically acceptable boundaries; it interferes with mainstream public debates; and it seeks to appeal to both the empathy and reason of readers. As Monika Wolting puts it, migration works invoke "interferences" and "irritations" that "disturb or destroy normality and introduce the state of denormalization"[23] (2019, 24).

Far from being dysfunctional or destructive, this state of denormalization can in fact be stabilising and productive, insofar as it points to the changes that need to be introduced in order to sustain the development of the existing social systems. By delving beneath the

[23] "zakłócenia," "irytacje," "naruszają lub niszczą normalność, wprowadzają stan denormalizacji"

composed surface of society, migration writing illuminates unresolved social disputes, political and economic crises, taboo subjects, sensitive issues and marginalised groups. In effect, it challenges the dominant ideas, raises searing questions, and offers some solutions to seemingly insoluble problems. As a result, migration writing plays an important social role by reflecting the complexity and incongruity of multicultural communities. It functions well as a means of introspective self-analysis and self-evaluation of society.

Drawing on Tzvetan Todorov's observation that the future of the world lies in a cosmopolitan mixing of cultures and that only people will be able to reconcile the conflicts initiated by the encounter of different cultures, Monika Wolting argues that migration writing offers some workable prescriptions to the grim diagnoses of the contemporary and future world. By documenting threshold experiences, migration writing complicates, extends and exposes the limits of current social debates, thereby exerting a powerful influence on readers who may hopefully change, develop or expand their worldviews. Inscribing migration writing within the contours of "committed literature,"[24] Wolting claims that migration writers are among the strongest proponents of humanism and human rights today (2019, 28). Their works – if taken seriously and studied carefully – can have a significant impact on the development of contemporary societies.

Also, the link between migration and writing has a major impact on the texts themselves. As migrants' stories cross national, cultural and linguistic borders, writers are forced to seek new means of artistic expression. This results in the introduction of new narrative techniques, characters, locations, themes, and language, thus contributing to the development of literature.

At the level of practical applications, migration writing has been employed as a therapeutic device, an integration tool and a research method. Interviews with members of Polish literary groups in the UK – specifically Marta Brassart, a co-founder of Poezja Londyn , and Aleksy Wróbel, a founder of Koło Młodych Poetów – reveal a common pattern: newcomers' attempts to settle in a new country evoke strong emotions that prompt them to write about their experiences. During the interview, Marta Brassart recalled that "we wrote, and we met. Poetry saved us from loneliness" (Kosmalska 2016, 161). For the members of these literary groups, writing was, in a sense, a form of psychotherapy.

A compelling example of how migration writing can facilitate integration is provided by the work of Fighting Words, an organisation founded by Irish writer Roddy Doyle and his

[24] "literatura zaangażowana"

friend Seán Love. Since 2009, Fighting Words has offered free creative writing programmes across Ireland, many of which involve migrants. One of their 2023 publications, *Inner Light: Stories by Ukrainian Writers in Ireland*, is a poignant collection of short stories and poems about fleeing a war-torn country. These works were written by seventeen Ukrainian women during workshops organised by Fighting Words in partnership with Ukrainian Action in Ireland and the Irish Red Cross.[25]

Similarly, Polish migrants in the UK have published a book to show their support for Ukraine. Anna Maria Mickiewicz, Adam Siemieńczyk, and Tomasz Mickiewicz invited poets and visual artists from Ukraine, the UK, the USA, Poland, Israel, Bulgaria, and Australia to contribute to the anthology *UKRAINE in the Work of International Poets*, which was published in London in 2022. These initiatives demonstrate how migration writing can foster a sense of community and solidarity.

No better illustration can be found of how migration and writing can be used as research methods than Ricarda Vidal and Manuela Perteghella's project *Talking Transformations: Home on the Move*.[26] This project aimed to trace how contemporary migration in Europe has reshaped the notions of "home" and "belonging." The scholars commissioned British poet Deryn Rees-Jones and Polish poet Rafał Gawin to each lead public workshops in their respective home countries (the UK and Poland) in order to creatively discuss the themes of home and migration and then to write poems based on these discussions. Once the poems were completed, they "migrated": Deryn's work travelled to France and Spain before returning to the UK, while Rafał's poem journeyed from Poland to Romania and the UK before coming back home. At each stop on the journey, the poems were translated into the local languages by literary translators and rendered into films by local artists. The theoretical underpinnings and outcomes of this project are detailed by Ricarda Vidal and Manuela Perteghella in their 2018 research article "Translation as Movement: Migration and Notions of 'Home'."

The combination of social, historical and artistic value is what makes migration writing such a potent research material. However, despite a large body of work on the subject, there are still some gaps to be filled.

[25] More information about *The Inner Light Project* can be found at: https://www.innerlight.ie/, accessed 7 June 2024.
[26] Additional details on *Talking Transformations: Home on the Move* project can be found at: https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1750261/1750262, accessed 7 June 2024.

The most unexplored area remains digital migration writing. In-depth analyses of digital texts, such as the content of migrant writers' websites, their posts on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Tweeter, as well as YouTube and TikTok videos, would broaden and enrich the study of both migration writing and literary criticism.

More research is also needed on up-to-date migration writing, as it highlights the current dynamics and challenges of migration as well as the problems of contemporary societies. Along with the books of well-known writers, the research samples should include the texts by lesser-known authors in order to draw attention to issues that the mainstream tends to exclude. A more holistic portrayal of migration would also be achieved by comparing the perspectives of migrant and local writers on migration issues. Such studies would enrich the understanding of the challenges posed by migration and the dynamics of multicultural societies.

Projects that explore migration literature across different geographic, political, and cultural contexts, instead of investigating migration works from a specific country or region, would provide a more global perspective on migration. More attention could also be paid to the transnational aspects of moving between home and host countries and how migration writing captures these. This could shed light on whether there is an emerging transnational culture, as some scholars suggest.

Finally, as migration writing often draws on real-life stories and individuals, there is a pressing need for research on ethical considerations. This line of research could explore the issues such as the privacy of individuals and communities, the sensationalising of migration stories, the perpetuation of negative stereotypes, cultural appropriation, the cultural sensitivity of writers, power relations between writers and the people they portray, political correctness, and the potential for migration works to reach a wider audience.

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Defining Migration Writing

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Abstract: With a view to extending and enriching the vibrant, ongoing debate about migration and literature, this article makes an attempt to define »migration writing«. Using three perspectives – the *theme-oriented*, *ethnic-oriented* and *text-oriented* approaches – the paper examines the concept of »migration writing« in relation to other literary terms. Therefore, the starting point for the discussion is a brief comparison of migration writing with autobiography, travel writing and postcolonial literature. Then some useful comparisons are made to other related literary concepts, such as exile literature, refugee literature, foreigners' literature, guest worker literature, Kanake literature, »allochthonous« literature, ethnic literature, minority literature, diasporic literature, hyphenated literature, multicultural literature, intercultural literature, émigré literature/emigrant literature, immigrant literature, migrant literature, the literature of migration. From these concepts, there emanates what I call »migration writing«.

The label is used by me as a term for a whole variety of different types of literary and non-literary texts that have been published since the 1990s. These texts either tackle the topic of migration or emerge from the experience of migration (but not necessarily address the subject of migration). It is also not necessary for the author to be a migrant: it is enough that his or her work is inspired or influenced by the experience of migration and is imbued with a vision of cosmopolitan, transnational, hybrid society and the globalised world. Given the large scope of this definition, it seems best to define the genre as a constellation of many different types of text which are connected to one another by a set of characteristic features. Some of these features include: the real-life nature of the writing, creolization and multilingualism in the text, references to multiple cultures and/or geographic locations, impact of the Internet and online communication on the structure of the work, common themes and motifs.

The article ends by illuminating the research potential of migration writing. Among other things, it gives highly informative accounts of migration experience, exposes the stereotypical representations of migrants, gives piercing insights into migrants' host and home cultures, explores the issues of identity, nationality, borders and belonging, provides alternative knowledge about current social and cultural transformations. Acting as a counterweight to the dominant narra-

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tives, migration texts often make visible the phenomena that are unintentionally ignored or wilfully excluded from the mainstream public discourse. Consequently, they provide alternative knowledge that can be a useful research material in all kinds of areas, such as sociological, political, economic or culture studies.

Keywords: migration writing, migrant literature, multilingualism, transculturalism, defining a literary concept

1 Exploring the Notion from Different Angles

When one of the speakers talked about the idea of ›home‹ in migration narratives during the 2017 conference organised by Cultural Literacy in Europe and the Polish Academy of Sciences, a person in the audience asked casually: »What is migration writing?« I had been seeking an answer to this question long before it was posed at the conference but the explanations I had come across seemed either incomplete or slightly confusing. Different terms, such as diasporic literature, exile literature, emigrant literature, immigrant literature, migrant literature, migration literature and many others that are mentioned in this text tend to be used interchangeably. Does this mean they are synonymous? If so, is ›migration writing‹ just another label to describe the same set of ideas?

This article attempts to answer the above questions by formulating a definition of ›migration writing‹ and examining the term in the wider literary context, viewing it not in isolation but in relation to other literary concepts. The touchstone for this endeavour was a study of theory in autobiography, travel writing and, most of all, postcolonial literature. The books *Autobiography* by Linda Anderson, *Travel Writing* by Carl Thompson and *The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha, among other work, were very useful in tracking down analogies between the abovementioned concepts and migration writing. For instance, the blending of fact and fiction is a feature that migration writing shares with life writing and travel books; and a hybrid form, structure and style are the characteristics that it has in common with postcolonial literature. However, along with the remarkable similarities, there also came to light some crucial differences: for example, not all migration writing is autobiographical or takes place in a colonial setting and, obviously, not all autobiographies and postcolonial literature deal with migration. The comparisons that were made with other types of writing do however prove helpful in drawing out specific features of migration writing.

The same comparative method was used with other concepts, such as guest worker literature, multicultural literature, migrant literature and the like. These notions are actually at the root of migration writing. They are like threads which,

gathered and woven together, have given rise to the concept of migration writing. Following this logic, they are viewed here as strands or, more precisely, as literary trends and movements in migration writing.

While every effort has been made to provide a transparent and consistent explanation of ›migration writing‹ in this article, attentive readers will doubtlessly detect some flaws. Some critics may find the term too inclusive. Since it is intended as a hypernym, it covers a wide range of diverse texts, embraces a number of concepts and straddles different disciplines. In consequence, the proposed definition may seem overly extensive and porous. Yet, its inclusiveness is also a strength and constitutes a great opportunity: the wide framework facilitates the bringing together of a plethora of texts that illuminate and investigate various dimensions of migration experience in a comprehensive way. Also, it enables the connection and synthesis of multiple strands of knowledge, often from different academic fields, situating ›migration writing‹ in the wider literary and social context. As a result, this broad, multipronged approach leaves the readers with a deeper understanding of migration writing than any mode of analysis that is confined to one discipline or perspective.

The brunt of the criticism can be directed at the fact that this broad approach inevitably imposes a perfunctory treatment of the concepts referenced in the article. The literary terms, such as ›exile literature‹, ›hyphenated literature‹, ›émigré literature‹ and many others, which are in fact complex and involve a lot of overlap and contradiction, may seem to have a clear-cut meaning and boundaries as they are presented below. For instance, the analysis of ›émigré literature‹ is almost entirely focused on the authors' ties to their homeland while their relationship with the host country or the cosmopolitan dimensions of emigrant writing are hardly acknowledged. This narrow and exclusionary interpretation of ›émigré literature‹ is a premeditated manoeuvre in order to distinguish it from ›immigrant‹ works. Likewise, social concepts, such as ›globalisation‹ or ›voluntary migration‹, are themselves the subject of simplification that may raise justified objections. However, this simplification, possibly even oversimplification, of literary and social terms has been applied deliberately in order to highlight – as lucidly as possible – the aspects that are of central importance in ›migration writing‹.

When defining ›migration writing‹, it is useful to explore the concept from three angles: the theme-oriented, ethnic-oriented and text-oriented perspectives. In the *theme-oriented approach*, the origin of the writer is not important. The migration writing can be authored by anyone who has, in one way or another, been affected by migration: it can be a migrant, their spouse, relative or friend, the descendant of the migrant (second or third generation migrant) or a local writer. After all, migration impacts not only the lives of migrants, their families

and friends but also the existence of people who live where the migrants pass through or settle. What is significant is that the material has been inspired by or relates to the experience of migration. The emphasis in the *theme-oriented approach* is placed on the topic and content of writing.

By contrast, the *ethnic-oriented approach* places the writer's cultural origin at the centre of attention. What counts is not the subject of the book, as in the case of the theme-oriented approach, but the author's ethnicity and cultural heritage. Any content is eligible as long as the work is produced by a migrant. The topic of migration is given a varying degree of prominence in these narratives: it can figure greatly and be the object of direct and sustained consideration; it can be one of the motifs in the book; it can be a framework – perhaps a few sentences at the beginning and end of the text; it can be a starting point for a series of the writer's reflections unrelated to migration; it can be just a prism through which the author interprets the world. The assumption is that the work is written by a migrant and is born from his or her experiences; but it does not have to deal with memories of migration or assimilation, in fact, some of the texts may not address the topic of migration at all.

The third approach is *text-oriented* and focuses on what kinds of text should be classed as migration writing. Can maps, photos and illustrations published by migrants be classified as ›migration writing‹? How about graphic novels or comic strips that engage with the topic of migration? Should we include in the category digital forms of migrant writing, such as their Facebook or Instagram posts, Twitter poems, YouTube videos, website content, etc.? Some critics may oppose the classification of these pieces as ›migration writing‹ because it extends the term to such extent that the label may refer to potentially an unlimited range of texts. As a result, it may lose any descriptive or explanatory value. On the other hand, it seems sensible to subsume these visual and digital texts into the category of ›migration writing‹ because they construe representations that often work in similar ways and with similar effects as the representations offered in the written text of a novel, poem or reportage. Therefore, it may be both appropriate and useful in some contexts to include visual and digital depictions into the broader category of migration writing.

As the three approaches to migration writing described above prove, the concept has fuzzy, flexible boundaries that encompass a whole array of texts. Therefore, it seems most fully defined by its diversity of structure, tone, style and form.

2 The Roots of Migration Writing

Within the large, generic, all-embracing term that is ›migration writing‹, one may talk with greater precision of specific strands or literary trends and movements, such as (1) exile literature,[1] refugee literature,[2] foreigners' literature, guest worker literature,[3] Kanake literature;[4] (2) ›allochthonous‹ literature,[5] ethnic literature,[6] minority literature,[7] diasporic literature;[8] (3) hyphenated literature,[9] multicultural literature,[10] intercultural literature;[11] (4) émigré literature/emigrant literature,[12] immigrant literature,[13] migrant litera-

1 Siegfried Mews explores the roots and development of the concept in ›Exile Literature and Literary Exile: A Review Essay‹ (1992).

2 In ››Refugee Literature‹: What postcolonial theory has to say‹, Claire Gallien traces a definition of ›refugee literature‹ back to Corina Stan who in »her close engagement with Jenny Erpenbeck's (2017) novel *Go, Went, Gone*, [...] makes a case for refugee literature as a body of prose texts by and about refugees, which represent migration as part of a shared world« (Gallien 2018a, 723; cf. Stan 2018).

3 For an insightful discussion of ›foreigners' literature‹ and ›guest worker literature‹, see Máiréad Nic Craith's ››Migrant‹ Writing and the Re-Imagined Community: Discourses of Inclusion/Exclusion‹ (2015).

4 Liesbeth Minnaard mentions the use of the term ›Kanake‹ in ›Literature of Migration: Aesthetic Interventions in Times of Transformation‹ (Minnaard 2009, 61). Dirk Uffelmann talks about the label in ›Self-orientalisation in Narratives by Polish Migrants‹, noting that the term is »derived from an extremely pejorative swearword used mainly for Turks living in Germany« (Uffelmann 2011, 109).

5 On the increasing interest in ›allochthonous literature‹ in the Netherlands, see Liesbeth Minnaard's ›Literature of Migration: Aesthetic Interventions in Times of Transformation‹ (2009).

6 For a study of ›ethnic literature‹, see John M. Reilly's ›Criticism of Ethnic Literature: Seeing the Whole Story‹ (1978) and Berndt Ostendorf's ›What Makes Ethnic Literature ›Ethnic‹‹ (1985).

7 See ›What Is a Minor Literature?‹ by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, translated by Robert Brinkley (1983).

8 In her 2020 article ›Diaspora and Diasporic Literature: Condition to Consciousness‹, Bhawana Pokharel ponders on the definition of ›diasporic literature‹ and the development of the term in the ongoing academic debate in Nepal and worldwide.

9 For an introductory discussion on ›hyphenated literature‹ in Germany and the Netherlands, see Liesbeth Minnaard's ›Literature of Migration: Aesthetic Interventions in Times of Transformation‹ (2009).

10 On ›multicultural literature‹ see Krishna Bista's ›Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults‹, (2012).

11 For a definition of the concept see Katie Petersen's intervention on ›Intercultural Literature‹.

12 On ›émigré literature‹ see Halina Filipowicz's ›Fission and Fusion: Polish Émigré Literature‹ international avant-garde« (1989).

13 See Linda Norberg Blair's explanation of ›immigrant literature‹ in *The Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*.

ture,[14] the literature of migration[15] and so forth. Such multiplicity of genres suggests that the attempt to describe and find appropriate terminology for different kinds of migration writing has been a prominent topic of scholarly discussions. In the face of such variety, I have tried to frame the labels by finding some points of convergence. The result is an arrangement of four groups, which are marked off above. Even if the characteristics of these concepts overlap, each of them carries a slightly different meaning. When taken together, they interpenetrate, extend and explain the notion of ›migration writing‹.

The first cluster of terms places the emphasis on by whom the text is written. The author is a ›foreigner‹, ›exile‹, ›refugee‹, ›guest worker‹ or ›Kanak‹ (a person of Turkish, Kurdish, Arab or other Middle Eastern descent living in Germany). What seems important is the fact that the writers are outsiders. Even though they might be socially, linguistically and economically integrated, the authors are situated outside the local mainstream because of their roots. This is why some scholars and critics discredit these categories, pointing to their shallowness and political and ethical limitations. For example, Liesbeth Minnaard draws attention to the irony that underpins the problematic juxtaposition of ›guest‹ and ›worker‹ (2009, 60) in the term ›guest worker literature‹. This combination raises vitally important questions: Should the migrant who seeks a career and future in a particular place be considered merely a guest? Can a refugee be given a temporary status of a ›guest worker‹? No sooner are these questions answered than another one suggests itself: Are the works produced by long-term migrants and asylum-seekers classifiable as *Gastarbeiterliteratur*? This is only a sample of difficulties that the abovementioned categories can cause. No wonder then that many migrant writers try to transcend this slot-rolling classification which, inevitably, may lead to reductive, distorted, congealed and sometimes biased interpretations of their creative work. Central to these interpretations is the tendency to overlook the aesthetic complexity of their writing in favour of strongly referential readings that either politicise their works or reduce them to social evidence.

The second set of labels makes use of the adjectives such as ›allochthonous‹, ›ethnic‹, ›minority‹ and ›diasporic‹. Implicit in this choice of words is the recognition that the writers belong to a self-enclosed community, which is limited in numbers and not native to the country. It marginalises the writers and subjects them to the process of ›othering‹. The result is that both the authors and their creative work may be ethnicised and relegated to the periphery of the host coun-

14 On ›migrant literature‹ see Charlotte Kessler's ›Migrant Literature or Migration Literature – And Why Does It Matter?‹ (2017).

15 Fatemeh Pourjafari and Abdolali Vahidpour analyse ›the literature of migration‹ in their 2014 article ›Migration Literature: A Theoretical Perspective‹.

try's culture. By underscoring the foreignness and exoticism of ›allochthonous‹, ›ethnic‹, ›minority‹, ›diasporic‹ texts, the labels describe them as a contained category separate from and opposing to national literature. What is thereby accentuated in this set of terms is the relation between the ›national‹ and ›foreign‹.

The same relationship is pivotal in the third grouping. However, unlike the previous categorisation, which puts foreign works in opposition to national literature, this classification suggests a successful fusion of the two. The authors of ›hyphenated‹, ›intercultural‹ or ›multicultural‹ works are, to a lesser or larger degree, bi- or multicultural. In their texts, they often translate natives to migrants and *vice versa*. Their writing is immersed in their native and host cultures, being a credible blend of two or more traditions. The permeation of one culture by another forces the writers to explore identity issues. In the very act of writing, the authors analyse and reformulate both their individual and group identities. Their investigations into identity construction help them invent new, alternative conceptions of home and belonging. What follows is that the authors of ›hyphenated‹, ›intercultural‹, ›multicultural‹ texts disrupt the existing understanding of national literature. In a number of today's countries, literary texts are increasingly produced by multicultural writers who live in multi-ethnic communities. If ›national‹ writing is created in multicultural societies, the logical deduction is that it becomes, inexorably, multicultural. This obviously challenges the traditional division between the ›national‹ and ›foreign‹ literatures and reinvents the ways in which nationality is imagined and represented. Consequently, from the ›hyphenated‹, ›intercultural‹, ›multicultural‹ texts there emerges a broader, more inclusive understanding of what one may consider as ›national literature‹.

The terms ›émigré literature‹, ›immigrant literature‹, ›migrant literature‹ and ›the literature of migration‹ have been gathered in a separate, fourth set. This is because they mark the major stages in the development of the concept of ›migration writing‹. The labels focus on the figure of newcomer and, as Graeme Dunphy argues, illuminate the stages of the migrant's integration in their new society. Just like Máiréad Nic Craith, Dunphy believes that the changing terminology reflects the relationship between the migrant and his or her host community. The ›emigrant‹ is a homeward-oriented outsider, the ›immigrant‹ – often second-generation migrant – is an individual that has developed a close affinity to host culture, and the ›migrant‹ is a bi- or multicultural member of a nomadic community (often nomadic intelligentsia). Each of these migrant types shows a different attitude not only towards his or her host but also towards his or her home countries and cultures.

When it comes to emigrants, the research by various scholars, such as Dorota Kołodziejczyk, Halina Filipowicz, Jerzy Jarniewicz or Wojciech Wyskiel to name a few, illustrate how émigré authors create an imagined homeland in order to allow

the members of their diaspora to continue to participate in the life of their native country. With this attempt to sustain contact with their homeland goes the mission to fight for their country's independence or its other political and social causes. In their works, the writers are expected to respond to national matters, emphasising the connection between the individual and nation. They act as »remote-control tools« (Kołodziejczyk 2018, 93) that sustain a bond between individuals and their native land. One of their tasks is therefore to disseminate and maintain knowledge of their home culture and language among diaspora members; another is to boost their countrymen's morale and expose hidden or censored information, »serving as a voice of freedom, hope, and direction for those left behind« in the native land (ibid., 94). Committed to these duties, the writers set up literary centres, associations, journals and publishing houses abroad. Since they tend to write in their native tongue, it concludes that the audience for most of their writing is their fellow countrymen. These authors will often produce works of the high-brow kind that are read mainly by a native elite in both the diaspora and home country. Their texts are immersed in their native culture rather than in their new milieu and tend to explore themes of political exile, trauma of displacement, the situation in their country of origin, the difficulties of settling down in the new place, and representations (often critical) of the host society. Separated from their homeland, the writers have a tendency to lapse into nostalgia and sentimentalism. For all of these features, one may describe émigré writing in a simplified way as national literature written outside of the author's homeland.

What distinguishes the ›émigré‹ from ›immigrant‹ texts is that immigrant writers reject the role of national bards or intellectuals who are under a moral obligation to be involved in the political life of their country of origin. The motives behind the immigrants' decision to remain in the host country do not have to be strictly political. In their literary works, there is a shift of emphasis from the theme of separation from one's homeland to the process of assimilation in the country of residence. The writers explore the loss of identity which emerges from living in-between two cultures. Attention is given to the (un)translatability of cultures and languages and the relationship between imperial centre and colonial periphery. It is often the case that immigrants end up developing a deeper affinity with their place of residence than with their country of origin. Therefore, the issue of locality takes on extra significance: rather than an entire country, immigrants take for their home a known and specific place, be it a village, town, city district, and the like. Characteristically, these immigrant texts, or at least a significant number of them, are produced in the local language, which might not be the author's mother tongue but his or her second (or even third) language.

If emigration/immigration is driven by compulsion, migration is often said to be undertaken of one's own volition. Obviously, drawing a line between a forced

and a voluntary relocation is a highly debatable point. In his book on *International Migration*, Khalid Koser describes ›forced migrants‹ as people who were compelled to leave their home country due to conflict (e. g. civil war, international war), persecution (because of one's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, political opinion), environmental disaster (drought, flood, earthquake, famine, etc.) (Koser 2007, 16 sq.). If migration is undertaken for reasons other than those listed above, it is generally considered voluntary. Therefore, moving abroad in order to work, join one's spouse or enter university are examples that fall into this category of uncompelled relocation. However, Koser is quick to point out that the distinction between these two types is very dubious. In reality, few migrations are purely voluntary or forced. To prove his point, he gives the example of a person who was made redundant and moves to another country to find a job. Economic migration is presumed to be voluntary. However, if the employee was fired because of their race or religion, it may be argued that the person has fled for political reasons (ibid., 18). A similar ambiguity, says Nicolas Van Hear, marks the displacement of a person who leaves a country which is simultaneously experiencing economic distress and violent social upheaval (Van Hear/McNeil 2011, 01:30). This person's moving to another country will be at once motivated by economic and political reasons. To acknowledge this complexity of motives, the concept of ›mixed migration‹ was introduced in the early 2000s. The term embraces all kinds of migrants: »refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities« (Mixed Migration Centre n.d., 1). Despite the recent, justified tendency to combine forced and voluntary displacement into one category, it is helpful in some cases –analysis of emigrant, immigrant and migrant literature being one of the instances – to distinguish these two types of migration.

In their paper ›When is Migration Voluntary?‹, Valeria Ottonelli and Tiziana Torresi set down four criteria that should be fulfilled for migration to be recognised as voluntary. The first prerequisite is non-coercion, which means that one's decision to move to another place must not be caused by any kind of physical violence or psychological pressure such as threats, intimidations or deception. The second requirement is that the migrant comes from the position of ›sufficiency‹. What Ottonelli and Torresi understand by ›sufficiency‹ is the fulfilment of fundamental human needs, such as food, shelter and personal safety, and of basic social necessities, such as capability to sustain familial ties or share a common culture (2013, 798). But since this definition leaves a lot of room for interpretation and depends very much on the culture and the standard of living accepted as decent in the given country, the authors provide further clarification. Namely, migrating to another place of one's own free will often involve the worsening of the migrant's life quality rather than its improvement, at least in the short run.

The third necessary condition listed by Ottonelli and Torresi is the existence of an exit option at the moment when the decision to relocate is made. It means, among other things, that the migrants are able to return to their country of origin or move to another destination if they wish to change their situation. The final requirement is that the migrant has sufficient information of what he or she is choosing. This is violated when people are tricked into moving by someone who exploits their lack of knowledge, like for example in the case of trafficking. All in all, migration is considered voluntary when it is part of a life plan that is freely and consciously undertaken by the migrant. Therefore, the reasons behind this type of migration often involve goals such as buying a house or car, paying for the child's higher education, starting a business, finding a more suitable or better-paid job, receiving health care, moving to a country that recognises gay marriage, studying abroad, etc. (Ottonelli/Torresi 2013, 806; Zhou 2020). Ottonelli and Torresi argue that these »goals do not respond to basic needs, but to a hope of advancement and comfort that cannot be achieved within the domestic economy« and/or social order (2013, 806). The migrants are eager, but only temporarily, to sacrifice their happiness, comfort and social life with the aim of improving their living standards and/or social standing.

This voluntary context is what distinguishes ›migrant literature‹ from ›émigré‹ and ›immigrant‹ writing. As Carine M. Mardorossian argues in her article ›From Literature of Exile to Migrant Literature‹, the movement from ›exile‹ to ›migrant‹ writing reflects »the change from an epoch of revolutionary nationalism and militant anticommunism which produced exiles to an epoch of capitalist triumphalism which makes various migrant experiences possible« (2002, 17 sq.). The result is that, as Graeme Dunphy contends, migrants begin to »manage two cultures confidently« (2001, 21). They evince proficiency in their native and host (and often some other) cultures and languages, viewing their multiculturalism as an asset rather than liability. The intimate knowledge of two or more cultures often translates into multicultural and multilingual texts intended for international audiences. What makes migrant literature even more inclusive is that it comprises of high-brow as well as middle-brow and low-brow texts. Unlike émigré literature, which is aimed mainly at elites, migrant writing finds favour with large audiences. Therefore, the reader will find among migrant books a whole variety of texts: from poetry collections and memoirs to crime stories and romance novels.

By comparison with ›émigré‹, ›immigrant‹ and ›migrant‹ literatures, the centre of gravity in ›the literature of migration‹ shifts from the figure of writer to the content of his or her literary work. In the words of Rebecca L. Walkowitz, the term includes all texts »that are produced in a time of migration or that can be said to reflect on migration« (2006, 533). Svend Erik Larsen rephrases the same idea when he writes that the label »embraces all literature written under cultural

conditions defined by flows of migration, no matter the origin of the author« (2016, 509). Both scholars argue it is enough for the author to be involved intellectually with the issues of migration and transculturalism: he or she does not have to be a migrant to produce the literature of migration. What is essential, however, is that the writer's work is imbued with a vision of cosmopolitan, transnational, hybrid society and globalised world. This vision determines the style, language and themes of the writing. The result is that whether a work is classified as ›the literature of migration‹ depends on the content, the characteristics and the reader's interpretation of the work; the writer's background is deemed irrelevant, even if it impacts the reception of the work.

3 What Is Migration Writing?

From the above concepts, there emanates what I call ›migration writing‹. The label is used by me as an umbrella term, within which one can talk about different strands or literary trends and movements, such as the abovementioned exile, refugee, guest worker, Kanake, allochthonous, ethnic, minority, diasporic, hyphenated, intercultural, multicultural, émigré, immigrant, migrant, migration literatures, and so forth. In comparison to ›migration literature‹, which in some countries (for example in Italy) denotes creative works only (Ganeri 2010, 437), ›migration writing‹ is a broader term that includes both literary and non-literary texts. It spans a wide thematic and tonal range from political commentaries to spiritual quests. Some of the migration texts discuss the topics with sophistication and gravity, others take a humorous or sensational view on the issues. In effect, the label embraces a spectrum of what one can consider high-brow, middle-brow and low-brow literature. It covers essays, memoirs, diaries, novels, short stories, poems, dramas, etc.

Therefore, when one discusses literature and migration, it seems essential to provide a time frame. Otherwise, as Margherita Ganeri shrewdly remarks, the term would be too broad and include all works concerned with the movement of people since the ancient times. The scholar argues persuasively that:

> [...] if we consider migration a literary theme, as many have done, we should also admit that a specific field of inquiry called migration literature would cover nearly all the literary histories of all times. Because every author who writes or has written in the past, in wide or limited ways, about migration experiences, should be included in it. As a theme, migration is not only relevant and widespread in itself; it is also historically relevant in almost all the European literatures both modern and ancient, because of the history itself of Europe, and not only of Europe. The so called »great human diasporas« require specific approaches

> regarding the various forms of migrations in the historical long-term courses and recourses. It is true that only in the last two-hundred years specific claims of personal, ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity entered the arena of social discourse, as many claim, but this is still a very large span of time. A wide chronological ground must certainly be taken into account in any discussion about literature and migration [...]. (Ganeri 2010, 437 sq.)

Ganeri suggests the beginning of ›migration literature‹ in Italy should be dated to the 1990s as this was the time when Italian migration writing began to be the subject of literary study. The first extensive anthology of prose, poetry and drama works by Italian-American authors, titled *From the Margin: Writings in Italian Americana*, was published in 1991. Six years later, Armando Gnisci, a prominent expert on migrant literature, started his large-scale research project *Basili* (Banca dati scrittori immigranti in lingua italiana), the enterprise aimed at tracking down and investigating Italian literature written by migrants (ibid., 438).

Albeit for a different reason, I would say that the same span of time can be ascribed to ›migration writing‹. Since the processes underpinning globalisation compel contemporary migrations and those, in turn, inspire migration writing, then it seems reasonable to link the appearance of ›migration writing‹ with the emergence of the concept of ›globalisation‹.

In his concise yet comprehensive introduction to *Globalisation*, Manfred B. Steger arrives at the following working definition of the term:

> Globalisation refers to a multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch, and intensify worldwide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connections between the local and the distant (Steger 2003, 13).

In the accompanying commentary, Steger stresses that globalisation is a multidimensional and uneven process. What he has in mind when he makes this statement is that, on the one hand, the analysis of this complex phenomenon, rather than reduced to the merely economic aspect, should embrace other important angles, such as political, cultural, ideological and environmental dimensions of globalisation. On the other hand, it must be remembered that populations in various parts of the world are affected by the intensification of global connections and interdependencies in very different ways. Generally speaking, the global South enjoys less access to, and fewer benefits from, the global networks than the economically advanced countries of the global North (Steger 2003, 13–15). In consequence, the existing asymmetrical power relations are preserved. It does not mean, however, that the global North is left unscathed by the inequality and negative ramifications of globalisation. As a matter of fact, in their report for Oxfam, Diego Alejo Vázquez Pimentel, Iñigo Macías Aymar and Max Lawson

arrive at a conclusion that 82 % of all wealth created in 2017 went to the 1 % of the wealthiest billionaires, who are, by the way, mostly men. To put it in perspective: »The three richest people in the US own the same wealth as the bottom half of the US population (roughly 160 million people)« (Vázquez Pimentel/Macías Aymar/Lawson 2018, 10). According to the researchers, women, ordinary workers and small-scale food producers across the world profit the least from globalisation. The fruits of international connections seem to be mostly reserved for a global elite (ibid., 1).

Apart from the impacts of globalisation, Steger observes that another contested topic in academic debates is when the acceleration of global connections started. In other words, when did globalisation begin? He examines different intellectual currents and goes in his analysis as far back as the pre-historic period (10,000 BCE – 3,500 BCE) during which the long-running dispersion of human species across all five continents was finally achieved. In the pre-modern period (3,500 BCE – 1,500 CE), Steger notes, the invention of the wheel in Southwest Asia allowed for more efficient transportation of goods and people. And the development of the alphabet in Mesopotamia, Egypt and central China facilitated the coordination of social activities and resulted in the formation of empires. In the early modern period (1500–1750), the monarchs of Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, France and England encouraged the exploration of new lands, their colonisation, and the development of interregional markets. Corporations like Dutch and British East India grew in size and stature, profiting from intercontinental economic transactions. Fed by a steady supply of goods from the colonised regions, the Western countries grew in wealth and power during the modern period (1750–1970). Then the 19th-century advancement of science and technology led to innovations in transportation and communication. If the development of railways and mechanised shipping set the stage for the 20th-century air transport, the invention of telegraph was a prelude to the devising of telephone, radio and television. During the 20th century, colonial competition, mass migration and urbanisation intensified interstate rivalry. It culminated in two world wars (Steger 2003, 17–36). By the end of World War II, the United States in alliance with the United Kingdom held a conference for the economic powers of global North in Bretton Woods in 1944. The conference laid foundations for the establishment of three key international organisations: the International Monetary Fund that administered the international monetary system; the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later known as World Bank) which initially provided loans for rebuilding post-war Europe but was later expanded to finance projects in the developing countries across the world; and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that facilitated and enforced multilateral trade agreements; GATT was replaced by World Trade Organisation in 1995 (Steger 2003, 37 sq.).

The funding of global institutions has visibly strengthened worldwide exchanges and networks. In *The Age of Migration*, Hein de Haas, Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller distinguish four periods in post-war globalisation: 1945–1973; 1973–1989; 1989–2008; 2008–present. Among other things, the researchers argue that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the start of the »era of ›neoliberal‹ globalization« which is characterised, among other things, by »market triumphalism, economic deregulation and accelerated globalization of trade and finance« (de Haas/Castles/Miller 2020, 17). The end of Cold War, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and destabilisation of ›strong states‹ in Africa and Asia led to increased international migration. The subsequent economic growth and demographic aging stirred demand for migrant labour in North America, Europe and East Asia while the Persian Gulf turned into a popular destination for workers from South and Southeast Asia.

Haas and his colleagues' observations and Steger's historical outline, which are only briefly and selectively summarised above, raise awareness that the processes of globalisation have been happening for centuries and so the phenomenon can be considered as old as humanity. However, as Steger asserts in his 2014 article which he co-wrote with Paul James, ›globalisation‹ as a concept was rarely used until the 1990s. It was only then that the term became immensely popular in both public and academic discourses (James/Steger 2014, 419). The journalists and scholars began to use it to talk about the changes they were observing in various fields such as business, economics, humanities and social sciences. As a result, ›globalisation‹ came to signify »the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-space and world-time« (ibid., 425). Previously, the term carried a different meaning. Exploring its uses between the 1930s and 1970s, James and Steger observe the word ›globalisation‹ was applied, among other contexts, »in education to describe the global life of the mind« and »in international relations to describe the extension of the European Common Market« (ibid., 417).

Beginning as an obscure idea in the late 1980s, the concept of globalisation grew into everyone's consciousness almost overnight. It became a source from which many other phenomena sprang, ›migration writing‹ being one of them. Therefore, even though this claim is made from a Eurocentric point of view, it seems quite legitimate to acknowledge the 1990s as the beginning of ›migration writing‹.

To sum up, ›migration writing‹ in the most general sense is a term for a whole variety of different types of literary and non-literary texts that have been published since the 1990s. They either tackle the topic of migration or emerge from the experience of migration (but not necessarily address the subject of migration). It is also not necessary for the author to be a migrant: it is enough that his or

her work is inspired or influenced by the experience of migration and is imbued with a vision of cosmopolitan, transnational, hybrid society and the globalised world. In consequence, the author of ›migration writing‹ can be a migrant, but also their spouse, relative or friend, the descendant of the migrant (second or third generation migrant) or a local writer.

Given the large scope of this definition and diversity of form, language, style, tone and themes of migration writing, the best way to define the genre is to see it as a constellation of many different types of text, which are connected to one another – not by conformity to a single, prescriptive pattern but – by a set of resemblances. That is to say, there is an array of features that allow one to classify a text as ›migration writing‹ and each individual work manifests a different selection and combination of these characteristics. Some of the features that mark out the genre include: the real-life nature of the writing (the story appears to have basis in real-life events and the author's first-hand experiences); creolization and multilingualism in the text; references to multiple cultures and/or geographic locations; impact of the Internet and online communication on the structure of the work; common themes and motifs (for example, locality *versus* globalism, community *versus* nation, exploration of belonging and identity issues, comparison of the home and host countries and cultures, living in a multicultural community, intercultural relationships, creation of new traditions and heritage, revision of gender roles and the like).

4 The Research Potential of Migration Writing

As mentioned above, one of the features typical of ›migration writing‹ is its real-life nature. The fact that the authors tend to constantly refer to actuality and use first-person narration conveys the impression that the events depicted in their books are based in reality and stem from the authors' first-hand experiences. Obviously, this apparent authenticity and factuality of migration writing can be misleading. Even if the writer describes real-life events and has a good memory, he or she rarely remembers things in a neat and linear chronology and recounts them accurately. Therefore, the authors – not so much reconstruct their experiences as – construct a fictionalised rendering of migration. What they offer are individual and subjective depictions of the events, which are presented selectively, adapted, exaggerated and often interwoven with scenes that are entirely the product of imagination. Of course, the extent to which the authors exaggerate or fabricate events in their account can vary greatly. At one end of the spectrum, there are those writers who lean towards reportage and journalism. At the other

end, there are those who have literary aspirations or are entertainment-oriented. As a result, migration books strike a very different balance between informing and entertaining the readers.

Although less evident, the influence of publishers and editors is equally significant. As Amy Burge notes in her informative essay on ›What can literature tell us about migration?‹, the publishing industry wields control over what is published and circulated. Writers often have to adjust the content of their books to the needs and expectations of the market. It is also not uncommon for migrants and refugees to produce texts as part of projects run by social and political organisations. Therefore, there might be a rift between what the authors would like to and what they are asked to write about.

Anyone who wants to analyse migration writing in terms of authenticity and what ›truths‹ it reveals must undoubtedly bear in mind the above limitations. On the other hand, every single text is always to some extent a constructed, crafted artefact, which does not necessarily discredit the information the narrative provides. Not everything in migration writing is fabricated or embellished and the books do provide some useful knowledge. Both non-fiction texts, such as a reportage or diary, and the literary works, such as a novel, drama or poem, give highly informative accounts of migration experience and offer a glimpse of the contemporary history. It is an awareness of this that makes the narrator in Jacek Ozaist's novel *Wyspa obiecana* [The Promised Isle] to make the following, perhaps slightly portentous but nevertheless incisive, remark:

> I am co-writing the contemporary history of Poland, which kids will read about the same way we read about uprisings and wars. The time will show if our emigration is a historical phenomenon that can be compared to the exodus after World War II and after the declaration of martial law; or perhaps it is something even larger, epoch-making. After all, it is said that 20 % of population has left the country, which is no fewer than several million people. (Ozaist 2015, 130)[16]

In casting himself in the self-appointed role as a chronicler, Ozaist's narrator records and interprets the events in which he participates. This way his personal experiences and subjective reflections become part of the national (or even world) history. Not unlike other migrants' works, his writing constitutes a sort of socio-historical archive.

16 Współtworzę nową historię Polski, o której kiedyś dzieciaki będą czytać, jak my czytaliśmy o powstaniach i wojnach. Czas pokaże, czy nasza emigracja to zjawisko historyczne, porównywalne z ucieczkami po II wojnie światowej i stanie wojennym, czy też o wiele większe, wręcz epokowe. Przecież słyszy się, że w kraju ubyło ok. 20 procent populacji, a to już liczba wyrażana w milionach.

By offering a mediation between fact and fiction, migration writing tends to provide a blend of literary pleasure and useful information. The texts convey an image of migrants' host and home countries, shaping the readers' perception of and attitudes towards those places and their inhabitants. As the authors capture human interactions in everyday life, they often try to prompt interest in the Other, explaining the culture of nationals to migrants and *vice versa* and forming new traditions and common heritage in local communities. This, in turn, problematises the question of belonging and national identity – or more precisely – of what it means to be British, English, Irish, Polish, local, foreign, migrant, Catholic, etc. Propelled by changes to migrants' economic status, religious life, language capacity and awareness of their ethnicity, migration writing re-defines their individual, collective and national identities. The texts often contain the most brilliant explorations of identity issues and elucidate the impact of globalising cultural processes on identity formation. In their attempt to challenge the ingrained assumptions about migration and migrants, many authors, though obviously not all, try to encourage their readers to think in new, ›other‹ ways about such notions as nationality, borders, belonging or home.

For those very reasons, migration writing can provide comprehensive material for research in all kinds of areas, such as sociological, political, economic and culture studies. The research potential of migration writing is already acknowledged by those who use it as research tools in a variety of projects engaging with diasporas. The sceptics, however, raise a vital question as to whether these texts have any significant impact on the existing reality.

In her elaboration on this issue, Amy Burge adduces evidence from a range of scholars, such as Viet Thanh Nguyen (2018), Claire Gallien (2018b), and Agnes Woolley (2014) (cited in Burge 2020, 20 sq.). Quite reasonably, Nguyen exposes the limitations of migration writing by pointing out that the world is not simply changed by literature. For a transformation to become possible, the readers have to undertake real actions to alter the conditions in which they live (ibid., 20).

By contrast, Woolley and Gallien see literature as a major impetus for change. They draw attention to the fact that migration writing raises awareness about the lives of those voiceless in society (ibid., 20). It documents and reflects on events that are often excluded from the mainstream discourse and that otherwise would remain invisible to the public; it exposes and dissipates the stereotypical representations of migration and migrants; it invites the readers to evaluate critically the contemporary social, political and economic concerns from a global, rather than a national, perspective; it gives an insight into current cultural transformations. Acting as a counterweight to the dominant narratives, migration texts make visible phenomena that are marginalised or deliberately kept away from the public. They record aspects that history and cultural memory tend to uninten-

tionally ignore or wilfully exclude, providing alternative knowledge about social and cultural transformations brought about by migration. By disrupting the existing beliefs of the national, the works broaden the meaning of what one considers his or her heritage and may help communities shape a new, common culture. Also, although it may seem overly optimistic and sound like wishful thinking, Woolley argues migration narratives may be charged with the subversive power to create a more equitable future for those represented in them.

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Polish Migrant Literature in Britain and Ireland: Signs of a New Literary Trend?

> Where once the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants [...] may be the terrains of world literature. (Bhabha 1994, 17)

Polish media has been particularly interested in the impact of post-accession emigration on the nation's economy and politics, but the departure of Poles to Great Britain and Ireland left a mark on many other areas of life as well. Its influence on literature may still seem slightly vague, yet it can hardly be denied. It has become especially evident in the dynamic activity of Polish cultural and literary groups in London and in the surge of migrants' books. When the writings are examined in the context of Polish literary history, one may conclude that we are witnessing the development of a new literary trend. Carrie M. Mardorossian names this 'migrant literature' in her article in which she delineates a paradigmatic shift from literature of exile to migrant literature (Mardorossian 2003, 15); Graeme Dunphy uses the same term in his essay about fiction written by Turkish immigrants in Denmark; and Dirk Uffelmann analyses the need for a terminological change to describe contemporary literature produced by East European migrants in Germany (2003, 277–288). The critics draw the readers' attention to the fact that "[t]he colonial migrant and the post-war migrant-worker may experience the host country in similar ways, but the historical context is distinct" (Dunphy 2001, 1).[1]

This difference finds apt expression in contemporary literature written by Polish migrants. Unlike political emigrants, who came to the British Isles after World War II or during communist rule in

[1] For further discussion of the issue, see Makarska and Henseler 2013, Pourjafari and Vahidpour 2014, 679–692 and Farago 2014, 93.

Poland in the 1980s, recent economic immigrants focus neither on maintaining their national identity nor on recreating a home away from home. Instead, they cherish the idea of starting a new life in a Western country. This discrepancy springs largely from their distinct motives for going abroad. Contrary to their predecessors, contemporary Polish migrants, disappointed with the economic policy in their homeland, usually move to another country to improve their standard of living. Additionally, the poet Wioletta Grzegorzewska mentions social motives for Polish emigration:

> [...] reasons for emigrating are very different from what they used to be, and I insist, they are not purely economic. A number of authors fled the country because of their beliefs, for instance travelers, homosexual authors and feminists. I often hear from members of the recent emigration wave that they want to bounce off the country [...][2]

This clear disparity between the contemporary socio-economic flow and the political exodus in the past raises the question of terminology: whether the present-day Polish diaspora should be denominated as *emigrants* or *migrants*. The writers themselves seem to lean toward the latter option: "Actually, are today's Poles really emigrants? [...] Can you call it emigration if you're able to come back home within two hours,"[3] ponders Łukasz Ślipko in *Pokój z widokiem na Dunnes Stores* [*The Room with a View of Dunnes Stores*]. In that case, it appears more pertinent to use the word *migrant*, which increasingly replaces the alternative term *emigrant*. It thus seems more appropriate to use the phrase *migrant literature* when referring to the works written by Polish people currently living abroad; mostly because the notion stresses the distinctiveness of present migrant writers, who are more interested in exploring the new reality rather than in reminiscing about the national past. Having come from comparatively monoethnic Poland, they are at-

[2] „[...] zupełnie inne podłoże ma obecna emigracja; i upieram się, że nie jest ono wyłącznie ekonomiczne. Wielu autorów uciekło z kraju ze względu na poglądy, na przykład podróżnicy, autorzy homoseksualni czy feministki. Często spotykam się z opinią członków nowej fali, że oni chcą odbić się od kraju [...]" (Grzegorzewska, Kosmalska 2014, 156).

[3] „Ale co z nas, współczesnych Polaków, właściwie za emigranci? [...] Co to właściwie za emigracja, z której można wrócić w ciągu dwóch godzin?" (Ślipko 2011, 40).

tracted to the novelty of a multicultural country. This, in turn, has resulted in a greater impact of British and Irish multi-ethnic culture on Polish literature than previously.

To show this influence, the article refers to some of over eighty drama, prose, and poetry books that tackle the problem of recent migration. All works have been written by Poles and published in Poland, Ireland or Great Britain since 2004.[4] The research concentrates on the works appearing within the boundaries of the UK and Ireland as these are the most popular destinations among Polish migrants. The multitude of writings allows conclusions to be drawn in regard to the characteristic features of contemporary migrant literature. By the same token, the article intentionally avoids in-depth analysis of the works to fully focus on illuminating patterns in order to ascertain whether there is actually a new emerging trend in Polish literature.

Although critics have spent years theorizing about what makes a literary trend (also referred to as *literary current*),[5] a systematic, precise definition of the concept has not been formed. In her 1996 book, *On the Margins of Modernism*, Chana Kronfeld highlights the diverse, often contradictory approaches to the term and makes an observation that still seems well-founded:

> Most treatments of literary trends, whether they explicitly identify themselves as concerned with periodization or with typology, in practice present some mixture of the two approaches, a tendency I find quite symptomatic. While this means that logically and methodologically the discussions may tend to be inconsistent and even confused, it also suggests that the need for a more pluralistic account may be indicated by the literary corpus itself (Kronfeld 1996, 37).[6]

In the absence of an unequivocal definition, the article offers the following working definition based mainly on the extensive descrip-

[4] This research is part of an international project on migrant literature (DEC-2011/01/B/HS2/05120). Financed by the National Science Centre, it is being conducted at the University of Łódź, Poland. More information is available on the project's website: www.emigracja.uni.lodz.pl.

[5] The theoretical foundations for the concept of literary trend (current) were laid down by René Wellek in his article "Periods and Movements in Literary History" (Wellek 1940).

[6] Henryk Markiewicz arrives at similar conclusions in *Główne problemy wiedzy o literaturze* (Markiewicz 1976, 182).

tion of a literary current included in *Zarys teorii literatury* [*Literary Theory Overview*] by Michał Głowiński, Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska, and Janusz Sławiński (1975, 485–498), but also referring to research carried out by Douwe Fokkema and Elrud Ibsch (1987, 1), Chana Kronfeld (1996, 35–56), Henryk Markiewicz (1976, 182–211), and Ireneusz Opacki (2000, 118–126).

Generally speaking, *literary trend* is defined in this article as a cluster of ideological, compositional, thematic, and linguistic characteristics that reappear in literary texts written within a given historical period. As Głowiński and his colleagues write: "You can find four constitutive elements in every literary trend."[7] Firstly, the respective authors share similar views on life, philosophical, and cultural ideas, or a similar outlook on the aims of their writing. Secondly, their texts resemble one other in regard to their literary form and structure. Thirdly, the works concern similar topics and display comparable recurring character types, motifs, and symbols. Fourthly, the writers use similar stylistic and linguistic devices. The above mentioned features correspond with characteristics Ireneusz Opacki mentions in "Royal Genres":

> Every literary trend—or a phase of it—has underlying it certain defined socio-historical factors, which shape a specific attitude towards the world and a certain sphere of interests and problems. In turn, this brings with it the creation of a specific system of poetics, an ensemble of means of expression, of ways of structurally linking them, which—growing out of the "extraliterary" environment of the trend—carry in them historically specific meanings and functions. (Opacki 2000, 119)

Finally, the emergence of a literary trend is usually an outcome of a literary discourse, and according to the authors of *Zarys teorii literatury*, it can also—although does not necessarily have to—be announced in a form of a literary manifesto. This view is contradicted by Douwe Fokkema and Elrud Ibsch, who, in the introduction to their 1987 book, ascribe more systematic activities, such as publishing manifestos and anthologies, to the literary movement. By doing so, they draw a clear line between a *trend* and a *movement*.

[7] „W każdym prądzie literackim można odnaleźć cztery konstytutywne elementy" (Głowiński, Okopień-Sławińska, Sławiński 1975, 486).

> The term "movement" pertains to a sociological process. If a group of writers can be clearly distinguished, with manifestoes and other collective publications, one can speak of a movement, e.g., the Futurist movement. If the texts produced by a movement are considered as literature rather than as the result of an intentional function, they can be said to constitute a literary current (Fokkema, Ibsch 1987, 1).

Taking these various aspects into account, the article is divided into five parts. Part one is devoted to writers. It presents a general picture of the group of Polish migrant authors in Britain and Ireland. It analyses their decision to take up writing, indicates their target readership by looking at the language of the books (whether the writers direct their works at Polish or English readers), and outlines the authors' purpose of writing. This demonstrates that the migrant penmen have a similar attitude to life and writing. Part two analyses interdependencies between migrant drama, poetry, and prose in order to single out the most popular genre in migrant literature at present, namely the (e)migration novel. Part three considers the typical characters, themes, motifs, and symbols; it briefly introduces the common issues that lie at the heart of the writers' interest. Part four, in turn, deals with linguistic features. If we compare the analysis, adduced in the above mentioned sections, to parts of a model aircraft, section five is the glue that makes it possible to stick all the pieces together. It refers to the highlighted patterns in order to draw conclusions on how writers' migration experiences have influenced Polish literature.

Polish Authors in the UK and Ireland

At first glance it seems striking that Poles in the UK seem more prolific in terms of literary production than those in Ireland. However, the greater literary production is less of a surprise when one considers the statistics: in 2014, the British Office for National Statistics estimated that the number of Polish immigrants in the UK was 853 thousand (ONS 2015, 1). The same year, the Irish Central Statistics Office recorded 150 thousand of Polish residents in the Republic of Ireland (CSO, 2015). The numbers give a ratio of approximately 1:6. Hence, a more dynamic development of the literary scene in Great Britain, in comparison to other European

countries, is not rooted in rallying of talents in one place, but rather in the vast disproportion in numbers among immigrants. Similarly, the gender division among the analyzed authors, where a half of the names are female, concurs with the official statistics: the latest Report of the Research Committee on Migration shows fifty-two per cent of emigrants are women.[8] Obviously, this goes against the stereotypical belief that migrants are mostly men in their twenties. Further debunking this myth, the authors are not very young either; the significant majority of them are well over thirty. But regardless of their age, sex, and place of residence, people's motivation for describing their experiences abroad is very much alike.

For the majority of authors, a need to set pen to paper was aroused by overwhelming emotions that accompanied their decision to leave the homeland and start everything from scratch in a new country. It is no surprise then that fifty per cent of the analyzed writers made their debut by describing the world of the recent emigration wave. What is suggestive of the authors' plans to take up the writing career in earnest is that three-fourths of them have already published their next book. Examples of such writers include Agnieszka Bednarska, Magdalena Zimny-Louis or Mariusz Wieteska. Speculation on whether the debutantes would write their texts had they not decided to emigrate is likely to remain inconclusive. Even though some authors admitted to consigning their previous works to the drawer, they had no reservations to share their reflections on migration with a wider public. It seems thereby plausible to assume that recent migration sparked the appearance of budding writers. Had it not been for their departure to the islands, we would have never heard about some of them.

Interestingly, a number of those writers plan to never come back, but still publish mainly in Poland and in Polish. Among fifty authors, only five reach out to the local audience by publishing in English. These are Joanna Zgadzaj (who writes under the pseudonym of A.M. Bakalar), Wiktor Moszczyński (an author of essays and articles about Poles in London), Daniel Żuchowski (who works as a teacher of English in Dublin), Maria Jastrzębska, and Marek Kazmierski (authors, who emigrated from Poland as teenagers in

[8] The yet unpublished report was prepared at the request of the Polish Senate by the members of the Polish Academy of Sciences (see Ćwiek 2013).

the 1980s). Even though writers often talk about plans to make their work available in English in interviews, few of the texts have actually been translated. Some exceptions are bilingual collections of poems, for example *Pamięć Smieny / Smena's Memory* (2011) by Wioletta Grzegorzewska or *Obecność / Presence* (2014) by Tomasz Mielcarek. The underlying cause for the *status quo* seems to be these authors' insufficient command of English. Many openly admit this handicap, saying they prefer to remain in the language with which they feel comfortable. However, this cannot be the only reason because when these writers have an opportunity to participate in international projects, they quickly have their work translated.

My hypothesis is, therefore, that contemporary migrant writers address their books, maybe even unconsciously, to Polish readers. Jerzy Jarniewicz calls them the "*retrospective* addressees,"[9] people whom the author left behind in his/her native land (Jarniewicz 2014, 115). The fact that the works in question are directed at this target group is further substantiated by the issues upon which they touch. Some of them, for instance Tomasz Wybranowski and Jacek Wąsowicz, call for socio-economic changes in their homeland. Others, for example Łukasz Ślipko or Maria Budacz, focus on the issues of Polish migration. Another group, including Magdalena Orzeł and Aleksander Kropiwnicki, describes their new realities in great detail as if they were shooting a documentary about a foreign country. The rest, Gosia Brzezińska, Dana Parys-White or Łucja Fice to name a few, depict their stay abroad in a very personal and contemplative manner. For them, writing is a way to reflect upon their decision to move abroad, externalize their dreams, or achieve a catharsis. Notwithstanding their aims, the authors live in Britain or Ireland physically, but mentally they travel back and forth from their current place of residence to their native land.

This suspended existence gives them an illusion of objectivism that allows them to take on the perspective of an outsider. Poland is one and a half thousand kilometers away, and they are only beginning to discover the new country. They are no longer a part of Polish society and are not yet a part of the local community. As Homi K. Bhabha puts it, they have become "unhomed," overwhelmed by

[9] „adresaci *retrospektywni*" (Jarniewicz 2014, 115, emphasis in the original).

"the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world" (Bhabha 1994, 13). Edward Said pictures this moment as crossing the frontier between us and the others and stepping into "the perilous territory of not-belonging" (Said 2002, 140). From there, the migrants believe they are able to observe Polish, British and Irish reality "from the outside." However, the isolation is only illusory as they lead a life, not outside the societies, but rather "in-between" them. They gradually fill in the "in-between space" with a new history, culture, language, and literature. This brings me to the second point: the question about the most popular forms of writing among Polish authors.

The Emergence of the Migration Novel

Judging by the gathered books, migrant prose is currently undergoing a most vigorous development. There is slightly less interest in poetry, but the least popular of all genres seems drama. *Re-identyfikacja* [*Re-identification*] (2007) by the members of Gappad Theatre, *Uciekający pociąg* [*Runaway Train*] (2012) by Piotr Surmaczyński and *The Passengers* (2015) by Anna Wolf and Rory O'Sullivan are among the few plays produced. Dramatized poetry evenings, popular in London and its satellite cities, compensate for the lack of theater by combining music, dance, art, and poetry. One of the groups actively promoting these multi-arts meetings is KaMPe (Association of Young Poets), run by Aleksy Wróbel. A survey of the works collected, however, leaves no doubt that migrants most willingly share their experiences by means of a novel, often referred to as the "emigration novel." The term probably owes its popularity to the promotional value the word *emigration* has recently acquired. With invigorating freshness, it widely draws the attention of Polish society due to the direct and indirect involvement of a great number of people in recent migration. The word's advertising potential has sparked a trend to place it or one of its derivatives in the works' title (e.g. *Opowieść emigracyjna* [*The Emigration Tale*] by Justyna Nowak (2010) or *Emigrantką być, czyli wspomnienia z Wells* [*Being an Emigrant, Memories from Wells*] by Marta Semeniuk (2011)), subtitles (for example, the title of a short story collection *Na końcu świata napisane* [*Written on the Edge of the World*] (Spadzińska-Żak 2008) is followed by an explanatory subtitle *Autoportret współczesnej polskiej emigracji* [*A Self-Portrait*

of Polish Contemporary Emigration]), and authors' biographies (for instance, from Jan Krasnowolski's biographical note, we learn that *Afrykańska elektronika* [*African Electronics*] (2013) is based on the writer's "emigration experiences"[10]).

The juxtaposition of "emigration" and "novel" was first used in migrant literature as a subtitle for Adam Miklasz's *Polska szkoła boksu. Powieść emigracyjna* [*The Polish School of Boxing: An Emigration Novel*] (2009). Typing the term *emigration novel* in a Polish search engine now results in a number of recently released books' titles. This genre, which is likely to change its name in time to the *migration novel*, combines elements of the novel of manners, reportage, bildungsroman, and autobiography. It aims at a detailed, but subjective description of the world constituted by a half-closed community of migrants. As a result, the authors place a greater emphasis on the depiction of reality and characters than on plot development. By doing so, they attempt to portray the psychological, moral, and social transformation of the characters who settled down in a foreign country. The books recount the events the writers have participated in or witnessed and often refer to media coverage. Inspired by true stories, the migration novels are recurrently based on diary notes, taken by the writers in the course of their everyday life.[11] Consequently, the majority of novels tend to be written in the first person. Indeed, three-fourths of the almost fifty analyzed prose texts employ first-person narration.

It therefore may come as a surprise that the authors deny incorporating autobiographical facts into their writing. A few authors, such as Wioletta Grzegorzewska, Iwona Macałka or Wiesława Czartoryska, openly point out the diary-like nature of their books in the title, preface or afterword, but the majority is reluctant to admit to documenting their own experiences. Only a longer conversation or a closer relationship with the authors shed light on the vivid similarity between the plot and the writer's biography. The reasons for keeping this correlation a secret do not probably differ from those that make writers all over the world keep such information to themselves. They wish to both protect their families' and friends' privacy, and they prefer their books not be

[10] „Doświadczenie emigracyjne zawarł w tomie opowiadań *Afrykańska elektronika* (2013)" (Krasnowolski 2013, back cover).

[11] For information on life writing in Polish migrant literature, see Gall 2011, 177–199.

labelled diaries. After all, their characters are a combination of several people, while the events become a colorful and exaggerated version of the truth.

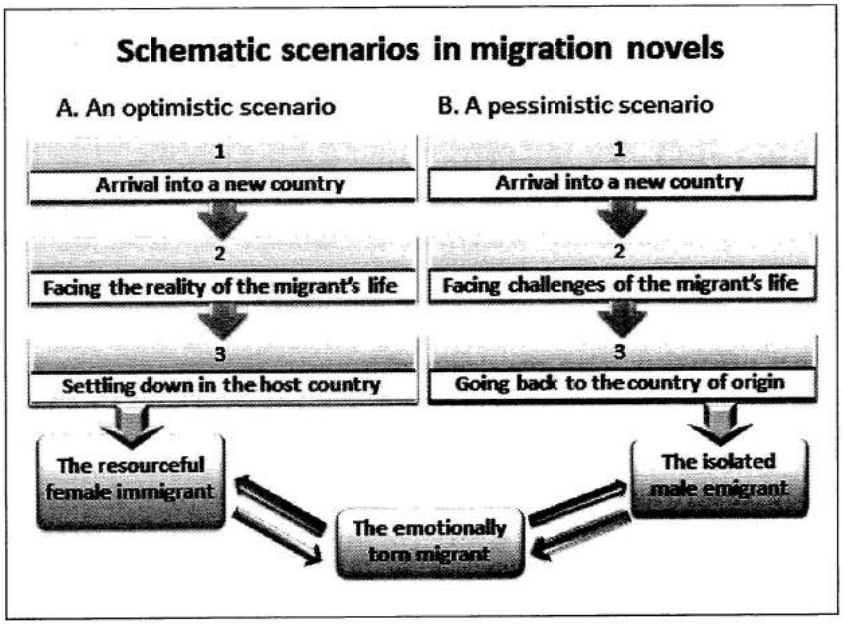
Despite denying any similarity to their own life, the novelists underscore the real-life quality of their prose and the references to real people and events. Apart from a few exceptions,[12] most authors have had the experience of a long-term stay in Britain or Ireland. This biographical information is often disclosed on the book's cover, so readers are aware of the author's competence from the very beginning. The message enters their mind like an ink drop into a glass of water, and the reception of the text becomes tinged with authenticity, suggesting the writer has lived abroad, and will provide an insightful study of migrants' lives. With this subliminal conviction, the readers open the books and believe they shall read an authentic account by an author with full knowledge about the described reality. In fact, the authors strive to create just such an impression. They repeat in interviews[13] that they want to paint a "true picture" of the islands and their citizens. The problem is that about seventy per cent of the novels focus entirely on the lowest echelons of the host society. As a result, the apparently faithful depiction of the reality is limited to the working-class world. Although the majority of the authors belong to this world, they rarely identify themselves with the working class and tend to describe this group from the perspective of a foreigner, alias an outsider. This paradox stems from the fact that educated Poles live and work among the uneducated local citizens. It may be the reason why the writers' representation of the host country is so often marked with criticism. That said, a few authors who managed to enter the middle-class circles, such as A.M. Bakalar, Ada Martynowska or Magdalena Zimny-Louis, paint the local realities in much brighter colors.

[12] E.g. Leszek Girtler, the author of a short story, "Sheringham Avenue," in *Na końcu świata napisane* [*Written on the Edge of the World*] (2008), who has not moved to the UK but often visits his Polish friends there, or Katarzyna Krenz, the author of the novel *W ogrodzie Mirandy* [*In Miranda's Garden*] (2008), who spent nine years living in Portugal (2005–2014).

[13] The interviews mentioned or quoted in this paper have been carried out for the Virtual Archive by the author of the article between 2013 and 2015. They are available on the website: http://archiwum-emigracja.uni.lodz.pl/.

The majority of the novels are set in a big city, usually in London or Dublin. The choice of the location is usually influenced by the author's place of residence since the writers tend to describe the surroundings they are currently living in. Despite this tendency, the presented world is rarely confined to the borders of one city or country. Not unlike the authors themselves, the characters frequently move and spend a lot of time globetrotting. They suffer from what Urszula Chowaniec calls a "tourist syndrome": "As long as they can afford it, the modern migrant[s] can choose his home, and this home is always temporal." (Chowaniec 2011, 143). Their nomadic lifestyle affects the book structure in that the descriptions of the islands are entwined with snapshots from the character's visits to the native land or other European countries. In this way, the narrator in Łukasz Suskiewicz's *egri bikavér* (2009) begins his journey with holidays in sunny Greece. Then he flies to Great Britain, followed by a visit to Ireland, the land of milk and honey, where he hopes to get on the gravy train, only to return to gloomy Poland disappointed. His account of the travels is interlaced with the memories from his family town, Częstochowa. Along the same lines, the plot of Magdalena Zimny-Louis's *Kilka przypadków szczęśliwych* [*A Few Lucky Coincidences*] (2014) is set simultaneously in England, Poland and Italy. Skillfully moving from one country to another at the opening of each chapter, the writer unfolds three parallel stories. That of Florian Duda in the 1960s and his daughter Emma at present, and she interweaves them with the adventures of the prostitute Monta Kolaczenko. By introducing more than one geographic location, the Polish authors enrich their works with new themes, settings and a range of ethnically varied characters.

This duality of location has also spawned a recurring structure. A significant majority of these novels and short stories begin at the moment the protagonist departs from his homeland. Usually two scenarios follow. In the first, the more optimistic one, the character is faced with the challenges of a migrant's life, but overcomes them to a great extent and succeeds in putting down roots in the new place. In the second pessimistic scheme, the first two phases remain unchanged; however, the protagonist fails to make the host country his home. Feeling feeble and ashamed, he decides to return to his native country, go to another European capital, or commit suicide.



Character Types: Immigrant, Emigrant, Migrant

The above mentioned schematic scenarios dovetail largely with two recurring types of characters, which leads me to the third point, i.e. the "typicality" of characters. The first type is the determined and resourceful female immigrant, who crosses one border after another until she becomes fully immersed in the new environment and an integrated member of the local community. This kind of protagonist is depicted in novels such as Dana Parys-White's *Emigrantka z wyboru* [*Emigrant by Choice*] (2008), Anna Łajkowska's *Pensjonat na wrzosowisku* [*Guesthouse in the Moorland*] (2012), or Magdalena Zimny-Louis's *Pola* (2011). Instead of staying on the periphery of the host society, feeling unfortunate and marginalized, the characters climb the social ladder and seize every opportunity to better their life. The plausibility of such venturesome heroines is supported by sociological research, which shows a positive impact of migration on women (Głażewska 2010, 18). Living and working abroad makes them stronger, more independent and self-confident. In truth, the recently released novels Łucja Fice's *Wyspa starców* [*Old People's Island*] (2013) and Monika Richardson's *Pożegnanie z Anglią* [*Farewell to England*] (2012) break the stereotype of a female migrant undergoing the process of acculturation successfully. But they are more an exception rather than the rule, at least for the time being.

Against the background of the resourceful woman cliché, the latter type of an isolated male immigrant carries a more decidedly negative undertone. His attitude towards life and work abroad is less ambitious. It takes him longer to adjust to the new circumstances, mainly because he has a hard time dealing with an overwhelming feeling of loneliness. In the end, he usually takes a decision to return home, or develops an addiction to alcohol, drugs, computer gaming, gambling, or sex. Representatives of this type are Gustaw in Piotr Czerwiński's *Przebiegum życiae* [*Conductum Lifae*] (2009), Sebastian in Agnieszka Bednarska's *Emigracja uczuć* [*Emigration of Feelings*] (2012), or Tomasz in Daniel Koziarski's *Socjopata w Londynie* [*A Sociopath in London*] (2007). Dirk Uffelmann finds four reasons for the subaltern position of Polish men. Firstly, they experience socio-economic degradation; they end up working below their qualifications, unemployed, or even homeless. Secondly, their patriarchal position is undermined because migrant women, who come into contact with alternative gender models or belong to a different culture, challenge their dominance. Thirdly, they must come to terms with cosmopolitan big-city life; this is especially distressing for the characters who move from the Polish countryside to Western capitals. And finally, they have insufficient language skills, which sometimes results in silence or logorrhoea (Uffelmann 2013, 72–73). In the face of these challenges, male protagonists fail to adapt to new realities. Sooner or later, their initial eagerness to assimilate disappears.

As a result, male characters develop emotional problems—a characteristic they, oddly enough, share with female protagonists (despite women's greater ability to enculturate). At the heart of the problem lies, of course, the above mentioned loneliness, alienation, and being overqualified for their work. But there is one more hitch: migrants are released from social framing. This means they can forget about many responsibilities or inconvenient dependencies and unleash their "real self." Stepping into a new environment allows them to lead an anonymous life in accordance with their beliefs, aspirations and deeply hidden desires. In the novel *WOT. 4*, Maria Budacz describes this phenomenon as "a life reset": "We can start everything all over again, we can change our habits, customs, who we are [...]."[14] The newcomers create a new

[14] „Możemy zaczynać wszystko od nowa, możemy zmieniać nasze nawyki, przyzwyczajenia, to, kim jesteśmy [...]" (Budacz 2012, 100).

identity. Stuart Hall suggests that we should think of their identity as "production" (1990, 222) because it continually "produces and reproduces itself anew" (Hall 1990, 235). Unfortunately, this process—accompanied by rapid personality changes—spawns mood swings, a feeling of hopelessness, anxiety, or, in the most severe cases, depression. The characters develop an inclination to question the purpose of their lives, their plans for the future, and the reason they chose to move abroad. As a result, they often suffer from emotional instability with a tendency toward mental illness. To give a few examples, Magda, the protagonist of *Madame Mephisto*, talks openly about her schizophrenic personality in the opening pages of the novel (Bakalar 2012, 3–4), Szymon from *Okrutny idiota albo prywatny żart* [*A Cruel Idiot or a Private Joke*] copes with the obsessive-compulsive disorder (Wojnarowski 2008, 14), while the narrator of *Afrykańska elektronika* [*African Electronics*] goes insane towards the end of the story (Krasnowolski 2013, 117–119). The above mentioned types of protagonists are, of course, not the only models present in contemporary migrant literature, nor are they reserved solely for main characters. They seem equally popular among deuterogamists and tritagonists.

Common Themes, Motifs and Symbols

If the "typicality" of characters is one of the symptomatic aspects of migrant literature, the recurring themes are another. To begin with, these authors unanimously turn their critical eye to the Polish political and economic situation, a result of successive governing elites' incompetence. The migrants flee to the isles in order to escape the malaise and torpor caused by unemployment, low income, and the lack of perspectives for a better future. They leave their homeland in the clamor of political bickering—heavily publicized in the media—over extraneous matters and unfulfilled promises. Having already set foot in the new land, they make a last dramatic attempt to relate to the country that disappointed them:

> "You betrayed me..."
>
> You betrayed me! Left me forsaken and vulnerable! [...]
> Walking out, you slammed the door
> From which there fell off a plate with hope that one day

you may let me come back.
(My...homeland?)[15]

The recent wave of migration is yet another generation of disgruntled Poles who, contrary to their predecessors, do not fight the system, but leave the country in silence. Disillusioned, disheartened, hamstrung—this is how they describe themselves. They settle down in a new country and conceive a "private homeland," shaped by the vicissitudes of their own lives. This invented land is not confined to any geographical, political or social borders. Piotr Czerwiński describes its elusive nature in the following way: "Our homeland can be anything and anywhere. Our homeland might not exist at all. Maybe Poland is not a country. Maybe it is a state of mind."[16] In that sense, the homeland is a product of our imagination, formed by our personal experiences. Obviously, in the new homeland, a new kind of patriotism is born which is very pragmatic in its nature and far from romantic traditions. To quote Marcin Lisak's *Dwie fale* [*Two Waves*]: "The Polish emigrant does not miss the idea of great Poland, brooding about its history, harmed by Partitions, the Nazis and Soviet Russia. [...] He misses his family and friends, food and the easiness with which he can tell jokes."[17] However, these needs can be, at least partially, satisfied by technology (Skype, email, phone) and globalization processes (e. g. in the UK and Ireland, *Tesco* has Polish food sections). In such a situation, the desire to live comfortably often wins over the feeling of being homesick. The attachment to the new place develops on the basis of the Cicero's maxim: "*Ubi bene, ibi patria*—Where I am at ease, there is my country." Hence, modern patriotism is not confined to one society or a defined territory, but is formed by the specific community's history. Marcin Lisak is right when he suggests that we are dealing with a peculiar combination of patriotism and cosmopolitism. Immigrants bring the culture and

[15] „Zdradziłeś mnie..." / „Zdradziłeś mnie! Zostawiłeś samą i bezbronną! [...] / Gdy na pożegnanie trzasnąłeś drzwiami, / Odpadła nawet tabliczka z nadzieją, że kiedyś może / pozwolisz mi do siebie wrócić. / (Kraju... mój?)" (Zbudniewek 2008, 332).

[16] „Nasz kraj, który może być gdziekolwiek i czymkolwiek. Nasz kraj, którego może nie być. Może Polska to nie państwo. Może to stan umysłu." (Czerwiński 2011, 329).

[17] „Polski emigrant może nie tęskni za ideą wielkiej Polski, rozliczonej z historią, pokrzywdzonej przez zaborców, hitlerowskie Niemcy i sowiecką Rosję. [...] Tęskni za rodziną i znajomymi, za łatwością opowiadania polskich dowcipów i smakiem jedzenia." (Lisak 2008, 69).

language with which they have grown up and to which they feel emotionally attached, but at the same time, they stay open to local customs and speech (Lisak, 2008). In doing so, they develop a new cultural identity. As Bhabha puts it, they translate the alien culture into their own language. They allow a foreign language to speak through their language and make another culture a part of their own. Once they have done so they realize certain things cannot be translated. If the untranslatable things are treated with aggression and anxiety, then tensions arise between cultures (Bhabha 1994, 321). Those moments of contestation create a space which Bhabha calls the Third Space, where individuals can articulate and negotiate their new cultural identity. This hybrid identity is rooted in ambivalence and the double consciousness of the migrant.

A starting point for the formation of identity is experiencing cultural difference, an idea Polish authors extensively explore in their books. The writers focus on differences in eating habits, customs, pastime activities, and interpersonal relations. These differences are like reference points for describing the foreign world. Stuart Hall goes as far as to claim that without them no representation could occur. They "[...] stabilize meaning and representation, and show how meaning is never finished or completed, but keeps on moving to encompass other, additional or supplementary meanings" (Hall 1990, 229). While describing the new realities, the writers use the focalization technique insofar as they narrow the perspective to point out one specific discrepancy at a time. Ryszard Adam Gruchawka employs this strategy in *Buty emigranta* [*The Emigrant's Shoes*] to provide a comparative study of Polish and Irish bread (Gruchawka 2007, 37), while Gosia Brzezińska uses it in *Irlandzki koktajl* [*Irish Cocktail*] to juxtapose Eastern and Western ways of people management in the office (Brzezińska 2010, 26–30). In the same way, all of the analyzed novels are threaded throughout with comments depicting single differences in order to compare and contrast two distinct worlds. It is somewhat reminiscent of the process of creating a cycloramic painting, where each element could easily be a standalone artwork; but only when all parts are gathered in a space-filling whole do they give the observer an impression that he is participating in events unfolding before his eyes. Similarly, the reader is placed in such a "word cyclorama," where he discovers the British and Irish culture through the prism of his own beliefs and habits.

In addition to these topics, other recurring themes are the differences between the three waves of Polish emigration (post-war, Communist and post-accession), the attempt to leave the past behind and start anew, the demythologization of the West as a promised land, life in a multicultural metropolis, the virtual world as an escape from reality, or the intriguing debate about the impact of migration on the local society. The authors consider the situation of newcomers: Are they slaves at the mercy of wealthy Western countries or rather invaders conquering new lands? Do they subserviently undergo acculturation, or do they aggressively spread their own customs? In an attempt to answer these questions, which are rooted in Hegel's master-slave dialectic, Piotr Czerwiński reverses the roles in *Międzynaród* [*Internation*] (2011). In his dystopian novel, the discovery of uranium deposits turns Poland into an economic superpower and a destination for a great number of poverty-stricken Brits. Just like today's Polish immigrants in the UK, the newcomers perform the most unattractive jobs. But as time passes, they start fiercely fighting for rights and, in the end, a revolt breaks out. Old Poland is transformed into New Poland, where the government declares the equality of rights and liberties for all inhabitants:

> The English were awarded half of the seats in Parliament, their own media, and bilingual names on the street telesigns. Polish companies were obliged to have at least one English person on the board, while the staff had to consist of no less than fifty per cent Poles.[18]

The reversal of roles shows the complexity of social interdependencies, in which migrants function as the defeated and invaders at the same time.

Another similarity of the writings lies in reappearing motifs. The most popular of these are the motifs of travel, water, money, language learning, "Polishness," multiculturalism, rebellion, alienation, homesickness, and betrayal. As for symbols, some of the most common ones include the Internet, the Polish shop, church,

[18] „Anglicy dostali połowę głosów w parlamencie, a także własne media i dwujęzyczne nazwy na ulicznych teletablicach. Polskie firmy miały odtąd obowiązek zatrudniać przynajmniej jednego Anglika w zarządzie, personel zaś, dla odmiany, musiał składać się przynajmniej w połowie z Polaków" (Czerwiński 2011, 354).

euro, alcohol, and waste dump. The analysis of themes, motifs and symbols in migrant literature is a topic for a separate article or even a book. They are only briefly outlined here to prove the contextual affinity of the texts, which is a prerequisite in our notion of a literary trend.

Development of a Hybrid Dialect

Whereas the former generations of emigrant writers paid a lot of attention to preserving "the purity of the Polish language" in their writing, contemporary authors tend to reflect the way migrants actually speak. The novelists allude to it by incorporating phonetic transcriptions. This is why the narrator of Ryszard Adam Gruchawka's *Buty emigranta* [*The Emigrant's Shoes*] informs his boss, Jeff, about his ill health saying: "ajm syk" (Gruchawka 2007, 102). In the same vein, the characters in Magdalena Orzeł's *Dublin, moja polska karma* [*Dublin, My Polish Karma*] confirm their presuppositions with the phrase "ju siur?" (Orzeł 2007, 116). Aside from hinting at the migrants attempts to speak a foreign language, these phonetic representations imply the dominance of the migrants' mother tongue over their command of the local discourse. Because the characters have no direct access to English, they approach it through Polish, learning the meaning or the pronunciation of foreign words by means of their mother tongue. This kind of language transfer is their first step on the road to sequential bilingualism.

The next step entails language borrowing (foreign words or phrases become an integral part of the migrant's language), code mixing (it refers to changes within a sentence, for example, "Czytam a Polish novel"), and code switching (the shift takes place at the sentence level, i.e. "Zapraszam do stołu. Bon appetite!"; see also Altarriba 2008, 87–96). These natural stages of foreign language acquisition are reflected in the language of the books; English words, sentences, and excerpts are interwoven into the Polish texts. In this manner, Daniel Koziarski opens *Socjopata w Londynie* [*A Sociopath in London*] (2007) by quoting a stanza from Pet Shop Boys' song, *This Must Be the Place I Waited Years to Leave*, in English. In a similar vein, the antagonist of *Okrutny idiota albo prywatny żart* [*A Cruel Idiot or a Private Joke*], who works in *Dunnes Stores*, gets rid of customers by repeating the sentence: "Sorry, no manager" (Wojnarowski 2008, 132). All works are interspersed with English

phrases because this is the way Polish migrants communicate with one another. They combine the two languages, weaving them together like the strands of a string. This habit becomes so prevalent that it even influences the speech of indigenous citizens. Łukasz Ślipko exemplifies this interdependency by quoting the words of an Irish girl, Lorraine, who says to her Polish friend: "Robert, don't say kurwa to me, okay?" (Ślipko 2011, 8). But the linguistic transference in migrant writings is not merely a comedic device or a sign of bilingualism. Placing English phrases in the Polish linguistic space helps the characters assimilate the alien environment.

A similar psychological effect is achieved by Polonizing English vocabulary. On the one hand, using phonetic transcriptions and adding inflectional endings endow the foreign words with a certain familiarity. On the other, it allows for linguistic simplification, common among people who live in-between cultures. The speakers avoid searching for the right words to express their thoughts in their memories, communicating their needs using the phrases that surround them. In the case of economic migrants, the Polonized words are usually borrowed from their work environment. The protagonist of Ireneusz Gębski's *W cieniu Sheratona* [*In the Shade of the Sheraton*] (2011) works as a "kejpis," which is an abbreviation of the kitchen porter (1). His morning duties include laying out the "katlery," cutlery (10) that is usually kept on the "drobie," a word formed from wardrobe, but meaning cupboard (23). Then he diligently serves food to the "customerów," customers (62), hoping that they will leave him "tipy," tips (10). He works in "shifty," shifts (29), and cannot wait to have an "offa," a day off (65). To earn a few extra "jurki," euros, he needs to work long-hours. According to *Miejski słownik slangu* [*Urban Dictionary*] online, *jurki* is a term used to "describe the Euro currency (€) among emigrants."[19] Incorporating the neologisms with their definitions into Polish lexicons is indicative of the impact the new slang has had not only on the Poles who live abroad but also on those who have stayed in Poland.

However, acculturation is no doubt a two-way process. It should come as no surprise then that the Polonization of English is accompanied by the Anglicization of Polish, which is particularly evident in pronunciation. Łukasz Ślipko mocks this tendency in *Pokój z wi-*

[19] „Wśród emigrantów [...] określenie waluty Euro (€)," www.miejski.pl/slowo-Jurek, January 12, 2016.

dokiem na Dunnes Stores [*The Room with a View of Dunnes Stores*] when he writes:

> Robert from Lublin, or maybe 'Lablin' (our fellow countrymen tend to Anglicize Polish names, hoping that this will make it easier to understand them), was a world-class champion in intertwining his broken English with Polish phrases, and came up with such language inventions that Ludwig Zamenhof would be proud of him.[20]

Overall, the power of the nascent migrant slang rests largely in the fact that people travel continually within Europe's borders. It is popular to take a weekend trip to Poland to visit the family, do shopping or collect a literary award in person. Consequently, contemporary migrant literature is far from being confined to the world of the diaspora as it was in the past. The likelihood the dialect will infiltrate common Polish, fueled by literature, is thereby quite high. It will enrich our speech with new words, phrases and sayings, leading to its even greater Anglicization. Looking ahead, Piotr Czerwiński invented such a newspeak in his novel, *Conductum Lifae,* published in 2009:

> Of sakra course, he replied only to the job ads that corresponded to his qualifications. Obviously, there were other fucking great possibilities, but Gustaw thought too much of himself. He wasn't going to be some kind of a pushover in one of the supermarkets, or a toilet cleanerem, or anyone like this for that matter. In none of the jobs they paid dużo enough to cover your bills, and Gustaw always wondered how these people managed to make the ends meet. To be honest, the whole Bulanda pondered on this phenomena, including myself. How can you survive on 700 zlotys a month? I don't koorva know.[21]

[20] „Robert z Lublina, czy może 'Lablina' (nasi rodacy mają skłonność do zangielszczania polskich nazw, jak gdyby z troski o to, żeby być lepiej rozumianymi), był pierwszym w przeplataniu swojego łamanego angielskiego polskimi wstawkami, tworząc konstrukty, których nie powstydziłby się Ludwig Zamenhof." (Ślipko 2011, 9).

[21] „*Of sakra course*, odpowiadał tylko na ogłoszenia w zawodzie. Były rzecz jasna inne pierdoliste propozycje, ale Gustaw nadzwyczaj się cenił. Nie zamierzał zostawać popychem w supermarkecie ani kibel *cleanerem*, ani nic z tych rzeczy. W żadnej z takich prac nie płacili dużo *enough*, żeby starczyło na rachunki, i Gustaw zawsze się zastanawiał, jak ci ludzie w ogóle dają radę wiązać koniec z końcem. Mówiąc szczerze cała *Bulanda*

Czerwiński's prose is seasoned with phrases borrowed from English ("of course," "enough," "I don't") Czech ("sakra," "ty vole") and Arabic ("Bulanda" means Poland), Polonized English words ("cleanerem," "skille"), English-Polish clusters ("twice-a-tydzień"), Anglicized Polish words ("koorva"), and with invented phrases that carry emotional weight, such as the "bajabongo land," a reference to Ireland. At the end of the book, there is a fifteen-page-long glossary of Anglicisms, neologisms, and excerpts of song lyrics. The writer gathered and applied in his novel the linguistic elements, though to a smaller extent, used by the vast majority of contemporary migrant authors. His derisive depiction of the transformations in migrants' speech, deliberately exaggerated and filled with vulgarisms, seems to illustrate how separate languages turn into a hybrid amalgam, from which "there rises the great history of languages and landscapes of migration and diaspora" (Bhabha 1994, 337).

A New Literary Trend or even Movement in Poland?

Before moving on to the last point, it is worth noting that migrant literature was particularly abundant in the years of 2010–2012, when at least forty books were published. By the end of 2012, Anna Maria Mickiewicz and Urszula Chowaniec established *The Movement for Polish Literature and Culture in London*. They took notice of new, outstanding writers and poets living in the British Isles in their manifesto and suggested creating a platform to promote the most interesting works and achievements of contemporary emigrant penmen. The proclamation was directed mainly at literary associations and publishing houses. In the case of Great Britain, it could have been addressed to the organizations such as the previously mentioned KaMPe, led by Aleksy Wróbel, the Polish Writers Association, headed by Anna Maria Mickiewicz, PoEtry London, chaired by Adam Siemieńczyk, The Voice of Polish Culture, administered by Piotr Kasjas, Interactive Writing Salon in Scotland, or to poets connected with *E-Art* magazine, edited by Frederick Rossakovsky-Lloyd. As for publishing houses, Polish literature in trans-

zastanawiała się nad tym fenomenem, włączając mnie. No bo jak można przeżyć za siedemset złotych? *I don't koorva* nie wiem." (Czerwiński 2009, 23; italics have been added in the excerpt to indicate the linguistic features that are typical of Czerwiński's prose).

lation has been widely promoted by OFF-Press, run by Marek Kazmierski, and Stork Press, started by the novelist Joanna Zgadzaj in 2011. In the closing paragraph of the manifesto, the authors expressed their hope the initiative would spread beyond the borders of the British Isles and reach every nook and cranny of the world where Polish people write and read.

The authors' concurrent world view, reappearing patterns in the structure of the books (leaving the homeland—the struggle in the new place—the decision to stay, or to go back), shared character types (a resourceful female immigrant, an isolated male emigrant, an emotionally torn migrant); the conception of the *migration novel* with recurring themes, motifs, and symbols as well as the development of a hybrid dialect; and the attempt to unite the various writers with a manifesto all suggest a new literary trend is emerging. Further proof is that similar works have been published in other countries famous for being destinations for Polish economic migrants. Examples of such novels are *Poszukiwanie całości* [*Searching for Integrity*] by Krzysztof Niewrzęda (Germany, 2009),[22] *Duńska odyseja* [*Danish Odyssey*] by Marlena Gałczyńska (Denmark, 2011), *Nielegalne związki* [*Illegal Liaisons*] by Grażyna Plebanek (Belgium, 2010) or *Zawieszeni* [*Suspended*] by Marta Zaraska (Canada, 2007).

The only thing that awakens doubt is the quality of the writing. Unfortunately, a great part of the research material is far from excellent. Similarly to what Dunphy noticed about Turks' fiction in the Netherlands, some of the weakest Polish migrant literature abounds in self-pity: "Extreme cases of injustice or oppression are invoked to enlist the reader's sympathy, and emotionalism substitutes for good storytelling." (Dunphy 2001, 5). Of course, there are exceptionally good texts, written by both renowned and budding authors, but generally speaking, many could be classified as lowbrow literature. Taking this into account as well as its only very recent appearance (contemporary migrant literature has been appearing on a larger scale since 2007), it is hard to tell for certain that we are dealing with a literary trend. It will take a few more years to make such a statement.

[22] For more information on Polish migrant literature in Germany see Uffelmann 2003, 277–309 and Zduniak-Wiktorowicz 2010.

Nevertheless, the impact of recent emigration on Polish literature should not be underestimated. Many people, who decided to start a new life abroad, felt an urge to describe their experiences, and thus many new writers made their debut. Some of them, for example Tomasz Mielcarek, Magdalena Zimny-Louis or Wioletta Grzegorzewska, are now winning literary competitions. One reason for this might be that the works created abroad introduced new issues into Polish literary discourse, for instance multiculturalism or the influence of nationality, social class and gender on everyday life. Although some of the themes, such as living on an island or English lifestyle, may seem a touch hackneyed to the British, they seem fresh and interesting to Polish readers. A further cause for attention is this literature's treatment of contemporary diasporic culture and hybrid identity that is shaped "in-between" countries and languages. This has broached the subject of the pressing need to redefine the ideas of patriotism and homeland that are deeply rooted in our culture, but quite dated. Additionally, the panoply of characters has been extended over ethnically varied members of the working-class, mainly builders, cleaners, caretakers, and dustmen, who are described from a peculiar outsider-insider perspective of a migrant.

The authors' openness to new topics and cultures has made Polish literature more universal than before. Not unlike the migrant writings of other ethnic groups, their works have started to "circulate in several literary systems at once, and can—some would say, need—to be read within several national traditions" (Walkowitz 2006, 523). For that reason, they are likely to awaken the interest of international publishers, critics, and readers. We can see the signs of this potential phenomenon in the inclusion of the works of the Polish poets Adam Czerniawski, Maria Jastrzębska, and Wioletta Grzegorzewska, in the British Library's large-scale initiative *Between Two Worlds: Poetry & Translation* and in critics' lively reaction to A.M. Bakalar's novel, *Madam Mephisto*, whose reviews were published in *The Guardian* and *The Times Literary Supplement*.

But for now, most migrant literature is published in Polish and with a Polish readership in mind. Comments on various websites[23]

[23] For example, http://powrotnik.eu/index.php/co-mu-dala-irlandia/; http://www.pomorska.pl/wiadomosci/grudziadz/art/6411802,daniel-zuchowski-z-grudziadza-wydal-w-irlandii-ksiazke-to-historie-nowych-dublinczykow,id,t.html; http://czat.wp.pl/id_czata,2796,zapis.html?T%5Bpage%5D=4.

reveal the books are mostly purchased by four groups of readers: Polish migrants, who want to compare their own experiences to the experiences of other fellow countrymen; people who are thinking of moving abroad and want to get to know the country that might become their new home; relatives of migrants who hope to learn the "truth" about the life of their beloved; and remigrants who have returned to Poland but feel nostalgia for the country they left behind. Additionally, Wioletta Grzegorzewska and Ewa Winnicka were nominated for the 2015 Nike Literary Award, the most prestigious award in Poland, which naturally sparked a wave of general interest in migrant literature in the country.

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Polnische Migrantenliteratur in Großbritannien und Irland. Anzeichen einer neuen literarischen Strömung?

Mit dem Beitritt Polens zur Europäischen Union im Mai 2004 setzte eine Migrationswelle ein, in deren Zuge auf dem polnischen Buchmarkt zahlreiche Bücher erschienen, deren Autorinnen und Autoren selbst Migrationserfahrung haben. Dieser Beitrag versucht eine Antwort auf die Frage, ob es sich bei der polnischen Migrationsliteratur um eine neue literarische Richtung oder gar Bewegung handelt. Dazu werden an den Texten von polnischen Autorinnen und Autoren von den britischen Inseln gemeinsame Merkmale herausgearbeitet, u. a. im Hinblick auf den neuerdings verwendeten Begriff *Migrationsroman*. Als wiederkehrende Merkmale erscheinen demnach die autobiografische Dimension der Texte, eine schematische Fabelstruktur (Ausreise – versuchte Verortung in der fremden Umgebung – Akklimatisierung im Aufnahmeland oder Rückkehr), bestimme Figurentypen (wie tüchtige Migrantin, isolierter und emotional zerrissener Migrant), wiederkehrende Themen, Motive und Symbole, die nicht zuletzt herrschende Vorstellungen von Heimat, Patriotismus und Migration revidieren, schließlich die Ausbildung hybrider Idiolekte, die die vielsprachige und multikulturelle Wirklichkeit Westeuropas einfangen sollen. Im Verein mit der Entstehung polnischer literarischer Gruppierungen und Verlage in Großbritannien weisen die genannten Phänomene darauf hin, dass zwar keine organisierte literarische Bewegung, wohl aber eine neue literarische Strömung im Entstehen begriffen ist, bei der lediglich die ästhetische Qualität noch zu wünschen übrig lässt. Wie sich der beschlossene Austritt Großbritanniens aus der Europäischen Union auf diese Strömung in der polnischen Gegenwartsliteratur auswirken wird, muss offen bleiben.

Research Article

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Liberated from Their Language: Polish Migrant Authors Publishing in English

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Abstract: The article opens with a brief analysis of the publishing industry in the UK and Ireland to provide an informed assessment of how difficult it is for Polish migrant authors to establish their presence on the local literary market. It proceeds to show how these writers have been amazingly persistent in their efforts to win British and Irish readership by, for example, participating in literary competitions, submitting their work to literary journals, collaborating with local writers or self-publishing their work. Then some attention is given to how the process of writing a book in a non-native language engages the writers: they tend to adjust their texts to the international readership, become involved in the translation process, try their hand at writing in a foreign language, and prepare bilingual advertising materials. Why they feel such a strong need to be published in English is a question broached in the next part of the article. Finally, the closing section explores how the fact that their writing is a translation influences the reception of the writers' work.

Keywords: Polish migrants in Britain and Ireland, literary translation, migrant literature.

The inspiration for this article was the news that BBC Radio 4 invited two Polish authors living in London to contribute short stories that would shed some light on the experience of Polish people in the UK. A. M. Bakalar's *Woman of Your Dreams* and Agnieszka Dale's *Fox Season* were turned into radio plays and aired on 4 and 11 September 2015 respectively. When the Brexit campaign sparked some anti-Polish incidents, BBC Radio 4 approached Agnieszka Dale again with the request to write another short story as a comment on the current socio-political situation. The result, *A Happy Nation*, was aired on 14 October 2016. The blurb for the play discloses that the story takes place in the near future when Polish migrants have left the country except for one, Krystyna Kowalska, who receives a late-night visit from an immigration officer. Krystyna is fully assimilated into the local society: she has lived in Britain for years, is married to a British man, speaks perfect English and her children are British. She could easily pass for British herself but the rising anti-immigration sentiment in the UK makes her acutely aware of being "the other," a stranger, a foreigner. The job commissioned by BBC Radio 4 to Bakalar and Dale entailed translation on a few different levels. The writers performed an audience-oriented translation, communicating the hardship of a life lived by a contemporary Pole in the UK to British people. They rendered a set of experiences of Polish migrants through the prism of their own experiences. They presented the British national debate on immigration as seen from the perspective of an immigrant. And in the most literal sense, their work was an act of interlingual translation since Bakalar and Dale submitted their stories not in Polish, which is their mother tongue, but in English.

Article note: The article is a self-translated, modified version of "Dyskurs literacki w procesie przekładu. Studium polskiej twórczości migracyjnej," the text written in Polish and submitted for publication in the monograph *Dyskurs—współczesne opracowania i perspektywy badawcze* by Lodz University Press. The permission to publish the text in English was granted by the editors of the book, Iwona Witczak-Plisiecka and Mikołaj Deckert, and the publishing house.

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It was the awareness of the complexity that lies behind the text written in a "foreign" place, a "foreign" language and for a "foreign" audience that encouraged me to look at the writing published in English by Polish migrants who have lived in Britain and Ireland since 2004. The article opens with a brief analysis of the publishing industry in the UK and Ireland to make an informed assessment of how difficult it is for Polish migrant authors to establish their presence on the local literary market. It proceeds to show how these writers have been amazingly persistent in their efforts to win British and Irish readership, for example by participating in literary competitions, submitting their work to literary journals, collaborating with the local writers or self-publishing their work. Then some attention is given to how the process of writing a book in a non-native language engages the writers: they tend to adjust their texts to the international readership, become involved in a translation process, try their hand at writing in a foreign language, and prepare bilingual advertising materials. Why they feel such a strong need to be published in English is a question broached in the next part of the article. And the closing section explores how the fact that their writing is a translation influences the reception of the writers' work.

Slightly over 0.5% of All Translations? Polish Literature in Britain and Ireland

The article refers to the "book market" in Britain and Ireland, rather than to two separate markets, since there has long been a close connection between the publishing industries in both countries. In "Novelistic Production and the Publishing Industry in Britain and Ireland," Claire Squires argues that Irish publishing was subaltern to the London-based industry for most of its history. The exceptions were a revival at the turn of the 20th century, a mini-boom during and shortly after the World War II, and a period in the 1970s when British publishers were hit by recession, which facilitated the emergence of new publishing houses in the Republic of Ireland, such as the O'Brien Press, Blackstaff or Appletree. But a prevailing tendency throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries was for Irish writers to seek a publisher in the UK. This provided them with more efficient marketing and distribution of their writing and, accordingly, better remuneration. Sometimes, it was also a way to avoid censorship (178). The Squires' article reads in places like a paraphrase of *A study of the evolution of concentration in the Irish publishing industry*, the report put out by the European Commission in 1979. The study acknowledges that the majority of books sold in the Republic of Ireland were imported from the UK, paradoxically, many of them authored by Irish writers (for example, Edna O'Brien whose writing was published by Penguin Books). In the Irish market, which was dominated by newspapers, books comprised only 11.9% of the printing industry. Unlike in Britain—where small, family-run publishing businesses morphed into international multi-media conglomerates in the course of the 20th century—most Irish publishing houses remained small, privately-owned companies that hired less than five people or even relied on part-time staff alone. The result was that they were only able to produce a few titles per year and lacked the resources to handle the output of bestselling authors. In her 2015 Guardian article "A new Irish literary boom: the post-crash stars of fiction," Justine Jordan argues that the situation has been changing: Irish writers who grew famous in the 1990s—for instance, Anne Enright, Roddy Doyle, Colm Tóibín and Sebastian Barry—tended to be published from London but nowadays the emerging authors are poached by Irish publishers. Nevertheless, the publishing industries in both countries are still closely linked, the epitome of which is the Booksellers Association of the UK and Ireland. The association promotes retail bookselling in both countries, operates the National Book Token, sponsors the Whitbread Award and holds an annual conference, among other things. This article, therefore, refers to the British and Irish publishing industries as "one market," in spite of it being a slightly simplified approach.

Although few Polish migrants write in English—out of seventy authors whose work I have analysed, only six can speak of such achievement[1]—their conscious efforts to establish their presence on the British and Irish literary scene are more frequent. The writers undeniably confront a challenge since translated books

1 The list of writers and the full bibliography of the literary works mentioned in the article are available in the Virtual Archive which has been compiled as part of "Polish (e)migration literature…" project: archiwum-emigracja.uni.lodz.pl/en.

constitute only a fraction of all literature published in the UK and Ireland every year. Worse still, publishers tend to label all texts sent in by first-time authors who are migrants as "foreign literature," even though some of the books were originally written in English. In 2015, Literature Across Frontiers, an organisation based in Wales which, among other things, promotes literature in translation, formulated a report on *Publishing Translated Literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland 1990-2012*. The study sample was based on one of the most voluminous bibliographies in the world compiled by the British Library annually. The results of Alexandra Büchler and Giulia Trentacosti's research confirm the often-cited statistics claiming that translations represent only 3% of all published literature in the UK and Ireland. This makes it eleven times less than in Poland, where translations constitute over 33% of all published books.

Table 1. Translations share in Germany, France, Poland, Italy and the UK and Ireland in 2011. Source: *Publishing Translated Literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland 1990-2012. Statistical Report* (9).

Country	*All publications*	*Translations %*
Germany	96,237	12.28%
France	81,268	15.90%
Poland	24,380	33.19%
Italy	63,800	19.7%
UK and Ireland	87,412	3.16%

While the French, German, Spanish, Russian, Italian and Swedish writings generate the most interest in Britain and Ireland, the texts form Eastern Europe enjoy very little attention. Although Poland holds the strongest position in this group (65 books came out in the past 12 years, which adds up to 0.67% of all translations published in that period), the Polish writers are still eighteen times less likely to be published than French authors.

Table 2. Number of translations from selected source languages published annually in the UK and Ireland over the period 2000-2012. Source: *Publishing Translated Literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland 1990-2012. Statistical Report* (15-16).

	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**Total**
French	77	82	82	97	93	95	92	80	117	99	84	109	110	1217
German	57	37	43	43	44	47	51	61	51	73	60	89	73	729
Spanish	24	20	25	38	45	43	38	42	54	32	45	39	36	481
Russian	14	16	24	35	28	23	20	38	45	44	44	43	58	432
Italian	20	25	22	29	21	25	27	32	25	36	45	41	35	383
Swedish	12	12	14	17	18	21	18	33	36	44	33	49	52	359
Polish	**3**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**7**	**2**	**9**	**20**	**6**	**4**	**6**	**8**	**65**
Hungarian	1	6	1	3	7	4	5	4	4	4	7	1	4	51
Czech	1	2	1	0	2	3	2	9	6	6	7	2	1	31
Latvian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	5

There is but one consolation for writers: Büchler and Trentacosti's findings show that the number of literary translations have grown by 69% in the period of 2000-2012. The figures indicate that fiction is the most often translated material (63%), then poetry (16%), children's literature (9%) and drama (7%).

The fact that British readers have recently shown more interest in the foreign literature was also mentioned by Dalya Alberge in *The Guardian* in August 2014. In her article, Alberge adduces opinions of experts involved in editing and selling books, one of whom is Liz Foley, Harvill Secker's publishing director,

who ingeniously juxtaposed beliefs British people harbour about literary translations with the common opinion about vegetables: they are both "good for you but not enjoyable." Foley argues this way of thinking about translation has been changing and translated literature has started to attract the attention of leading-edge publishers.

Chris White, who selects fiction for Waterstones, a major book retailer, ascribes this transition to sales figures. He alleges the example of a top German author, Ferdinand von Schirach, whose rendering of the novel *The Collini Case* (2012) sold 29,385 copies, thereby outselling the thriller by John Grisham that came out around the same time. Not unlike Liz Foley, White observes that the perception of literary translations has undergone a revolutionary change over the last decade. Translated titles are no longer recognised as low-grade texts but, on the contrary, they are perceived as potential bestsellers. This shift was brought about by intensified migrations, which aroused readers' interest in the cultural heritage of the newcomers, and by the development of the Internet, which accelerated the dissemination of information about the books released abroad.

But the publishers' contentment is hardly shared by academics. B. J. Epstein, a lecturer at the University of East Anglia, accuses mainstream publishing houses of underestimating the British and Irish readers in assuming they would show little interest in the stories of people living in distant places around the world. The inevitable outcome of this assumption is that the authors likely to be published in the UK and Ireland are those who have already achieved financial success in their home countries or won prestigious awards. In *Politics of Cross-Cultural Reading*, Marion Dalvai views such practice as natural: after all, literary prizes spread the word about high-profile books internationally, enhance the symbolic capital of the work, increase the sales and thereby enable the authors to enter foreign markets (96). Dalvai's point is successfully confirmed by the careers of Polish writers. The elite whose books were selected by British and Irish publishers include such names as Paweł Huelle (*Castorp*, Serpent's Tail 2007), Andrzej Sapkowski (*Baptism of Fire*, Gollancz 2014) or Jacek Dehnel (*Saturn*, Dedalus Press 2012). These are well-known, critically-acclaimed and award-winning authors in Poland: success in their homeland paved the way to the literary markets in the West.

Similar observations to those of B.J. Epstein were made by Lawrence Venuti, the author of the highly acclaimed book on *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995). Venuti criticises English-language publishers for skilfully concealing that books are translations by omitting the translator's name on the cover. For the same purpose, the covers are customized to reflect local trends and the titles are domesticated to sound familiar, catchy and intriguing. The trick is to make a passer-by believe he is looking at a home-grown novel. A brilliant example of how foreign books have been adjusted to the needs of the local market is *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną* [The Polish-Russian War under the White-and-Red Flag] by Dorota Masłowska which was rendered by Benjamin Paloff and published by Atlantic Books in London in 2005. Compared with the cover of the Polish volume, the British edition dazzles with the vivid red and the title has been shortened to three words, *White and Red*, to catch the eye of the potential customer.

The effort invested in the rendering of a text seems to be more appreciated by small, independent publishing houses. But even those tend to showcase the name of the translator more often on poetry than prose books. In *Gościnność słowa* [The Hospitality of Words] (2012), Jerzy Jarniewicz ascribes this tendency to the ingrained but ill-grounded conviction that rendering a poem involves greater creativity than translating a prose piece.

As if to vindicate Jarniewicz's diagnosis, Marek Kazmierski's name is found on the cover of *Finite Formulae & Theories of Chance* (2014), a poetry collection by Wioletta Greg.[2] Kazmierski was introduced to Greg's writing around 2010 and started to promote her work in England's literary circles. He rendered into English and edited a collection of her poems *Pamięć Smieny/Smena's Memory* (2011) which was then published by Off_Press, an indie press he set up in London. It is worth recalling, Kazmierski, like many others before him, put his name not on the cover but on the front page of *Pamięć Smieny/Smena's Memory* to purposefully conceal the book was a translation. This publication opened up a career path in the UK for Greg, which led to real success: her first prose book, *Swallowing Mercury*, translated into English by Eliza

2 Wioletta Greg is the pen-name of Wioletta Grzegorzewska which she uses for her publications in English.

Marciniak, was longlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2017. Kazmierski was given the credit for his involvement in Greg's literary career when the Arc Publications, a British publishing house, released *Finite Formulae & Theories of Chance*, the collection of poems that was shortlisted for the prestigious Griffin Poetry Prize in Canada in 2015. The competition organisers gave much attention to the translator: on the website of the Griffin Trust for Excellence in Poetry, Kazmierski's name and biography were displayed above the pseudonym and the bio note of the poet. The book was introduced as "*Finite Formulae & Theories of Chance* by Marek Kazmierski, translated from the Polish, written by Wioletta Greg," which conveyed the impression the volume had two equally important authors. In the promotional video from the awards ceremony, the translator and the poet sit beside each other at the table, signing copies of the book together. Then Marek Kazmierski is shown reading out his translations while Wioletta Greg stands behind him, waiting for her turn to present the same poems in Polish. This competition was one of those rare occasions when the poet seemed slightly overshadowed by the translator.

Per aspera ad astra, Migrants' Attempts to Leave a Mark on the Local Literary Scene

Many migrant authors can only dream of a collaboration like the one between Greg and Kazmierski where the translator publishes and promotes the poet's work in the local society he knows inside out. Therefore, they look for other ways to enter literary circles in the UK and Ireland, one of them being the participation in literary contests. When Tomasz Mielcarek won the Jacek Bierezin Prize in a nationwide competition in Poland, it enabled him to publish his debut book *Obecność/Presence* (2014). The organizers of the contest from Dom Literatury [The House of Literature] in Lodz suggested the volume should be bilingual and they recommended David Malcolm, as a translator, who was already well known for his excellent rendition of *Till the Words Draw Blood!/Słowem do krwi!* (2013), an anthology of poems by Julian Tuwim. Mielcarek gave his consent: the collaboration between the author and the translator was so successful that Malcolm offered to translate the poet's next book.

Marek Kazmierski, in turn, won the 2007 Decibel Penguin Prize for his short story story "No Way Back Where" in the competition organised by Arts Council England and Penguin Books. The judging committee included Shami Chakrabarti, a popular female politician, who expressed hope the prize would encourage people to look at the tabloid headlines critically and appreciate the cultural wealth migrants bring in to the UK. The award earned Kazmierski formal recognition that, apart from being a skilled translator and a publisher, he was a talented writer.

There is also a group of migrant authors who have succeeded in showcasing their work in London-based journals. A. M. Bakalar's short story "Whatever Makes You Sleep at Night"(2013), originally written in English, and the excerpts of Jan Krasnowolski's novel *African Electronics* (2014) in Anna Hyde's translation, came out in *Wasafiri,* a magazine which has been promoting multicultural writing in English since 1984. The quarterly is based at the Open University in London where Susheila Nasta, its founder and editor-in-chief, works as a lecturer. The title comes from the Swahili language where "wasafiri" means "travellers" and reflects the profile of the magazine focused on highlighting the impact migrations and multiculturalism have had on the "English" literature. The journal has always given much attention to Caribbean, Indian and Bangladeshi authors, who represent the dominant ethnic groups in the UK. As Polish people gradually became the largest minority in Britain and Ireland, their writing has also piqued curiosity of the magazine's editors.

A further confirmation of the growing interest in the writing of Polish authors came when *Litro Magazine* dedicated its 126 issue entirely to Polish literature. A. M. Bakalar, the guest editor of the volume, asked for submissions both from authors who are based in Poland (such as Jacek Dehnel, Zygmut Miłoszewski and Paweł Huelle) and those who have been living abroad (for example Wioletta Greg or Grażyna Plebanek). The blurb discloses that the issue provides a fast track onto the contemporary literary scene in Poland and argues that: "With Polish now the second most widely spoken language after English in the UK, Polish literature is a hot topic" (Bakalar, *The Litro Magazine*). The magazine's overview of Polish writing seems

broad-brush: it presents just a handful of writers and spares only one page for each of them. But this is actually the idea that lies behind *Litro Magazine*, which is modelled on tabloids to allow a commuter on a train or a customer in a café to skim-read and discard it quickly. In its continuing focus on the general reader, rather than those with a particular interest in literature, the magazine is pocket-size, consists of about thirty pages per issue, and can be accessed for free via the Internet.

Last, but not least, Wioletta Greg's prose piece "On the River Boży Stok" (2015) was rendered into English by Anna Hyde for *The Guardian's* series *Translation Tuesday*. In her translation, Hyde focused on retaining Polish elements in the text, including the Silesian vernacular, diacritics and cultural references as the following excerpt illustrates:

> For me the epitome of the decline of the peasant culture at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s was *bebok*, a demon most likely originating from the Slavic mythology, in some other villages called *babok* or *blandurek*. It lived near people's houses, in storage clamps, in quarries, in dark nooks of mows, in post-German bunkers and—as the adults used to say—it liked kidnapping naughty children. To me it seemed as dangerous as *Black Volga* [5], always coming from some dark place, from a limepit. (Greg, "On the River Boży Stok")

The words taken from the Silesian vernacular are italicized and left in the original form. The endnotes elucidate cultural references embedded in the text, one of them being *Black Volga* which alludes to an urban legend popular in the 1970s in Poland. The story has it that a driver of the black Volga car kidnapped children to draw their blood and sell it to Germans suffering from leukaemia.

Yet another group of Polish migrant writers have settled into the local literary scene by cooperating with British and Irish authors. For instance, the collaboration of Anna Wolf and Rory O'Sullivan resulted in the drama *The Passangers* that premiered in April 2015. The play was put up by the Polish Theatre Ireland and staged in The New Theatre in Dublin. It told the story of a Polish businessman Krzysztof, his sister Anastazja, and an Irish nurse Grainne whom the two met at the airport by coincidence. The characters were played by Irish and Polish actors: Paul Travers, Kasia Lech and Elaine Reddy respectively. In the play, Krzysztof and Grainne get stranded at the airport by snow and Anastazja speaks with her brother and the nurse on Skype. Similarly, in real life Kasia Lech performed her part via the communicator from her flat in Canterbury in the UK. Indeed, the audience experienced a transnational play where different nations, places and the virtual and real worlds got intertwined.

Some other example of a collaboration between the newcomers and locals is Angelika Sobieraj, a Polish student from one of Dublin's high schools, who participated in creative writing workshops organized by Fighting Words, a centre established by the Irish writer Roddy Doyle and his friend Sean Love. During the meetings, the participants worked on their own short stories that were later compiled in the volume entitled *Yet to Be Told* (2012). Meave Binchy, a widely-read Irish novelist, wrote the foreword to the collection, which was a huge reward for the students and an incentive to purchase the book for other people. The anthology included two versions of Angelika Sobieraj's short story "Chris": the original one in Polish and its English rendition by a translator and writer Siobhán McNamara. Although the stories collected in the volume smack of amateurism and teenage naivety, the project is an interesting example of how cooperation between migrants and the locals helps Poles to emerge on the Irish and British literary map.

The last group I am going to mention here consists of the authors who decided to self-publish their writing. One of them is Przemek Kolasiński. In 2012, he published a collection of essays *Co mi dała Irlandia?/What I Got from Ireland?* in two separate volumes – one in Polish and the other one in English. He invited Brian Earls, a prominent diplomat and researcher, to write a concluding chapter which highlighted historical similarities and differences between Poland and Ireland. Thanks to Earls' contribution, the collection went on sale in Eason, the most popular chain of bookstores in Ireland, and a brief article about the volume appeared in *The Dublin Review of Books*, the biweekly where Brian Earls had published for years. The category of self-publication encompasses also books that are authored by an owner of the publishing house, like in the case of Marek Kazmierski's *Damn the Source* (2013). These writers enjoy a greater freedom and encounter fewer procedural obstacles than authors who have to face qualifying procedures of external publishing houses.

Working on the Book in a Non-mother Tongue

The awareness their books are going to be published in English is one of the major factors shaping the migrants' writing. The authors adjust their texts—sometimes deliberately and sometimes instinctively—to the international audience: they engage with more universal topics and tend to avoid cultural references only Polish people would understand. Where culture-specific elements are included, they use footnotes or explain any historical, cultural or linguistic references within the text. In interviews, they talk eagerly about the measures they take to make their writing translucent, pointing to similar features as those mentioned by Jan Krasnowolski, the writer who moved with his family to Bournemouth in 2005:

> I don't write in English and I doubt I'll ever dare because I have too much respect for the language. It's easy to convey the meaning but it's a different matter to capture the language subtleties. Therefore, some things should be left to the translator. What I try to do is to make my writing reasonably universal and comprehensible to the Western reader. For that reason, I avoid culture-bound references that only Polish people would grasp. Instead I play with the language and inject it with Polish idioms, sayings, etc.[3]

Once the author decides to have his writing published in English, he faces the challenge of finding a capable translator. The best-case scenario is to ferret out a native speaker who grew up in the target language and culture but, at the same time, knows the Polish context and language well enough to pick up on the subtleties of the original text. There are only a handful of translators living in Britain and Ireland who can meet those expectations and the top dog is award-winning Antonia Lloyd-Jones. A number of Polish migrant authors are, therefore, left no choice but to pin their hopes on their children. Those who have already sought this intergenerational collaboration point out that due to the age gap, their children, and even more so grandchildren, tend to misread certain allusions, especially those referring to the Communist times. For instance, Aleks Wróbel's grandson, who rendered his collection of poetry, had different connotations than his grandfather with "Społem," the largest chain of stores in the Polish People's Republic, or "the jump over the wall," a symbolic gesture performed by Lech Wałęsa to lead the strike in the Gdańsk shipyard in 1980. However, the migrant writers speak English fluently enough to detect any inaccuracies and suggest alternative translations. By the same token, they are actively involved in the process of translation although they say unanimously that the translators should be given a free hand and the authors should interfere as little as possible.

There are also those, like A. M. Bakalar, Agnieszka Dale or Daniel Żuchowski, who have taken up the challenge of writing directly in English, even though it is not their mother tongue. They remark in interviews that reading British, Irish and American literature helps them switch to thinking and writing in English and, because they are out of regular touch with Polish, they actually find it easier to describe commonplace situations, events and issues in English, the language they use in their everyday life. As the authors admit, the act of writing in a non-native tongue is a time-consuming and difficult task but the satisfaction derived from completing a text in English is commensurably greater. A. M. Bakalar highlights some advantages and disadvantages of writing in a non-native language in a short video clip she uploaded to YouTube:

> Writing in the second language... Yes, it is difficult. Obviously speaking fluently in one language is like one aspect. But writing in the second language is a completely different ball game... For me, writing in English, cause my mother tongue is Polish, was a liberating experience because there were certain ideas that I wanted to talk about and I found it difficult to express myself in Polish. And there was also another aspect of writing in English. Before I started writing the book, I translated like two or three books—novels by other authors from English into Polish cause I used to work as a translator back in Poland. And I sent it to three different publishers in Poland. Every one of them came back with the same comment that my Polish had English structure. So it made me think as well. I just didn't feel comfortable writing in Polish ... because I was kind of moved—living in the UK—from the language. It was a very conscious decision to start writing in English. I wanted the book to be accessible. And if I wrote it in Polish, it'd probably take a lot of time for the book to be translated into English. And finding a publisher that would invest the money into translating a book like that, I thought, it'd be quite a long process... I don't think I'll ever write in Polish. I wrote short non-fiction pieces that were published in the Polish

3 Interview with Jan Krasnowolski carried out by Joanna Kosmalska in 2016 as part of the research project "Polish (e)migration literature..." (www.emigracja.uni.lodz.pl/en).

> press. But I found it a strenuous experience and I kind of prefer to speak and to write in English. (Bakalar, "A. M. Bakalar and writing in the second language")

Bakalar made sure not only *Madame Mephisto* (2012) but also all marketing materials promoting her book were available in English. At least as much English-language information can be found on the Internet about Wioletta Greg's translated writing. There has also been an increasing number of Polish migrant authors' websites appearing in English on Facebook and Wikipedia. And many authors have become actively involved in the literary events in the UK and Ireland: for example, Jan Krasnowolski took part in the Liars' League, a themed fiction night held once a month at The Phoenix pub in London. For the occasion, writers from around the world submit short stories on a designated theme. Then the association's members select the best texts for professional actors to perform in front of live audience. The readings are filmed for the online archive and YouTube channel with a view to promoting literature in a similar fashion to theatre and film productions. The motive behind the writers' efforts to emerge in the English-language public discourse is obviously to gain some recognition in the country in which they currently live: if their work is reviewed or mentioned in the British and Irish newspapers and scholarly articles, it enhances the writer's (and the translator's) visibility.

The Need to be Published in English

Looking at the efforts of Polish authors living in the UK and Ireland, one might wonder why they feel such a strong need to be part of the local literary scene. One obvious explanation is the deeply-rooted desire to belong to the local community because, as Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary argue in the article *The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation* (1995), happiness and equanimity in life are strongly correlated with having some close social ties. The feeling of being excluded from the community, even if it is merely a misplaced impression, evokes depressive mood states which evince themselves in anger, resentment, despondence, jealousy or irascibility. Conversely, the feeling of being accepted and having support of other people provides a buffer against anxiety and stress. It leads to a variety of positive emotions, such as fulfilment, contentment or tranquillity. But, as Baumeister and Leary point out, physical presence is essential to maintain these close relationships.

In their books and interviews, Polish writers reveal that they felt strong resistance to forming attachments when they moved abroad, partly due to the language barrier and cultural differences and partly because they invested a lot of time and energy in staying in touch with the friends and family they left behind. But this resistance diminished over time. The physical absence of the beloved slackened the ties and the migrants replaced old relationships with new ones. The same might be said of their attitude towards language: while their initial strong sentiment towards Polish shrivelled due to limited propinquity, the affinity towards English intensified. This natural process, as Baumeister and Leary argue, is driven by the fact that every person needs his or her achievements (such as literary accomplishments among other things) to be recognized and valued by the people he or she lives among. It is even more important for writers who often view their work as communication with readers. When asked why they publish in English, Polish migrant authors tend to say they want to write for the local people about the issues they all face together day in day out. And no other language would enable them to "talk" to such a large, multicultural group of readers. In an interview in *Jantar Podcast*, Agnieszka Dale elaborated on this idea with a remarkable cogency:

> I would say I always felt a little bit oppressed by English. To me, English is a kind of language that my parents always told me: "You need to speak English because with just Polish no one will hear you basically." So I don't write in English because I love the language. I write in English because I want to be heard and I'm very much aware that it's the universal language that everybody speaks.

Another reason for having their work published in English is the writers' urge to pass their legacy onto their descendants. As Aleks Wróbel, a poet living in London, observes his grandchildren and greatgrandchildren

will speak no Polish so he can stay bonded with them only through English. This reflection motivated him to have his work translated. Some authors also feel a need to flaunt their cultural heritage, which—as they themselves admit—stems either from vanity, pride or patriotic feelings, or the mixture of these emotions.

In the end, the English language opens up international book markets for writers, interestingly not only those in English speaking countries. The story of Aleks Wróbel and Tomasz Mielcarek illustrates how this mechanism works. Both poets have organised Slavic Poetry Festival in London, the outcome of which was establishing close relationships with writers from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, Romania, Serbia and Russia. The collaboration they had started in 2013 soon bore fruit: Aleks Wróbel's and Tomasz Mielcarek's selected poems were translated from English into Belarusian, Bulgarian, Russian and Slovak and published in leading journals, anthologies and festival almanacs. This, in turn, led to a number of invitations to literary events in Eastern European cities. Later, their poetry books were rendered into Bulgarian and launched in Sofia and Plovdiv. In essence, the English language paved the poets' way to the literary circles in the East.

Migrant Literature as a Literature Always in Translation

As often happens in cases such as the above-mentioned, the English language does not play the hackneyed role of the cultural hegemon but functions as an intercultural mediator. Although translating the text from the third language (in this case from Polish into English and only then into Slovak) seems absurd when one takes into account how close Poland and Slovakia are geographically, culturally and linguistically, the fact is that the translation *through* English (and not other languages) has become a sign of contemporary globalization processes. For a large majority of people, English is simply their second language, often one of many, they use for communication.

In *English as a Language Always in Translation* (2008), Alistair Pennycook argues that English has become the transcultural language which is in the continuous process of translation. Since there is a multiplicity of Englishes, and they often interact with the speakers' mother tongues, translation has, in fact, become the key to communication. Therefore, when evaluating English competency, one should take into account not only if the person is a fluent speaker of the language but whether he or she formulates original statements, is able to use English to convey their own culture and identity and is aware of multifarious social, cultural and historical implications of the utterance he or she has produced. If we bear in mind the variety of the speakers' ethnic backgrounds, it seems obvious the contemporary English discourse, including the literary discourse, should always be interpreted in the context of other languages and cultures. Only such approach allows one to decode it adequately.

All the more so because, as Fiona J. Doloughan observes in *English as a Literature in Translation*, the writing in Britain is increasingly being produced by bilingual and multilingual, rather than monolingual, authors (4). They tend to use English in a creative and innovative way, fortifying it with idioms, grammatical structures and phrases imported from a whole array of other languages. They pay little attention to linguistic conventions because their main focus is not the linguistic transfer but the transmission of information. They appropriate the language and shape it according to their needs. This, in turn, leads various idiolects to clash, permeate and superpose on one another: and out of this welter of different "Englishes," there emerges a new dictionary. To show how this influences the reception of the text, I will quote excerpts from two reviews published on blogs in which the British readers comment on the language in A. M. Bakalar's *Madame Mephisto* (2012). Stuart, the editor of *Winstonsdad* blog, who lives in Derbyshire, makes the following remark:

> The voice of Magda even though written in English has a very Polish feel to it, I do wonder if this is why some publishers weren't so keen on this book. As for me, it gives it a real feel. Bakalar said her choice to write in English was because her Polish writing had been seen as tinged by English due to her extensive work translating and I may say the opposite is true: her writing in English has a Polish feel without the reader getting bogged down in Polish words. ("Madame Mephisto by A. M. Bakalar")

The above-quoted observations reverberate in the review by Rachel Ward, a translator and literary critic from Norwich, who argues on her blog *a discount ticket to everywhere* that:

> The other particularly strong aspect was Magda's experience as an immigrant in London, ending up too Polish for the Brits and too English for the Poles. This clearly reflects the author's own experience as A. M. Bakalar was born and raised in Poland but has lived all over the world before settling in London in 2004.... Madame Mephisto is the only book on the Stork Press list originally written in English, yet is it also a translation? A translation of the Polish experience perhaps? ... I did find the English occasionally tinged with Polish, but perhaps that was because I was expecting it to be. If it had been a conventional translation I'm sure I would have commented to that effect. (Ward, "Madame Mephisto")

Both reviews echo Alistair Pennycook's (2008) pertinent thesis that English is a language always in translation. The phenomenon is further reinforced by the fact that in almost every book there overlaps a panoply of voices, often multicultural, which belong to people involved in the publication process: the voices of the author, translator, reviewer, editor, proofreader, etc. What the readers often forget is that before they open a book, its content has been translated, edited and rewritten several times.

A Polish(ing) Touch on the British and Irish Literary Map

Like postcolonial writers before, the contemporary Polish migrant authors cling to the hope that something is gained rather than lost in the act of translation. In their astute essay "Where's Your Accent From? Britain's White Others," A. M. Bakalar and Agnieszka Dale remark:

> But we are enriching English.... We both write via Polish, even if we do it in English. Polish must leave a significant mark, even if the accent is undetectable, on the page. Even if nobody knows. There will be Polish directness, sense of humour, our impatience with words.

Drawing upon the theories of Frantz Fanon, Bakalar and Dale place the Polish case in the wider context of the debate of postcoloniality. They point out that the writing of Polish migrants goes further than a simple linguistic translation: it carries over aspects of Polish culture into English, it renders a set of migrant voices and experiences for the local readers, it helps the authors to invent their own hybrid identity and reflects the national identity of the British and Irish people. After all, migrants are the perfect foil for the natives, thereby emphasizing their national characteristics.

Despite a remarkable similarity of Bakalar's and Dale's opinions, there is one major difference between the two—their relationship with English. While the language has had a liberating effect on the former writer, the latter has felt oppressed by it, by its privileged position and its capacity to push other languages aside. Dale forthrightly expresses her frustrations in the poem "A Very Secret Wish of Every Immigrant," in which she wishes for all English speakers to disappear from the earth for at least half a minute so that she can breathe.

But Dale also implicitly acknowledges that this oppressive quality is only one aspect and writing in a foreign language can also be a liberating experience in a sense that translation helps the writer surpass the potential of his or her mother tongue. Even more importantly, publishing in English enables migrants to be heard. A shrewd awareness of this probably accounts for the efforts of Polish migrant authors to reach out to the British and Irish readers by submitting their writing to local journals and publishing houses, investing money in self-publishing their work, participating in literary competitions and events and becoming engaged in all sorts of projects with local writers and translators. The Polish migrants do not seem discouraged by the fact that the book market in Britain and Ireland is highly competitive for non-native writers and, despite being the fifth largest in the world, shows very little interest in the translated literature form Poland as it has been shown by Alexandra Büchler and Giulia Trentacosti's report.

But, by a weird paradox, the situation of Polish writers in the UK and Ireland has slightly improved in recent years. The local publishers and broadcasters, who had been obsessed with writing that somehow related to the Middle East, turned their eye to Poland because of the Brexit campaign. As I have already mentioned in the article's introduction, one of the results was that A. M. Bakalar's *Woman of Your Dreams*

and Agnieszka Dale's *Fox Season* and *A Happy Nation*, three short stories that depict the life of the Polish diaspora in the UK were aired on BBC Radio 4 in 2015. As it happens, Poland was also a Market Focus country at the 2017 London book fair, which whipped up some more interest in Polish literature in Britain and Ireland. Books that were promoted on that occasion included those authored by Polish migrants, such as Wioletta Greg's *Swallowing Mercury* and A. M. Bakalar's *Children of Our Age*.

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CHAPTER 9

A Country Constructed from Memories: Representations of Poland and Poles in Migrant Writing in the Twenty-First Century

Joanna Kosmalska

"If you want to learn something about Poles, you shouldn't go to Warsaw or Cracow, but to Victoria Station in London", notes Łukasz Suskiewicz in his novel *Egri Bikaver*. According to him: "There's no better place to study contemporary sociology".[1] By this he means to suggest that a keen observer, at Victoria Station, can scrutinise Polish people from different walks of life

This chapter is part of the project *Theatrical Heritage of Polish Migrants* (NdS/538415/2021/2022), which is conducted at the University of Łódź, Poland.

[1] Łukasz Suskiewicz, *Egri Bikaver* (Szczecin-Bezrzecze: Forma, 2009), 93.

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and every corner of Poland, all in one place at one time. In much the same way as Germans and Russians have contributed to the construction of Poles' self-image over the centuries, now the English and Irish serve for migrant writers as a foil to set off Polish features. This leads to the feasible, even if slightly far-fetched, interpretation that one of the most accurate portrayals of Poland and Poles at the turn of the twenty-first century can be found in the books of Polish migrants.

Inspired by Suskiewicz's astute observation, the chapter explores how Polish migrant writers construct representations[2] of their homeland and its citizens and how a life of migration influences these depictions. The authors' subtle delineations give us a perceptive insight into the complex relationship, attitudes and opinions of Polish migrants towards their home country and fellow compatriots. Their literary socio-representations are like a decryption grid that provides an insightful view to the reasons behind certain beliefs, decisions and behaviours of Polish people.

In their books, Polish migrant writers create images of Poland from their reminiscences. As a result, their depictions are displaced both in time and space: the authors describe their native land drawing upon their memories from both the recent and remote past, and they do this while being physically away from the place. Although undeniably sincere, their

[2] In this chapter, a "representation" is used in its wide sense as a term to describe a written depiction of an idea, object, person or event and how this depiction produces and conveys meaning through language. Drawing upon the theories of Stuart Hall, "language" is also defined here in a very broad manner as a signifying system that can take various forms (Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation", in: *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE Publications & Open University, 1997), 19). Such an inclusive interpretation of "language" feeds into Hall's definition of representation, which goes as follows: "Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language" (Hall, "The Work of Representation", 17). Another theory that is useful in this chapter is the Theory of Social Representations. Formulated by Serge Moscovici in the 1960s, it has since been expanded by the findings of other scholars. One of them is Birgitta Höijer who defines "social representations" as a network of ideas, images and metaphors that involve emotions, attitudes and judgements. Rather than logical and coherent thought patterns, they comprise thought fragments and a variety of, sometimes contradictory, ideas. Social representations illuminate collective cognitions, common sense and thought systems of a group of people or society (Birgitta Höijer, "Social Representations Theory: A New Theory for Media Research", *Nordicom Review* 32, no. 2 (2011), 3–16. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg & DeGruyter, https://doi.org/10.1515/nor-2017-0109, 5–6). They are embedded in communicative practices, such as media debates or, as in the case of this chapter, literary texts.

representations are selective, much in the same way as people's memories are selective, both at the time of remembering and retrieval.[3]

Again and again, the migrants' recollections of a life lived back in their native land are accompanied by intense feelings of powerlessness, pain, desperation, frustration and anger. The natural ability of the human brain to recall emotionally charged situations more vividly than other events may partly explain why the depictions of homeland in migrant narratives tend to be bleak in the extreme. Another explanation for the gloomy portrayal of Poland may have roots in psychological rationale: the characters evoke painful rather than cheerful memories of their native land in order to protect themselves from homesickness. The recollections of what annoyed migrants in their homeland shield them to some extent from nostalgia. But even if their reminiscences are distorted and emotional, they provide a surprisingly consistent image of Poland.

The Land of Limited Opportunities and High Aspirations

Many characters are haunted by the memories of financial struggles they faced in their home country day in and day out. They reminisce about grindingly low wages, high taxation, the lack of employment opportunities and burgeoning debts that prompted them to search for a better future abroad. One of these characters is Monika, a high-achieving primary school teacher and a PhD student, depicted in Dionisios Sturis' *Gdziekolwiek mnie rzucisz* [Wherever You Cast Me]. Although she and her husband, a

[3] The Theory of Cultural Memory offers a powerful interpretative medium through which to study literary representations in the writings of Polish migrants. Developed by Aleida and Jan Assamann in the 1980s, the concept of Cultural Memory is based on the conclusion that social memory is not transmitted biologically but is passed on via external symbols (Aleida Assamann, "Canon and Archive" in *The Invention of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 97). In this regard, culture provides people with a framework of concepts, images, ideas, meanings and values within which they construct their own biographies, histories and identities. For all these reasons, Assamann describes culture metaphorically as the suitcase that people take along on their journey through history. They repack this suitcase at different stations, or in a more literal sense, at various moments of high intensity, for example when the realities change or when they encounter other cultures (Aleida Assamann, "Cultural Memory" as part of *NITMES – Network in Transnational Memory Studies*, Utrecht: Humanities Universiteit Utrecht, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hjwo7_A%2D%2Dsg&list=PLeBDdx1RvpDQgORu4-0se2X2dgZG7mnjn&index=1&t=15s (2017), 1–10).

network administrator, were young, educated, ambitious, hard-working, frugal and had full-time jobs in Poland, they could not afford a modern level of consumer comfort. Monika lived in a state of perpetual anxiety and frustration about their inability to pay the bills for the Internet and insurance, pay off the bank loan or buy better-quality food for their young daughter. This strengthened in her the conviction, shared by a surprising range of other migrants, that she must be dumb, inept, somehow flawed. She kept asking herself sorrowfully: What did I do wrong?[4]

In response to the same question, the narrator in Jacek Ozaist's *Wyspa obiecana* [The Promised Isle] recalls his unflagging belief, nurtured by his mother, that education was a passport to success in adult life. Armed with an MA degree and two foreign languages, he entered the Polish job market full of high hopes: first he toiled away in a corporation, then held a post in public administration, and finally decided to open his own business. No sooner had he settled into the new role of company owner than high taxes led him to bankruptcy. However bravely he tried to stay afloat, he did not succeed. His perilous situation perfectly exemplifies the problems of many Poles who, despite their best efforts, were unable to achieve self-sufficiency and contentment in their native land.

These narratives thus depict characters moving abroad, mostly not because they were starving in Poland, but because they despised the monotony of their dreary, impoverished, nerve-racking existence. In other words, the opportunities available in the fledgling capitalistic Poland were not commensurate with the aspirations of young Poles.

Reliving the Past?

The harsh realities in Poland of the 1990s and early 2000s were, in large part, the legacy of the country's turbulent history. World War II, the Nazi occupation and the Soviet invasion plunged the country into dire poverty and immense chaos. Over decades, Poles had to lead a "normal" life in abnormal conditions, dealing with constant degradation and violence at the hands of their occupiers. They have learnt the techniques of circumventing imposed rules and encoding hidden messages into their language. The necessity of prevaricating for the sake of survival led many Polish people to develop a mentality characterised by secrecy and distrust of strangers,

[4] Dionisios Sturis, *Gdziekolwiek mnie rzucisz. Wyspa Man i Polacy. Historia Splątania* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B, 2015), 215.

the instinct of always reading a hidden agenda into other people's words and actions, and a genuine affection for patent sincerity. A prime exponent of these features is Magda's mother in A.M. Bakalar's *Madame Mephisto*. In response to Magda's stories about her polite and friendly English workmates, the mother immediately warns her daughter that "[t]hey are hiding something. […] Nobody smiles unless they want something from you".[5]

When the Solidarity movement led to the collapse of Communism in the 1980s, it channelled all its energy towards eradicating the old system. The result was that the new political leaders did not have enough time to map out the future of the country. Without ever fully realising it, the freshly elected politicians tend to create a bureaucracy that bears remarkable resemblance to that used by the Communist regime which they had grown up under, genuinely despised and fought tirelessly to bring down. Polish migrants become acutely aware of this when they encounter the British administration system. In *Wyspa obiecana* [The Promised Isle], the narrator, Jack, whose business went bankrupt in Poland, achieves great success in England. Marvelling at the ease with which one can set up and run a company in the UK, he denounces Polish realities:

> Here, if you have an idea and skills, you can put them into practice without much worry. In our country, you need to take a few loans or inherit money because you start every business by having an overdraft to cover the social insurance, rent, taxes and other fees. In England, you have three months to register your company since you have issued your first invoice, you pay two pounds per week for insurance and you can run your business from the flat you rent.[6]

The characters complain that the convoluted and expensive bureaucracy-sapped enterprise in Poland prompted many employers, who felt exploited by the system, to in turn exploit their employees. Some owners did it for the survival of their companies, others for quick profit. As Dariusz Leszczyński observes in his article on the post-1989 economic transformation in Poland, the environment was conducive to exploitative practices. On the one hand, the public at large remained willing to make sacrifices to turn the country into a democracy. On the other, it was a time of rapid transition from centrally steered to a market economy, which resulted in

[5] A. M. Bakalar, *Madame Mephisto* (London: Stork Press, 2012), 9.
[6] Jacek Ozaist, *Wyspa obiecana* (Kraków – Łobez: Bogdan Zdanowicz, 2015), 62.

price inflation leading to a decline in sales and production, and finally high unemployment.[7] The consequence was a continuing frustration among workers at the instability of employment, poor working conditions with little or no social security, and low wages.

Apart from the lamentable financial situation of workers, a further complaint repeated by migrant authors is of a poor workplace culture in Polish companies. Gregory Spis sees it as a legacy of nepotism that prevailed in the old regime. In *Pamiętnik tłumacza* [The Translator's Diary], he describes how the executive posts were often filled by individuals who lacked expertise, skills and experience. To mask their intellectual deficiencies, they managed the company with nerve-wracking crudeness: they employed emotional blackmail, bullied people into working overtime for no extra pay, abused them verbally, stole their ideas and presented them as their own. Keenly aware of how the unequal treatment of employees could foster envy and divisions, they gave special favours to sycophants. In the words of Spis' narrator, it was "a customary, reliable, communist despotism that has had a long, nearly a hundred-year-old family tradition".[8] By creating an atmosphere of repression, menace, deference and hostility, Polish managers fostered internal divisions in the company. This allowed them to suppress any attempts at rebellion by workers.

In *Wot. 4*, Maria Budacz suggests that a similar obstructionist tactic has proven of great service in Polish politics. The majority of politicians behave as if they were running an endless government campaign: not only do they continue to shower society with promises but they also use propaganda techniques to discredit their rivals by continually bringing to light all sorts of political, financial and personal scandals. In this way they bring out divisions in society. But what makes this—otherwise very common—spectacle of a political life potent is its insistence on confronting the difficult history of Poland, the source of many wounds. The author complains that "Daily news exhausts us: arguments, financial scandals, investigating committees, special sessions, secret files, followed by more reports, secret files, investigating committees, special sessions and financial scandals".[9] For Budacz, this is a vivid reminder of the ways in which the Communist regime operated, with its well-developed system of secret personal files that contained

[7] Dariusz Leszczyński, "Przeobrażenia gospodarcze w Polsce w latach 1989–2016", *Refleksje* 12 (2015): 33, https://doi.org/10.14746/r.2015.2

[8] Gregory Spis, *Pamiętnik tłumacza* (London: Meridian Publishing, 2018), 58.

[9] Maria Budacz, *Wot. 4* (Warszawa: Papierowy Motyl, 2012), 69.

evidence used to incriminate opponents. She scoffs that: "Poland is like one big file, everybody has dirt on everybody else, one must reckon with this or that person and get on well with yet another person, all this due to the file".[10]

The older generations—who have lived through World War II and/or the Communist regime—see the quest for historical justice as essential to re-establish order and healthy relations in society. Like the narrator's mother in Budacz's *Wot.4*, they question the integrity of those Poles who had compromised with the oppressors in return for well-paid jobs and more comfortable lives. The widespread belief is that these opportunists should no longer enjoy a privileged position in national life.[11] After all, some of them assisted in the oppression of their fellow countrymen who fought for Poland's independence. Yet the problem of Polish history is more complex still: this judgement overlooks different groups of people, for example those who worked for the Communist system but then became part of the Solidarity movement. For the oppressed, this continual attempt to untangle the intricacies of the Polish past is a way of reworking the trauma they have experienced, of structuring the chaos that has surrounded them for years, of constructing the "world of normality".

On the contrary, many members of the younger, post-Communist generations feel exhausted by what seems to them an obsession with the past that overwhelms the present and hinders progress. In A.M. Bakalar's *Madame Mephisto*, the narrator observes that "Poles have a talent for lamenting, endlessly dissecting the events of the past".[12] Her indictment is that the extensive focus on suffering rooted in history evokes melancholic emotions that nurture narrow ethnicity. This, in turn, poses a danger of making the society hermetic, intolerant, impervious to "the others".

To Be a Pole Is to Be a Catholic

The works of historians, such as Philip W. Barker, Norman Davies, Józef Marecki, Paweł Milcarek, Rafał Łatka, Wojciech Sadłoń or Sabrina P. Ramet to name but a few, attest to the fact that there has always been a close link between religion and nationalism in Poland. This link can be traced as far back as the tenth century when Mieszko I, Duke of Poland

[10] Budacz, *Wot. 4*, 69.
[11] Budacz, *Wot. 4*, 69.
[12] Bakalar, *Madame Mephisto*, 5.

from the Piast dynasty, pursued a mutually beneficial alliance with Boleslav I, Duke of Bohemia (the Czech lands). The agreement was sealed with a marriage between the Duke of Poland and the Duke of Bohemia's daughter, Doubravka, providing that he agreed to convert to Christianity. Therefore, as a matter of expediency, Mieszko I received baptism in 966. What is important, however, is that he requested to be baptised by Jordan, a missionary bishop subordinate directly to the Pope. In this way the Polish ruler remained independent from the Holy Roman Empire, which included both the Czech and German lands, and inaugurated a long-lasting and direct relationship between the Vatican and the Polish state.[13]

With time, Catholicism became equated with nationhood and cultural tradition. In *100 Kijów w mrowisko* [Stirring up 100 Hornets' Nests], Jacek Wąsowicz suggests that Pope John Paul II is still more remembered for his role in overthrowing Communism than for his teachings.[14] The writer warns against the equation of religion with tradition. The same warning is reiterated throughout A.M. Bakalar's *Madame Mephisto*. The novel's narrator Magda accuses Poles of having a lot of religion but not enough faith. She argues that the devotion of many people seems to be a set of customs they follow to sustain a sense of connection with their local community. Magda becomes so irate and disillusioned with the Catholic Church, whose leaders claim a position of moral authority but do not reflect it in their own actions, that she decides to undertake apostasy.[15] When she makes the announcement, her mother is left in such shock and denial that her sister, Alicja, uses blackmail to make the narrator give up her decision.

The three female characters in *Madame Mephisto* define the Catholic Church in very different ways. For the mother, Catholicism embodies the most ancient and exalted values of traditional Polish life. She perceives the Church in terms of a noble ideal rather than an institution or people. Therefore, she is able to turn a blind eye to anything that does not rise to this ideal. Alicja's faith seems to be rather a matter of social decorum. She

[13] Philip W Barker, "Poland" in *Religious Nationalism in Modern Europe: If God be for Us* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 75–112, 78–79; Sabrina P Ramet, "Introduction" in *The Catholic Church in Polish History: From 966 to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2; Paweł Milcarek, "Kamienie milowe dziejów chrześcijaństwa" in *1050 lat chrześcijaństwa w Polsce* (Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny i Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego SAC, 2016), 9–56, 10–12.

[14] Jacek Wąsowicz, *100 Kijów w mrowisko* (Warszawa: Grupa M-D-M, 2013), 23–24.

[15] Bakalar, *Madame Mephisto*, 194.

experiences Catholicism as a set of rituals that keep her connected to people around her. Religion forms a protective shell that provides stability in her life. Magda, in turn, sees the Church as a fossilised ecclesiastical structure created by autocratic, conservative, often ignoble priests.[16] The different narratives developed around the Church by the mother, Alicja and Magda reveal that Catholicism in Poland is a complicated blend of various, often contradicting, beliefs, opinions and challenges. But these distinct discourses of the female characters have at least one thing in common: a conviction that religion is in large part about society.

In this respect, the novel seems to be filled with echoes of Émile Durkheim's theory on religion as "something eminently social".[17] Durkheim argued that religion offers three important things: social cohesion, meaning and purpose in life, and social control. First, it binds people together and is a source of solidarity and identification for individuals within a society (social cohesion). Second, it offers a meaning for life and strength during life's transitions and tragedies (meaning and purpose). Third, it reinforces morals and social norms, provides authority figures and promotes behaviour consistency (social control). When people gather and celebrate sacred events together, they foster social bonds and maintain the stability of their society.[18]

Echoes of Durkheim's emphasis on the social dimension of religion may also be heard in the work of Wioletta Greg. Her 2017 novella *Swallowing Mercury*, which is set in the autobiographically inspired village of Hektary during the 1970s and 1980s, demonstrates the tremendous influence of the Catholic faith on rural communities in Poland. Catholicism is all-pervasive in Hektary: it is embedded in the landscape (roadside shrines, churches), the calendar (parish fairs, Sunday Mass, May devotions, Pope John Paul II's visit to Poland) and in the everyday practices of the characters (the narrator's grandmother recites a litany when she cooks, the mother clutches a blessed medallion in her hand during storms, people dress up for Sunday Mass, etc.). Greg observes astutely that the immense power of Catholicism in rural areas of Poland lies in its idiosyncratic nature. It is a strange mix of the official Catholic teachings, acts of popular

[16] Bakalar, *Madame Mephisto*, 194.

[17] Émile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain, Project Gutenberg Project, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/41360/41360-h/41360-h.htm (2012), 10.

[18] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 226.

piety, folk beliefs, superstitions, common knowledge, local traditions, rituals of the family life, and personal habits.

Perhaps one of the most telling instances of this combination is the "storm rite" performed by Wiola's mother. When she hears thunder, she crosses herself, takes the laundry down, closes the windows and doors, pulls plugs out of sockets, hides metal objects and covers the washing machine with a blanket. Once she is done with the practicalities, she calls over her daughter Wiola to make sure the girl has not killed a spider. But this is only an excuse to tell Wiola how Joseph and Mary avoid the killing of baby Jesus commissioned by Herod.[19] When the Holy Family shelters in a cave, the spider which lives there weaves a thick web at the entrance to protect baby Jesus from Herod's soldiers. This urban legend explains not only the reason why spiders are considered sacred creatures but also the roots of the popular Polish superstition that killing a spider brings on a storm—a sign of God's wrath. With astonishing adroitness, Wiola's mother works religious gestures and symbols, the official gospels, urban legends, superstitions and pragmatic actions into her ritual in such a way that they become indistinguishable parts of one semi-religious rite. She blends the elements of Catholicism, common knowledge, Polish culture and history, producing, in effect, her personal religion. The religion that satisfies her needs.

Although in a very different context, the same social benefits of religion are sought by Polish people living in the UK. Their narratives often portray the Catholic Church as an institution that has successfully developed a network of ethnic parishes in the UK. Led by Polish priests, the parishes have become centres of assistance and the nucleus of Polish culture for newcomers. They are places where Polish people not only find spiritual and material help in times of need but meet their fellow compatriots and socialise. One such parish is depicted in Justyna Nowak's *Opowieść emigracyjna* [The Emigration Tale]. The novel's protagonist, Klara, attends Polish Mass in a London church. After the service, the friendly and very supportive Polish priest invites all parishioners for free drinks and snacks to the Haven Pub, which is adjacent to the church. It is built in a country cottage style to give the place a warm, welcoming, homely feeling. On a wall, there hangs a noticeboard covered with all sorts of announcements, which range from mass times and rehearsal schedule of the Polish choir to the addresses of job centres, state offices, Polish shops, and ads for

[19] Wioletta Greg (aka Wioletta Grzegorzewska), *Swallowing Mercury*, trans. Eliza Marciniak (London: Portobello Books, 2017), 58–59.

free-of-charge English classes.[20] Implicit in Klara's description of the place is the recognition that the Polish priest attempts to create an ersatz home for migrants. He assumes the roles of a guardian of Catholic faith and Polish culture, translator of foreign realities, and experienced guide through the unknown country.

By performing all these tasks, the priest and, by extension, the Catholic Church try to anticipate the migrants' needs and expectations. And they seem to be doing a good job if one takes into account the reasons why migrants attend church. In Ireneusz Gębski's novel *W cieniu Sheratona* [In the Shadow of the Sheraton], the narrator notes that: "Some people come for spiritual nourishment, others want to meet their fellow compatriots, have a conversation in Polish and exchange information. Yet others come to show off their new cars which they park right outside the church doors".[21] By no means exhaustive, Gębski's list is extended further by Maria Budacz, Justyna Nowak or Dionisios Sturis. The writers concordantly come to the conclusion that the toils of migration compel many newcomers to seek out a Catholic community abroad. For one thing, it addresses their psychological issues, such as a feeling of loneliness, uncertainty and anxiety or the need for acknowledgement of their achievements. It also offers material benefits, such as assistance in finding a job or free-of-charge English classes. Last, but not least, the Catholic Church as an international and mainstream institution gives migrants a sense of belonging to the local community in the host country. This is why some migrant characters, like the Świątek family in Dionisios Sturis' *Gdziekolwiek mnie rzucisz* [Wherever You Cast Me], attend English rather than Polish Mass. It makes them feel part of the Douglas community on the Isle of Man.

What migrants discover when they join a congregation in a foreign country is that the Catholic Church is less homogenous than they had thought. As Monika Świątek in Sturis' *Gdziekolwiek mnie rzucisz* [Wherever You Cast Me] makes her own comparisons between the Catholic Church in Britain and in Poland, the latter appears to be more conservative, pompous, rigid, brassbound. She praises the British priest for keeping out of politics and letting the children play during the Mass. This is very different than what she remembers from the church in Poland.[22] Interestingly, in

[20] Justyna Nowak, *Opowieść emigracyjna* (Gdynia: Novae Res, 2010), 89–91.

[21] Ireneusz Gębski, *W cieniu Sheratona* (Warszawa: Warszawska Firma Wydawnicza, 2012), 91.

[22] Sturis, *Gdziekolwiek mnie rzucisz. Wyspa Man i Polacy*, 219.

mainly Catholic Poland, where faith seems to be inherent in political, public and literary discourses, few people care to discuss the spirituality of religion. Most debates focus on the historical and social impact of Catholicism. What this creates is the impression that the Catholic Church has more impact on the nation than individuals. No doubt, it has left a strong imprint on Polish history and culture.

Interrogating the Traditional View of Women

Part of this historical, cultural and religious heritage is the lofty ideal of Mother Pole,[23] which women are expected to live up to, and some, indeed, try to avidly. As Anna Titkow notes in *Pożegnanie z Matką Polką?* [A Farewell to Mother Pole?], the traditional rhetoric concerning this myth moves beyond the notion of mother to the idea of woman.[24] In a later chapter of the book, Klaudyna Świstow demonstrates how this ideal is connected to the cult of the Virgin Mary, who provides the model for females in the Catholic Church.[25] The traits attributed to the Mother of God, such as submissiveness, leniency, protectiveness, sacrifice and non-sexuality, have been imputed to Polish women. Beneath these features lurked the social implication that all women sought fulfilment of their nurturing impulses in marriage and motherhood. Such portraiture defined the female always in relation to men and reinforced the gender stereotypes for centuries.

According to Anna Titkow, the Mother Pole myth has roots that go back to the seventeenth century. At that time, the ethos of Polish nobility promoted a "gentle patriarchy", in which an ideal noblewoman was chaste, obedient to her family and able to run a household. However, when the fathers, husbands and brothers went away to fulfil their war or public

[23] The Polish term "Matka Polka" is rendered into English as "Mother Pole", using the translation suggested by Krystyna Slany. In her chapter on "Family relations and gender equality in the context of migration", she briefly describes the impact of the Mother Pole model on Polish women. See Krystyna Slany, "Family relations and gender equality in the context of migration" in *The Impact of Migration on Poland*, ed. Anne White, Izabela Grabowska, Paweł Kaczmarczyk and Krystyna Slany (London: UCL Press, 2018), 108–130, 116.

[24] Anna Titkow, "Figura Matki Polki. Próba demitologizacji" in *Pożegnanie z Matką Polką?* ed. Renata E. Hryciuk and Elżbieta Korolczuk (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012), 27–48, 31.

[25] Klaudyna Świstow, "Rodzicielstwo wirtualne. Duchowa adopcja jako nowa forma rodzicielstwa" in *Pożegnanie z Matką Polką?* ed. Renata E. Hryciuk and Elżbieta Korolczuk (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012), pp. 309–330, 309.

duties, the mothers, wives and daughters watched the estates and ran the businesses. Many women enjoyed some degree of power and reverence in such families.[26]

The Partitions of Poland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries placed more emphasis on bearing and rearing children, which was important for sustaining the autonomous Polish national identity. Women were responsible for passing on the native language, culture and religion to younger generations and educating their sons to become patriotic fighters. Their social duties were outlined by Adam Mickiewicz, a Polish Romantic bard, in his 1830 poem "Do Matki Polki" ("To Mother Pole"). In the poem, the female protagonist is instructed to bring up her son in such a way that he becomes a plotter and willing martyr to the national cause. Mickiewicz explicitly links Mother Pole to the Mother of God with the implication that they both raise a son who will die for a greater good. This use of religious symbolism emphasises the importance of sacrifice: Mother Pole is expected to sacrifice herself and her family for the sake of country and nation. Anna Titkow believes this was the time when the "Mother Pole" began to function in society as a term for "superwoman".[27]

In the nineteenth century, the number of female workers rose substantially: the difficult economic situation in Poland forced women, especially from lower social strata, to take up any employment available. Although their contribution to the family budget was significant and it was not uncommon for the wife to be the only breadwinner, the head of the Polish household was still always the man. Anna Titkow laments that, in consequence, this unfair treatment endowed the Mother Pole myth with a stronger patriarchal colour.[28]

World War I did not alter the model in any significant way. But when World War II began in 1939, women took an active part in it. Not only did they take on traditional roles such as nurses, cooks and dispatch-carriers, but they also directly took part in fighting against the Nazi army. The risks they took were very often the same as those taken by men. This reconfiguration of gender roles allowed women to claim authority and heroism, which were not available to them before.

The arrival of the Red Army in 1944 proved as traumatic to some Polish people as the atrocities they experienced during the Nazi occupation. Dariusz Kaliński in *Czerwona zaraza. Jak naprawdę wyglądało wyzwolenie*

[26] Titkow, "Figura Matki Polki. Próba demitologizacji", 29.
[27] Titkow, "Figura Matki Polki. Próba demitologizacji", 31.
[28] Titkow, "Figura Matki Polki. Próba demitologizacji", 30–31.

Polski [The Red Plague: How Did the Liberation of Poland Really Look Like?] and Stanisław M. Jankowski in *Dawaj czasy! Czyli wyzwolenie po sowiecku* [Give Me Your Watch! Liberation the Soviet Way] quote horrifying testimonies from victims that describe how Polish females, age 3 to 73, were subjected to hours-long rapes and beatings from the Soviet soldiers who marched through Poland to Berlin. The war was a brutal example of the paradox in which gender hierarchy was both undermined and strengthened. But it also set the consistent patterns of female personality in Poland in the form of an extremely strong and self-sufficient woman.

Trying to rebuild and industrialise Poland after the enormous destruction inflicted by the Nazis and the Soviets, the Communist government installed in Warsaw by the USSR promoted the gender equality which was advocated by the Stalinist system. Women were encouraged to enter jobs in industry on an equal footing with men and husbands were encouraged to help with household chores, such as cleaning or cooking. But despite the efforts of the Stalinist system to implement equality of the sexes, the ingrained division of society into male producers and female reproducers was still very strong in Poland. In *Women, Communism, and Industralization in Postwar Poland*, Malgorzata Fidelis argues that initially the Polish Communist government supported the official Stalinist line that women and men should have equal rights and opportunities but, over time, many state policies and public images relegated women from public life to domestic spheres. The return to pre-war conservative traditions was significantly assisted by the Catholic Church: in calling for a revival of the old ideal of Mother Pole, the Catholic activists made a point of the need to rebuild the nation after the war. In the 1970s, women's maternal qualities were emphasised in general public discourse and the gender segregation of jobs became more pronounced, with male employers often refusing to hire women in industries traditionally dominated by men. The result was that women were doubly discriminated against in the Polish People's Republic: they often worked full-time in low-skilled, low-paid jobs and were fully responsible for parental and domestic duties. The female ideal in Communist times was expected to reconcile the roles of an industrial worker and a household manager. It was often said that women had two jobs: one at work and one at home.

Since the fall of Communism in 1989, the Mother Pole exemplar has been functioning as a frame of reference within which new female ideals take shape. A modern variation of the Communist model seems to be a beautiful, forever young, high-achieving super-mother. Agnieszka

Imbierowicz observes that at the root of this hyper-resourceful figure lies Polish history, traditions and mentality combined with Western pop culture, consumerism, individualism and ideology of "intensive mothering".[29,30] The products of popular culture, such as commercials, films or books, create pressures on women that are founded on contradiction. On the one hand, they are encouraged to be self-sufficient, self-fulfilled, sleek and successful, while on the other, they are expected to prioritise family over their career and devote a great deal of time, energy and money to meeting their children's emotional and intellectual needs. A.M. Bakalar offers an ironic description of this exalted role model in the opening pages of *Madame Mephisto*:

> Polish women make good housewives; two-course dinner is always ready on time, the house is scrubbed clean, the children are taken care of, and at night we transform into sexually insatiable goddesses. Making a career is the last of our worries, because it is the family, husband and children who always come first. Simply put, a Polish woman is one of the best deals on the matrimonial market.[31]

No matter how extensive the critique of the Mother Pole myth mounted by female characters in migrant fiction, a large number of male protagonists display scant awareness that this role model also proves pernicious to men.

[29] On the nature of "intensive mothering", see D. Lynn O'Brien Hallstein's article "Conceiving Intensive Mothering" (D. Lynn O'Brien Hallstein, *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 8, No. 1–2 (2016): 96–108. She cites the term coined by Sharon Hays in her 1996 book *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* to describe how American society perceives the "ideal mother". Hays argues that the concept of intensive mothering is based on three ingrained assumptions. First, the primary, central caregivers of children continue to be women. Second, the mother is expected to devote huge amounts of time, energy and financial resources to provide her children with an upbringing that is child-centred, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing and labour-intensive. Third, professional work and motherhood are kept separate in distinct zones, and therefore mothering has no market value. The result is that women are condemned to the role of thoughtful, self-sacrificing, ideal mothers, with limited agency in public and professional life.

[30] Agnieszka Imbierowicz, "The Polish Mother on the defensive? The transformation of the myth and its impact on the motherhood of Polish women", *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 1 (2012): 140–153, https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs20121-140-153, 151.

[31] Bakalar, *Madame Mephisto*, 7. On the Mother Pole myth in Bakalar's *Madame Mephisto* see Martyna Bryla, "Weeding Out the Roots? The Construction of Polish Migrant Identity in A.M.Bakalar's Polish-British Fiction", *Complutense Journal of English Studies* 28 (2020): 1–10.

In *Single*, Piotr Kępski emphasises this issue by introducing Filip Romer's family, from which the writer removes the mother, Maria Romer (who goes missing mysteriously), and examines the consequences of her absence. The mother's disappearance makes Filip realise that his father keeps referring to his wife as "mum".[32] But the protagonist quickly remarks that it inadvertently reflects the psychological dynamic of his parents' relationship: both he and his father were, in fact, Maria's pampered children. They gleefully entrusted all domestic affairs to her. She organised their lives in terms of time and space, and yet somehow managed to cultivate the illusion that her husband was the head of family. Filip comes to the conclusion that, as a result, his father has remained an eternal child, a frivolous loafer whose life, bereft of household chores and planning, has a large capacity for enjoyment.[33] The day Maria disappears, her husband's helplessness is exposed unsparingly: the simplest tasks, such as doing the laundry, take him forever to perform. He is a defeated person without his wife, like "an admiral without a navy",[34] a grotesque elderly man who, as if he were a little boy, learns how to be independent. One of the implications behind such ironic portraiture of Filip's father is that he is a victim of the sacrificial Mother Pole myth. Kępski caustically observes that: "Militant males, who enjoy privileged position in society, greater power, authority and physical strength; who earn more and elbow their way to a successful career; they – without their women, who have had their back for years and bolstered their world, power and self-confidence – turn into helpless children".[35]

Kępski's diagnosis, though relevant and probing, may be susceptible to certain corruptions. In her article on feminism in Poland, Monika Ksieniewicz warns that the interpretations of the Mother Pole myth, which emphasise women's latent agency, may be cunningly used to protect patriarchal values. According to her, the oft-repeated maxim that "the man may be the head, but the woman is the neck that turns the head whichever way she pleases" misleads society into believing that the Mother Pole model is a source of authority when, in fact, it only gives women a semblance of power. Ksieniewicz's diagnosis overlaps with the opinions offered by Maria Budacz, who, like many other migrant writers, depicts this myth as a force which oppresses women and prevents them from becoming

[32] Piotr Kępski, *Single* (Warszawa: Jirafa Roja, 2009), 90.
[33] Kępski, *Single*, 92.
[34] Kępski, *Single*, 126.
[35] Kępski, *Single*, 127.

themselves.[36] In migrant fiction, the majority of female protagonists find it impossible to gain profound freedom in a society in which traditional patterns of living, despite certain criticism and weakening, are still generally valued and sustained.

A Microcosm of Polish Society in Britain

The power of ingrained tradition within a larger context of culture, no less than the power of history or politics, is a pervasive theme in Polish migrant writing. In *Dublin, moja polska karma* [Dublin, My Polish Karma], Magdalena Orzeł notes: "You have left Poland but you can't escape Poland […]".[37] This becomes evident in the emergence of what the sociologist Anne White calls "Polish society abroad", and more specifically in the fact that Polish migrants living in a foreign country form communities that "can be considered to some degree a microcosm of Polish society in Poland".[38] Similarly to White, many authors, such as Jacek Wąsowicz, Iwona Macałka, Michał Wyszowski or Łukasz Ślipko, to name but a few, observe that as soon as Polish migrants leave their homeland, they search for it abroad. Many people read Polish newspapers, books, or websites and watch Polish films, shows, or news; others go to Polish shops, schools, restaurants, medical centres, libraries, masses, or events; some include Polish traditions in their Christmas, Easter or wedding celebrations. Despite living a great distance from Poland, many of them keep track of the situation in their native country. They also recreate the stereotypes. For example, the female characters follow a modified version of the Mother Pole model, just like Gabi in Łucja Fice's novels, who plods away as a carer of the elderly in the UK in order to provide for her family in Poland. Even those who have managed to flee from the pressure of stereotypes, acquired a cosmopolitan identity, and thrive in multicultural settings are reminded of their roots when other people enquire about their distinctive accent. Confronted with the representatives of other cultures, migrant characters become increasingly aware of their Polish identity, something many of them had rarely acknowledged when they lived in Poland.

A very similar process is documented by Declan Kiberd in his brilliant book *Inventing Ireland*, in which he observes that the Irish identity was

[36] Budacz, *Wot. 4*, 79.
[37] Magdalna Orzeł, *Dublin, moja polska karma* (Kraków: Skrzat, 2007), 134.
[38] White, "Polish society abroad", 186.

often defined in opposition to the British identity. He quotes the example of Oscar Wilde who came to the conclusion that Irish people discovered themselves only after they had left their homeland. Kiberd elaborates on this idea in the following way: "Identity was dialogic; the other was also the truest friend, since it was from that other that a sense of self was derived. A person went out to the other and returned with a self, getting to know others simply to find out what they think of him or herself".[39] What Kiberd remarks about the Irish is also apposite to Polish migrant protagonists. Their deep interest in what the British think about them is most evident in the numerous passages where the characters view themselves through the eyes of local citizens. For example, a character in Michał Wyszowski's *Na lewej stronie świata* [On the Left Side of the World] bemoans the way English people perceive migrants as the shells of sunflower seeds that litter their country.[40] Both Magda, the narrator in A.M. Bakalar's *Madame Mephisto*,[41] and Gabi, the protagonist in Łucja Fice's *Wyspa starców* [The Isle of Old People],[42] lapse into frustration when the English behave as if Polish people were poor unfortunates for whom England was a true paradise. This attempt to first imagine oneself from the perspective of the other and then debunk various misrepresentations is a constructive element in the shaping of the characters' selfhood.

This search for self-identity may also explain why the characters show such a rapturous devotion to recognising the faults of their fellow countrymen. Ironically, nobody seems more critical of Polish migrants than they themselves. Their obvious intention is to pinpoint national vices of their compatriots in order to combat them. But at a deeper level, it is also a way in which the characters subject themselves to self-examination: if they recognise certain faults in their countrymen, they deny with fervour any of these features in themselves. Interestingly, the more they renounce a particular trait, the more it emerges from the depths of their unconscious. For example, the migrant narrators are critical of the fact that Polish people complain in excess while their own repeated complaints about their fellow countrymen escape their notice.

Another feature, often noted in migrant books, is that there is a low degree of solidarity among Polish migrants. Stories of predatory Poles

[39] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (Vintage Books: London. 1996), 48.
[40] Michał Wyszowski, *Na lewej stronie świata* (Warszawa: MG, 2010), 26.
[41] Bakalar, *Madame Mephisto*, 10.
[42] Łucja Fice, *Wyspa starców* (Warszawa: Warszawska Firma Wydawnicza, 2013), 78.

taking advantage of their compatriots to line their own pockets, such as those documented by A.M. Bakalar in *Children of Our Age*, inspired a paraphrase of the Latin proverb "Homō hominī lupus est" into "A Pole is a wolf to another Pole". In virtually all books, Polish migrants caution their Polish friends to be wary of other Poles living abroad. By a paradox, which seems to escape the characters' notice, it is also Polish migrants who often prove most helpful when the protagonist finds himself or herself in an adverse situation.

In general, the paradox is what seems to underline the representation of Poles and Poland in migrant writing. At the same time, a Polish person might be the truest friend and the deadliest enemy of another Pole. Poland is depicted simultaneously as a nostalgic land of happy memories and a gloomy limbo in the grip of underdevelopment. At the core of these paradoxes lies a realisation that contradictions mark the foundation of Poland. Jacek, a second-generation Pole in *Wot.4*, finds a reflection of these inconsistencies in Polish cities, in which "the centres are covered with the sheet of modernity and splendour and the recesses are strewn with holes and poverty".[43] His parents' attitude to their native land seems no less contradictory: living in England, they miss their family, friends and food, but as soon as they arrive in Poland, they want to go back to the UK "because they can't bear the tension".[44]

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of Poland and Poles

In *Dublin, moja polska karma* [Dublin, My Polish Karma], Magdalena Orzeł notes that although Polish migrants leave their native land behind, they carry all their anxieties, wounds and habits with them.[45] As their memories travel with them, a definitive break with the past is not possible. Piotr Kępski elaborates on this idea in *Single*, in which the protagonist Marta Cichy, having moved to London, reads her diary (the symbolic reminder of her past), nurtures old wounds and practises her "stupid, painful rituals".[46] When she questions her own behaviour, which seems utterly inexplicable even to her, she becomes aware of her inability to cut

[43] Budacz, *Wot. 4*, 44.
[44] Budacz, *Wot. 4*, 44
[45] Orzeł, *Dublin, moja polska karma*, 56.
[46] Kępski, *Single*, 34.

the cord that binds her to the past. Kępski emphasises this inability at the level of language when Marta asks herself a series of negative questions, which help her investigate the depths of her unconscious:

> Why didn't I burn these notes? Why didn't I dump them? I wouldn't even have to tear the pages here. Nobody would be able to read the jottings in a foreign, Slavic language anyway. Why don't I do it then? Why won't I break free from the past?
>
> I don't know, maybe because this notebook gives me an ersatz feeling of continuity. It is a lifeline for my impaired identity. Even the worst memory is better than none. When I came to London, I haven't become someone else. I wasn't reborn. I didn't erase what had already happened. Although I did dream about it and promised myself I would turn into a new person, a kind of Super-Marta.[47]

This passage is filled with echoes of John Locke's theory of memory:[48] Marta's personal identity persists because she retains memories of herself. In other words, she sustains her personal identity through a chain of memories that bind her to her old self. Although it inevitably keeps her from a quick metamorphosis into a Super-Marta of her dreams, it also provides her with continuity that becomes a base on which she can pattern her new life abroad.

In his article on *Migration, Food, Memory, and Home-Building*, Ghassan Hage notes an analogous tendency in migrants whose memories of their native land provide them with a shelter which they use to launch themselves into their new lives abroad. In a somewhat similar way, the characters in Polish migrant books invent an imaginary private Poland that serves as a backdrop against which they create their new identities and build their new homes in a foreign country. This private land becomes a space where migrants translate their past into their present and future. In Wioletta Grzegorzewska's poem *Mapa emigrantki* [The Map of Emigrant Woman],

[47] Kępski, *Single*, 34.

[48] John Locke's theory of memory propounds that personal identity persists over time because the person retains memories of himself/herself at different points in life, and each of those memories is connected to one before it. For example, if a woman remembers her first day of kindergarten, she maintains a memory link to the girl from the past. John Locke's most thorough discussion of this issue can be found in his "Chapter XXVII: Identity and diversity, Book II: Ideas" in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (2017; first published in 1694), ed. Jonathan Bennett, pp.112–121. The text is available online at: https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1690book2.pdf.

the speaking persona—asked about the location of Poland by her hairdresser—replies:

> Where is Poland located? In gawky verses,
> in favourite books, which were sized at the airport.
> by an officer because 'the luggage was too heavy';
> in the father's ossuary, in the house by the Boży Stok River;
> maybe it grows inside the belly and will soon say: mum?[49]

The migrant's mental map of her native land, however studded with nostalgic reminders of the past, is in fact her response to what awaits her in the future. In the stanza, a tide of memories leads the speaker to pose a question in the final line of the poem that is expressive of hope, optimism and a new beginning. It suggests that the act of remembering is to some extent an attempt to invent and construct the future. The same implication is spelled out in the closing chapter of Maria Budacz's *Wot.4*, in which the narrator falls asleep and conjures up a utopian vision of Poland. In the narrator's dream, the competent government has turned Poland into a modern and prosperous place where people are genuinely happy. This utopia is built out of the narrator's memories, which she mentions earlier in the book, but here the previously described realities are reversed: her father is no longer quick to anger when he watches the news, her aunt who suffers from cancer is pleased with the healthcare system in the country, and her uncle who lost his job praises the administrative efficiency of state agencies.

As in so many other migrant texts, what begins as the character's travel into the past ends as their journey into the future. In this journey, a life of migration offers itself as an analytical tool: the foreign country becomes a social laboratory in which the migrants examine Poland and Polish people amid the foreign realities, and in doing so, gain a deeper understanding of their native land and themselves.

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[49] Wioletta Grzegorzewska, *Mapa emigrantki*, In *Na końcu świata napisane. Autoportret współczesnej polskiej emigracji*, ed. Elżbieta Spadzińska-Żak (Chorzów: Videograf II, 2008), 305.

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The Contribution of Polish Writers to the Brexit Debate

Recent reflections of Polish writers on Brexit – such as those by Marek Rybarczyk in *Wszystkie szaleństwa Anglików. Brexit i reszta* (*All English Follies: Brexit and Other Things*) or Dariusz Rosiak in *Oblicza Wielkiej Brytanii. Skąd wziął się Brexit i inne historie o wyspiarzach* (*True Colours of Great Britain: The Origins of Brexit and Other Stories about the Islanders*) – attempt to explore, among other things, the reasons behind the Leave Vote in 2016. Both authors conclude that Brexit is rooted in a set of considerations that were easy to detect long before a referendum was mentioned. Among other factors, they list mass migration, British isolationism and Euroscepticism, nostalgia for the imperial past, a deepening division of British society into two camps – globalists and nationalists, and the celebration of English identity.

The diagnosis offered by Polish writers is vindicated by scholars. In the article 'How Brexit was made in England', Ailsa Henderson and her colleagues argue that the factors leading to Brexit have a long history connected to Englishness (Henderson et al, 2017, p. 632). The researchers found that Eurosceptic and anti-migrant attitudes prevailing in England were linked to the expression of national identities. It turned out that people in the UK were more inclined to vote Leave if they prioritised their English over their British national identity (p. 639). Similarly, Richard Hayton notes in his study of 'The UK Independence Party and the Politics of Englishness' that Anglo-centric Britishness has strengthened in the UK. According to him, this process has led to the invigoration of Euroscepticism, English nationalism and opposition to immigration (Hayton, 2016, p. 402). The same correlations between Brexit and English identity have been investigated by Michael Kenny in 'The Genesis of English Nationalism'. Kenny draws attention to the fact that national identity in England revolves around two polarities. On the one hand, there is a Britishness determined by liberal globalism, which is favoured by the political and economic elites; on the other, there is English nationalism that has roots in locality, tradition and popular culture (Kenny, 2016, p. 11). The latter seems popular among voters from poorer communities. To many of them, migration to Britain has undermined their economic situation and cultural traditions (p. 9). From these two opposing viewpoints, Kenny infers a conflict between globalists and nationalists which is not unique to Britain. In fact, this fault-line can be observed in many other modern, democratic countries, including Poland or the United States.

Quoted by writers and scholars alike as decisive factors that led to Brexit, the aforesaid considerations function as the axis around which this chapter is organised. After a brief

introduction to the perception of Britain in Poland and the Polish diaspora in the UK, the subsequent sections explore the issues of migration, isolationism, Euroscepticism, nostalgia for the imperial past and a division of society into globalists and nationalists in Britain. These passages utilise the works that presage Brexit and were published by Polish migrants living in the UK since the 2000s, among them *Polska szkoła boksu* by Adam Miklasz (2009), *Na lewej stronie świata* by Michał Wyszowski's (2010), *Karpie, łabędzie i Big Ben* by Ada Martynowska (2010) or *Pożegnanie z Anglią* by Monika Richardson (2012). This is followed by the analysis of more recent texts that are a direct response by Polish authors to the Leave Vote, for example *Polish Girl in Pursuit of the English Dream* by Monika Wiśniewska (2017) or 'Legoland' by Agnieszka Dale (2017). Although the continuing focus is on Brexit, the chapter also gives an insight into how Poles perceive the British.

The chapter floats freely between literary and non-literary writings, and views them not in isolation but in relation to one another. Therefore, interpretations of selected novels and short stories take their place alongside examinations of memoirs, essays and interviews. This technique allows a more comprehensive analysis of Brexit in wider cultural and socio-political contexts. What the juxtaposition of pre- and post-referendum, literary and non-literary Polish writing proves is that the idea of Brexit emerged neither quickly nor unexpectedly, but that it has been a continuous, incremental process revolving around national identity.

British-Polish Relations over the Centuries

The United Kingdom had been a well-known country among Poles long before the post-EU-accession migration began. Poland was among the first countries where the British Council – a state-funded organisation whose main aims are to promote British culture and the English language – opened an office in 1938. After a break in operations during World War II, the British Council reopened in 1946. Although the Polish post-war communist government, deployed by the USSR, strongly discouraged taking up English studies, there was considerable interest among Poles for whom cultivating Western European culture was a way to oppose the Soviet regime. In the 1960s and 1970s, the British Council organised a number of cultural events in Poland, including a Henry Moore Exhibition, a performance of the Royal Ballet and a visit from the Royal Shakespeare Company. Even when Martial law was introduced in the early 1980s, the organisation managed to continue its educational and cultural work (British Council, n.p.). With the fall of Communism in 1989, British culture – especially pop-culture – moved into the mainstream and achieved mass popularity.

Knowledge of Britain therefore preceded the actual experience of it for most Poles. The idea of the country was derived mainly from course books used in schools for teaching English as a foreign language, history books, translations of British classic literature, songs by iconic bands, and, last but not least, from the accounts of relatives and friends who lived in the British Isles.

From the nineteenth century onwards, there had been various waves of Polish migration to Britain. The first large influx took place after a series of rebellions followed the partitioning of Poland by Russia, Prussia and Austria. The November Uprising, put down by Russia in 1831, forced a number of rebels to flee to England. According to Maria Antonina Łukowska, Britain was the place from which much of the political impetus for Polish independence would come in the succeeding years 1831-1864 (Łukowska, 2017, p. 10).

Another wave of Polish migrants came during World War II after the Polish government was forced to move first to France and then to the UK. Large numbers of Poles travelled to Britain as military émigrés and joined the British forces to fight against the Nazis. The No. 303 (Polish) Fighter Squadron was recognised as the best unit in the British Royal Air Force and became a symbol of Poland's contribution to the Allied cause (Mariusz Gasior, 2015, n.p.).

The war ended but, as Agata Błaszczyk notes, Poles were not granted the freedom for which they had fought. The decisions taken at the Yalta Conference led to another partitioning of the country. Half of Poland's pre-war territories were incorporated into the Soviet Union and the other half was supposed to be ruled by an elected Polish government. However, Stalin made it clear that he was not going to honour his pledge to hold free elections in Poland. It meant that Churchill's promises of independence for the Poles turned to ash. The final blow was delivered in July 1945 when the British Government withdrew its formal recognition of the Polish Government-in-Exile operating from London and bestowed it on the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity in Warsaw. For Polish people in the UK at the time, this felt like a betrayal by their allies (Błaszczyk, 2018, p. 36).

Disappointment gave way to desperation. In the book *For Your Freedom and Ours*, Lynne Olson and Stanley Cloud chronicle that, on receiving the news from Yalta, thirty officers and men from the Second Polish Army Corps committed suicide (Olson & Cloud, 2004, p. 374). Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, the leader of Home Army, remarked with sorrow that the Allies gave up Poland – 'their most faithful and oldest ally of the war' – to 'slavery and partition' (p. 375). Meanwhile, reports about mass arrests by the Red Army, of Poles being shipped off to Soviet gulags, of non-Communists being tortured were reaching London (p. 383). Unlike citizens of other countries, such as France or Norway, Poles were unable to return safely to their

homeland. In recognition of this, the British Parliament passed the Polish Resettlement Bill in 1947. This legislation enabled Poles, who feared for their lives, to remain in the UK. The result was that, as figures from the 1951 UK census show, some 162,000 Polish people settled in Britain (Burrell, 2002, p. 59).

Those Poles made every effort to keep in touch with and support their relatives and friends in Poland. In her 2016 debut novel *Are My Roots Showing?*, Karola Gajda, a second-generation British Pole, describes how Polish immigrants in the UK prepared parcels for their family abroad: the novel's narrator watches her mother pack hand-me-downs, coffee, tea, sugar, chocolate, toothpaste, plasters, batteries and matches. The mother wraps the goods in brown paper, secured with scratchy string, addresses it with a black felt tip pen and sends it to 'some terrible, distant land'(Gajda, 2016, p. 13). These parcels and the stories heard from Polish emigrants partly account for the idealised perception of Britain in Poland; although compared with post-war Poland, the UK was indeed dreamland.

The idea of the UK as a dreamland that assures freedoms of all individuals, promotes tolerance and provides well-paid jobs persisted into the 21st century. Various writers have described it as 'a paradise,' 'promised land,' 'dream islands,' or 'El Dorado' (Nowak, 2010, p. 38; Surmaczyński, 2014, p. 112; Wiśniewska, 2017, p. 6; Ozaist, 2015, p. 91). This image, a resounding echo of the American Dream, has encouraged thousands of Polish people to migrate when Poland joined the European Union in May 2004 and Britain granted free movement to workers from the new member states. A decade later, the number of Polish citizens in the UK was estimated at roughly a million and Polish has become the third most-spoken language in the UK, after English and Welsh (Booth, 2013, n.p.). In 2017, Poles were labelled Britain's largest ethnic minority (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2019, n.p.). This post-2004 migration was very different in nature from the previous ones. Not only was it significantly larger in numbers, but it was embarked upon freely and not driven by violent events.

Speaking of contributing factors for Poles to come to the UK, the sociologists Barbara Jancewicz, Weronika Kloc-Nowak and Dominika Pszczółkowska list economic, social and cultural considerations. In comparison to twentieth century Poland, which struggled with high unemployment, low wages and contracting without health insurance and pension, Britain offered migrants a whole variety of secure, remunerative jobs. This, along with the splintering of social networks in their homeland, has led many Poles to leave their country of birth and join relatives and friends abroad. Additionally, the educated and ambitious young wanted to break into a wider world in order to learn English and live in a multicultural metropolis. According

to Jancewicz and her colleagues, the same factors determined the migrants' decision whether to stay or depart after Brexit (Jancewicz et al., 2020, p. 107).

Even though over 100,000 Poles left Britain in the two years following the EU Referendum, Poland, now surpassed by India, dropped from first to second place, but is still one of the top countries of birth for non-British residents in the UK. In 2019, the Polish minority comprised 818,000 people, accounting for 15% of all migrants in Britain (Vargas-Silva & Rienzo, 2020, 6.). Taking into account the remarkable number of Polish residents in Britain, it is hardly surprising that there is a strong Polish interest in Brexit.

British Attitudes to Mass Migration

One of the key discussion points during the Brexit campaign was mass migration; predictably, virtually all books by Polish migrant writers touch upon this topic and the ensuing issue of multiculturalism. In *Polska szkoła boksu* (*The Polish Boxing School*), Adam Miklasz notes that most Polish people, who came from the country that was relatively ethnically homogenous, saw 'taki wulkan egzotyki', 'such a volcano of exoticism' in the UK for the first time (Miklasz, 2009, p. 45). The authors are astonished by the blend of races, religions and cultures in the UK, particularly in London, and their works investigate how all these different strands are interwoven in British society.

London's diversity is brilliantly summarised in the title of Jarek Sępek's book *W 80 dni dookoła świata (nie wyjeżdżając z Londynu)* (*Around the World in Eighty Days [Without Leaving London]*). Inspired by Jules Verne's novel, Sępek sets off to find and record 80 different languages spoken in the capital. The very success of his endeavour yields a conclusion that the city deserves to be called the navel of the world (Sępek, 2010, p. 7). The diversity of nationalities, languages and accents is so tangible in the streets that '[g]dyby tylko Londyn ogłosił niepodległość, stałby się najbardziej zróżnicowanym etnicznie państwem w Europie' (p. 168).[1]

Accustomed to multiculturalism, British people were at first very friendly to newcomers from Eastern Europe. The narrator of Krystian Ławreniuk's *Ziemia wróżek* (*The Fairyland*) observes that their response to the influx of new migrants was an attentive curiosity: 'W knajpach ludzie przekazywali sobie szeptem z ust do ust, że widzieli takiego jednego, że słyszeli, jak mówi z tym dziwnym, szeleszczącym akcentem, że nosi się jakoś inaczej'

[1] '[i]f only London declared independence, it would be the most ethnically diverse country in Europe.'

(Ławreniuk, 2014, p. 15).[2] Attesting to this, a character in Michał Wyszowski's short story 'Czarna Lista' ('Blacklist'), recalls that, initially, there was an abundance of work and no fear of migrants: 'Jeszcze się prosili, żebyśmy przyszli do roboty' (Wyszowski, 2010, p. 137).[3]

However, this positive attitude has faded away over time, at least among some social groups. Jarek Sępek discusses the reasons behind this change with Joe Bloggs, the British author of *Feeling My Culture*. Brought up in Manchester, previously married to a Polish woman, Bloggs taught English to migrants and befriended many of them. Nevertheless, he tells Sępek about his disappointment in immigration politics, political correctness and what he calls 'zdradą klasy robotniczej', 'the betrayal of the working class' (Sępek, 2010, p. 286) by the Labour Party in Britain. Proclaiming himself a spokesman for the working class, he bitterly notes that mass migration was welcomed by both liberals and conservatives though for different reasons: the left wing supported immigration for it 'osłabia rodzimą populację' (p. 286)[4] while the right wing saw in the newcomers the cheap labour force. Both fractions seem unconcerned with the suffering of the British working class which feels alienated and abandoned. Bloggs laments: 'Ich obrońcą zawsze była gazeta „The Guardian", jednak teraz zostawiła ich na rzecz pisania o mniejszościach z całego świata' (p. 287).[5] Yet, somewhat paradoxically, Bloggs approves of a multi-ethnic society, talking of other nationals living in the UK with affection and respect: he is unable to imagine British society without Africans, Asians or Eastern Europeans. But he draws a line between a multi-ethnic and a multicultural society. For him, multi-ethnicity is a social model in which 'ludzie wyglądają różnie, ale zachowują się podobnie', 'people look differently but they all behave in a similar way' while multi-culturalism is when 'wszyscy zachowują się i wyglądają inaczej', 'everybody behaves and looks differently' (p. 287). He is an advocate of a diverse nation constructed under the aegis of a shared identity: in the absence of a shared identity, he believes, the nation is plunged into chaos and divisions.

Bloggs' observations have more in common with the reflections of Polish writers than might at first seem the case. In his short story 'Oswajanie' ('Taming'), Michał Wyszowski provides a study of the effects of mass migration on British people and their everyday life. The story begins with an implication that British society is held together by an internal agreement about the sacredness of certain values. One of them is the deeply ingrained need for

[2] 'In pubs, people would spread the word of mouth, whispering that they saw a guy who spoke with this rustling accent and was dressed in a somewhat different way'.'
[3] 'They actually asked us to come and work for them'.
[4] 'weakened the indigenous population'.
[5] '*The Guardian* was always their advocate, but even they have given up on them to write about minorities from all over the world'.

order. This feature is also emphasised by Monika Richardson in her memoir *Pożegnanie z Anglią* (*A Farewell to England*) where the author observes the unquestioning British obedience to both enacted and customary laws that is acquired in childhood (Richardson, 2012, p. 157). It creates a natural sense of order in their world that is, as Łajkowska among other authors argues, reflected in their physical environment (Łajkowska, 2012, p. 13): for the most part, the British landscape is well-organised, the houses are spruce, the gardens well-kept, the streets tidy. This harmony, however, is shattered by the elementary ignorance of the new migrants, who unlike people from the former British colonies, lack in intimate knowledge of British mentality and customs. In his exploration of Dawlish, a seaside resort town, Krystian Ławreniuk indicates that beneath the serene, harmonious surface of English life, '[c]oś rozbiło się niemal bezgłośnie i tylko nieliczni usłyszeli dźwięk rozsypującego się szkła' (Ławreniuk, 2014, p. 17).[6] The inhabitants' everyday routine, their sacred ritual, has been destroyed: the British watch their orderly fairyland disappear as the new waves of migrants settle down.

Elaborating further on this theme in 'Oswajanie' ('Taming'), Wyszowski projects the inner experience of the local British community and investigates the damage done by newcomers to the old behavioural codes. He documents how a 'słowiańska rodzina barbarzyńców', a 'Slavic family of barbarians' (Wyszowski, 2010, p. 34) moves into an English street: they put up a colourful garden umbrella in the front yard of their rented house and invite their friends for a noisy celebration. In the spring, they hang wet laundry in the back garden and mount a satellite dish to watch Polish television. Their cars disrupt the perfect symmetry of the cars parked along the pavement. The British neighbours gaze at them with suspicion and whisper to one another that: 'To była taka spokojna okolica' (p. 33).[7] The disruption caused by the appearance of this Polish family is only a portent of the social change that follows. Every month more and more newcomers from Nigeria, Pakistan, Jamaica, Iran, Poland and other countries pour in. The tranquil neighbourhood turns into a colourful 'jungle' where the British worry that the world they have been accustomed to might fall apart and consequently try to retrieve the land they once owned.

The fear of recent newcomers assails also Collins, a British drug dealer in Jan Krasnowolski's *Syreny z Broadmoor* (*Sirens from Broadmoor*). Enraged by a reality of constant surveillance due to terrorist attacks, with European migrants ignoring local traditions, and property prices rocketing, Collins hopes for a referendum allowing the UK to divorce the continent and expel the newcomers. In the meantime, he busies himself with the task of living

[6] 'something smashed almost noiselessly and only a few people heard the sound of the scattered glass'.
[7] 'It used to be such a peaceful neighbourhood'.

off their back. This sarcastic treatment of migrants by Collins has further implications: Krasnowolski is but one among many other writers who contest stereotyping.

The tendency of British people to define the world via stereotypes seems to coincide with their cheerful pragmatism. To avoid wasting time, Richardson argues, the British are shown to be quick to pass unflinching judgements (Richardson, 2012, p. 92). These swift generalisations might have some advantages: they permit the British to respond rapidly to new situations, make quick decisions, simplify their surroundings. Through stereotyping, the British erect a scaffolding of rationalism, consistency, pragmatism and tradition around a messy reality. In Richardson's view, they have built their political, economic, cultural and linguistic power across the globe on this attitude: 'Udowodnili to na przestrzeni wieków, wystarczy zobaczyć, jak dzisiaj jest ułożony świat, w jakich krajach mówi się po angielsku i jak wielki wpływ ma anglosaska mentalność na biznes…' (p. 69).[8]

However, such resorts to mere stereotypes often place migrants at a disadvantage. By fostering the division between the British and the 'others', they make newcomers feel immediately estranged from society. It is one of the reasons why Polish migrant writers feel a constant need to challenge the clichés that scale them down to flat, often patently ridiculous figures. In an interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Jan Krasnowolski recalls how he watched with amazement as *The Daily Mail* alleged that Polish migrants caught swans and carp for food in public parks. Ada Martynowska alludes to this misrepresentation in the very title of her book *Karpie, łabędzie i Big Ben* (*Carps, Swans and Big Ben*). She weaves into her novel short articles from the fictive *Daily Messenger*, which are blatantly imitative of the ludicrous news disseminated by *The Daily Mail*. Some of the sharpest satire in the book is reserved for the absurd preconceptions of the tabloid: 'Według „Daily Messangera" ja, Beata Martynek, i moi rodacy najpewniej najechaliśmy Wyspy Brytyjskie tylko po to, aby pożreć wszystkie łabędzie, wyłowić wszystkie karpie i załapać się przy okazji na angielską pomoc społeczną' (Martynowska, 2010, p. 137).[9] The same story is ironically cited in Jarek Sępek's conversation with Desislava, an employee of the Bulgarian Embassy in the UK, in *W 80 dni dookoła świata (nie wyjeżdżając z Londynu) [Around the World in Eighty Days (Without Leaving London)]* (Sępek, 2010, pp. 285–6).

[8] 'They have proven it over the centuries: it is enough to look at how the world is organised, in what countries people still speak English and how greatly the Anglo-Saxon mentality has influenced the business…'.
[9] 'According to *The Daily Messanger*, I, Beata Martynek, and my fellow compatriots surely invaded the British Isles to devour all swans, fish out all carp, and luck upon the English welfare system'.

With devastating wit, Sępek, Martynowska and other writers embark on the attempt to expose apparent contradictions in the representation of Polish people in the British public discourse. The authors point out that the stereotypical Poles are helpful and harmful to the local society in turns: they are usually ‘młodzi, zdrowi i stanu wolnego’, ‘young, healthy, single’ migrants who work hard and yet somehow manage to place a great burden on the welfare system (Martynowska, 2010, pp. 13–4). The exoticism of the Poles is related to the untamed life they allegedly lead back in their homeland: their purposeful failure to obey the British rules, for example drinking and driving, is attributed to the widespread but false assumption that the Eastern European civilisation is backward, barbaric and violent (p. 137).

The writers see in these representations incontrovertible evidence that British understanding of Polish people and their culture is based on a severely limited number of ideas. To prove the point, Jarek Sępek quotes *The Times* journalist Caitlin Moran, who lists some common beliefs about Poland that prevail in the UK: Polish people are hard-working and love pickles; wolves might still be roaming the streets of their homeland; the pronunciation of Lech Wałęsa sounds as if somebody was opening a creaky door; the country fought poorly at the beginning of World War II (Sępek, 2010, p. 165). Beata, a character in Martynowska’s novel, states that many British people still think of Poland as a nation that sends horses against tanks (Martynowska, 2010, p. 69). For Monika Richardson, every casual conversation with an English person focuses on four topics: Lech Wałęsa, Pope John Paul II, the No. 303 (Polish) Squadron in the RAF, and the Solidarity movement. What is left once these topics are exhausted is an awkward silence (Richardson, 2012, p. 45). In recent years, Richardson adds, there has not even been much official recognition of the Polish contribution to the war effort, which she links to Britain’s pride in its self-sufficiency and the ensuing reluctance to celebrate any assistance from outsiders (p. 175).

Every Man is a Lonely Island: British Isolationism, Euroscepticism and Nostalgia for the Imperial Past

According to Richardson, this striving for self-sufficiency as well as the British inclination towards isolationism may be attributable, at least in part, to the fact that Britain is an island and living on an island has moulded the British. Although they were part of the European Union and they belong to many international organisations, they have always been reluctant to assimilate with their partners since they feel naturally isolated from the rest of the world. When the British say they ‘jadą „na kontynent”’, they ‘are going to the continent’ (p.86), they indicate

that they do not consider their island a part of the mainland, that it stays neatly distinct from Europe.

This geographic isolation has had a lasting impact on British mentality. In *Miłość na wrzosowiskach* (*Love Across Moorlands*), Anna Łajkowska observes that children in Britain quickly become independent from parents (Łajkowska, 2012, p. 67). Richardson, in turn, points out they are widely taught that 'każdy człowiek jest samotną wyspą', 'every man is a lonely island' (Richardson, 2012, p. 66). From a very young age, she explains, British children learn to spend time on their own: they develop hobbies, such as sports, reading, taking long walks or gardening. She contends that photos of the royal family taking a stroll with dogs in the woods, wearing Wellingtons, capture the authentic mentality of many Britons. For the gregarious, impulsive and romantic Poles, the British often appear as slightly aloof individualists who lead rather solitary lives (p. 66).

In the basic portrayal of British people, Polish migrant writers also mention the composure, serenity and extreme politeness of the British: they smile at one another, stay out of each other's way, never give other people judgemental looks in public, are always ready to help, abide by political correctness, have fine manners, make other people feel comfortable around them. Sępek sees these traits as a legacy of the centuries-old tradition of the English gentleman, which might be considered more typical of the older generations but still seems alive judging by the number of gentlemen's clubs in London (Sępek, 2010, p. 284).

Nevertheless, many Polish authors warn that newcomers often mistake the Islanders' kindness for openness and acceptance. Those who live longer in the UK, like the characters of Piotr Surmaczyński's, Łucja Fice's or Marta Semeniuk's novels, learn that British society is rather introverted. In Semeniuk's *Emigrantką być, czyli wspomnienia z Wells* (*Being an Emigrant, Memories from Wells*) the protagonist observes: 'Anglicy wydają się bardzo otwarci, jednak w rzeczywistości jest inaczej. Trudno się z nimi zaprzyjaźnić, rzadko kiedy pozwalają sobie na prawdziwą bezpośredniość. Nie wiem, czy to moja wina, ponieważ nie dość się staram, czy po prostu dzieli nas zbyt wiele' (Semeniuk, 2011, p. 48).[10] Richardson similarly claims that the British are tolerant but show only scant interest in other cultures and rarely acquire proficiency in foreign languages (Richardson, 2012, pp. 26, 85, 188). She views this as the legacy of their colonial past and a subliminal nostalgia for the romantic idea of the British Empire. She proposes that the imperial history has developed a – for many Britons subconscious

[10] 'The English seem to be very open, but they are not in fact. It is hard to make friends with them, they rarely speak their mind openly. I don't know if this is my fault because I don't try hard enough or we are simply too different'.

– conviction of their superiority over other nations. What fosters this belief, Richardson claims, is the fact that many former colonies have retained aspects of British identity and tradition: playing cricket, polo or rugby and feeling 'respekt wobec wszystkiego, co przyszło z Wysp, kraju wyższej kultury' (p. 176).[11] The British education system, she adds, further strengthens this belief (p. 174). In contrast to a more versatile Polish syllabus, the British school curriculum makes the UK its main focus. For the writer, history course books offer telling examples: they place so much emphasis on the history of the UK that even world history is presented in the wider context of the events in Britain (p. 174).

As if to ratify Richardson's analysis, Adam Miklasz complains in *Polska szkoła boksu* (*The Polish Boxing School*) that the sports coverage on British television is very UK-centred. Watching the Olympic Games, his characters feel disappointed because the BBC devotes most of its attention to British sportsmen and the disciplines in which they excel, pushing everything else into the background:

> Jeżeli na starcie pojawiał się zawodnik reprezentujący barwy „Union Jacka", oglądaliśmy przez piętnaście minut reportaż o nim, jego rodzicach, przyjaciołach, dzieciństwie, sposobie przygotowań, szansach, po czym następował występ sportowca, a po nim kolejne dziesięć minut wywiadów „na gorąco", opinii ekspertów, itd. Wiem, mieli do tego prawo, być może nawet spełniali wymagania widza brytyjskiego, strasznie nas to jednak złościło, mieliśmy świadomość tego, ile w tym czasie ciekawego mogło się wydarzyć na stadionie, dlatego z rozrzewnieniem wspominaliśmy elastyczność polskich relacji i szybkie przeskakiwanie z jednej areny na drugą.
> (Miklasz, 2009, p. 110)[12]

Earlier in the novel, Szymek, one of the narrator's friends, notes teasingly that the citizens of wealthier and more powerful Western European countries realise that other countries exist only when watching the World Cup or Eurovision (p. 74). By contrast, though, the narrator in Wyszowski's short story 'Test' is deeply sceptical of his interlocutor who perceives British

[11] 'respect towards everything that came from the British Isles, the country of cultural superiority'.
[12] 'When a contender in Union Jack colours appeared at the start, they showed a fifteen-minute reportage about him, his family, friends, childhood, training, potential; then we watched the sportsman perform, which was followed by another ten minutes of live interviews, experts' comments, etc. I knew they had the right to do so, they might have even met the demands of an average British viewer, but we were frustrated by the sheer awareness we had missed many interesting moments of what was going on in the stadium, so we recalled with affection the flexibility of Polish coverage and the camera quickly moving from one spot to another.'.

people as self-occupied. This disagreement between the two characters points towards another underlying division within Britain: globalists and nationalists.

Globalists vs Nationalists

Wyszowski elaborates on this division in his short story 'Zoo': the board of Blackpool Zoo is summoned by the director, Harry Gorman, furious because the online plebiscite organised by the zoo staff asking people to pick names for three new-born Siberian tigers causes problems. It transpires that Polish immigrants take a great interest in the issue and keep voting for Polish names: Wiesław, Sobiesław, Radosław. The local newspaper *Blackpool Mail*, outraged with the results, runs a campaign to save 'honor i dumę naszego regionu', 'the honour and pride of our region' (Wyszowksi, 2010, p. 109) by voting for English names. The Zoo's board, in turn, is split into two fractions: the marketing manager, Emily, and the vet, Neil Parr, represent the open-minded English globalists, who cheerfully embrace a hybrid society and genuinely care for the zoo (which here epitomizes the UK). They are the opposite of director Harry Gorman, Garry Jones, the head of the sponsors' board, and Jamie, the manager of the education department, who are haughty, profit-oriented, blatantly hostile to migrants, and deliberately ignorant of their country (if the zoo symbolises the UK). In the violent quarrel that follows, the characters argue about migration and multiculturalism. Each side fiercely defends their values and beliefs, evoking the common juxtaposition between globalists and nationalists in Britain. Their differences apart, there is a striking analogy between the two camps: they both fight for their principles and allow no concessions to their opponents.

Richardson shares Wyszowski's sense that British society is polarised and detects a generic, if not simplistic, tendency that cities tend more towards liberalism while more rural areas tilt towards conservatism. As a wife of a Scottish RAF pilot, Jamie Malcolm, she can observe the differences between these two fractions in her immediate vicinity. In her memoir *Pożegnanie z Anglią* (*A Farewell to England*), she describes her husband and his friends from the Royal Air Force, declared nationalists, as faithful servants of the crown with high moral standards who are fully committed to their country (Richardson, 2012, p. 44). In contrast to his friends, Jamie's family is mostly liberal. His father used to work as a university lecturer but turned to teaching in a secondary school to spend more time with his sons. His aunt Caroline is a hippie and an anarchist who lives in east London. Their likeable portrayal as open, friendly, hospitable, cosmopolitan people who lead colourful and interesting lives, leaves no doubt that Richardson sides with British liberals (p. 49).

The British vs. the 'Others': The Question of National Identity[13]

If one of the divisions highlighted by Brexit was that between globalists and nationalists, then another one was that between the British and 'the others'. Vote Leave slogans, such as 'British bread for British toasters', 'We want our country back' or 'We must break free of the EU and take control of our borders' suggested a demarcation between 'us' and 'them', between those who were and those who were not entitled to call themselves British.

In their poignant essay 'Where's Your Accent From?', A.M. Bakalar and Agnieszka Dale observe that, in Brexit Britain, one's fluency in English has become a tell-tale sign of belonging, 'of being perceived as "us" not "them"' (Bakalar & Dale, 2017, n.p.). The authors note that '[a]ny suspicious sounds, misplaced accent or unusual grammatical constructs are promptly noticed' (n.p.). A bitter consequence of this, cited in the essay, is the story of Kasia, a Polish woman featured in the BBC documentary *Accents Speak Louder Than Words*, who used to proudly admit she came from Poland but, since the referendum, has begun to tell people that she is from South Africa in order to avoid a growing resentment towards migrants from Eastern Europe. The example of Kasia leads Bakalar and Dale to an incisive conclusion that 'In Brexit Britain, the polarisation between the British and the "others" is audible' (n.p.).

A corresponding observation is made by Monika Wiśniewska in her memoir *Polish Girl in Pursuit of the English Dream.* In the ominously titled chapter 'Brexitpocalypse,' the author confides in her Hungarian partner, Peter, that she has been afraid to speak English since the EU referendum in case people would recognise her Polish accent. This fear is a result of the open hostility towards migrants that, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, emerged after the vote. Up to this point, Monika had felt fully assimilated into the local society and had contributed greatly to its wellbeing: 'Everyone has benefited from my professional skills and working in England: the landlords, the car sellers, the supermarkets, the local hairdressers, the restaurants, everyone, except Poland, which lost a young hard-working professional like me' (Wiśniewska, 2017, p. 261). What really upsets her is the fact that a number of British people must have secretly disapproved of her presence in their country but had hid their resentment behind a mask of politeness and friendliness. This sad realisation prompts her to ask the question repeatedly posed by many Britons– why is she in England? – and wonder whether she should leave the country that has been her home for over a decade.

Wiśniewska's reflections are echoed resoundingly in Agnieszka Dale's short stories. In 'Legoland,' Dale turns the Berkshire theme park, Legoland Windsor, into a double-edged

[13] This section is a revised excerpt from my 2019 article 'The Response of Polish Writers to Brexit', *Journal for the Study of British Cultures (JSBC)*, 26.2, pp. 167 – 80.

metaphor of Britain, illuminating the transformation that the country has undergone since Brexit. Only since the referendum has 'Legoland' revealed its plastic, soulless nature; before, it had been a welcoming, flourishing country where the narrator Inga (Dale's alter ego) led a peaceful and enjoyable life. Inga is an integral part of the local society: she is a writer who has already won some recognition in her field, she is married to a British man and has three children. To illustrate her intimate bond with the country, she describes herself as a child of Legoland's family. The only thing that Inga regrets is that she was born second, in other words, that she is a migrant, a pushover for her older sister, who was born first and is the 'real' Lego citizen.

The complicated relationship between the sisters in 'Legoland' is an expressive illustration of the relations between natives and migrants not only in the UK but in any other country across the world. Dale adroitly presents the situation of foreigners as parallel to that of second-born children. The life of the younger ones is always harder: they are brought into the world so that their sister or brother is not alone, they live more for their older sibling than for themselves and they 'hardly ever become "established"' (Dale, 2017b, p. 119). The situation of migrants bears a remarkable similarity: they are invited to countries that seek cheap labourers, they work in the service of the natives, they rarely achieve great success or power. But although Inga is used to being pushed around as a second-born child, she is alarmed by something that she has never experienced before the referendum: an open hostility towards migrants. She notes anxiously that '[t]he term *foreign* has become a disease in the last year or two, a kind of criminal status' (p. 124). Since many of Legoland's indigenous people – handsome, ideally constructed Lego men – were 'programmed, like a robot or a soldier with tunnel vision' (p. 119), their previous friendly attitudes towards foreigners have changed.

This change is also indicated by Wioletta Greg (aka Wioletta Grzegorzewska), an outstanding Polish writer whose book *Swallowing Mercury* was longlisted for the 2017 Man Booker International Prize. In an interview for the Polish *Gazeta Wyborcza*, she perspicaciously remarks: 'Mogę powiedzieć, że emigrowałam do kwadratu, bo doświadczyłam dwóch Anglii. Pierwszą była ta rządzona przez Partię Pracy. Wtedy czułam się tu jak w domu. Kraj miał ludzką twarz, władza także. Mogłam pracować i żyć bez przeszkód. Ale gdy rządy przejęli torysi, wszystko się zmieniło…' (Grzegorzewska & Nogaś, 2017, p. 4).[14] Greg recounts how the new government restored a central administration, weakening the position of local councils.

[14] 'I'd say I emigrated twice because I have experienced two Englands. One was governed by the Labour Party. Back then I felt at home here. The country had a human face, and so did the government. I could work and live freely. But when the Tories took over, everything changed …'.

All funding for social organisations that supported migrants was withdrawn; taxes went up. She could no longer afford the rising rent for her house, forcing her to leave her grown-up son on the Isle of Wight, their home for ten years, and move with her teenage daughter to East Tilbury in 2016. It was the time of the referendum and the prevailing mood was sour: the slogan 'Britain for the British' caught on, racist flyers and hate cards, such as 'Leave the EU. No more Polish Vermin', were delivered to houses, migrants were accused of having caused damage to the NHS, a crusade against foreigners was launched on the internet. Greg and her daughter were confronted with racist slurs by a group of women who overheard them speaking Polish in a local shop. She was hardly surprised when she found out that 83% of people in Tilbury had voted for Brexit.

What the reflections of Wioletta Greg, Monika Wiśniewska and Agnieszka Dale have in common is the recognition that in multicultural countries, such as the UK, different ethnic groups, despite living side by side in relative harmony, may actually never develop more intimate bonds, shared goals and values that would give them a sense of unity and provide a spiritual foundation for reinventing the nation. Although the British had grown accustomed to living in a multicultural landscape, the Brexit campaign revealed that they had not included foreign elements into their idea of national identity. Their understanding of what it means to be British remains deeply rooted in the past. This may have serious implications for migrants. Even if they have fully assimilated into the local culture, acquired a high degree of cultural literacy and even British citizenship, they might never be perceived as real members of the nation: a foreign accent, along with the absence of social network from school and college, will always mark them as outsiders, strangers, 'the others'.

How have Polish migrant writers contributed to the debate on Brexit?

Paradoxically, it seems to be this very position of someone who is simultaneously an insider and outsider in society that permits Polish migrant writers to achieve some piercing insights into Brexit. If we look at their writing published since 2004, the questions of mass migration, isolationism, Euroscepticism or a division of British society into globalists and nationalists troubled Polish authors long before the EU referendum was even mentioned. They understood that these issues, if never directly addressed by governing elites, could leave the way open for radical movements to gain support, a development which proved even stronger than they had anticipated. Although this only becomes clear in retrospect, Polish migrant authors foresaw to a great extent what was to come and attempted in their works to unleash a plurality of voices that would help to solve at least some of the problems that led to Brexit. Therefore, their works

describe the same issues, for example mass migration or multiculturalism, from different perspectives and experiences. The most common voices found in the books belong to Polish newcomers and Polish long-term migrants; another set of opinions is voiced by members of other ethnic minorities; and finally the writers put themselves in the place of British people (mostly, though not only, representatives of the working class) in order to examine how the lives of locals have changed and predict the shape of their future. Giving voice to those who tend to be voiceless in society, Polish migrant writers document and reflect on the issues that are often excluded from the mainstream debate, bringing to light the phenomena that are marginalized or deliberately kept away from the public. As a result, they provide alternative knowledge about social and cultural consequences of Brexit.

Additionally, many Polish authors place Brexit in a wider, international context, inviting their readers to evaluate it critically from the global, rather than the national, perspective. By doing so, they add yet another important layer to the already complex discussion. Agnieszka Dale and A.M. Bakalar, for example, imply that a single, pro-capitalist focus on physical well-being is no longer sufficient to unite a society. For them, the Brexit vote is a vivid reminder that multicultural countries need to find values and goals that bond all their inhabitants. As European countries are inevitably reshaped by migrations, it seems essential to revisit and update the traditional definitions of a nation. The same writers also position Brexit in a wider historical context, juxtaposing the present situation in Britain with more tumultuous times in the contemporary history of Eastern Europe, and arrive at a consoling conclusion that Brexit is rather a crisis than an awful tragedy.

As so often happens, the first to take an interest in Dale's, Bakalar's and other Polish migrant writers' reflections on Brexit were a variety of media. In 2014, *The New York Times* published A.M. Bakalar's 'Britain's Poles Are Paying Their Way', the writer's bitter response to the accusations made by David Cameron, the Prime Minister at that time, that Poles exploited the UK's social welfare. Two years later, Agnieszka Dale's essay 'My First Thought Was: Who Laminates a Hate Card? One Writer on How It Feels to Be Polish in a UK Facing Brexit' appeared in the British weekly *Stylist* and BBC Radio 4 commissioned her to write a short story as a comment on the current situation in Britain. The result was 'A Happy Nation', aired on 14 October 2016.[15] The radio play was followed by the previously mentioned essay 'Where's Your Accent From? Britain's White Others' co-written by A.M. Bakalar and Agnieszka Dale for the London-based online magazine *Boundless* in 2017. In the meantime, *Gazeta Wyborcza*,

[15] 'A Happy Nation' was subsequently included in Agnieszka Dale's 2017 collection of short stories entitled *Fox Season and Other Short Stories*.

one of Polish mainstream newspapers, invited Wioletta Grzegorzewska (aka Wioletta Greg) in 2016 and 2017 and Jan Krasnowolski in 2017 to share their thoughts on Brexit, both at a personal and wider socio-cultural level.[16] In 2020, *Financial Times* published 'Fear, rejection . . . guilt? Britain's Poles on Brexit', an article by Magdalena Miecznicka, a Polish writer who moved to the UK after the EU referendum. Even the few examples quoted above prove there has been a steady media interest in the Polish commentary on Brexit. Seeing the British withdrawal from the EU through the eyes of others – and more precisely through the eyes of Polish migrant writers – not only offers a more balanced assessment of Brexit but also some perceptive insights into contemporary Britain.

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[16] See 'Brexit. Wioletta Grzegorzewska: Nie wyrzucajcie moich kotów!' ('Brexit. Wioletta Grzegorzewska: Don't Throw My Cats Out!') & 'Wioletta Grzegorzewska: Nie mam już dokąd uciec. Świat się zamienia w mroczne Gotham City' (Wioletta Grzegorzewska: There's No Longer a Place I Can Escape to. The World is Turning into Dark Gotham City') (2017) and 'Polacy w Anglii. W dużym stopniu żeśmy się do tego Brexitu przyłożyli. Kwaśniewski rozmawia z Krasnowolskim' ('Poles in England. We've Contributed to Brexit to a Large Extent. Kwaśniewski Talks to Krasnowolski') (2017).

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Turning the foreign land into a homeland: the representations of Ireland and the Irish in Polish literature

Joanna Kosmalska

The mysterious island

In August 2017, any visitor to Łazienki Park—a popular tourist destination and a venue for numerous music, arts and culture events in Warsaw—was presented with the opportunity to learn about Polish–Irish connections by visiting an open-air gallery located in the centre

of the park. It showcased the exhibition whose title *From strangers to neighbours: encounters between Poland and Ireland* aptly summed up the long-standing relationship between the two countries.[1] The exhibition was organised by Gerard Keown, the Irish ambassador to Poland, and it tracked the links between Ireland and Poland from 1698—when Bernard O'Connor published his *History of Poland*, the first account of Polish history in English—to the year 2016, when the Irish government, in collaboration with the Polish embassy in Dublin ran the second *Polska–Éire Festival,* a series of cultural, sports, business and academic events held all over Ireland to foster bonds between the two communities.[2]

The earliest literary encounter that the exhibition mentioned dated back to the nineteenth century, when romantic literature accompanied the struggle for independence, both in Ireland and Poland. At that time, Thomas Moore was in frequent contact with two exiled Polish authors in Britain, Zygmunt Krasiński and Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz. Moore's poetry also became a source of inspiration for Polish national bards: for example, Adam Mickiewicz translated his poem 'The meeting of the waters' and Juliusz Słowacki rendered into Polish *Irish melodies*, the songs that Zygmunt Krasiński used as a pre-text for writing *Polskie Melodie* ('Polish melodies'). When the Easter Rising broke out in 1916, the Polish press carried news about the cataclysmic events taking place in Dublin and paid particular attention to the activity of one of the rebel leaders, Constance Markievicz, who was married to a Polish playwright, theatre director and painter, Count Casimir Dunin-Markievicz. The weekly Świat called her 'a modern Irish amazon', and other journals implied her nationalism might have been encouraged by her husband.[3] With their struggle against the oppressor, the Irish were like brothers-in-arms to Polish people: heroes fighting for a similar cause. Their rebellions gave hope that freedom could be won and a national identity could be reconstructed.

Since the turn of the twentieth century, Irish plays have regularly appeared on stage in Poland. The wit and unanticipated twists of action worked into tragic stories draw the attention of local audiences. Among the first Irish dramas staged in Polish theatres were the works by Oscar Wilde, J.M. Synge and W.B. Yeats. But it was George Bernard Shaw who enjoyed the greatest popularity: his plays premiered in Warsaw almost at the same time as in London and were performed repeatedly

until the outbreak of World War Two. When the war ended, the work of Irish playwrights—this time it was Seán O'Casey, Brendan Behan and Samuel Beckett—returned to Polish theatres in the 1950s and the 1960s. Since Antoni Libera, a critically acclaimed Polish writer, translator and theatre director, translated all of Beckett's dramatic works and directed many of them, the Irish Nobel prize-winning playwright has established a strong presence on the Polish literary scene.[4]

But the real exercise in translation was *Ulysses*, James Joyce's masterpiece of modernism whose rendering into Polish appeared in 1969.[5] It took Maciej Słomczyński over a decade to complete the work. Throughout this time, he compiled a large collection of Joyce's biographies, Irish history books, old maps, postcards, etc. His office housed a greater number of critical books on *Ulysses* than all of Poland's public libraries combined. On finishing his translation, Słomczyński travelled with his typescript to Dublin to re-enact scenes from the novel: he drank, ate and slept in the places mentioned in the novel to make sure he had captured all of the details.[6] In the 1970s and the 1980s, Ernest Bryll, a Polish poet and diplomat, along with his wife Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, translated early Irish poetry.[7] And the 1990s saw the publication of Séamus Heaney's poems in Polish.[8] The fact that the poet was friends with his fellow Nobel laureate, Czesław Miłosz, and an eminent literary critic and translator, Jerzy Jarniewicz, has created much interest in Heaney's work in Poland.[9]

The Polish translations of Irish drama, prose and poetry shaped the image of the Irishman as an artist—a writer, a visionary, an intellectual—a person at odds with the social conventions and a fighter for ideals. Only Polish people with a particular interest in Irish studies had a broader knowledge of the country's history and culture. For the rest, the Emerald Isle was a distant, mysterious, evergreen land inhabited by heroic warriors and talented writers who spoke English (which became significant when Poland joined the EU and many of her citizens chose to move to Ireland because they had studied English as a foreign language at school).

The story behind the song 'Kocham cię jak Irlandię' ('I love you like Ireland') by the band Kobranocka illuminates how little the general public knew about Ireland. The song, which was one of the greatest hits in the history of rock music in Poland, appeared on the album *Kwiaty*

na żywopłocie ('Flowers on the hedge') in 1990 and remained in the charts for twenty-two weeks: almost everyone, regardless of age, knew the lyrics by heart and could hum the melody. It told of the unrequited love of the lyric-writer, Andrzej Michorzewski, who fell in love with a stranger he met on his way to high school every day. He finally plucked up courage to ask the girl out, but she never showed up for the date. When he met her again as a grown-up man, the feelings revived and he wrote the song. Interviewed on why he chose to compare his object of desire to Ireland, he replied that he had never been to the Emerald Isle and knew very little about it. He adopted the place as a symbol because it was as distant and mysterious as the girl for whom he had fallen.[10] Michorzewski never suspected that a decade later the country would become a home to thousands of Polish people.

Tomographic exploration of Ireland

From the undiscovered land, Ireland grew into the territory well-researched by Polish migrants at the turn of the twenty-first century. When migration began, there was a daily bus service from Warsaw to Dublin, but it was soon replaced by over sixty flights departing from eleven cities in Poland.[11] The newcomers evinced great interest in the new land: they roamed the streets, went to pubs and clubs, visited museums and galleries, and travelled the country, uncovering the layers of Irish life. What they saw and experienced they described in the semi-autobiographical, frequently first-person narratives, which had a patchwork structure and wove together disparate elements, such as passages depicting places and people, photos, amusing anecdotes, interviews, scraps of conversations, other narratives, poems, songs, media reports, maps and the like. As the writers recorded their observations, they simultaneously cast themselves in four seemingly conflicting roles: one was that of a reporter who was an eyewitness and therefore a reliable source of information; the second was that of a storyteller who presented his or her experiences and observations in a comprehensive and enjoyable way; the third was that of a displaced person attuned to matters of place and therefore able to depict Ireland in a more 'truthful' way; and the last was that of the local, a person who lived in the place he or she described and with which they were

well-acquainted. But as much as the writers reconciled these roles to ensure a more contrapuntal analysis in their work, they never underwrote a claim of objectivity. Some even made sure to mention this fact in their books. For example, in his 2012 collection of essays, *What I got from Ireland?*, Przemek Kolasiński writes:

> I present my deeply subjective depiction of the Green Island, but I don't fantasise, make things up, although I tend to equip the presented reality with some colour. … This book is about Ireland, the Irish and the Poles living here….[12]

Whether the writers acknowledge it or not, they render Ireland through the prism of their own experiences and the result is a partial and skewed representation, in which certain aspects are inevitably prioritised and exaggerated. Tomasz Borkowski tackles this issue in the opening to *Irlandia Jones poszukiwany* ('Ireland Jones wanted'):

> [This book] is an attempt to describe my personal experiences in Ireland which I have shared with thousands of my fellow compatriots and with millions of Irish people. Presumably, there have been as many perplexities and explanations as there were people involved in that process. Here I put out only one account of what happened. One could call it a 'tomography.'[13]

By comparing his writing to 'tomography,' which is a word derived from Ancient Greek meaning 'to write' (γράφω, *graphô*) and a 'slice, section,' (τόμος, *tomos*), Borkowski broaches the question of reflecting the world and arrives at similar conclusions to those made by Graham Greene in *The lawless roads*: it is impossible to describe a place. One can 'present only a simplified plan, taking a house here, a park there as symbols of the whole'.[14] In the same vein, the depiction of the Emerald Isle by Polish migrant writers is composed of an array of colourful mental images illuminating O'Connell Street, the Spire, the River Liffey, St Stephen's Green, *Busaras*, a row of houses in Howth, the harbour in Skerries, the Cliffs of Moher, and the like. By the same

token, the narratives of Polish migrants are as much representing a world as they are a form of world making. Their portrayal of Ireland, which is subsequently passed on to readers, is a product of the way they have selected and presented those places. And the technique of the writers is very much alike: they outline the contours of the place they have lived in (or frequently visited) with great precision and then fill them with vivid and detailed recounting. Therefore, most of the books could pass for fictionalised travel companions, narrated by a pedestrian, *flâneur*, voyeur, the urban stroller who aspires to know the place as well as Joyce knew Dublin.

Some writers even follow in the footsteps of Joyce's characters from *Ulysses*. One of them is Małgorzta Goraj-Bryll, the co-author of *Irlandia. Celtycki splot* ('Ireland: the Celtic wreath').[15] The book begins at the point when Goraj-Bryll leaves her house to join the Bloomsday celebrations and searches the recesses of Dublin in Joyce's shoes. The fact that she was the wife of the Polish ambassador to Ireland, Ernest Bryll, permitted her to have contact with celebrities from the front pages of newspapers, such as the president, Mary Robinson, or Bono from U2, as well as with the people she met in the streets every day. Consequently, the book she co-wrote with her husband portrays a whole variety of people, the representatives of different walks of life. What looms throughout the Brylls' personal narrative is their fascination with Irish literature: their intimate knowledge of Ireland is presented in a literary context, something not completely surprising if one takes into account their previously mentioned translations of Irish poetry or the fact that Ernest Bryll was already an established poet in his homeland before he was appointed Poland's ambassador to Ireland.

Equally predictable are references to Irish literature in other migrants' books. This is, after all, what the Emerald Isle was known for in Poland, even before Polish migrants arrived in the country. For example, Daniel Żuchowski's *The new Dubliners* is an obvious reference to Joyce's 1914 collection of short stories. If *Dubliners* sketches the daily lives of the Irish at the turn of the twentieth century, *The new Dubliners* depicts personal and often tragic stories of migrants in the Irish capital a century later. Joyce peers into the homes of his contemporaries while Żuchowski gives an insight into the lives of migrants who share the space and spirit of Dublin with the Irish.[16]

In *egri bikavér*, Łukasz Suskiewicz invokes Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* when the narrator and his friend spend every night drinking whiskey and conversing on various topics. They are deadened by routine and feel that every day is like the previous one. They waste their time in Ireland, but they have no clear plan for the future. Like Vladimir and Estragon, they are 'educated tramps' (both hold MA degrees and work in positions below what their qualifications make them suitable for) who are waiting without hope for deliverance.[17]

Magdalena Orzeł, whose book ends with a reference to *Ulysses*, ascribes the worldwide popularity of Irish literature to the extraordinary capacity of Irish people to promote their national culture. She remarks in *Dublin, moja polska karma* ('Dublin, my Polish karma'):

> The Islanders are really good at advertising. As hard as it is, they have even invented admiration and craze for literature. They have found and maintained their own brand. They seduce all our senses—greenness caresses our eyes, Guinness finds a way to our stomach, and books get hammered into our heads with a fist.[18]

In this manner, by recourse to a few chosen symbols (literature, Guinness, shamrock, greenness, Celtic knot, sheep, red hair, Ryanair, to name but a few) and the repeated use of them, the Irish have created a set of positive stereotypes, which immediately bring to mind their national identity. For newcomers, these symbols—which obviously comprise only the surface of the local culture—function as signposts that guide them through the unexplored country. They mark the otherness of Irish people and the distinctiveness of their culture, and as indicators of such features, they adorn covers of Polish migrants' books.[19]

Even more often than the attributes of Ireland, the cover designs on works produced by Polish migrants in Ireland depict the island's breath-taking landscapes, which are also a prominent part of the narratives.[20] Again and again, Polish authors return to the notion of nature providing a shelter from the hectic pace of modern life and a space for spiritual renewal. Their characters travel to the Irish seaside every time they feel stressed, over-worked or frustrated. As they immerse themselves into meditation amid the windswept Irish landscapes, they

reconnect to the self, rethink their current situation and make plans for the future. This has given rise to long passages in migrants' writings devoted to observational accounts of sea, cliffs, beaches, pastures, parks, plants, animals, and, above all, meteorological phenomena. The weather wields such an immense power over the island that it has even shaped Irish cultural and social life. Gosia Brzezińska jocularly implies in *Irlandzki koktajl* ('The Irish cocktail') that the Irish affection for literature might have been brought about by exposure to frequent rainfall and wind: Irish people cocooned themselves inside their houses and read poetry.[21] According to Agnieszka Latocha, Irish myths and legends arose out of a 'damp and tacky world of greenery' whose fairy-like, magical aura formed a perfect setting for supernatural and peculiar creatures.[22] In *egri bikavér*, Łukasz Ślipko contends that the Irish have developed a fondness for a pint because they took refuge from repetitive cycles of pelting rain in an alcoholic haze.[23]

While it is explored in many different contexts, the weather functions also as a reflection of the characters' emotional states. For example, the worry voiced by an Irishman in Ryszard Adam Gruchawka's *Buty emigranta* ('The emigrant's shoes') is an expression of the fear that some members of Irish society harboured about the massive influx of migrants: 'On a rainy day, a farmer, who was as old as the ocean, sadly confided in me that ever since the wave of migration had begun, the weather had gone nasty, too.'[24] In *Przebiegum życiae* ('Conductum lifae'), the ailing Gustaw is assigned the job of cleaning the lawn in front of the factory. Against the bleak backdrop of a grey sky and the pouring rain, he is down on his knees, picking up cigarette butts, coughing, mopping sweat from his face and singing 'I'm singing in the pain' to the tune of *Singin' in the rain*.[25] In this scene, Piotr Czerwiński achieves a tragic intensity by emphasising through use of bad weather conditions the lamentable plight of his character. Finally, Wowa, the main hero of Łukasz Stec's *Psychoanioł w Dublinie* ('The psychoangel in Dublin') reads meaning into the weather changes: he deduces good fortune from the cloudless sky and awaits troubles when it rains.[26] The use of environment in Polish migrant writing seems, for the most part, to be a resounding echo of the Romantic period: nature aids the characters' intellectual and spiritual development, it exerts a tremendous influence on the island

and the island's inhabitants, and it is a medium through which the characters' emotions are expressed.

There are at least eleven novels, a short-story volume, two poetry books and five collections of essays, as well as short stories and poems included in anthologies produced by Polish writers, that purport to record life in Ireland.[27] Ever since Iwona Słabuszewska-Krauze's *Hotel Irlandia* ('Ireland Hotel'), the first-published account of a Polish economic migrant living on the isle, came out in 2006, work by her compatriots has appeared quite regularly. One of the most recent is Piotr Czerwiński's 2017 *Zespół ojca* ('Father syndrome'). If Słabuszewska-Krauze's account adopts the coloration of a settler in an exotic country, Czerwiński's narrator conveys the impression of being a member of the local society. Crossing from one country to another, the heroine in *Hotel Irlandia* remarks:

> We came by ferry. In an ordinary way, just like dozens of our fellow countrymen who had arrived here every day. Although I thought of myself rather as a traveller, or even a conqueror, who was sailing to another land which was as undiscovered as a land can be.[28]

By way of contrast, Ireland feels like home to the hero in *Zespół ojca*, and this feeling is heightened by his dissolving memory of Poland. Pondering the last ten years he has spent in Dublin, he notes: 'More and more often, I feel as if I have lived here forever. As if I came from here, as if I was born here….'[29] The character has developed such an affinity with Ireland that the country's initial exoticism has degraded to the routine. His sense of belonging to the local place and its history grows stronger as Poland is, for him, slowly turning into a dream world, to which it is impossible to return.

The polarity of the narrators attitude towards Ireland in both *Hotel Irlandia* and *Zespół ojca* is reflective of two points in time: one is the late-1990s when the economic boom was in full swing and the influx of Polish people was still in its initial stages; and the other is the late-2010s when the country was experiencing a return to economic stability and had become home to thousands of Poles. Throughout this time, the writings of Polish migrants captured Ireland's metamorphosis from the 'Celtic Tiger'[30] into the 'Celtic Phoenix'.[31]

The Emerald Isle through Polish eyes

At the beginning of the millennium, Polish news reports and the first personal accounts of migrants portrayed the Emerald Isle as a paradise: a promise of global capitalism and an easy life. This seductive image was transfigured into a symbol, which grew so strong that Donald Tusk, the party leader of Civic Platform, based his successful political campaign on the assertion that he would turn Poland into 'The Second Ireland'.[32] Like many political promises before, this one remained undelivered, but ever since the 2007 parliamentary election, this metonymic expression for Poland was regularly used in the public space, often with wry irony. The powerful myth of the Irish promised land was given a further lease of life by Polish migrant authors who—not unlike the rest of their compatriots—came to the Emerald Isle with this utopian vision aroused by news reports and migrants' stories. But surprisingly, this idealistic image of the country was ratified by the writers' initial observations: Konrad, the main character in Piotr Czerwiński's *Przebiegum życiae* ('Conductum lifae'), collected coins from pavements because Irish people did not bother to pick up the change they had dropped. This aroused his serious suspicion that they might 'shit with money'. His first impression of the new place was nothing but positive: 'It's perfect: they drink, they sing and they have jobs.' For all these qualities, Ireland earned many telling nicknames in Polish migrant books, such as 'the land of milk and honey,' 'the ultra-divine paradise',[33] 'heaven',[34] or 'the crystal palace',[35] to quote but a few. Implicit in these names was the country's excessive affluence, but also a pervading sense of unreality. As if the place was too good to be true. The nicknames portended the sad recognition that the Irish idyll was an illusion, which was a theme reworked in almost all Polish migrant books, including *Pokój z widokiem na Dunnes Stores* ('The room with a view of Dunnes Stores') in which Łukasz Ślipko drew up a sort of profit and loss account of migration:

> They took shelter under the umbrella of wealth, leaving their decayed villages, potholes in roads and rust-eaten buses behind. They were let into the crystal palace, but even in this palace they are not devoid of worries and they atone for the high standard of living by being 'the Other', 'proles from the outside'.[36]

The topic of migrants being divested of their illusions about Ireland was also put forward by Łukasz Suskiewicz in *egri bikavér*. In the book, two Polish truck drivers travel on a bus to Poland and complain to the narrator about their unsuccessful stay in Ireland:

> They called this smart aleck here to tell him it was a paradise. That manna fell from heaven and that we should come because people here had nice cars, earned huge money and lived in the lap of luxury. They did a snow job on this fool and he followed me around and mumbled, and burbled and grumbled. And there was 'Ireland' and 'Ireland.' As if he knew no other words. Only this one. This moron had dreamt up that he would save for a house, that he would buy a car… You've really made a pile! Ha ha. You're coming back so well-off! Like from America![37]

In teasing out the theme of disillusionment, America provided Łukasz Suskiewicz, as it had provided many other Polish authors, with a metaphor for Ireland, offering points of comparison that illustrated how the myth of the Irish promised land had come into being. The projection of celebrated American ideals—one of which was securing a better material future through hard work—onto Ireland, led to a belief that all newcomers would live the 'Irish Dream', a magnified version of the American Dream. It was, of course, a fantasy, unscathed by reality, but it had become the basis of the common perception of the Emerald Isle that had prevailed in Poland for a few years before it was dismantled by a surge of new journalistic articles and migrants' books.

The updated, more realistic literary portrayals of the isle depict Ireland as a country of 'new money', where memories of emigration are still vivid and where juxtapositions of poverty and wealth, of backwardness and progress, of provincial and cosmopolitan, of rustic and urban, and of conservative and liberal life lurk in the landscape. For example, the writers recount that Irish cities, including the capital, have a rural structure with low-rise buildings, which look almost the same within each district. In *egri bikavér*, the narrator recalls how he meandered through the narrow streets of Dublin, which—apart from the city centre—is laid out in a relatively geometric pattern as if the capital

were designed by mathematicians. His confusion is heightened by the fact that the houses, which have no balconies, no curves and almost identical doors and windows, differ only in that they are buildings of two or three storeys. Worse still, there are much the same road signs on every street corner.[38] For their relatively homogenous buildings and narrow streets, along with a low-rise skyline punctured only here and there by tall buildings (many of which were erected during the Celtic Tiger era), the Irish cities seem intimate and provincial to authors who are new to the country.

The writers also chronicle how Dublin, having entered into the boom period, had attracted large numbers of young people who came there from all over the world because the place offered a happy and comfortable life. The result was the city's transformation into a vibrant, multi-cultural metropolis, which facilitated liberal lifestyles. Emphasising this metamorphosis, the Polish authors reprise in their writings that Dublin had become a true home of personal freedom and ethnic diversity. The change manifested itself in, among other things, the appearance of foreign shops, restaurants, pubs and other business establishments all around the capital. As the main characters in *Psychoanioł w Dublinie* ('The psychoangel in Dublin') walk down Abbey Street in the city centre, they see a number of such places:

> As they were walking towards O'Connell Street, they went past ten Polish, eight Indian and eleven Chinese shops. There were only two Irish stores, and Wowa bought a packet of cigarettes in one of them. Just in case he needed it. Having done the shopping, they went for dinner to an Indian restaurant called Govinda's.[39]

In their narratives, Polish writers compare Dublin, in a sometimes hackneyed manner, to the crucible in which various nationalities have melted into a dynamic, cosmopolitan society. The authors turn to the ethnic diversity of the city for inspiration, since it provides a colourful context for their plots. They paint the spaces where the multi-cultural crowds spend their time with such precision that many texts, some of which are even accompanied by illustrations, could constitute a sort of interactive map: by adducing stories associated with the places, the

writers endow them with life and meaning. A clear instance of such mapping is the scene in Piotr Czerwiński's *Przebiegum życiae*, in which Gustaw finds shelter from the rain in 'The Church':

> Gustaw managed to pick up twenty cents from the pavement in front of Arnotts and rushed to the portal of the nearby church, clearly a relic, whose refurbishment must have been well-thought-out by some very noble monks since there was even an inscription over the entrance that read 'The Church' and a macho Garfield for security who opened the door for worshippers. Inside, a spiritual atmosphere prevailed: behind the bar, there were fifty different kinds of whiskey and the Irish toast painted in golden Gothic lettering instead of the altar, from which Jesus usually looks down at people. There was also a DJ who operated consoles standing on two holy water basins and the pipe organ in the loft where the waiters had their rallying. Gustaw suspected that it had to be a church of some very funky sect: the provost was resting after the mass by his console and the sectarians were eating dinner. So, he ordered a steak and a glass of wine and read the leaflet lying on the table which advertised other attractions of this temple. It turned out there was a disco in the underground catacombs. A permanent resident of this place was the English guy who jakieś two hundred years earlier had ordered an execution of a bardzo, very important freedom fighter from the bajabongo land. Gustaw suspected that the sectarians from 'The Church' gathered every night in the catacombs and paid people for dancing on this fellow's tomb so that he would never forget what he had done to this nation.[40]

Running to over a page in length and written in Ponglish—the bi-lingual weave of Polish and English—this detailed description of the modern club located in an old church is Czerwiński's trenchant introduction to the interconnected themes of the consumerism and hedonism of Dublin, themes that also recur in the writing of other Polish migrants.

Regardless of their nationality, crowds of Dubliners spend their free time browsing around the city's shopping centres with the aim of purchasing useless and redundant goods just for the sake of squandering money. By recycling somewhat cliched comparisons of shopping malls and nightclubs to 'temples',[41] Czerwiński explores the alarming affection of the city dwellers for excessiveness, which has grown into a sort of religion. The pastime of compulsive buying on weekdays is replenished with binge drinking at weekends. In *Zielona wyspa* ('The green isle'), Mariusz Wieteska castigates young Dubliners for succumbing to witless hedonism:

> Saturday and Sunday were the days when people unleashed their primal instincts. Dazed with drink and dope, they showed how you could fall without touching the ground with your hands. They slipped off their masks and stepped on them with their expensive shoes which reflected the class of their owners, who went to work Monday to Friday.[42]

In much the same way as Wieteska, many other writers provide extensive accounts of Dublin's self-indulgent nightlife and suggest parallels with the Greek Dionysia: Daniel Żuchowski and Przemek Kolasiński quip that the central event epitomising such indulgence is held on 17 March, the feast of the Irish Dionysus—St Patrick's Day. Magdalena Orzeł and Mariusz Wieteska describe how, with the break of dawn on Saturday and Sunday, the city is reminiscent of a waste dump, an incisive symbol of young Dubliners' debauchery: the streets are covered with broken bottles, condoms, fast food leftovers, piss and vomit. On Monday, the litter is scavenged, everybody goes to work, and the weekend wildness passes into oblivion.

This youth drinking-culture, which seems to serve mainly as a distraction from their day-to-day lives, has no resemblance to that of the older generation, for whom a local pub is the basis of communal life, the place where people develop relationships with a whole network of the locals. Thus, as Agnieszka Latocha chronicles in *Irlandia, moje* ścieżki ('Ireland, my paths'), drinking in pubs is always accompanied by all sorts of social activities, such as singing, dancing, tale-telling, card games, darts, etc. In the previously mentioned *Pokój z widokiem*

na Dunnes Stores ('The room with a view of Dunnes Stores'), Łukasz Ślipko observes that Irish people drink in large quantities but innocently: there is no bohemian ring to it, drinking is more like a 'national sport',[43] like Gaelic football or hurling—a distinctive feature of the local culture. Daniel Żuchowski registers in *The new Dubliners* that although migrants find the rules of Gaelic games very complicated and have scant understanding of them, they enjoy going to the matches because of the friendly atmosphere; the atmosphere that is also typical of Irish pubs and that has arisen from the happy-go-lucky demeanour of Irish people.

A portrait of the Irish as …

Virtually all Polish migrant writers offer the same portrait of the Irish as blithe, convivial, laid-back, hospitable, friendly and tolerant minimalists. They gave a warm welcome to thousands of newcomers, they have generally avoided mixing local economic problems with the subject of ethnic minorities, they set little store by material possessions, they focus on the present moment rather than muse about the future, and they live by the maxim that Magdalena Orzeł cites in *Dublin, moja polska karma* ('Dublin, my Polish karma'): 'Take it easy, we can do it tomorrow.'[44] Łukasz Ślipko mentions with amazement that even the police force, *An Garda Síochána*, evokes sentiments of social trust and liking. Anna Wolf, a Polish playwright and founder of Polish Theatre Ireland, attests to this in an interview:

> I think they [Irish people] are friendly, optimistic, and helpful. I remember when I first went to Kilkenny. Lost in thought, I stood in the street, and suddenly an Irishwoman approached me and offered to help me find a job. She led me to a nearby supermarket, gave me an application form and went on to explain how to fill it in. Nobody would approach me like that in Poland! I also think that the Irish live on a day-to-day basis. They don't worry about tomorrow and they don't make far-reaching plans. In Poland, it's the other way round. We live on our dreams and we plan everything in hope of a better future. That's why here,

> in Ireland, people have their apartments made over only every now and then; whereas every time I visit Poland, I hear the noise of drilling, because of someone redoing their flat. It's partly due to our financial situation, but it's also a consequence of our mentality. [45]

The bitter paradox is that the same traits that the Irish are admired for in personal relationships they are chided for in the work context. Their laid-back attitude has given rise to the different perception of time that prevails on the island, with the result that all sorts of delays are frequent and people just pass over them lightly. In *Hotel Irlandia*, Iwona Słabuszewska-Krauze describes how passengers wait for buses that follow some secret, unpredictable timetable, plumbers promise to come in two days but show up two weeks late, a simple renovation or amendment turns into a long mission, etc.[46] Marcin Wojnarowski in *Okrutny idiota* ('The cruel idiot') jocosely concludes that when a job is two days overdue, it is considered to be completed promptly.[47]

As a consequence of their gregariousness, the Irish have great attachment to their social circles, the inevitable result of which is their tendency to endow greater trust in members of their own community and to prioritise them over strangers. Kinga Olszewska, whose work as an interpreter for Galway Community Services has inspired some of her poems, highlights in 'Site for sale' how migrants occasionally experience prejudice in business relations, only because they are members of the out-group:

> 'Site for sale to locals in the area'
> I go in to inquire.
> Are you local? The man behind the desk asks disbelievingly.
> I have been local for the last ten years.
> But you are not really Irish?
> So I recite: Irish passport, Revenue, Hibernian, Bank of Ireland,
> Áine and Saoirse, holiday house in Wicklow,
> I start quoting national heroes
> When the man interrupts
> In fairness, I don't think it's a site for you.[48]

Truth to tell, Polish authors seem to be envious rather than critical of the Irish solidarity and mutual support. When asked how his life would change if he were Irish, Piotr Czerwiński said in an interview:

> I would easily get a decent job. I would quickly get promoted. Seriously. No joke here. I don't refer to any particular situation. It's just a general rule and there is no sense denying that. Good for them, at least they respect themselves. I wish Poles had such an attitude in Poland.[49]

Finally, some Polish migrants struggle to reconcile the affable Irish nature with the assertiveness of their Irish superiors in business situations. In *Pokój z widokiem na Dunnes Stores*, the Irish manager beams at the employee whom she is making redundant.[50] In much the same way, the narrator in Słabuszewska-Krauze's *Hotel Irlandia* is called into the office by her boss, who makes friendly small talk and then dismisses her with a smile on his face.[51] The woman looks back with some bitterness to the time when she worked in the company and complains that her supervisor has never shared his ideas, or for that matter reservations, about her work. As if to vindicate Słabuszewska-Krauze's observations, Piotr Czerwiński points in *Przebiegum życiae* to a major difference between Polish people and the rest of the world: while other nations express their thoughts in a less direct manner, Poles openly state what they think and in return they expect patent sincerity from others.[52] Despite their minor frustrations, however, Polish migrants extol the Irish lifestyle since it renders into reality a place where, in Słabuszewska-Krauze's words, the cashiers are in no hurry, officials are humane, and passers-by smile at one another.[53] Ryszard Adam Gruchawka adds that there is an absence of stark divisions in Irish society, and work, regardless of its nature, is held in high esteem.[54]

In the rudimentary portrayal of the Irish, Polish authors mention also jocularity, garrulousness and a predilection for tradition. Marvelling at the capacity of Irish people to be naturally funny, Przemek Kolasiński notes in *What I got from Ireland?* that everything and everyone is a source of wise-crackery in Ireland, but the jokes always walk a fine line between jocosity and mockery, with the result that they are caustic but never humiliating.[55] Tomasz Borkowski devotes a whole chapter of

Irlandia Jones poszukiwany ('Ireland Jones wanted') to 'The famous Irish sense of humour' and uses the space, first, to outline major historical, literary, social and linguistic influences that have led to the refinement of Irish humour and, second, to give a few first-hand examples of Irish wittiness. The jokes are often woven into wider stories, since the Irish are a nation of gifted tale-tellers who spin their colourful stories for hours on end. As Ryszard Adam Gruchawka asserts, the talkativeness of Irish people, along with their fondness for music, is encoded in their green blood.[56]

Although the Irish have a vibrant contemporary culture produced by numerous professional and amateur artists, they have also retained a penchant for their Gaelic tradition of folk music, dances, songs and tales, which are all bound together by the Irish language. The language, which has been in decline, is a subject widely discussed by Polish writers, who shed some light on how the Irish have been robbed of their native tongue by British colonisers and how they have attempted to revive it. Łukasz Ślipko sadly notes that contemporary Ireland is bi-lingual only in theory because, in practice, the Irish language has been side-lined: few people care about it and even fewer are fluent in it.[57] Tomasz Borkowski bears out Ślipko's diagnosis, remarking that a huge majority of Irish society loses touch with Irish as soon as they graduate from school, even though they are offered a free language course, thanks to the Irish street signs, TV shows, radio programmes and books. The result is that: 'when you ask two Irishmen about the meaning of an Irish word, a dispute breaks out because each of them gives you a different definition.' Fortunately, 'they all agree that *Póg mo thóin* means "Kiss my arse".'[58] Many Polish authors confront the issue of the Irish language with a touch of humour, some take a more serious approach to the subject, and there are also a couple of writers who lapse into a sort of nostalgia for the native tongue that the Irish have lost. In Łukasz Stec's *Psychoanioł w Dublinie*, the main character dies and ascends to heaven where people speak Irish, the language that has always sounded heavenly to the hero.[59]

A whole set of texts produced by Polish migrants attests to the fact that despite the dwindling of the Irish language, the Irish have preserved the wealth of the Gaelic tradition and appropriated the English language to express their own distinctive identity. One result of this

is that the newcomers find it challenging on arrival to understand the Irish, and they often talk about the need to learn the local language. When the narrator of Łukasz Suskiewicz's *egri bikavér* lands at Dublin airport, he strikes up a conversation with a bus driver only to realise that neither of them can discern what the other is saying:

> I had thought that I had at least communicative English. But when I articulated my thoughts, the guy just winced helplessly. In turn, when he started responding to what I had said I was convinced I heard the gurgle of water. We probably used different course books to learn the language.[60]

The deployment by Irish people of alternative vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax and accents are elements of Hiberno-English that are repeatedly mentioned by Polish migrant writers, who identify the local language as one of the distinctive features of the Irish nation.

Another trademark of the Irish identified by Polish authors is their clothing: despite wind, rain and low temperature, Irish people, who are surprisingly resilient to the cold, always wear short-sleeves. This is how Piotr Czerwiński and Łukasz Suskiewicz set Irishmen apart from foreigners, and Magdalena Orzeł recounts that 'a December evening is full of bare shoulders, backs, thighs, calves, feet, stomachs', especially those of Irish girls who, like nymphs, waltz through the streets in sheer dresses and high-heels.[61] The female attire epitomises the lifestyle of young Irish women: the skimpy evening outfits, which accentuate their sensuality by night, are replaced with tracksuits, which provide them with cosiness by day. In *Dublin, moja polska karma*, Magdalena Orzeł refers to a radio show, which was meant to address the question of 'What do Polish people think about the Irish?' but turned into a sort of beauty contest for Irish and Polish women, in which male callers chided the former for their licence and lack of personal grooming and lauded the latter for their restraint and good looks.[62] If some Polish male authors seem to flirt dangerously with these stereotypes, their female counterparts mock them with devastating wit as nostalgic fantasies of men. Polish female writers extol the self-confidence of Irish women, who, in Iwona Słabuszewska-Krauze's words, behave as if they had

no complexes. 'I was really impressed by it', she concludes in *Hotel Irlandia*.[63] An equally animated discussion about fashion in Ireland may be found in *Pokój z widokiem na Dunnes Stores* by Łukasz Ślipko or in *Psychoanioł w Dublinie* by Łukasz Stec.[64] Both writers use the androgynous emo style, which is typical of the contemporary youngster, to highlight a generation gap. The emo, with their figure-hugging, studded clothes in black and pink colours and their dark make-up, are juxtaposed with middle-aged and elderly Irishmen in their V-neck sweaters, shirts and tweed jackets. In Łukasz Ślipko's eyes, a significant difference between younger Irish people and their parents or grandparents, which is embodied by their apparel, is that the older generation fought for their identity and slogged away in Britain, while everything is handed on a plate to modern teenagers who, as a result, have developed a sort of sentimentality that he calls 'Electropop Wertherism'.[65]

Ireland—the other Poland?

Apart from cultural and social issues, the attention of Polish migrant writers in Ireland also turns to some bread-and-butter domestic matters, such as the impracticality of two taps or three-pronged plugs; the superannuated plumbing system in which the water freezes if the temperature drops below zero; the tradition of naming houses and using the name of the property instead of the address in some parts of Ireland; or spongy bread, to name but a few. What these things have in common is that they signify a difference between Ireland and Poland. Establishing the points of comparison between the two countries is an instrument with which the migrant writers investigate the island and its inhabitants. A closer reading of their texts reveals how the authors tend naturally to attach 'the other' to the cultural context they are familiar with, framing the new and unknown in terms of the old and known. Obviously, the ensuing result is also a better understanding of themselves and their country of origin. This method, however, runs the unintended risk of assuming a greater similarity or difference between the countries than is actually the case, which has occasionally led to some overgeneralisations, ill-founded assumptions or biased projections.

Some of the recurring analogies between Ireland and Poland that have been explored by Polish writers include history (fighting against

the oppressor for national independence and the experience of forced and economic migration); religion (the powerful influence of the Catholic Church in the country); and culture (which emerged from the folk life of a rural society). In *Przebiegum życiae* ('Conductum lifae'), Piotr Czerwiński derisively sums up the historical links between Ireland (which he nicknamed the bajabongo land) and Poland (called Bulanda):

> Generally speaking, Mickeys and Poms had a long sado-masochistic relationship, which clearly wasn't very happy. It was kinda like the affairs of Bulanda with her exotic neighbours who had desperately wanted to screw Bulanda over for the last thousand years and turn her into soap or send her na holidays in Ciberia. But we didn't give up. Everyone who was still alive fled from Bulanda abroad. A lot of people ended up in England or the USA where the main intention of the locals was to screw them over dla a change. Mickeys had exactly the same adventures, so I think, that both nations should be very happy that they have finally found each other in this world.[66]

Ireland became independent from Great Britain in 1922, but Poland regained its independence from USSR only in 1990 and the Soviet Northern Group of Forces left the country in 1993. Consequently, as Łukasz Ślipko observes, Irish people seem to have, for the most part, reworked their traumas, recovered their self-confidence and started to work towards utilising their full economic and entrepreneurial potential. Meanwhile, Polish people still nurse their own wounds and read their deepest fears into everything that is strange and foreign, with the result that they live in a sort of seclusion and hibernation.[67] The Poles who sensed a frustration with the *status quo* took refuge from the malaise by moving to Ireland and elsewhere in Western Europe at the turn of the twenty-first century. The same might be said of the Irish emigration in the 1980s, when many people in their twenties and thirties saw no future for themselves in their homeland and pursued an emigrant career and a more prosperous life in the UK or the US. In their writings, Polish authors indicate a set of connections between the experiences of the Irish and Polish migrants: people who left were

young, well-educated, eager to integrate into a developed economy and similar in appearance to the local people. The countries in which they settled differed from their homeland in several important ways, but nevertheless, the underlying realities were, in fact, strikingly similar. One of the characters in Magdalena Orzeł's *Dublin, moja polska karma*, Wiola, becomes aware of this when she strikes up a conversation with her Pakistani female neighbour:

> 'Ireland is like Poland, like your home, here is your religion,' said Shazia dreamingly. That was indeed the case but Wiola had never thought about it this way. Until now, she was convinced that they had gone so far. But actually she was at home here. Everybody could visit her and she could fly to Poland. Besides, they had the same churches and McDonalds. People also looked the same because everybody followed the European fashion while Shazia never took off her headscarf. How close were they, and how far has Shazia travelled… [68]

Adam Ryszard Gruchawka phrases the same idea slightly differently in *Buty emigranta* ('The emigrant's shoes')by saying that when he arrived in Ireland, the place felt so familiar and ordinary to him that he had an impression he had arrived in a Polish city, which he simply had not yet visited.[69] Similarly, when the narrator of *Hotel Irlandia* goes to Wicklow, she feels as if she were in Kashubia.

In *Pokój z widokiem na Dunnes Stores*, Łukasz Ślipko probes what lies behind the casual ease with which Polish people make the Emerald Isle their new home and comes to the conclusion that it is the shared culture of 'folk songs and dances, drinking, garrulity, pissing in the streets and rural cuisine'.[70] There is also the affinity in terms of religion; the Irish parishes are increasingly populated by migrants rather than natives, but the relationship between the state and the Catholic Church nevertheless seems stronger in Ireland than in Poland (where Communism largely dismantled church–state connections). The recognition of this is implicit, for example, in the bafflement of Gustaw, the character in Piotr Czerwiński's *Przebiegum życiae*, when he learns that the sale of alcohol is prohibited on Good Friday, or in Daniel Żuchowski's and

Marcin Wojnarowski's commentaries on the ban on abortion. That the allegiance of the Irish state to religion has been rapidly flagging can, however, be traced in more recent writings. In the brief afterword to *Zespół ojca* ('Father syndrome'), Piotr Czerwiński remarks, for instance, that Irish family law was changed in 2015, opening up the possibility that in cases where parents are not married, guardianship over children from their relationship may now, in certain circumstances, be granted to the father instead of the mother.

When asked in an interview about his experience of living in Ireland, Czerwiński points to yet another change that the country underwent between 2000 and 2015:

> I like the Ireland that we have now. It's poorer, but it's finally Irish, the way I had always imagined it. People are normal again. Now they are the Irish I always wanted to meet and live among. It's good, despite the price Ireland had to pay to wake up from the prosperity craze. But again, for me, that wasn't Ireland back then—that was a bad dream, in a way.[71]

After the Celtic Tiger dream (or nightmare as some writers would argue) was over, the reality to which Irish society awoke was one in which people were poorer, more secular and more ethnically diverse. If the Irish successfully defined their national character in relation to Britain in the past century, they face an even more complex task at present: to negotiate their identity with reference to the ethnic minorities, which have become constituent parts of their society. Iwona Słabuszewska-Krauze is one of many Polish authors who raises this issue. In *Hotel Irlandia* she briefly introduces Heidi's son: the boy, described by his mother as Irish, has become tri-lingual as a result of being brought up in Dublin by his German mother and Italian father. The same group of writers also registers the astonishing capacity the Irish have demonstrated to embrace foreign elements throughout all their history. It is one of the reasons why so many Polish people feel at home in Ireland.

Notes

[1] The section 'The mysterious island' is largely based on the information presented at the outdoor exhibition *From strangers to neighbours: encounters between Poland and Ireland* organised by the embassy of Ireland in Poland (Open-Air Gallery, the Royal Łazienki Museum; Warsaw, 1–30 August 2017).

[2] Bernard Connor, *The history of Poland; in several letters to persons of quality* (Brown; London, 1698), 2 vols. O'Connor removed the "O" prefix from his surname in 1695; therefore two spellings of his name are in use.

[3] Embassy of Ireland in Poland, 'Constance Markiewicz: the rebel Countess', *From strangers to neighbours. encounters between Poland and Ireland* (Open-Air Gallery, the Royal Łazienki Museum; Warsaw, 1–30 August 2017).

[4] On the impact of Irish drama on Polish culture and literature, see the recent book by Barry Keane *Irish drama in Poland: staging and reception, 1900–2000* (Intellect; Bristol, 2016).

[5] James Joyce, *Ulisses* (Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy; Warszawa, 1969).

[6] '„Ulisses" Jamesa Joyce'a – niemoralne arcydzieło wznawiane w prestiżowej serii', in *Booklips*, 10 December 2012. Retrieved from website <http://booklips.pl/premiery-i-zapowiedzi/ulisses-jamesa-joycea-niemoralne-arcydzielo-wznawiane-w-prestizowej-serii/> Accessed on 29 October 2017.

[7] Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, *Miodopój (VI-XII.)* (PAX; Warszawa, 1978); Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, *Irlandzki Tancerz (XII-XIX)* (PAX; Warszawa, 1981).

[8] Seamus Heaney, *44 wiersze* (Wydawnictwo Znak; Kraków, 1995), trans. Stanisław Barańczak; Seamus Heaney, *Ciągnąc dalej. Nowe wiersze 1991-1996* (Wydawnictwo Znak; Kraków, 1996), trans. Stanisław Barańczak; Seamus Heaney, *Kolejowe dzieci* (Centrum Sztuki—Teatr Dramatyczny; Legnica, 1998), trans. Piotr Sommer.

[9] Jerzy Jarniewicz is the author of *Heaney. Wiersze pod dotyk* ('Heaney: Tangible poems'), the first Polish monograph about Heaney's poetry, which was published in 2011 by Znak, one of the leading publishing houses in Poland.

[10] 'Historia piosenki „Kocham cię jak Irlandię". To się wydarzyło naprawdę', WP Teleshow, 20 March 2014. Retrieved from website, <https://teleshow.wp.pl/historia-piosenki-kocham-cie-jak-irlandie-6033696284095617g> Accessed on 29 October 2017.

[11] Embassy of Ireland in Poland, 'Building bridges: The Polish community in Ireland', *From strangers to neighbours: encounters between Poland and Ireland* (Open-Air Gallery, the Royal Łazienki Museum; Warsaw, 1–30 August 2017).

[12] Przemek Kolasiński, *What I got from Ireland?* (Xilbris; Bloomington, 2012), 1.

[13] Tomasz Borkowski, *Irlandia Jones poszukiwany* (Gajt; Wrocław, 2010), 10. As all citations from Polish books are translated by the author, the original quotes are provided here in the endnotes:

Jest to próba opisania moich osobistych irlandzkich doświadczeń, które dzielę z tysiącami innych rodaków i milionami Irlandczyków. Przypuszczam, że ile było osób w ten proces zaangażowanych, tyle było zdumień i wyjaśnień. Tutaj prezentuję jedną z wersji wydarzeń. Można by powiedzieć „tomografię".

[14] Graham Greene, *The lawless roads* (Penguin Books, 1981), 65.

15 Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, *Irlandia. Celtycki splot* (Zysk i Sk-a; Poznań, 2010).
[16] Daniel Żuchowski, *The new Dubliners* (Literary Publishing; Dublin, 2014).
17 Łukasz Suskiewicz, *egri bikavér* (Forma; Szczecin, 2009), 36. The book takes its title from a variety of wine and so does not have a direct translation in English.
[18] Magdalena Orzeł, *Dublin, moja polska karma* (Skrzat; Kraków, 2007), 104. *Wyspiarze umieją się reklamować. Potrafią wykreować nawet rzecz tak trudną jak zachwyt literacki i czytelniczy amok. Odnaleźli i utrzymali własną markę. Kuszą każdy zmysł – zielonością przez oczy, guinessem do żołądka i książkami jak pięścią w głowę.*
[19] See, for example, the covers of Piotr Czerwiński's *Przebiegum życiae* (Świat Książki; Warszawa, 2009) and Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll's *Irlandia. Celtycki splot* (Zysk i Sk-a; Poznań, 2010).
[20] See, for example, the covers of Agnieszka Latocha's *Irlandia, moje ścieżki* (Gajt; Wrocław, 2008), Mariusz Wieteska's *Zielona wyspa* (Anagram; Warszawa, 2009) and Marcin Lisak's *Dwie fale. Przewodnik duchowy emigranta* (Homini; Kraków, 2012).
[21] Gosia Brzezińska, *Irlandzki koktajl* (Wydawnictwo Bliskie; Warszawa, 2010), 10.
[22] Latocha, *Irlandia,* 49.
[23] Suskiewicz, *egri bikavér*, 19.
[24] Ryszard Adam Gruchawka, *Buty emigranta* (Exlibris; Warszawa, 2007), 61. *Pewnego deszczowego dnia farmer stary jak ocean wyznał mi ze smutkiem, że odkąd zaczął się napływ imigrantów, pogoda też zrobiła się paskudna.*
[25] Piotr Czerwiński, *Przebiegum*, 235.
[26] Łukasz Stec, *Psychoanioł w Dublinie* (Akurat; Warszawa, 2014).
[27] The writings that this article refers to include:
a) eleven novels: *Irlandzki koktajl* by Gosia Brzezińska (2010), *Przebiegum życiae, czyli kartonowa sieć* by Piotr Czerwiński (2009), *Zespół ojca* by Piotr Czerwiński (2017), *Lenie* by Andrzej Goździkowski (2007), *Buty emigranta* by Ryszard Adam Gruchawka (2007), *Irlandia, moje ścieżki* by Agnieszka Latocha (2008), *Hotel Irlandia* by Iwona Słabuszewska-Krauze (2006), *Psychoanioł w Dublinie* by Łukasz Stec (2014), *egri bikavér* by Łukasz Suskiewicz (2009), *Zielona wyspa* by Mariusz Wieteska (2009), and *Okrutny idiota albo prywatny żart* by Marcin Wojnarowski (2008);
b) a short-story volume: *The new Dubliners* by Daniel Żuchowski (2014);
c) three poetry books: *Mullaghmore* (2016), *Pierwsze wspomnienie wielkiego głodu* (2017), both by Małgorzata Południak, and *Nocne czuwanie* by Tomasz Wybranowski (2012);
d) five collections of essays: *Irlandia. Celtycki splot* by Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll (2010), *Dublin, moja polska karma* by Magdalena Orzeł (2007), *Dwie fale. Przewodnik duchowy emigranta* by Marcin Lisak (2012), *Co mi dała Irlandia?/What I got from Ireland?* by Przemek Kolasiński (2012), and *Pokój z widokiem na Dunnes Stores* by Łukasz Ślipko (2011);
e) short stories and poems included in the following anthologies: *Wyfrunęli. Nowa emigracja o sobie* Wiesława T. Czartoryska (ed.) (2011), *Na końcu świata napisane. Autoportret współczesnej polskiej emigracji* Elżbieta Spadzińska-Żak (ed) (2007), *Transgeniczna Mandarynka* by Barbara Mikulska, Dariusz Wędrychowski, Marek Zychla, Adam Dzik, Anna Grzanek, Agnieszka Osikowicz-Chwaja, Anna Brzeska, Adam K. Burling, Marek Hołub, Marcin Kasica, Ryszard Machowski, Rafał Piotrowicz (2013), *Landing Places: Immigrant Poets in Ireland* Eva Bourke and Borbala Farago (eds) (2010) and *Yet To Be Told* Ciara Doorley, Daniel Bolger and Clara Phelan (eds)(2012).

It is worth adding that – apart from four volumes in English—these books were published in Polish, in Poland, and, as such, are primarily addressed to Polish readers.

[28] Iwona Słabuszewska-Krauze, *Hotel Irlandia* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper; Warszawa, 2006), 6. *Przypłynęliśmy promem. Zwyczajnie, tak jak dziesiątki innych rodaków przybywających tutaj każdego dnia. Chociaż ja wolałam czuć się jak podróżnik raczej, a może nawet zdobywca dobijający do kolejnego lądu, tak nieznanego jak tylko nieznanym ląd być może.*

[29] Piotr Czerwiński, *Zespół ojca* (Wielka Litera, Warszawa, 2017), 24.

[30] The term 'Celtic Tiger' as a signifier of the Republic of Ireland's economic health (or even just the nation's health as a whole) seems to have first been employed by Kevin Gardiner, a contributor to a newsletter produced by the company Morgan Stanley in 1994. See, Peadar Kirby, 'Three tiger sightings, but its stripes are in dispute' *Feasta Review* 1 (2002), 17–18, and Denis O'Hearn, 'Globalization, '"New Tigers", and the end of the developmental state? The case of the Celtic Tiger', *Politics and Society* 28/1 (2000), 67–92.

As Kirby notes; 'The official Tiger narrative is typically structured around the following explanations of Irish success: consistent macro-economic management of the economy, investment in education, social partnership, EU structural funds combined with the fiscal discipline imposed by the Maastricht criteria and, of course, very high levels of inward US investment'. See, Peadar Kirby, *The Celtic Tiger in Distress: Growth with Inequality in Ireland.* (Palgrave; Basingstoke, 2001), 2.

[31] The phrase 'Celtic Phoenix' seems to have been coined by Paul Howard, a satirist who writes a column under the Ross O'Carroll-Kelly pseudonym in *The Irish Times*. See, Donal O'Keeffe, 'Phoenix Miracle or Celtic Phoenix, Paddy never learns any lessons', *The Avondhu* (19 April 2017). Retrieved from website <https://avondhupress.ie/phoenix-miracle-celtic-phoenix-paddy-never-learns-lessons/> Accessed 12 February 2018. The term started to be used irony-free by media commentators to describe a revival of the Irish economy after its severe post-2008 crisis. See, 'Celtic Phoenix; the Irish Economy', *The Economist* 417/8965 (19 November 2015), 15–16. Retrieved from website <https://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21678830-ireland-shows-there-economic-life-after-death-celtic-phoenix> Accessed 12 February 2018.

[32] Sylwia Miszczak, '„Druga Irlandia", czyli wpadka Donalda Tuska' in *Wirtualna Polska*, 19 December 2007. Retrieved from website < https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/druga-irlandia-czyli-wpadka-donalda-tuska-6037410533958785a> Accessed on 4 September 2018.

[33] Czerwiński, *Przebiegum*, 54.

[34] Mariusz Wieteska, *Zielona wyspa* (Anagram; Warszawa, 2009), 11 or Andrzej Goździkowski, *Lenie* (Lampa i Iskra Boża; Warszawa, 2007), 129.

[35] Łukasz Ślipko, *Pokój z widokiem na Dunnes Stores* (Wydawnictwo RB; Opole, 2011), 21.

[36] Ślipko, *Pokój*, 21. *Schronili się pod parasol dobrobytu, zostawiając za sobą zapadłe wsie, dziurawe drogi i zardzewiałe autobusy. Wpuszczono ich do kryształowego pałacu, ale nawet w tym pałacu nie są wolni od trosk, a wysoki standard życia materialnego okupują byciem „innymi", „zewnętrznymi proletariuszami"…*

[37] Suskiewicz, *egri*, 85. *I temu tu, mądremu, dzwonili, że jest raj. Że manna z nieba leci i żeby przyjeżdżać, bo auta dobre, pieniądze duże i w ogóle luksus. I tak mu w tej pustej głowie namieszali, że cały czas za mną łaził i szeptał, i mamrał i truł. I nic – tylko „Irlandia" i „Irlandia". Jakby innych słów nie było. Tylko to jedno. Wymyślił se durnota, że tam na dom zarobi, że auto kupi… Ale żeś zarobił! Ha, ha. Taki już dorobiony wracasz! Jak z Ameryki!*

[38] Suskiewicz, *egri*, 22.

[39] Łukasz Stec, *Psychoanioł*, 44. *Ruszyli w stronę O'Connell Street, mijając po drodze dziesięć polskich, osiem hinduskich i jedenaście chińskich sklepów. Irlandzkie były tylko dwa i właśnie w jednym z nich Wowa kupił nową paczkę papierosów. Tak na wszelki wypadek. Po zakupach udali się na obiad do hinduskiego baru „Govindas".*

[40] Czerwiński, *Przebiegum*, 107. Since Piotr Czerwiński wrote *Przebiegum życiae* in Ponglish, the bi-lingual weave of Polish and English, I have deliberately included some Polish words in the English translation: *Gustaw zdołał tylko podnieść dwadzieścia centów z chodnika przed Arnottsem i popędził do portalu pobliskiego kościoła, najwyraźniej zabytku, który jacyś bardzo zacni mnisi musieli odrestaurować z prawdziwym pomyślunkiem, ponieważ miał nawet napis „The Church" nad wejściem, a także własnego macho Garfielda dla bezpieczeństwa, który otwierał drzwi wiernym. W środku panowała bardzo spirytualistyczna atmosfera; za barem mieli pięćdziesiąt gatunków whisky i toast po irlandzku, wymalowany złotym gotykiem w miejscu ołtarza, skąd zwykle Jezus patrzy na ludzi. Był też didżej, obsługujący adaptery ustawione na dwóch kropielnicach oraz organy na galerii, gdzie był punkt zborny kelnerów. Gustaw uznał, że to musi być kościół jakiejś bardzo odjechanej sekty, miejscowy proboszcz właśnie odpoczywa po mszy przy swoim gramofonie, a sekciarze jedzą dinner. Zamówił więc stek i małe wino, czytając ulotkę ze stołu, która zachwalała pozostałe atrakcje świątyni. Wynikało z niej, że w piwnicy lokalu znajdują się katakumby, a w nich dyskoteka. Jej stałym rezydentem jest facet, który like dwieście lat wcześniej, zarządził egzekucję jakiegoś bardzo ważnego freedom fightera z krainy bajabongo i był Angolem. Gustaw uznał, że najwyraźniej sekciarze z „The Church" zbierają się co noc w katakumbach i płacą za tańczenie na grobie tego klienta, by nigdy nie zapomniał, co zrobił temu narodowi.*

[41] Czerwiński, *Przebiegum*, 138; 107.

[42] Wieteska, *Zielona wyspa*, 46. *Sobota i niedziela były zawsze dniami, w których ludzie powracali do swych pierwotnych instynktów. Odurzeni alkoholem i narkotykami, pokazywali jak można upaść na ziemię nie dotykając jej rękoma. Zrzucali maskę, depcząc ją drogimi butami, obrazującymi klasę ich właścicieli, chodzących od poniedziałku do piątku do pracy.*

[43] Ślipko, *Pokój*, 17.

[44] Orzeł, *Dublin*, 19.

[45] Joanna Kosmalska and Joanna Rostek, 'Irish-Polish cultural interrelations in practice: interviews with Chris Binchy, Piotr Czerwiński, Dermot Bolger, and Anna Wolf', *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* 5 (2015), 103–30: 123.

[46] Słabuszewska-Krauze, *Hotel*, 35; 90.

[47] Marcin Wojnarowski, *Okrutny idiota albo prywatny żart* (Wydawnictwo EP; Poznań, 2008), 134.

[48] Kinga Olszewska, 'Site for sale', in Eva Bourke and Borbala Farago (eds) *Landing places: immigrant poets in Ireland* (Dedalus Press; Dublin, 2010), 144–7: 144.

[49] Kosmalska and Rostek, 'Irish-Polish cultural interrelations', 110.

[50] Ślipko, *Pokój*, 7-8.

[51] Słabuszewska-Krauze, *Hotel*, 158.

[52] Czerwiński, *Przebiegum*, 202.

[53] Słabuszewska-Krauze, *Hotel*, 35.

[54] Gruchawka, *Buty*, 81.

[55] Kolasiński, *What I got* , 35.

[56] Gruchawka, *Buty*, 47-8.

[57] Ślipko, *Pokój*, 6.
[58] Borkowski, *Irlandia Jones*, 34.
[59] Stec, *Psychoanioł,* 300.
[60] Suskiewicz, *egri*, 9. *Uważałem, że mój angielski jest co najmniej komunikatywny. Ale kiedy werbalizowałem myśl, facet robił bezradny grymas. Z kolei, kiedy odpowiadał, byłem przeświadczony, że słyszę bulgotanie wody. Prawdopodobnie korzystaliśmy z różnych podręczników do nauki języka.*
[61] Orzeł, *Dublin*, 37.
[62] Orzeł, *Dublin*, 110-4.
[63] Słabuszewska-Krauze, *Hotel*, 187. *To mi naprawdę imponowało.*
[64] Stec, *Psychoanioł,* 118; 192.
[65] Ślipko, *Pokój*, 47.
[66] Czerwiński, *Przebiegum*, 77. *Ogólnie rzecz biorąc, Irole i Angole mieli długotrwały związek sadomaso, który najwyraźniej nie był szczęśliwy. Kinda trochę przypominało to romanse Bulandy z jej egzotycznymi sąsiadami, którzy przez ostatni tysiąc lat desperacko pragnęli wydymać Bulandę i zrobić z niej mydło albo wysłać na holiday in Cyberia. Aleśmy się nie dali. Kto żyw uciekał z Bulandy za granicę. Mnóstwo ludzi wylądowało w Anglii albo w USA, gdzie główną intencją wielu miejscowych było ich wydymać, for a change.*
[67] Ślipko, *Pokój*, 43.
[68] Orzeł, *Dublin*, 129. 'Ireland is like Poland, like your home, here is your religion'. *Rozmarzyła się Shazia. Rzeczywiście to prawda, chociaż Wiola o tym nigdy nie pomyślała. Do tej pory wydawało jej się, że pojechali tak daleko. A przecież tak naprawdę tu jest jak w domu. Każdy może ją tu odwiedzić i ona może polecieć do Polski, poza tym mają te same kościoły i McDonaldy. Ludzie też wyglądają tak samo, bo obowiązuje moda europejska, a Shazia przecież nie zdejmuje szalika z głowy. Jak niedaleko oni wyjechali, jak wielką podróż odbyła Shazia…*
[69] Gruchawka, *Buty*, 18.
[70] Ślipko, *Pokój*, 41.
[71] Kosmalska and Rostek, 'Irish-Polish cultural interrelations', 110.

Joanna Kosmalska

Writing by Poles in the UK and Ireland: The Transnational Turn in Polish Literature

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In July 2012, *Madame Mephisto* by A.M. Bakalar, a female author who had moved from Wrocław to London, was longlisted for the Guardian First Book Award. In one of her articles the writer stresses that it is "a sign of our times that migration between countries offers to many people the best of both worlds."[1] In November 2014, Daniel Żuchowski, a Polish teacher living and working in Dublin, was invited to the Dublin Book Festival to talk about his recently released collection of short stories, *The New Dubliners*. When asked about the setting of the book, he replied that the stories were "universal enough to have happened in any other European, or even non-European, capital."[2] These are only two out of over eighty works of poetry, prose and drama which have been published since 2004 by Polish authors who lived, or still live, in Britain

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1 Asia Monika Bakalar, "Polish People are Britain's Invisible Minority," *The Guardian,* December 18, 2012, accessed November 2, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/dec/18/polish-people-britain-invisible-minority

2 Daniel Żuchowski, *The New Dubliners* by Daniel Zuchowski, "Writing.ie," accessed November 2, 2015, http://www.writing.ie/tell-your-own-story/the-new-dubliners-by--daniel-zuchowski/

and Ireland.[3] All of them were born out of the clash between the writers' national context and other, alien, contexts and they duly illustrate how the driving forces of transnationalism have shaped contemporary Polish literature.

Although transnationalism as long-distance travel, exploration and trade networks has a history preceding "the nation," the emergence of new forms of quick and efficient transportation, communication, and economic flows has fundamentally transformed the contemporary world. In a relatively short period of time, social, political and economic relationships between countries have intensified globally; the Internet has brought into being a virtual reality, parallel to the real world; nation-state borders have grown blurred and porous. Migrations on a large scale have become part of everyday life, but the "new migrants," in contrast to previous generations of newcomers, maintain stronger familial, economic, political and religious ties to home. At the same time, they have been undergoing integration processes in receiving countries faster than before, forging links with host societies and adapting to their values and lifestyles.[4]

When talking about "integration," one has to ask what the word actually means in a multi-ethnic and multicultural country like the UK or modern-day Ireland. I would argue that it means finding a city, town or village where a particular individual can pursue his or her life goals. Once this is accomplished, the newcomer has to get a grasp of the cultures that surround him or her in the neighbourhood and workplace. In other words, the emphasis is placed on locality, since migrants do not integrate into the whole of British or Irish society, but into local, often very ethnically-diverse communities where they lead their everyday lives. For newcomers, it means that they have to adapt to multiple cultures rather than a single, historically dominant national tradition. By sustaining links with a variety of communities in the receiving country and in their homeland, migrants create imagined, virtual spaces, which have been called "transnational social fields"[5] by social scientists and the "third space"[6]

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3 A full bibliography of the literary works mentioned in the article is available in the Virtual Archive which has been compiled as part of *Polish (E)migration Literature*... project: archiwumemigracja.uni.lodz.pl/en. Hence, I only mention the writings that are cited in the footnotes.

4 The short description of transnationalism and its implications is based mainly on a monograph by Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (New York: Routledge, 2009), and on an article by Alvaro Lima, "Transnationalism: A New Mode of Immigrant Integration," *The Mauricio Gastón Institute* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Boston, 2010).

5 The term "social fields" was adopted from an article by Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society," *The International Migration Review* 3.38 (2004).

6 Homi K. Bhabha uses the term "Third Space" in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

by literary critics. In those spaces, processes of cultural interpretation and blending take place, often described in terms of cultural translation, hybridity, bricolage, syncretism, creolization. One of the most conspicuous areas in which these phenomena play out is literature.

With this in mind, this article traces how the "new" aspects of transnationalism – namely, advances in transportation, the breaking down of barriers to the flow of people, the development of electronic media, and the globalisation of economic and social relationships[7] – have influenced contemporary writings by Polish migrants who have moved to Britain or Ireland. Hence, it examines how the reduction of travelling costs and the post-accession opening of EU borders facilitated a confrontation of the post-communist East with the multicultural West. This confrontation has altered the territory that Polish authors cover in their books, transformed the nature of locations the writers describe, moved action to spaces between the real and imagined borders of Poland, and consequently complicated nationalist and cosmopolitan paradigms. Interestingly, this imagined space often overlaps with cyberspace, because once migrants have settled down in a new place, they rely heavily on the Internet for communication and news from their homeland. Such strong engagement with virtual reality has affected the narrative form and language of migrant writing which, as we will see after a closer analysis, shares a number of characteristics with blogs, news websites and communicators. The literary language has been further modified by natural processes of hybridisation, which has turned the migrants' mother tongue into a peculiar vernacular filled with Anglicisms and neologisms. This dialect, captured in diasporic writings, reflects cross-cultural exchanges that take place under the forces of migration. The process is reinforced by the strong economic and social relationships developed between Poland, the UK and Ireland over the last decade, and these in turn have had two significant effects: a greater commodification of migrant literary narratives and their further universalisation.

Since the end of communism in the 1980s, no historical event has reshaped Poland's literature more than her 2004 entry into the European Union. The generation of Poles who levered for the collapse of communism opened the borders of Europe to their children, and EU accession sealed the success. The dream of Poland as a free European country became a reality when migrants were allowed to leave their country of birth and travel to Britain or Ireland. So the mass migration of young people was not a cause of concern at first. What's more, Polish people developed a taste for advancement when they entered capitalistic reality in the 1990s. In short order, they moved from a world where

7 A division into "old" and "new" aspects of transnationalism quoted after Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 14-16.

goods were scarce to another where they were abundant, but they lacked the financial resources to benefit from this astonishing metamorphosis. Polish society tried to remedy this through an enhancement of skills and the number of students in higher education rose almost fivefold, from 390,000 in 1990 to 1,906,000 in 2004.[8] And Polish people started taking short trips to the West, which stimulated their desire to live in a more liberal reality. When, despite their best efforts, they failed to make a satisfactory life in their fledgling, badly governed, capitalistic homeland, they emigrated. There were, of course, many people who were forced to leave Poland because of long-term unemployment, but others left in pursuit of modernity and liberal values, and this group included a key number of migrant authors. Among them was Anna Wolf, a playwright and founder of Polish Theatre Ireland, who observed: "Unlike us, the Irish are more relaxed. They don't look for problems where there aren't any. It was one of the reasons why I came here. In Poland, I felt under constant pressure to get married, to start a family, to take out a bank loan for a flat. I don't feel that here."[9] Wioletta Grzegorzewska, a Polish author based in East Tilbury, adds: "A number of authors fled the country because of their beliefs, for instance travellers, homosexual authors and feminists. I often hear from members of the recent wave that they want to bounce off their country …"[10] These writers were also driven by curiosity about a Western culture that for many decades was identified with rebellion against the Soviet regime. It was a window opening onto a civilisation that Poles longed to be a part of. As Agata Pyzik writes in her 2014 book *Poor but Sexy*:

> Queuing with dozens of my compatriots, who feed the financial power of all the Wizzairs, Ryanairs and Easyjets of this world every single day, I'm not strictly one of them, I'm a fake: a middle-class overeducated Polish girl, who is there seduced by the cultural lure of the West, rather than led by material necessity.[11]

8 Department for Higher Education and Science, *Szkolnictwo wyższe w Polsce. Raport* [*Higher Education in Poland. A Report*] (2013), accessed November 2, 2015, https://www.nauka.gov.pl/g2/oryginal/2013_07/0695136d37bd577c8ab03acc5c59a1f6.pdf

9 Joanna Kosmalska and Joanna Rostek "Irish-Polish Cultural Interrelations in Practice: Interviews with Chris Binchy, Piotr Czerwiński, Dermot Bolger, and Anna Wolf," *Studi Irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* 5 (2015): 123.

10 Joanna Kosmalska "Czuję się pisarką polską z krwi i kości. Rozmowa z Wiolettą Grzegorzewską" ["I Feel Like a Polish Writer, in Both Blood and Bone. Joanna Kosmalska in Conversation with Wioletta Grzegorzewska"], *Arterie* 2.19 (2014): 156.

11 Agata Pyzik *Poor but Sexy: Culture Clashes in Europe East and West* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2014), 25.

If we look at the interviews with other Polish writers, it turns out that Agata Pyzik's reasons for migrating are not as rare as she thinks. Her words reverberate in, for example, Piotr Czerwiński's reminiscences about his decision to settle down in Ireland:

> Maybe I should start by stating that I am not a migrant – I am an "expat." That is how the English describe themselves when they settle down abroad, to differentiate themselves from cheap labour folk from Eastern Europe, don't they? Well, in that case, I will not give them the satisfaction of being inferior to them. I am an expat, too! Regarding my moving to Ireland, I guess that my history is slightly different from that of the vast majority of other Poles who came here. First of all, I didn't *have* to go, I *wanted* to. I am probably the only Pole who brought his own savings to Ireland. I had just given up a career in journalism; after twelve years in the mass media I was tired and burnt out … On the whole, I wanted fresh air, a new life. Anything new, as far away as possible from the world I had been living in for so many years. Far away from the rat race – and believe me, they call it a rat race for a reason.
>
> English was the only foreign language I could speak relatively well without any sense of shame, so the choice was obvious when they opened the job market in Western Europe for Eastern Europeans. England was a no-go area at that time. The terrorist attacks on the London tube had just occurred … Ireland seemed different, so I went to Ireland. I put on my best suit, my best coat, and carried an umbrella with a wooden handle. You see, my story is a bit different …[12]

The writers, however, realise that their positive attitude to migration is only one way of looking at the issue. In their works they depict a more varied picture of Polish people in the UK and Ireland by highlighting two opposing tendencies, one rooted in nationalism, where migrants try to recreate a home from home to shelter themselves from the foreignness of the British Isles, and the other emerging from cosmopolitism, where migrants eagerly, often too eagerly, give in to the pressure of assimilation to settle down in the new place.

The former kind of migrants, those who have very strong ties with their native land, leave their country of origin mainly for financial reasons. Not unlike Radek, an infantile degenerate in Marcin Wojnarowski's *Okrutny idiota albo prywatny* żart [*The Cruel Idiot or a Private Joke*], or Krzysztof, the repulsive leader of the Polish Club in Michał Wyszowski's collection of short stories *Na lewej stronie świata* [*On the Left Side of the World*], they speak very little or no English and focus on acquiring wealth they plan to take back to Poland. They have almost no interest in local culture, hiding from the world of the British or Irish

12 Kosmalska and Rostek, "Cultural Interrelations," 110.

in self-imposed Polish ghettos. With their lives centred around Polish shops, Polish restaurants, Polish clubs and the Polish church – in short, Polish places – they sentimentalise their native goods and customs while denigrating local values and traditions. That those characters are often, although not always, satirised for being uneducated, uncultured and narrow-minded indicates the scornful attitude of the writers towards this kind of migrant. At the opposite extreme are the latter type of newcomers, who zealously push aside their own culture to make space for richer, Western European traditions. In the manner of Magda, the shrewd drug dealer in A.M. Bakalar's *Madame Mephisto,* or Damian, the main character in Daniel Żuchowski's short story "To be on time," they feel no need to develop a sense of belonging to a particular place but, on the contrary, they break all the ties that might hold them back. Convinced that they can easily adapt to any new environment, they glorify everything that is foreign or local, while thumbing their nose at the world they have left behind.

These two approaches do not exclude but in fact complement each other: taken together, they evolve into a new idea of migrants whose transnational identity stretches out between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. The identity is dynamically reshaped by assimilation processes which make it possible for an individual to live in a local, multi-ethnic community but, on the other hand, it naturally remains anchored in that person's national narratives. Metaphorically speaking, migrants stand with one foot in their home country and the other in the place where they currently reside. By living in this two-point reference frame, they benefit from the knowledge and experience of both communities. The side-effect of this phenomenon is a feeling of non-belonging to any particular country, as if living away from home stripped people of their nationality and cast them adrift in a transnational virtual space. To the repeatedly posed question "Where do I belong?," the writers respond in ways which echo Piotr Surmaczyński in his *Wyspa Dreszczowców* [*Thriller Island*]: "Maybe, to a nature reserve where they keep creatures with no roots, those which belong nowhere."[13] The idea reappears in *Single* [*Single People*], for example, where Piotr Kępski states: "Bezprizorny, I don't belong to any world."[14] If we use the language of physics and say that migrant identity is located in a gravitational field, the objects in space which exert a force of gravitational attraction on that identity are the multi-ethnic cultures surrounding the migrant. Obviously, the magnitude of the force is dependent on age – the older people are, the less affected they become. In his short story "W stronę domu" ["Towards home"], Michał Wyszowski distinguishes three

13 Piotr Surmaczyński, *Wyspa Dreszczowców* [*Thriller Island*] (Gdynia, Novae Res, 2014), 85.

14 Piotr Kępski, *Single* [*Single People*] (Warszawa: Jirafa Roja, 2009), 270.

age groups: *Double-Home-Owners* comprise "grandfathers and grandmothers" who are tied to their country with a *Made in Poland* umbilical cord and, therefore, they divide everything in half, "money, time, even feelings sent to their homeland via broadband"; *No-Home-Owners*, in turn, are middle-age people who are too young (read too liberal and progressive) to live in Poland, and too old both to forget about the country where they grew up or to integrate fully in the place they have moved to; and *Children-of-European-Integration*, also known as *Hooligans-of-Free-Flow*, include twenty-year-olds who think of Poland as a holiday destination or their parents' home.[15]

As the speed of transportation between home and away, fostered by the proliferation of electronic media, creates the impression of proximity, of blurred national borders, of a shrinking world, migrants develop a feeling of being suspended in some virtual space between two countries. In *Ziemia wróżek* [*The Fairyland*], Krystian Ławreniuk compares this experience to "sneaking between one fairy-tale and another,"[16] while Wioletta Grzegorzewska reveals in "Czas mew" ["In the time of seagulls"]: "On this island, as if between dreams, I slowly turn, am twin."[17] The duality of their existence makes migrants locate their homeland in a virtual space characterised by fluidity, porosity and dislocation, where they can conceive their "private homeland" – shaped not by historical events such as wars, partitions or revolutions, but by the vicissitudes of their own lives. This invented land is not confined by any geographical, political or social borders. Piotr Czerwiński attempts to capture the elusive nature of this place in *Międzynaród* [*Internation*], where he writes: "Our homeland can be anything and anywhere. Our homeland might not exist at all. Maybe, Poland is not a country. Maybe, it is a state of mind."[18] Similarly, in his *Buty emigranta* [*The Emigrant's Shoes*], Ryszard Adam Gruchawka concludes that "our fatherland is a mental concept."[19] Living abroad has affected migrants' perception of their home country: it has become a product of their imagination, formed by their personal experiences. Although it is too early to argue that we have entered the era of transnational order or have become – as the

15 Michał Wyszowski, *Na lewej stronie świata* [*On the Left Side of the World*] (Warszawa: MG, 2010), 198 – all of the quotations come from the short story "W stronę domu" ["Towards home"].

16 Krystian Ławreniuk, *Ziemia wróżek* [*The Fairyland*] (Brzeg: Fundacja Rozwój, 2014), 153.

17 Wioletta Grzegorzewska, *Pamięć Smieny/Smena's Memory*, trans. Marek Kazmierski (London: Off-Press, 2011), 101.

18 Piotr Czerwiński, *Międzynaród* [*Internation*] (Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2011), 329.

19 Ryszard Adam Gruchawka, *Buty emigranta* [*The Emigrant's Shoes*] (Warszawa: Exlibris, 2007), 77.

title of Grzegorz Kopaczewski's novel suggests – members of a *Global Nation*,[20] there is a clear shift in Polish migrant literature from a more local concept of "country" to a more global, hybridised understanding of "homeland."

If we invoke sociological terminology, the cultural flow between the core (the UK and Ireland) and the semi-periphery (the homeland of Polish migrants) has turned into a powerful two-way process which has had the effect of remapping, of pushing forward the mental borders of Poland. It has brought cross-border exchanges, connections and practices to the attention of authors: processes which allow people to develop attachment to multiple locations around the world at once. By the same token, it has moved migrant writings away from a narrow focus on the home culture to include the geographies, histories and traditions of Western Europe to a much greater extent than before. Consequently, authors present a myriad of foreign locations, ethnically diverse characters and non-native traditions, describing them from the perspective of an insider, of someone who takes active part in unfolding events. The writers also emphasize that it is not historical or political commitments but culture that plays the most important role in sustaining ties between migrants and their homeland. Thus they advocate creating innovative, multifarious and socially engaged Polish literature and art. As Anna Wolf points out: "We don't have to fight any regime at present, so our patriotism manifests itself rather in our affection for culture."[21] By saying this, she does not suggest transporting Polish folklore, embellished with the crowned eagle, to the host country, but creating a mainstream culture that, on the one hand, will make it easier for other ethnic groups to understand Polish people and their traditions and, on the other, will broaden the horizons of people who live in Poland. In other words, she advocates creating transnational literature and art that embraces multi-locality, interacts with other cultures and combines national and cosmopolitan values.

The platform for producing such transnational writings is often the borderless space of the Internet. The narrator of Anna Łajkowska's *Cienie na wrzosowisku* [*Shadows Across Moorlands*] reveals on the opening page of her novel: "I wanted it to be a blog at first …"[22] Wioletta Grzegorzewska put such an idea into practice by setting up the blog *Pamięć Smieny/Smena's Memory*, where she makes observations which later inspire her poems and prose. Interviewed about her activity on the Internet, she said:

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20 Grzegorz Kopaczewski, *Global Nation. Obrazki z czasów popkultury* [*Global Nation. Snapshots of Pop-cultural Times*] (Wołowiec: Czarne, 2004).

21 Kosmalska and Rostek, "Cultural Interrelations," 130.

22 Anna Łajkowska *Cienie na wrzosowisku* [*Shadows Across Moorlands*] (Katowice: Damidos, 2013), 7.

> When I emigrated, I published a lot with online writing communities, such as *Nieszuflada*, because this was my only access to Polish readers … I observe that emigrants miss people who have stayed in their home country and they tend to become very active on the Internet when they move abroad.[23]

That online writing has exerted a great impact on Grzegorzewska's work becomes clear when we look at her publications. Her 2011 poetry collection *Pamięć Smieny/Smena's Memory* bears the same title as the poet's blog, while the 2012 chronicle, her *silva rerum*, entitled *Notatnik z wyspy* [*Notes from the Isle of Wight*], keeps a blog-like form and layout – the text is divided into short sections, each marked with a date. The diary covers the period between 2006 and 2012, in chronological order, from the time of the writer's arrival in the UK to the year of the book's release. Selected poems from *Notes from the Isle of Wight* and *Smena's Memory* were included in her 2014 book *Finite Formulae and Theories of Chance*, published under the pseudonym Wioletta Greg to make it easier for English-speaking readers to pronounce the author's name. The book received solid critical acclaim and was shortlisted for the prestigious Griffin Poetry Prize in Canada in 2015.

Not unlike Grzegorzewska, Daniel Żuchowski also started a website where he published excerpts from his short stories for a couple of months. The Irish literary portal, *Writing.ie*, became interested in this "work-in-progress" and featured it on their website. This, in turn, drew the attention of the organising committee of the Dublin Book Festival, one of the most popular literary events in Ireland, who invited the author to talk about his debut book. Lorraine Courtney's subsequent review of *The New Dubliners*[24] in *The Irish Times* noted that "… the writing is not always assured and it works better as a noisy, colourful celebration of contemporary Dublin than as a conventional narrative. Bawdy and boisterous, it's an important book by a writer perfectly tuned

23 Kosmalska, "Czuję się pisarką," 154.

24 The title of Daniel Żuchowski's book alludes to James Joyce's classic 1914 collection of short stories, *Dubliners*, where the author depicts the lives of city dwellers in the capital of Ireland. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the book's publication, a "sequel" was published, presenting the lives of contemporary Dubliners. Its editor, Oona Frawley, invited popular and critically acclaimed Irish writers, such as Roddy Doyle, Colum McCann, Joseph O'Connor and Maeve Binchy, to contribute a story to the volume. The outcome of their work, a celebration volume *New Dubliners*, was published in 2006. Apart from the above-mentioned references, the title of Daniel Żuchowski's book, *The New Dubliners*, alludes to a politically correct term, "The New Irish," that was used between 1946 and 1961 to describe Irish immigrants moving to the United States, and is now used in reference to post-accession migrants in order to mark the fact that they have become part of Irish society.

into the experiences of the new Irish."[25] Currently, we can follow Jan Krasnowolski's progress on his new volume *Współczucie dla diabła* [*Sympathy for the Devil*] by visiting his website. As the writer reveals there, the book will be produced in the form of a blog, which will motivate him to work towards its completion more regularly. Krasnowolski, Żuchowski and Grzegorzewska are just three out of many authors whose work has become, in a sense, "electronified." They use blogs as a writing tool, a space where they gather and organise their thoughts to publish them in book form later.

The moment of moving from the virtual world of blogs to publishing houses makes it evident how the writers' activity on the Internet affects their literary narrations. For instance, the first reviews reach authors while their work is still "in progress," readers having had the chance to send their comments via email or post them on various websites. Before the book appears in print, it has often been appraised already and is, to some extent, shaped by the readership. What also comes with the culture of blogging is an ethos of independence: since the authors set up the websites by themselves, it gives them unlimited control over the content and layout. They keep this freedom by relying largely on self-publishing or small, independent publishing houses (such as Fox Publishing, Papierowy Motyl, Radwan, Drugie Piętro, Piktor or Damidos), which is typical for contemporary migrant writers. Another similarity of blogs to the analysed writings is their journal- and journalism-like nature. According to Rebecca Blood's etymology of "blogs," the term dates back to the late 1990s and stems from "web journals" that Jorn Barger called "web-logs." Since Peter Merholz announced that he was going to pronounce the word as "wee-blogs," it got quickly shortened to "blogs."[26] In the monograph *Blogging, Citizenship, and the Future of Media*, Mark Tremayne observes that the two most common kinds of blogs are "online diaries," which follow the private stories of the bloggers, and "filter blogs," where the authors – in the hope of changing the socio-political situation – comment on current events in the world around them by "filtering" information from other sources. Which is why this kind of blog is described as an alternative form of journalism.[27] When we look at the content of the migrant books, it turns out that about ninety per cent of them are, in fact, a combination of these two types of blog. Memoirs of

25 Lorraine Courtney, "Bawdy and Boisterous: The New Dubliners," *The Irish Times*, July 5, 2014.

26 Rebecca Blood, "weblogs: a history and perspective," *rebecca's pocket*, September 7, 2000, accessed 2 November, 2015, http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html

27 Mark Tremayne, "Introduction: Examining the Blog – Media Relationship," in *Blogging, Citizenship, and the Future of Media*, ed. Mark Tremayne (London: Routledge, 2006), X.

Polish authors in the UK and Ireland are interlaced with their reflections on back-and-forth migrations and the dramatic situation in Poland: all of this includes numerous references to media coverage, which is contrasted with the reality. The writers, like bloggers, are usually personally engaged in the topics they tackle, and they therefore take on a subjective point of view in their descriptions. This leads to the dominant use of first-person narration in the majority of blogs and migrant books, but also to a distinct style of writing that Nina Wakeford and Kris Kohen define aptly as "spontaneous and revelatory." [28]

Some books are even divided into short, topic-orientated sections, which are reminiscent of blog postings, as in the case of Maria Budacz's *WOT.4* or Michał Wyszowski's *Na lewej stronie świata* [*On the Left Side of the World*]. The prevailing mode of blogging dictates that the postings be sequenced according to the date of publication and, accordingly, most of the analysed writers do not disrupt the chronology of their plot. What's more, blogging software allows the bloggers to upload a full range of files, such as written texts, photos, sound files, video clips, and hypertext links. Although the scope for multimedia use in books is obviously limited, we can track down some features – functioning like hyperlinks – that are more common in Polish migrant books than in works written in Poland. These include quotations from Skype and phone conversations, numerous emails, footnotes or dictionaries that provide translation from English, photo documentation, citations of song lyrics, reviews of the TV series *Londyńczycy* [*The Londoners*], and references to British, Irish and diasporic media news. Following a trend from the UK, writers also shoot video clips to promote their writing on the Internet – from amateur recordings, for example, Przemysław Kolasiński's films, to professional trailers, such as film materials by Jarek Sępek or Marek Kazmierski. So in the case of many migrant writings the creation process seems to go full circle: the books are first produced in cyberspace, then they arrive in a printing house, only to end up on the Internet again, where they are advertised and distributed. No wonder, then, that such a strong correlation between the virtual and real worlds has resulted in the development of the previously mentioned, numerous parallels between online and migrant writing.

This heavy reliance on the Internet by Polish writers living abroad has also affected their literary language. Just like the social media users, whose main aim is to get their message across, these writers tend to focus mainly on conveying the story and their observations, paying much more attention to the content than to the artistic form of their work. Their texts are therefore mostly

28 Nina Wakeford and Kris Cohen, "Fieldnotes in Public: Using Blogs for Research," in *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*, ed. Grant Blank, Nigel Fielding and Raymond M. Lee (London: SAGE, 2008), 308.

devoid of lengthy, convoluted descriptions of places, characters and the like, while the language tends to be colloquial, playful, explicit and abbreviated. Relatively short sentences, sparse in adjectives and adverbs, are interlarded with neologisms. For example, the narrator of Ireneusz Gębski's novel *W cieniu Sheratona* [*In the Shadow of the Sheraton*] works as a "kejpis," which is an acronym of the kitchen porter [/kei/+/pi/+s],[29] while funfair employees in Krystian Ławreniuk's *Ziemia wróżek* [*The Fairyland*] cannot wait to have a "rain off" – a day off work due to bad weather.[30] If we look at these linguistic features outside their literary context, they immediately bring to mind the language of instant messengers: Skype, Twitter or Facebook. In addition, living in Britain and Ireland's multi-cultural, predominantly English-speaking environment has naturally led to the creolization of the language that Polish migrants use on a day-to-day basis. In contrast to former generations of emigrant writers, who paid attention to preserving "the purity of the Polish language," contemporary authors tend to reflect the pidginised vernacular migrants actually use. Therefore, their writings are sprinkled with Anglicisms, loan-blends, translation equivalents, phonetic transcriptions and code-switching. Inspired by Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, Piotr Czerwiński wrote his 2009 novel *Przebiegum życiae* [*Conductum Lifae*] in this nascent, deliberately exaggerated, migrant dialect:

> Zapłacił dwa j u r k i to the h a p p y p e e p a l from A f r i c a i wyszedł na świeże powietrze, na którym akurat dla odmiany nie padało. Był szczęśliwy, myślał że wszystkie jego problemy przejdą do historii, a on sam rozpocznie nowe życie szybciej niż się spodziewał, w nowym b a j o b o n g o m l e c z n o - m i o d o w y m ś w i e c i e.[31] … Nie mieli szczęścia z pracą po studiach, ponieważ w B u l a n d z i e najlepszy sposób, żeby zostać politykiem, to nie mieć żadnej szkoły w ogóle, a oni mieli doktoraty. J o b w supermarkecie to raczej u s e r - f r i e n d l y eutanazja niż robota, z powodu p a m p e r s - p i s s e r pensji, więc uznali, że będzie mniej samobójczo, jeżeli pojadą do Anglii, upokarzać się za funty. Oboje byli zerami w dziedzinie języków obcych, ale Grzesiek miał l u c k a i znalazł j o b od zaraz.[32]

29 Ireneusz Gębski, *W cieniu Sheratona* [*In the Shadow of the Sheraton*] (Warszawa: Warszawska Firma Wydawnicza, 2011), 3.

30 Ławreniuk, *Ziemia* wróżek, 69.

31 Piotr Czerwiński, *Przebiegum życiae, czyli kartonowa sieć* [*Conductum Lifae or the Cardboard Web*] (Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2009), 106. The highlighted words illuminate the characteristics of the analysed dialect; they are not thus marked in the original text.

32 Ibid., 236.

The writer seasons his text with phrases borrowed from foreign languages, mainly English ("happy," "user-friendly," "job"), but also from Czech ("sakra") and from Arabic (Bulanda means Poland in Arabic); with Polonised English words ("lucka," "dewajsem" or "jurki," which is a term for the euro among the migrants in Ireland); with English-Polish clusters ("twice-a-tydzień"); with phonetic transcriptions ("peepal," "empe-sree"); with translation equivalents ("mleczno-miodowy świat" is a literal translation of the phrase "the land of milk and honey"); and with neologisms ("pampers-pisser" is an adjective implying "very low" wages and "bajobongo" is a name for Ireland, alluding to an exotic holiday place, a paradise). In his novel, Czerwiński has gathered and applied linguistic features that are also introduced, though in a more subtle way, by other contemporary migrant authors.

This dialect, skilfully captured in migrant books, explores not only the construction of the developing language of the Polish diaspora, but also, and even more importantly, the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic exchanges that occur under the forces of recent migration. If we look at the texts produced by Polish migrants, even the short excerpt from *Conductum Lifae* quoted above, we get a clear picture of how Western culture captivates writers' attention, stirs their interest in the Other, and boosts their imagination. This is why every single author from the sample group references cultural differences between Polish people and local citizens in a variety of life spheres. These range from trivial things, such as left-hand traffic, spongy bread, two taps per sink or softer water, to more general issues like the national mentality, male-female relationships or the ethnic make-up of society. Michał Wyszowski indicates those differences in the very title of his book by locating England, the place of action, *On the Left Side of the World.* For many migrants who left Poland, a country with a relatively homogeneous population, and moved to the UK or Ireland, this was their first ever experience of life in a multicultural metropolis of Western Europe. Hence the writers are interested in exploring how Polish people react to cultural heterogeneity and how their biases fare when confronted by other ethnic groups. Thus the characters share houses, work and spend their free time with representatives of different nationalities and, just as in real life, often end up developing closer relationships with migrants from other countries than with British or Irish people. The authors hide behind a veil of sarcasm in order to denounce the xenophobic behaviour of Polish people, which is rooted in narrow nationalism, and to show the advantages of endorsing the Other. Jarek Sępek devotes almost 300 pages of his book *W 80 dni dookoła* świata *(nie wyjeżdżając z Londynu)* [*Around the World in 80 Days (Without Leaving London)*] to exploring and celebrating multiculturalism. Following in the footsteps of Phileas Fogg, the protagonist of Jules Verne's novel, he makes a bet with the editor of *Geographical Magazine* that it will take him no

more than eighty days to find and document eighty representatives of different nationalities who live in the capital of the UK. The experiment is meant to prove, among other things, that London's ethnic diversity is a treasure. As the book was published in Polish and in Poland, we might assume that it was intended for Polish readers from the very start. Actually, out of over sixty migrant authors whose work I have analysed, only five wrote their books in English: A.M. Bakalar, Maria Jastrzębska, Wiktor Moszczyński, Marek Kazmierski and Daniel Żuchowski. The main reason for this is insufficient fluency in the foreign language, something the writers admit to openly, saying that they find it much easier to express themselves in Polish. But this means that their native culture is still a hugely dominant part of their identity; it acts as a prism through which they perceive and describe the outside world.

Members of the two previous waves of Polish emigration to England and Ireland – the first during World War II and the second in the 1980s, when martial law was introduced in Poland – cultivated their national identity by founding Polish Clubs, called Dom Polski [Polish House]. As the name suggests, they were like a home from home, little pockets of Poland in a strange land. They hosted a variety of weekend activities: Polish language classes for children, Sunday mass, dances, art exhibitions and literary evenings. The buildings usually housed a restaurant, a bar and a library. But when post-accession migrants arrived in the UK and Ireland, they thought Polish Clubs were outdated and fossilised time capsules fostering activities that had little to do with contemporary culture in Poland. So these newest arrivals have certainly not pushed up membership of the clubs, but instead established less formal artistic groups, such as KaMPe, Poetry London, E=Art or Interactive Writing Salon in Scotland. Interestingly enough, the previous role of Polish Clubs was partly assumed by Polish shops, which sprung up throughout the British Isles. According to the website uksimple.info, there are currently 319 such shops in operation.

As migrant novelists imply, some newcomers believe consumerism can be a remedy for homesickness: so when they miss home, they go shopping for Polish goods. In a number of books, for instance *Pokój z widokiem na Dunnes Stores* [*The Room with a View of Dunnes Stores*] by Łukasz Ślipko or *Dublin, moja polska karma* [*Dublin, My Polish Karma*] by Magdalena Orzeł, a separate chapter is devoted to the role Polish shops play in the life of the diaspora. The authors dwell, often with sarcastic undertones, on how these places support newcomers and foster patriotism: apart from selling Polish goods, the shops serve as employment agencies and cultural centres, disseminating information about the latest job offers, Polish concerts, art exhibitions or book launches. When Magdalena Zimny-Louis wanted to find out if people would be interested in her work, she left a few copies of *Emigracja uczuć* [*The Emigration of Feelings*] in the local shop in Ipswich and was pleased to discover that they sold out

within three days. In turn, *Kalendarz Easy Ridera* [*Easy Rider's Calendar*] by Konrad Jaskólski, a migrant who lives in the UK, can be purchased at a florist's in Łódź. This intersection of literary narratives and commerce shows how the economic system subsumes the products of culture. As migrant books started to circulate along with other goods, they became an integral part of the materialist world. In *Global Matters*, Paul Jay rightly points out that it is no longer possible "to make a clear distinction between exchanges that are purely material and take place in an economy of commodities and exchanges that are purely symbolic and take place in a cultural economy."[33] Economic flows propel cultural transfer, and *vice versa*.

What this reciprocal relationship leads to is greater commodification of migrant narratives than is the case with literature produced in Poland. All the more so since, as I have already mentioned, a number of the books in question were either self-published or released by small publishing houses, which means that migrant writers were frequently forced to simultaneously adopt the role of author, editor, agent and publisher. In many cases, attention has consequently shifted away from the artistic dimension of the writings to their social and anthropological functions. The imperative to portray recent migration experience "as it really was" became the guiding principle for many of the authors. To reach a relatively wide readership with their message, they invested a lot of time and effort in marketing. For example, Anna Wendzikowska began to heavily advertise her debut novel *300 poranków w Londynie* [*300 Mornings in London*] in 2011, even though seven years later the book has still not been published. This materialistic approach to producing and distributing books has resulted in a surge of migrant writing that has little aesthetic value but is full of social and cultural information, documenting an important period in contemporary Polish history. Reading it, we can see how the meaning of concepts like nationality, homeland, and patriotism is redefined, how old stereotypes are eroded and new ones shoulder them aside, how young people morph into European citizens, and how transnational culture comes into being.

Although migrants produce this culture in a sort of seclusion, parallel to the artistic activity in their homeland – mainly due to geographical distance – it is still closely connected with mainstream culture in their home country. The authors sustain ties with the literary milieu they have left behind by participating in Polish literary initiatives and organising events in cooperation with writers based in Poland. To give an example, Tomasz Mielcarek, moved to England ten years ago and has since taken part in a number of competitions in Poland and won several awards, including the Bierezin Literary

33 Paul Jay, *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2010), 56.

Prize in 2013. This enabled him to publish *Obecność/Presence,* his debut bilingual poetry collection. In 2010, Marek Kazmierski set up OFF-PRESS, an independent publishing house based in London, bringing together Polish and migrant authors to produce unique bilingual anthologies, such as *Free Over Blood,* a beautifully designed, hand-bound collection of poems. Currently, KaMPe in London and Dom Literatury in Łódź are considering joining forces to organise the next Puls Literatury Festival in both cities. Due to such multi-locale cooperation, Polish literature is "travelling" more often and being presented and interpreted in foreign, ethnically diverse contexts. This is especially true as organisers almost always make an effort to attract and engage with local communities. Aware that the audience might comprise a multicultural mix of people, the authors involved attempt to select topics and display them in such a way as to relate to a large spectrum of people.

The process of Polish literature acquiring more universal qualities is further accelerated by numerous literary initiatives aimed at forging international links. One of them is *The Enemies Project,* founded in the UK in 2010 by the British poet S.J. Fowler. Quoting from his website:

> It is a project that looks across nations, languages, genders and ethnicities as much as it does art forms and styles of poetry. It is the culmination of an exploration of the role and practice of the poet in the 21st century, and how that has shifted with new means of communication, language, technology and curatorial purview.[34]

Within the programme, poets are paired up and commissioned to collaboratively write poems which they later perform live at specially organised readings. So far, there have been two such events where Polish poets (many of whom were migrant authors, e.g., Tomasz Mielcarek, Grzegorz Wróblewski and Piotr Gwiazda, among others) cooperated with British authors. They then presented the fruits of their collaboration – poems in English – at the Rich Mix Arts Centre in London. A similar format was used by *Once Upon a Deadline*, a writing marathon originally devised by the Australian writer and filmmaker Robert Mac, staged at the 2011 edition of the Polish Arts Festival in Southend-on-Sea. Polish writers (again many of them migrants, including Piotr Czerwiński, Kajetan Herdyński and Wioletta Grzegorzewska) were coupled with UK authors and sent on a trip around the festival town. While sightseeing, the marathon participants had to write a 1,500-word short story in English and later that same day read it aloud at a live public event in Cliff-town Studios at the University of Essex. The short stories were subsequently

34 S.J. Fowler, *The Enemies Project*: www.theenemiesproject.com, accessed November 2, 2015, http://www.stevenjfowler.com/#/the-enemies-project/

collected and published by OFF-PRESS. An expanded format of this project, involving British writers being sent to Poland and Polish writers visiting the UK, was successfully staged a year later.

In transnational practices, such as those above, literary narratives become subject to cultural and linguistic translation from the moment of inception. The writers involved are taken out of their comfort zones and sent to a foreign place where they are asked to assume and assimilate the Other into their own cultural frameworks, in order to produce original, innovative pieces of writing. Their task is to take in elements which are alien, then appropriate, neutralise, reconfigure and recreate them in such a way that they seem foreign and familiar at the same time; and this is not the end of the challenge, because the outcome of this labour has to be expressed in a language that is not native to the authors. As Paweł Gawroński, one of the participants of *Once Upon a Deadline,* admitted:

> It is a very funny experience when you get to the stage where your vocabulary in your mother tongue is quite rich and then you end up in the country where you lose the greatest asset you've ever had. It's suddenly gone. And you've got two choices: you either jump off the bridge or you start to discover a new quality of language.[35]

This quality rejuvenates writing style and is a "side-effect" of translating when one rephrases, reworks and remodels language to convey an original thought in foreign words. In the process, mother tongues and foreign languages interact, each bringing with them different means of expression, resulting in a comprehensive and unconventional description of reality. From the very start, the migrant literary narratives are produced in those transcultural and multilingual spaces where the writer is positioned among multifarious nationalities, histories, values, traditions and knowledge sets. This naturally creates the foundation for a more diversified, complex and hybrid literature. All the more so because it has become quite common for literary texts to be showcased as part of large-scale artistic initiatives such as festivals, where they are presented alongside, together with or in the foreground of art exhibitions, concerts, theatre productions and film screenings. One can therefore talk about a sort of combined artistic, rather than solely literary, production. This multidisciplinary approach is also employed by migrant writers when they promote their own work. At the book launch of *Piękni ludzie* [*Beautiful People*] in Birmingham, many of those who contributed to the anthology chose to read out their texts while music or a film animation was played in the

35 The quotation comes from a promotional video for the collection of short stories *Once Upon a Deadline*. It was available on the OFF-PRESS Publishing House's website: http://off-press.org/main/books/once-upon-a-deadline/, accessed November 2, 2015.

background. And some of the poems were performed by professional actors. The eclectic structure of these events explores the expansive potentiality of combining different artistic media across nations, cultures and languages in order to bring out new forms, styles and themes in literature.

With an increasing number of migrant books on the Polish market being written outside the state's borders, often in more than one location, one can risk concluding that there has been a transnational turn in Polish literature. What are the grounds for such a view? The expansion of EU borders, along with increased availability of cheap flights, have led to Polish contemporary writing being more and more often produced in a range of geographical, historical, cultural and linguistic spaces. The texts then function simultaneously in multifarious social and literary systems, and should be analysed in relation to such. That these writings belong to different contexts is confirmed by the interest they generate among critics and scholars worldwide. 2010, for instance, saw the publication of *Facing the East in the West: Images of Eastern Europe in British Literature, Film and Culture,* a monograph produced under the Rodopi imprint in Amsterdam. And a year later, Joanna Rostek and Dirk Uffelmann, both working at the University of Passau in Germany, compiled and edited a collection of essays on *Contemporary Polish Migrant Culture and Literature in Germany, Ireland and the UK.* Anyone attempting to analyse migrant narratives should take into account the profound effect the authors' reliance on the Internet for communication and online writing exerted on the form and language of their books. Moreover, it is worth looking at how closer economic and social relationships between Poland and Western Europe are providing new spaces and new ways of creating literary narratives (as part of transnational projects), their advertising (by combining literary, music and art events) and the dissemination of books (via Polish shops, publishing houses and literary groups abroad). Should these aspects be ignored while interpreting migrant writing, their meaning and value will be narrowed, distorted, and possibly misunderstood. Anyone who wants to analytically read the books needs to include those perspectives in their mode of literary interpretation. With certain texts there will also be a need to shift attention from aesthetics to their social and anthropological functions, in order to examine how they synthesize elements of multiple places and nationalities, how they become engaged in a multifaceted exploration of intersecting effects of migration and globalization, how they rework the issues of trauma and memory, and how they express transnational identities and experiences. To conclude on a positive note, among the many texts lacking in artistic value one can also increasingly find *rara avises* such as *Guguły* [*Swallowing Mercury*] by Wioletta Grzegorzewska and *Angole* [*Brits*] by Anna Winnicka, both of which were shortlisted for the 2015 Nike Prize, one the most prestigious literary awards in Poland.

Appendix 1: Bibliography of Polish Migration Writing since 2004

The following bibliography encompasses 215 works that have provided the foundation for the analysis and conclusions drawn in this PhD thesis. These texts were published by Polish authors between 2004 and 2024. The works fulfil one of two conditions: they are either authored by Polish migrants who lived or still live in Britain or Ireland, or they tackle the topic of post-accession migration of Poles to the British Isles. For clarity, the bibliography is divided into two sections according to the country: ***WORKS BY POLISH AUTHORS IN THE UK*** and ***WORKS BY POLISH AUTHORS IN IRELAND***. These sections are further divided into two subsections: FICTION WRITING and NON-FICTION WRITING. The Fiction Writing section is arranged into three groups: *PROSE, POETRY* and *DRAMA*. Although most of the works in this bibliography are written in Polish, there are also texts published in English and bilingual Polish-English publications. Works that are available in English are indicated by the addition of this information in parentheses. At the end of the appendix, there are graphics that analyse the works listed in the bibliography.

WORKS BY POLISH AUTHORS IN THE UK

FICTION WRITING

PROSE

1. Bakalar, A.M. *Madame Mephisto*. London: Stork Press, 2012. (in English)
2. Bakalar, A.M. *Children of Our Age*. London: Jantar Publishing, 2017. (in English)
3. Bakalar, A.M. "Whatever makes you sleep at night", Wasafiri, 28:3, 2013, 35-38, DOI: 10.1080/02690055.2013.802432 (in English)
4. Bas, Ania. *Odd Hours*. Croydon: Welbeck, 2022. (in English)
5. Bednarska, Agnieszka. *Emigracja uczuć*. Zakrzewo: Replika, 2012.
6. Bednarska, Agnieszka. *Wszystko przed nami*. Zakrzewo: Replika, 2012.
7. Bednarska, Agnieszka. *Płaczący chłopiec*. Wołowiec: Black Publishing, 2015.
8. Bednarska, Agnieszka. *Dwa oblicza*. Świdnica: Zaklęty papier, 2017.
9. Bednarska, Agnieszka. *Zanim się obudzę.* Poznań: Media Rodzina, 2019.
10. Bednarska, Agnieszka. *Piętno Katriny*. Poznań: Media Rodzina, 2021.
11. Bednarska, Agnieszka. *Zabierz dzieci, wyjedź z miasta*. Poznań: Media Rodzina, 2022.
12. Bednarska, Agnieszka. *Taki piękny most*. Olsztyn: Seqoja, 2023.
13. Budacz, Maria. *WOT. 4*. Warszawa: Papierowy Motyl, 2013.
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16. Czul, Kamila. *Pani Kebab. Opowieść polskiej emigrantki*. Warszawa: Czerwone i Czarne, 2017.
17. Czartoryska, Wiesława (ed.). *Wyfrunęli*. Nowa emigracja o sobie. Łomża: Stopka, 2011.
18. Dale, Agnieszka. "Legoland." In *Conradology*. Ed. Becky Harrison and Magda Raczyńska. Manchester: Comma Press, 2017. (in English)
19. Dale, Agnieszka. *Fox Season: and Other Short Stories*. London: Jantar Publishing, 2017. (in English)

20. Fice, Łucja. *Przeznaczenie*. Warszawa: Warszawska Firma Wydawnicza, 2012.
21. Fice, Łucja. *Wyspa starców*. Warszawa: Warszawska Firma Wydawnicza, 2013.
22. Fice, Łucja. *Za kryształowym lustrem. Wspomnienia opiekunki*. Warszawa: Warszawska Firma Wydawnicza, 2017.
23. Fice, Łucja. *Druga strona grzechu*. Warszawa: Warszawska Firma Wydawnicza, 2019.
24. Gębski, Ireneusz. *W cieniu Sheratona*. Warszawa: Warszawska Firma Wydawnicza, 2011.
25. Gębski, Ireneusz. *Moja żmija*. Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 2013.
26. Gębski, Ireneusz. *Od moroszki po morwę*. Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 2014.
27. Greg, Wioletta. *Swallowing Mercury*. Trans. Eliza Marciniak. London: Portobello Books, 2017. (in English)
28. Greg, Wioletta. *Accommodations*. Trans. Jennifer Croft. San Francisco: Transit Books, 2019. (in English)
29. Grzegorzewska, Wioletta. *Notatnik z wyspy*. Warszawa: eMedia, 2012.
30. Grzegorzewska, Wioletta. *Guguły*. Wołowiec: Czarne, 2014.
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33. Grzegorzewska, Wioletta. *Wilcza rzeka*. Warszawa: W.A.B., 2021.
34. Grzegorzewska, Wioletta. *Tajni dyrygenci chmur*. Warszawa: W.A.B., 2024.
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37. Johnson, Ada. *Kalendarz z dziewuchami*. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 2019.
38. Johnson, Ada. *Kronika strasznego dworku czyli wakacje z dziewuchami*. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 2020.
39. Johnson, Ada. *Z duszą na ramieniu, czyli święta z dziewuchami*. Mikołów: Wydawnictwa Videograf SA, 2022.
40. Johnson, Ada. *Krótsze ramię trójkąta. Tom 1: Elka*. Mikołów: Wydawnictwa Videograf SA, 2023.
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44. Kazmierski, Marek (ed.). *Once Upon a Deadline*. London: Off-Press, 2012. (in English)
45. Kępski, Piotr. *Single*. Warszawa: Jirafa Roja, 2009.
46. Kopaczewski, Grzegorz. *Global Nation*. Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2004.
47. Koziarski, Daniel. *Socjopata w Londynie*. Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka, 2007.
48. Krasnowolski, Jan. *Afrykańska elektronika*. Kraków: Ha!art, 2013.
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54. Lytek-Dehiles, Magdalena. *Po każdej burzy świeci słońce*. Self-Published, 2021.
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57. Łajkowska, Anna. *Pensjonat na wrzosowisku*. Katowice: Damidos, 2012.
58. Łajkowska, Anna. *Wrzosowa dziewczyna*. Katowice: Damidos, 2015.
59. Ławreniuk, Krystian. *Ziemia wróżek*. Brzeg: Fundacja Rozwój, 2014.
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61. Martynowska, Ada. *Karpie, łabędzie i Big Ben*. Katowice: Sonia Draga, 2009.
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64. Miklasz, Adam. *Polska szkoła boksu*. Powieść *emigracyjna*. Kraków: Skrzat, 2009.
65. Mucha, Grzegorz. *London Eye – kroniki szczęśliwe*. Gdynia: Novae Res, 2013.
66. Mucha, Grzegorz. *Horyzont zdarzeń*. Warszawa: Rozpisani.pl, 2020.
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79. Suskiewicz, Łukasz. *egri bikaver*. Szczecin-Brzeszcze: Wydawnictwo Forma, 2009.
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88. Wiśniewska, Monika. *Polish Girl: In Pursuit of the English Dream.* Amazon: Self-Publishing, 2018. (in English)
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13. Jastrzębska, Maria*. I'll be Back Before You Know It*. Brighton: Pighog, 2008. (in English)
14. Jastrzębska, Maria*. Everyday Angels*. Hove: Waterloo Press, 2009. (in English)
15. Jastrzębska, Maria. *At the Library of Memories*. Hove: Waterloo Press, 2013. (in English)
16. Jastrzębska, Maria. *Cedry z Walpole Park – Wiersze Wybrane/The Cedars of Walpole Park – Selected Poems*. Brzeg: Stowarzyszenie Żywych Poetów, 2015. (in English)
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26. Mickiewicz, Anna Maria. *Shades of the Earth*. Lincoln: Impspired, 2024. (in English)
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28. Mielcarek, Tomasz. *Przejazdem*. Łódź: Łódzki Dom Literatury, 2020.
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33. Pawłowski, Jerzy. *Poza domem*. Tolkmicko: Radwan, 2010.
34. Siemieńczyk, Adam. *Piękni ludzie*. Warszawa: IBiS, 2012.
35. Sławiński, Aleksander. *Manifest współczesności*. Rybnik: Wydawnictwo Mart-Gra, 2013.
36. Sławiński, Aleksander. *Jednorazowy towar*. London: Biblioteczka KaMPe przy Związku Pisarzy Polskich na Obczyźnie, 2016.
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39. Smolarek, Iza. *Obca*. Warszawa: Fundacja Duży Format, 2021.
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42. Studzinska, Agnieszka. *Branches of a House*. Swindon: Shearsman Books, 2021. (in English)
43. Winniczuk, Grażyna. *Podglądanie ciszy/Spying on silence*. Tolkmicko: Radwan, 2012. (in English)
44. Wróbel, Aleksy. *Ziarenka czasu*. Warlingham: Adatree Publishing, 2011.
45. Wróbel, Aleksy. *Widok przez brudną szybę*. London: Biblioteczka KaMPe przy Związku Pisarzy Polskich na Obczyźnie, 2017.
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<u>WORKS BY POLISH AUTHORS IN IRELAND</u>

FICTION WRITING

PROSE

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11. Bizuk, Agata. *Pożegnanie z Zieloną 13*. Warszawa: Dlaczemu, 2022.
12. Bizuk, Agata. *Głodni*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Inne, 2023.
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Appendix 2: Graphic Analysis of the Bibliography

The following graphics analyse the works collected in the bibliography. The first graph illustrates the annual publication count of texts within the corpus, while the second chart visualises the prominence of various genres and enables a comparison of the collected material between the UK and Ireland.

Graph 1: The number of Polish migration works within the corpus published annually

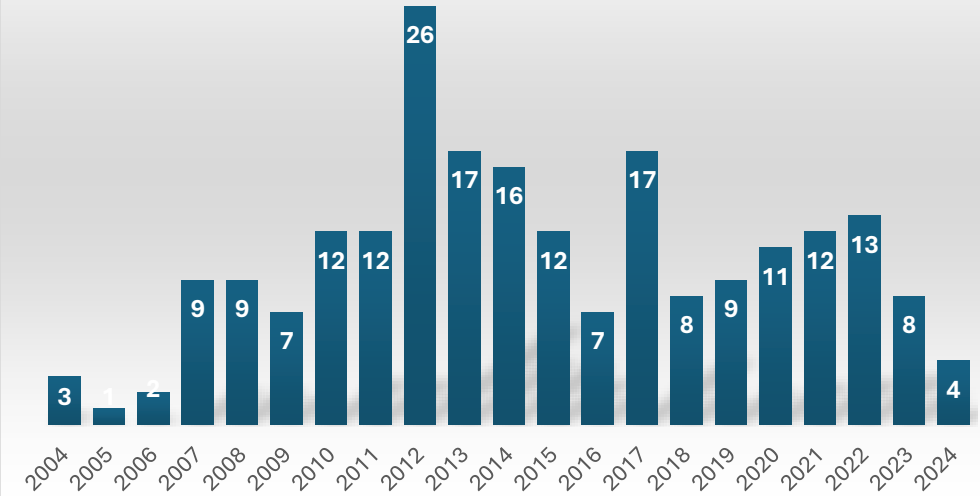
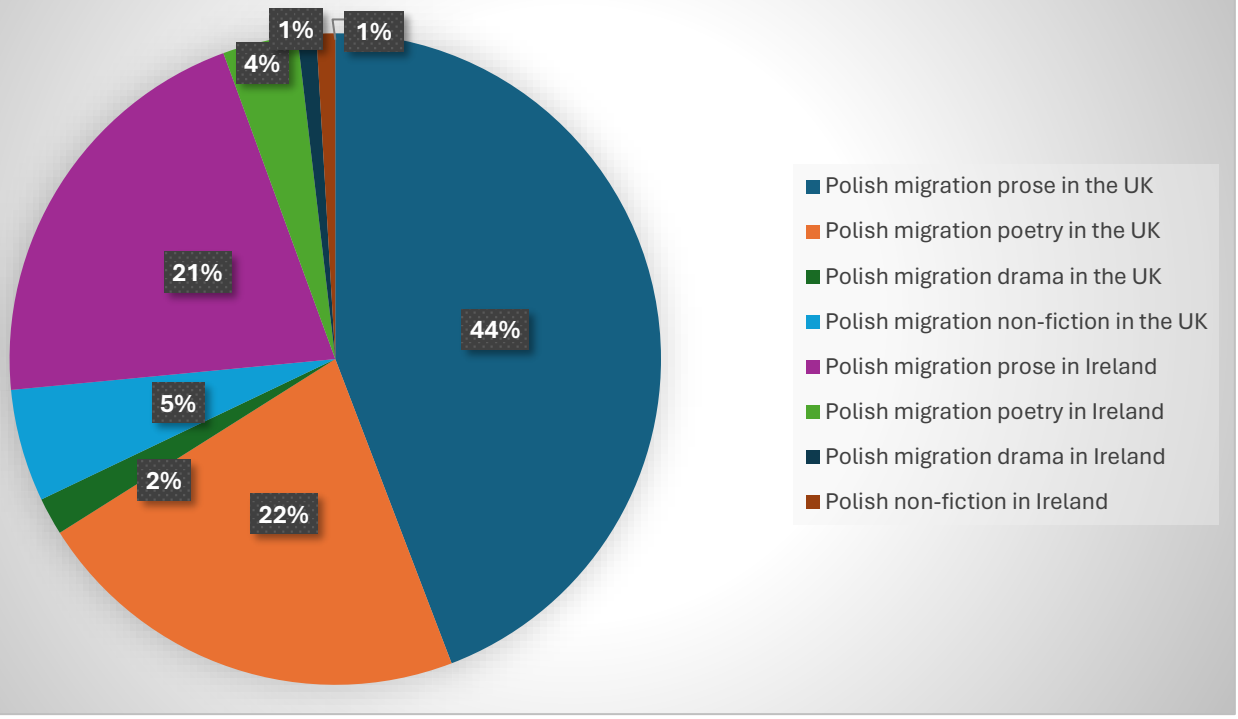


Chart 1: Various genres within the corpus



Appendix 3: Questionnaire for Polish Writers

Polska literatura migracyjna po 2004 roku

Szanowni Państwo

Od prawie roku prowadzimy na Uniwersytecie Łódzkim projekt naukowy "Polska literatura (e)migracyjna w Irlandii i Wielkiej Brytanii po roku 2004" finansowany przez Narodowe Centrum Nauki w Krakowie. Projekt ma na celu zgromadzenie, przebadanie i spopularyzowanie polskiej twórczości literackiej powstającej w Anglii, Walii, Szkocji i Irlandii. Wynikiem działań badawczych będzie archiwum wirtualne oraz monografia.

Niniejszy kwestionariusz posłuży do określenia wpływu mobilności polskich twórców na ich dzieła, redefinicji utrwalonych w naszej kulturze pojęć oraz zaobserwowania zjawisk kształtujących współczesne życie kulturowo-literackie Polonii na Wyspach. Będzie również pomocny przy analizie Państwa twórczości, szczególnie w kontekście biograficznym, społecznym i artystycznym.

Zebrane w kwestionariuszu dane będą chronione, tzn. nie zostaną przypisane konkretnej osobie. Jeśli będziemy chcieli wykorzystać jakiekolwiek zamieszczone w nim informacje, podając tożsamość autora/autorki, zwrócimy się najpierw do Państwa z prośbą o akceptację. W innym wypadku zebrane dane zostaną wykorzystane jedynie w celu sformułowania i udokumentowania tez badawczych.

Gdyby wśród pytań znalazły się takie, na które Państwo woleliby nie udzielać odpowiedzi, prosimy je ominąć. W razie pytań proszę o kontakt:+48 692 281 299

Bardzo dziękuję za współpracę,

Joanna Kosmalska

I. SYLWETKA

1. Dane statystyczne

Rok urodzenia	
Obecnie wykonywany zawód/zawody	

2.

Rok wyjazdu z Polski	
Kraj i miejscowość	
Rok powrotu do Polski	

3.

Rok wyjazdu z Polski	
Kraj i miejscowość	
Rok powrotu do Polski	

4. Jak Pan/Pani ocenia stopień:

Proszę ocenić w skali 1 (bardzo niski) - 5 (bardzo wysoki). Każda wartość może być użyta tylko raz.

	1. Bardzo niski	2.	3.	4.	5. Bardzo wysoki
swojego zintegrowania ze społeczeństwem kraju przyjmującego?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
zadowolenia obywateli państwa przyjmującego z napływu Polaków?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
otwartości społeczeństwa brytyjskiego na imigrantów?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
otwartości społeczeństwa irlandzkiego na imigrantów?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
zadowolenia ze swojej obecnej sytuacji ekonomicznej?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
zadowolenia ze swojej obecnej sytuacji zawodowej?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Czy planuje Pan/Pani powrót na stałe do Polski?

- ☐ tak
- ☐ nie
- ☐ nie wiem

6. Które z poniższych czynników wpłynęły na Pana/Pani decyzję o wyjeździe?

Proszę zaznaczyć wszystkie odpowiedzi, które dotyczą.

- ☐ lepsze warunki dla rozwoju zawodowego
- ☐ poprawa warunków życia
- ☐ poznanie partnera/partnerki z kraju przyjmującego
- ☐ większa tolerancja dla moich poglądów
- ☐ podjęcie kształcenia za granicą
- ☐ nauka języka obcego
- ☐ otrzymanie oferty pracy za granicą
- ☐ zmęczenie sytuacją polityczno-ekonomiczną w kraju
- ☐ inne (proszę wymienić jakie):
- ☐
- ☐

7. Jak ocenia Pan/Pani swój stopień znajomości języka angielskiego:
Proszę ocenić w skali 1 (bardzo niski) - 5 (bardzo wysoki). Każda wartość może być użyta tylko raz.

	1. bardzo niski	2.	3.	4.	5. bardzo wysoki
	○	○	○	○	○

II. TWÓRCZOŚĆ

Odpowiedzi w tej części kwestionariusza powinny dotyczyć Pana/Pani twórczości powstałej podczas pobytu za granicą, lub dotyczącej zjawiska migracji.

8. Proszę określić wpływ niżej wymienionych aspektów na Pana/Pani twórczość.

	1. nie miały żadnego wpływu	2.	3.	4.	5. miały znaczący wpływ
własne doświadczenia na Wyspach					
doświadczenia polskich znajomych/rodziny, którzy wyjechali z kraju					
doświadczenia znajomych/rodziny, którzy pozostali w Polsce					
historie zasłyszane w mediach (gazetach, radio, telewizji)					
historie zasłyszane od brytyjskich/ irlandzkich znajomych					
nowe miejsce					
twórczość innych pisarzy (proszę wymienić jakich)					
inne (proszę wymienić jakie i określić ich wpływ)					

9. Do jakich czytelników kieruje Pan/Pani swoją twórczość?
Proszę zaznaczyć wszystkie odpowiedzi, które dotyczą.

Polaków	
Irlandczyków	
Brytyjczyków	
Innych narodowości (proszę wymienić jakich):	

10. **W jakim języku publikuje Pan/Pani swoje utwory?**
Proszę zaznaczyć wszystkie odpowiedzi, które dotyczą.

polskim	
angielskim	
innym (proszę wymienić jakim):	

11. **Prosimy o wymienienie Pana/Pani publikacji książkowych- drukowanych i elektronicznych - powstałych podczas pobytu za granicą lub traktujących o zjawisku współczesnej migracji.**
Prosimy o określenie rodzaju publikacji poprzez wpisanie D dla publikacji drukowanych, E dla elektronicznych oraz D/E jeśli publikacja ukazała się w obu wersjach.

	tytuł	wydawca	rok wydania	rodzaj publikacji

12. **Prosimy o wymienienie Pana/Pani utworów, które ukazały się w publikacjach zbiorowych po 2004 roku i mówią o doświadczeniu emigracyjnym.**
Prosimy o określenie rodzaju publikacji poprzez wpisanie D dla publikacji drukowanych, E dla elektronicznych oraz D/E jeśli publikacja ukazała się w obu wersjach.

	tytuł utworu	tytuł antologii, magazynu, itp.	wydawca	rok wydania	rodzaj publikacji

13. **Czy Pan/Pani jest aktywny/a literacko w internecie? Czy Pan/Pani prowadzi bloga, publikuje swoje utwory na portalach społecznościowych, itp.?**
Jeśli tak, prosimy o podanie adresu strony internetowej oraz określenie formy aktywności.

	adres strony internetowej	forma aktywności, np. blog

14. **W jakich wydarzeniach kulturalno-literackich brał/a Pan/Pani udział od roku 2004?**
Definicja wydarzenia kulturalnego obejmuje wszelkiego rodzaju wieczory autorskie, festiwale, imprezy promujące, konferencje, konkursy, przedstawienia, spotkania z czytelnikami, itp.

tytuł wydarzenia	organizator	rodzaj wydarzenia (np. konkurs)	miejsce	rok

15. **Czy jest Pan/Pani członkiem organizacji literackich, kulturalnych, politycznych lub społecznych? Jeśli tak, prosimy o ich wymienienie.**
Definicja organizacji obejmuje stowarzyszenia pisarzy, organizacje polonijne na Wyspach, wydawnictwa, partie polityczne, inicjatywy społeczne, itp.

	nazwa organizacji	rodzaj organizacji	rok przystąpienia do organizacji	kraj, w którym organizacja ma siedzibę	Nie jestem członkiem/członkinią żadnej organizacji.

16. **Czy Pan/Pani czuje się pisarzem/pisarką/poetą/poetką/dramaturgiem:**
Prosimy o zaznaczenie wszystkich odpowiedzi, które dotyczą.

emigracyjnym	
polskim	
brytyjskim	
szkockim	
walijskim	
irlandzkim	
kosmopolitycznym	
innym (proszę określić jakim):	

III. Opinie

W tej części kwestionariusza prosimy Państwa o wyrażenie swojego zdania w odniesieniu do podanych zagadnień. Interesuje nas nie tyle obiektywna ocena rzeczywistości, ile Pana/Pani subiektywne odczucia.

18. **Który z niżej wymienionych krajów wymieniłby/wymieniłaby Pan/Pani jako swoją ojczyznę?**
Prosimy o zaznaczenie wszystkich odpowiedzi, które dotyczą?

Polska	
Wielka Brytania	
Irlandia	
Walia	
Szkocja	
Anglia	
Inne miejsce (proszę podać jakie):	
Nie czuję, że konkretne miejsce jest moją ojczyzną	

21. **Jak wyjazd z kraju wpłynął na postrzeganie przez Pana/Panią rodziny?**

22. W jakim stopniu czuje się Pan/Pani częścią następujących środowisk literackich?
Proszę ocenić w skali 1 -5. Każda wartość może być użyta tylko raz.

	1. w dużym stopniu	2.	3.	4.	5. w niewielkim stopniu	nie jestem częścią tego środowiska
polskiego						
brytyjskiego						
irlandzkiego						
walijskiego						
szkockiego						
polonijnego						
lokalnego (życia literackiego w Pana/Pani obecnej miejscowości zamieszkania):						
innego (prosimy określić jakiego):						

23. Gdyby mieli Państwo jakieś uwagi/komentarze/spostrzeżenia będziemy wdzięczni za ich wpisanie poniżej.

Dziękujemy za wypełnienie kwestionariusza.

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for Organisations

Polska literatura emigracyjna po 2004 roku

Szanowni Państwo

Od prawie roku prowadzimy na Uniwersytecie Łódzkim projekt naukowy "Polska literatura emigracyjna w Irlandii i Wielkiej Brytanii po roku 2004" finansowany przez Narodowe Centrum Nauki w Krakowie. Projekt ma na celu zgromadzenie, przebadanie i spopularyzowanie polskiej twórczości literackiej powstającej w Anglii, Walii, Szkocji i Irlandii. Wynikiem działań badawczych będzie archiwum wirtualne oraz monografia.

Niniejszy kwestionariusz posłuży do określenia wpływu mobilności polskich twórców na ich dzieła, redefinicji utrwalonych w naszej kulturze pojęć oraz zaobserwowania zjawisk kształtujących współczesne życie kulturowo-literackie Polonii na Wyspach.

Zebrane w kwestionariuszu dane będą chronione, tzn. nie zostaną przypisane konkretnej osobie. Jeśli będziemy chcieli wykorzystać jakiekolwiek zamieszczone w nim informacje, zwrócimy się najpierw do Państwa z prośbą o akceptację. W innym wypadku zebrane dane zostaną wykorzystane jedynie w celu sformułowania i udokumentowania tez badawczych.

Gdyby wśród pytań znalazły się takie, na które Państwo woleliby nie udzielać odpowiedzi, prosimy je ominąć. W razie pytań proszę o kontakt:+48 692 281 299.

Bardzo dziękuję za współpracę,

Joanna Kosmalska

I. O ORGANIZACJI

1. Dane

Adres	
Nazwa organizacji	
Rok założenia organizacji	
Źródła finansowania	

2. Zarząd organizacji

Prosimy o podanie osób prowadzących organizację od jej założenia.

3. Członkowie organizacji

Prosimy o podanie obecnego stanu (liczba członków organizacji)

4. Zakładane cele organizacji

5. Co było inspiracją/motorem do założenia organizacji?

6. Jakie są oczekiwania Polaków wobec organizacji?

7. Do kogo skierowana jest działalność organizacji?

Proszę zaznaczyć wszystkie odpowiedzi, które dotyczą.

Polaków	☐
Irlandczyków	☐
Brytyjczyków	☐
Innych narodowości (proszę wymienić jakich):	☐
	☐

8. Kto zazwyczaj uczestnicy w organizowanych przez Państwa stowarzyszenie wydarzeniach?

Prosimy o podanie przybliżonej wartości procentowej.

Polacy	☐
Irlandczycy	☐
Brytyjczycy	☐
Inne narodowości (proszę wymienić jakie):	☐

9. **Jak ocenia Pan/Pani stopień zainteresowania organizacją wśród Polonii**
Proszę ocenić w skali 1 (bardzo niski) - 5 (bardzo wysoki). Każda wartość może być użyta tylko raz. W przypadku organizacji prosimy o podanie przybliżonej liczby odbiorców, w przypadku teatru – widzów, itd.

	1. bardzo niski	2.	3.	4.	5. bardzo wysoki
	○	○	○	○	○

przybliżona liczba odbiorców

10. **W jakim języku odbywają się najczęściej spotkania?**
Prosimy o podanie przybliżonej wartości procentowej.

polskim	
angielskim	
polskim i angielskim	
innym (proszę wymienić jakim i podać wartość procentową):	

11. **W jaki sposób organizacja promuje swoją działalność? Czy ma stronę internetową, prowadzi bloga, promuje wydarzenia kulturalno-literackie na portalach społecznościowych, itp?**
Jeśli tak, prosimy o podanie adresu strony internetowej oraz określenie formy aktywności.

	adres strony internetowej	forma aktywności, np. blog, reklama

12. **Jakie wydarzenia kulturalno-literackie (współ)organizowało Państwa stowarzyszenie od roku 2004?**
Definicja wydarzenia kulturalnego obejmuje wszelkiego rodzaju wieczory autorskie, festiwale, imprezy promujące, konferencje, konkursy, przedstawienia, spotkania z czytelnikami, itp.

	tytuł wydarzenia	organizatorzy	rodzaj wydarzenia (np. konkurs)	miejsce	rok

II. OPINIE

W tej części kwestionariusza prosimy Państwa o wyrażenie swojego zdania w odniesieniu do podanych zagadnień. Interesuje nas nie tyle obiektywna ocena rzeczywistości, ile Pana/Pani subiektywne odczucia.

13. Które z poniższych czynników najczęściej wpływają na decyzję Polaków o wyjeździe?

Prosimy o podanie przybliżonej wartości procentowej.

lepsze warunki dla rozwoju zawodowego	
poprawa warunków życia	
poznanie partnera/partnerki z kraju przyjmującego	
większa tolerancja dla ich poglądów	
podjęcie kształcenia za granicą	
nauka języka obcego	
otrzymanie oferty pracy za granicą	
zmęczenie sytuacją polityczno-ekonomiczną w kraju	
inne (proszę wymienić jakie):	

14. Jak ocenia Pan/Pani stopień:

Prosimy ocenić w skali 1(bardzo niski) - 5 (bardzo wysoki). Każda wartość może być użyta tylko raz.

	1. bardzo niski	2.	3.	4.	5. bardzo wysoki
zintegrowania Polaków ze społeczeństwem kraju przyjmującego					
zadowolenia obywateli Państwa przyjmującego z napływu Polaków					
otwartości społeczeństwa brytyjskiego na imigrantów					
otwartości społeczeństwa irlandzkiego na imigrantów					
zadowolenia Polaków ze ich sytuacji ekonomicznej					
zadowolenia Polaków z ich obecnej sytuacji zawodowej					

15. Jak ocenia Pan/Pani stopień znajomości języka angielskiego wśród Polaków w kraju przyjmującym:
Proszę ocenić w skali 1 (bardzo niski) - 5 (bardzo wysoki). Każda wartość może być użyta tylko raz.

	1. bardzo niski	2.	3.	4.	5. bardzo wysoki
	○	○	○	○	○

16. Jak ocenia Pan/Pani stopień zainteresowania Polonii literaturą:
Proszę ocenić w skali 1 -5. Każda wartość może być użyta tylko raz.

	1. znikome	2.	3.	4.	5. duże	brak zainteresowania
polską, powstającą w kraju						
brytyjską						
irlandzką						
polską, powstającą za granicą						
inną (prosimy określić jaką):						

17. Jak ocenia Pan/Pani stopień zainteresowania Irlandczyków/Brytyjczyków polską literaturą?
Proszę ocenić w skali 1 -5. Każda wartość może być użyta tylko raz.

	1. znikome	2.	3.	4.	5. duże	brak zainteresowania

18. Gdyby mieli Państwo jakieś uwagi/komentarze/spostrzeżenia będziemy wdzięczni za wpisanie ich poniżej.

Dziękujemy za wypełnienie kwestionariusza

Appendix 5: Questionnaire for British and Irish Writers

Representation of Polish immigrants in Irish and British literature

I. About Poland

1. Have you ever been to Poland?

yes ☐

no ☐

2. What year was it in? What places did you visit?

	year	visited places

3. What was the aim of your visit?

holidays ☐

visiting friends ☐

literary event ☐

conference ☐

studying abroad ☐

work ☐

other (please name) ☐

☐

4. What were your first impressions on visiting Poland? What seemed different, funny, upsetting, shocking?

5. Do you know any Polish people living in Ireland? Are you friends with any of them?

Q1

yes ☐

no ☐

Q2

yes ☐

no ☐

6. Have you ever lived abroad? If yes, what country did you go to and how much time did you spend there?

- yes ☐
- no ☐

country

period of time

7. What were your reasons for leaving Ireland?
Please answer this question, only if the answer to the previous question was positive. Otherwise go the next question. Mark all answers that apply.

- better career perspectives ☐
- better living conditions ☐
- meeting a partner ☐
- greater tolerance ☐
- studying abroad ☐
- a job offer abroad ☐
- I was tired with the political and economic situation in Ireland/the UK ☐
- Other (please name): ☐
- ☐
- ☐

II. About Ireland/the UK

8. In your opinion, what are the most important changes that Ireland/the UK has undergone since 1990?

9. In your opinion, how well did Irish/British society cope with the influx of immigrants?

10. Has the attitude of the Irish/British towards Polish people changed over the last 10 years? If yes, what might have been the reason for that?

yes	☐
no	☐

11. Could you express your opinion in regard to the following issues:
Please, rate from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

	1. very low	2.	3.	4.	5. very high
the ability of Polish immigrants to integrate in Irish/ British society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
satisfaction of Irish/British citizens with the influx of immigrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
the openness of Irish/British society towards immigrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
satisfaction of Irish/British citizens with their current economic situation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
racism towards immigrants among the Irish/British	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Do you feel that the economic crisis has changed the attitude of the Irish/British towards immigrants? If yes, in what way?

yes	☐
no	☐

13. How do Irish people perceive the Polish. Is there a stereotype of a Pole in the present-day Ireland?

14. In your opinion, what is the image of an Irish/British people among Polish immigrants in Ireland/the UK?

15. What similarities and differences can you see between the Polish and the Irish/British?

16. Why do you think Polish people stayed in Ireland/the UK despite the crisis?

III. About Works

17. Have you ever taken part in any literary, cultural or social initiatives organized for immigrants or by immigrants in Ireland/the UK?

	event	place	year

18. Have you read any works by Polish authors? Are you familiar with Polish literature?

19. Are you friends with any Polish authors?

20. In your opinion, are Irish/British people familiar with Polish …
Please rate from 1(to a small extent) to 5 (to a great extent)

	1. to a small extent	2.	3.	4.	5. to a great extent
culture					
literature					
history					
music					

21. Which of your works feature Polish characters?

	title	publisher	year

22. Are your Polish characters based on real people?

yes	
no	

23. To what extent did you rely on the following sources when writing about the experiences of Polish immigrants in Ireland/the UK?

	1. to a small extent	2.	3.	4.	5. to a great extent
the stories told by Polish immigrants living in Ireland/the UK					
the stories told by other immigrants living in Ireland/the UK					
the stories heard from your Irish/British friends and family					
the stories covered by the media (TV, newspapers, radio etc.)					
observations you made in public places/ streets, etc.					
other (please specify)					

24. What readers were you aiming your works about immigrants towards?

Irish	
British	
Polish	
Immigrant	
Other nationalities (please name):	

25. In your works, have you tried to play with the language to mirror English spoken by Polish immigrants?

26. Have you participated in any literary, cultural or social initiatives concerning immigrants or organized by them?

name	organizer	type of the event	place	year

27. Are there any places in Ireland/the UK that you associate with Polish immigrants?

28. What was the inspiration for …. (title of the work)

29. Do you have any comments/advice/remarks regarding the questionnaire/the project?

Thank you

Polish Migration Writing in Britain and Ireland since 2004

Summary

This thesis comprises seven chapters whose main aim is to catalogue Polish migration writing in Britain and Ireland from 2004 to 2024 and analyse it in literary, social and historical contexts, with two objectives in mind. Firstly, to examine how the post-EU-accession migration has influenced the writing of Polish migrants, and secondly, to explore the new insights this writing provides in the fields of literary and migration studies.

To achieve these goals, the first article aims to define "migration writing" and outlines its research potential. The second article highlights the characteristic features of works produced by Polish migrants and investigates whether these writings can be considered as a new literary trend in Polish literature. It also introduces Polish migrant writers in Britain and Ireland and attempts to identify their intended readership. While this text focuses mainly on authors publishing in Polish, the next article presents a small but growing group of writers who publish their work in English. It analyses the challenges that these authors face when they attempt to establish themselves in the local literary markets, the strategies they employ to achieve recognition, and finally, how writing in a non-native language influences migrants' work.

What follows are three papers that examine literary representations of the countries central to this thesis: Poland, the UK, and Ireland. These chapters attempt to answer several questions: How do Polish migrants represent their country of birth (Poland) and their host country (the UK or Ireland)? What do these representations reveal about the attitudes of Polish migrants towards their home and host countries? What knowledge do these representations offer about Poland, Britain, and Ireland, and the interrelations between these countries? How have these depictions evolved over time? The analysis of home and host country representations in the works of Polish migrants provides new, important insights into their experiences, the dynamics of migration, multicultural societies, and global processes triggered by migration.

The concluding article of the thesis examines how the new aspects of transnationalism – such as advances in transportation, the breaking down of barriers to the flow of people, the development of electronic media, and the globalisation of economic and social relationships – have influenced contemporary writings by Polish migrants. As their works are increasingly produced in a range of geographical, cultural, linguistic and virtual spaces, they synthesise elements of multiple places, nationalities and cultures, explore the intersecting effects of migration and globalisation, and express transnational identities and experiences. Conceived from the intersection of the writers' national context and other, foreign contexts, these works illustrate how the driving forces of transnationalism shape contemporary migration writing.

Polskie pisarstwo migracyjne w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii po 2004 roku

Streszczenie

Niniejsza rozprawa składa się z siedmiu tekstów, których zadaniem jest skatalogowanie polskich utworów migracyjnych w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii w latach 2004 – 2024 oraz przeprowadzenie ich analizy w kontekście literackim, społecznym i historycznym po to, by osiągnąć dwa cele. Pierwszym było zbadanie wpływu migracji poakcesyjnej na pisarstwo polskich migrantów, drugim zaś, ustalenie wiedzy, jaką te utwory wnoszą do badań nad literaturą i migracjami.

Mając te cele na uwadze, w pierwszym artykule podejmuję próbę zdefiniowania „pisarstwa migracyjnego" i naświetlam jego potencjał badawczy. W kolejnym artykule staram się wyodrębnić cechy charakterystyczne utworów tworzonych przez polskich migrantów, a następnie analizuję, czy można je uznać za nowy nurt literacki w polskiej literaturze. Przedstawiam również polskich pisarzy migracyjnych w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii, i próbuję zidentyfikować ich docelowych czytelników. O ile w centrum zainteresowania tego tekstu znajdują się autorzy tworzący w języku polskim, o tyle w kolejnym artykule przybliżam niewielką, choć rosnącą grupę polskich pisarzy, którzy publikują w języku angielskim. Omawiam wyzwania, przed jakimi stają ci autorzy, i strategie, jakie wykorzystują, gdy próbują zaistnieć na lokalnych rynkach literackich, a następnie przyglądam się temu, w jaki sposób pisanie w języku obcym wpływa na twórczość migrantów.

W kolejnych trzech rozdziałach analizuję literackie obrazy krajów, na których koncentruje się rozprawa: Polski, Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii. W rozdziałach tych próbuję odpowiedzieć na kilka pytań: W jaki sposób polscy migranci przedstawiają swoją ojczyznę (Polskę) i kraj przyjmujący (Wielką Brytanię lub Irlandię)? Czego możemy dowiedzieć się z tych przedstawień o stosunku polskich migrantów wobec ich ojczyzny i kraju przyjmującego? Jakiej wiedzy na temat Polski, Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii oraz relacji między tymi krajami dostarczają te reprezentacje? Jak zmieniały się one na przestrzeni lat? Analiza reprezentacji kraju ojczystego i kraju przyjmującego w utworach polskich migrantów dostarcza nowych, ważnych informacji na temat ich doświadczeń, dynamiki migracji, wielokulturowych społeczeństw i procesów globalizacyjnych wywołanych migracjami.

W ostatnim artykule rozprawy analizuję, w jaki sposób nowe aspekty transnarodowości – takie jak możliwości szybkiego i sprawnego przemieszczania się, przełamanie barier hamujących przepływ ludności, cyfryzacja mediów oraz globalizacja relacji ekonomicznych i społecznych – wpłynęły na współczesną twórczość polskich migrantów. Ponieważ coraz częściej tworzą oni w różnych przestrzeniach geograficznych, kulturowych, językowych

i wirtualnych, ich utwory łączą wiele różnych miejsc, narodowości i kultur, naświetlają krzyżujące się wpływy migracji i globalizacji oraz opisują transnarodową tożsamość i doświadczenia migrantów. Jako że wszystkie omawiane tu teksty powstają ze zderzenia rodzimego kontekstu z obcym, wielokulturowym kontekstem kraju przyjmującego, stanowią doskonałą ilustrację procesów, zgodnie z którymi nowe wymiary transnarodowości kształtują współczesne pisarstwo migracyjne.