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"Wymiary dzieła literackiego",  
Henryk Markiewicz,  
Kraków-Wrocław 1984 ;  
"Świadomość literatury. Rozprawy i  
szkice", Henryk Markiewicz,  
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# Book Reviews

## Comptes rendus de livres

Henryk Markiewicz: **Wymiary dzieła literackiego** (**The Dimensions of Literary Work**), Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1984, 242 pp.; **Świadomość literatury. Rozprawy i szkice** (**The Awareness of Literature. Dissertations and Studies**), Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1984, 386 pp.

The two latest books by Henryk Markiewicz deal with the problems already suggested by the titles of that writer's former works: *Główne problemy wiedzy o literaturze* (*The Main Problems of the Science of Literature*), *Polska nauka o literaturze* (*The Polish Science of Literature*).

So *Wymiary dzieła literackiego* (further Wdl) and *Świadomość literatury* (further Sl) are representative works of Markiewicz's scholarly pursuits in the fields of 1) the theory of literature, 2) the history of science of literature. The former had earlier brought the dissertations: *O marksistowskiej teorii literatury* (*About the Marxian Theory of Literature*, 1952, 2nd ed. 1953), *Tradycje i rewizje* (*Traditions and Revisions*, 1957), *Główne problemy wiedzy o literaturze* (*The Main Problems of the Science of Literature*, 1965, 5th ed. 1980), *Przekroje i zbliżenia dawne i nowe* (*Profiles and Close Ups, Past and Present*, 1976). The latter enriched the Polish science of literature with important anthologies: *Teoria badań literackich w Polsce* (*The Theory of Literary Research in Poland*, 2 vol., 1960), *Współczesna teoria badań literackich za granicą* (*The Present Theory of Literary Studies Abroad*, 3 vol., 1970–1973, 3rd ed. 1976), *Problemy literatury w Polsce międzywojennej* (*The Problems of Literature in Poland Between the Wars*, 1982), and a synthetic work *Polska nauka o literaturze* (*Polish Science of Literature*, 1981). The two lines of research are expressed in the anthologies: *Problemy teorii literatury* (*Problems of the Theory of Literature*, Series I: 1967, Series II: 1976).

The division into these works is, of course, only approximative, since an interest in the theory of literature can be seen also in the books of the second group, while an interest in the history of the science of literature manifests itself in the theoretical writings on literature as well. What integrates the two spheres of Markiewicz's study is the methodology of literary research. Indeed apart from the afore-mentioned books Markiewicz has written a two-volume anthology *Sztuka interpretacji* (*The Art of Interpretation*, 1971–1973), on the problems of methodology. In giving this list of his works one must also mention Markiewicz's investigations into the history of literature which are expressed in the following books: *Realizm krytyczny w twórczości Bolesława Prusa* (*The Critical Realism in B. Prus' Work*, 1950), *Prus i Żeromski* (*Prus and Żeromski*, 1954, 2nd ed. 1964), *W kręgu Żeromskiego* (*Within the Range of Ż.*, 1977), *Pozytywizm* (*Positivism*, 1973, 2nd ed. 1980).

The very list of the titles of these books suggests an interesting feature of Markiewicz's studies, the recurring themes, various approaches to the same themes, applying different discourses. They result from the realization that particular studies cannot be made into a sum and on some occasions they cannot even lead to comparisons, being at the same time always unsatisfactory. But just in this—according to Markiewicz—resides the specific character of the science of literature which “is called upon to take on a task beyond its power, to return to the problems that will never be solved finally and not even satisfactorily in the short run” (Wdl, 214). This stand accords with the model of the science of literature as it has been outlined in Markiewicz's works, of the science that has been trying to trace the boundaries of its study, define its task, establish its method of research and of description. The fact that from time to time questions are being asked about the nature of the science of literature, about the very style of its discourse, does indicate that they were not put only at that science's emergence but are repeated in the periods of its crises, that is at the moments when the researchers feel they should revise their methods and renew their scientific language.

The model of literature, presented in the two books under discussion, may be called a paradigmatic one should we make use of the

term applied by T. Kuhn in his famous book.<sup>1</sup> The science of literature does not evolve in a cumulative way. Its output cannot be added up since it is made up of a variety of stands on the question what actually is the science of literature and what is not. The science of literature is based on some patterns of research which determine what can be regarded in this area as scientific, define the questions and indicate the method of answering them, and finally establish the language in which they should be formulated. Once such patterns have been rejected new boundaries must be traced for that science's penetrations, the questions to be asked have to be altered, as well as their acceptable answers, all of which leads to the adoption of a new language in this branch.

Most clearly Markiewicz presents the paradigmatic model of the science of literature in the following excerpt:

One could attempt the generalization that while in the positivistic period literary research aimed first of all at the explanation of the origin and its main "hero" was the author and while in the subsequent period the stress was laid on the structure, that is the literary work, now we have entered the phase in which interest is concentrated on the function of the literary work and on its reader (Wdl, 216).

These generalizations include no evaluation and that is why we can speak of the researcher's paradigmatic approach to the history of the branch he studies. Markiewicz does not evaluate the particular tasks these three periods used to set before that branch. He treats them as equal, uncomparable, existing side by side as it were. The term "paradigm" does not appear in Markiewicz's works but it can be related to his considerations, the more so that he uses such synonyms as "algorithm," "canon," "topos" (of aesthetics, science of literature).

Markiewicz wrote on the positivistic paradigm of literary studies

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<sup>1</sup> T. Kuhn, *Struktura rewolucji naukowych* (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*), transl. H. Ostromecka, Warszawa 1968. The Kuhnian term "paradigm" was used by M. Głowiński, while describing the methodological evolution in the science of literature, in his work "Od metod zewnętrznych i wewnętrznych do komunikacji literackiej" (From External and Internal Methods to Literary Communication)—see this volume, p. 27. See also W. K. Percival, "The Applicability of Kuhn's Paradigm to the History of Linguistics," *Language*, June 1976, no. 2.

the following dissertations: "Między plotką a mitem" (Between Gossip and Myth), "Życie i osoba pisarza w polskich badaniach literackich" (The Writer's Life and Personality in the Polish Literary Research), "Pozytywiści wobec romantyzmu polskiego" (The Positivists' Attitude Towards the Polish Romantic Movement), "Polskie przygody estetyki Taine'a" (The Polish Adventures of Taine's Aesthetics) included in the volume *Świadomość literatury*. In the first two of them he describes the evolution of the views on a writer's biography as the subject of literary study, in the third he discusses the attitude of the positivists towards the literary and ideological legacy of the romantics, and in the last analyzes the way the Taineian inspiration influenced the Polish science of literature. Then Markiewicz shows the post-positivistic paradigm in the following studies: "Przemiany ergografiki w polskich badaniach literackich do roku 1939" (The Transformations of Ergographics in the Polish Literary Studies till 1939), "Myśl aksjologiczna w polskiej nauce o literaturze" (The Axiological Thought in the Polish Science of Literature), "Polskie dyskusje o formie i treści" (Polish Discussions on the Form and Content), "Recepcja formalizmu rosyjskiego w Polsce" (The Reception of the Russian Formalism in Poland—all in Sl). Each of these studies is governed by such conceptions in the study of literature which focus the student's attention on the work itself without being concerned with its non-literary situation (the writer's biography, historical process). The contemporary paradigm in literature is discussed by Markiewicz in the study "Odbiór i odbiorca w badaniach literackich" (The Reading and Reader in Literary Studies) linked closely to the study "Interpretacja semantyczna dzieł literackich" (Semantic Interpretation of Literary Works), both included in *Wdl*. The author deals in them with the reader's reception of a literary work.

As regards the history of the science of literature as it appears in Markiewicz's latest books it does differ basically from his approach in the volume *Polska nauka o literaturze* (*Polish Science of Literature*). It has partly to do with the poetic quality of an "outline" which is the latter book. The history of the science of literature presented in the studies making up the volume *Świadomość literatury* is, on the other hand, a history "without names," a history of paradigms, algorithms, canons of description. Markie-

wicz describes the evolution of norms in the study of literature, leaving out the researchers themselves and individual realizations of those norms. An example of such norms we find in W. Dibelius' monograph *Englische Romankunst* (1910) which had lastingly influenced the way of writing on novels (Sl 63, 154–155). As regards the norms of describing lyrical poetry they were expressed in the positivistic studies by the terms of “topos of indescribability”<sup>2</sup> and “topos of obviousness.” Both suggested a resignation from describing lyrical poetry on the grounds that an analysis in this area must be incomplete or that it is pointless to describe something that appeals directly to the reader (Sl 52). Markiewicz demonstrates how very essential it is in literary study to try to work out “a general canon in the description of literary works” (description by Z. Łempicki, Wdl 153) and how such attempts are doomed to achieving only partial solutions (Wdl, 166).

Apart from paradigms, algorithms and canons a dominant role in Markiewicz's history of literary studies are playing the terms. In his view the history of this branch includes also the history of that branch's language, that is a history of terms and notions. This approach could be referred to a statement by J. Sławiński according to which “a reflection on terminology becomes as a rule—and it cannot be otherwise—a reflection on the basic features of a branch's language; the basic ones because owing to them it can effectively deal with its subject.”<sup>3</sup>

So Markiewicz devoted to the vicissitudes of the two essential terms for ergocentric studies an article “Polish Discussions on the Form and Contents” (Sl). He is particularly concerned in them with the process of “terminologization,”<sup>4</sup> that is with the way

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<sup>2</sup> The term “topos of indescribability” comes from J. Sławiński, “O opisie” (About the Description), [in:] *Studia o narracji*, ed. J. Błoński, S. Jaworski, J. Sławiński, Wrocław 1982, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> J. Sławiński, “Problemy literaturoznawczej terminologii” (The Problems of Terminology in the Science of Literature), [in:] *Dzielo. Język. Tradycja*, Warszawa 1974, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> The term taken from a work by T. N. Omelyanenko, “Terminologizatsya obshchepotrebitelnoy leksiki v istorii angliyskogo yazika,” [in:] *Yazik i stil nauchno-go izlozheniya. Lingvometodicheskiye issledovaniya*, ed. M. Ya. Cwilling a.o., Moscow 1983.

the word "contents" and "form" are used in literary description. This process goes together with a non-linguistic reflection of the researchers aiming to draw a list of all the meanings attached to those two terms (K. Irzykowski, J. Kleiner, R. Ingarden, K. Górski, W. Tatarkiewicz). But the most important period in the history of these terms in the branch under discussion was the one during which they were not strictly defined and were used as common or *quasi*-common words.<sup>5</sup> During their tens-of-years-long history the "form" and "contents" have exhausted their terminological potential. And the categorization of literary phenomena which can be achieved by means of them seems now unsatisfactory.

Having played [...] a major role in the shaping of artistic programmes and in the evolution of the theory of literary work the terms "contents" and "form" are now being dropped in science as being ambiguous and simplifying. [...] are regarded sometimes as symptomatic of naive and simplistic positions: we use them at the most in abbreviated and popular statements (SI 127).

Then we find a penetrating study of the evolution the idea of novel has gone through in the article "Problemy teoretyczne powieści w krytyce młodopolskiej i międzywojennej" (The Theoretical Problems of the Novel in the Criticism of the Young Poland and in the Period Between Wars). Markiewicz discusses in it two essential aspects of the critical thought on the novel in these two periods, the normative and descriptive one. The first of them manifested itself in the statements postulating a particular type of novel, evaluating various solutions of style and composition, or various subjects. Those pronouncements were of a publicist or persuasive character which influenced their terminology—casual, not consequent, and not very precise. Not much better was the descriptive equipment applied in works of analytical ambition. Dibelius' monograph determined first of all the range of problems and the method of analysis while being less concerned with description. As a result almost every student of novels was obliged to invent his own terms to call his conclusions (SI 157). Of course this could not lead to the emergence of a tradition in the studies of the novel, consequently in the postwar period "on many occasions the theoretical journey

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<sup>5</sup> See Sławiński, "Problemy..."

once made by the predecessors had now to be repeated" (Sl 158).

In the work "Dramat a teatr w polskich dyskusjach teoretycznych" (Drama and Theatre in Polish Theoretical Discussions), included in the volume under review, Markiewicz deals with the three lines of reflection on the relationship between drama and theatre: the literary, theatrical and utraquistic one. Each of them used to define the status of the dramatic text in a particular way. The first of them opted for its full autonomy, second regarded it as a sort of "theatrical score," third gave equal rights to the literary and theatrical aspects of drama. Markiewicz pays much attention to the language in which all these conceptions were formulated. It is here precisely, more than in any other area, that the conceptual uncertainty and terminological inconsistency of literary studies are most apparent. A semantic freedom mars, among others, the basic term of the theatrical conception, one of "the theatrical score" which, according to Markiewicz, is merely a metaphorical expression (Sl 175).

Of particular interest is a study concerned both with the history of literature and of social awareness "Rodowód i losy mitu trzech wieszczów" (The Origin and Evolution of the Myth of Poland's Three Great National Poets). The equal "heroes" of that study are the myth, being at once an element of social awareness and a means of social communication ("a sort of genre"<sup>6</sup>) and the word *wieszcz* (great national poet). While analysing the semantics of this word Markiewicz demonstrates how it was assuming new meanings and how those meanings were taking shape in literary works. From the 17th century the word *wieszcz* meant "poet" ("contemporary poet"), then around 1831 new meaning appeared, that of a prophet which a decade later prevailed completely over the semantics of that word (Sl 181–187). In the early 1860s there appeared the formula of the three *wieszczs* which once more changed the semantics of the term. The word lost then its half-sacral character and began meaning an exceptional position among the writers (S 207–213).

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<sup>6</sup> A term used by K. Bartoszewski in the discussion on E. Kuźma's paper read at a conference on the New Methodological Problems in the Science of Literature (April 14–16, 1986, Warsaw).



The evolution in the semantics of the word *wieszcz* went together with the formation in the social awareness of a singular literary myth. The myth of the three great national poets embodied the myth of something exceptional which to L. Gumplowicz was a manifestation of the social dreams of progress.<sup>7</sup> Thus the conception of the three national poets met the demand for a triad of great authors (SI 201) and became in time a special interpretation of the literary past and a socially accepted manner of regarding that past. The category of myth, as presented by Markiewicz, enables us to follow the process of degradation the conception of the three national poets had undergone during those several decades. So a notion of a clearly scholarly origin became a myth which had to provoke a reaction among the scholars (the famous campaign of Boy-Żeleński against the devotees, SI 29–31). This reaction was directed against the myth as a special literary discourse. But it did not affect the vitality of that myth as a figure in social awareness.

Here we can try to arrive at a summary characteristic of the model of the science of literature suggested by Markiewicz in the books under discussion. So above the history of paradigms, history of terms he puts the history of literary awareness. This interpretation of the science's past makes it possible to capture its self-awareness. Markiewicz is therefore interested, while describing that past, in the statements which show the methodological awareness of the science of literature, a realization how far can reach knowledge, what are the rules of study and the norms to be observed in an analysis of a work of literature.

This kind of a model of the science of literature implies the necessity to create a proper language, or rather meta-language, since the object of interest in this model are the terms which, within the given paradigm, help to trace out and order the area of that science. While writing about the "transformations of ergographics" Markiewicz justifies the necessity of using neologisms as follows:

In order to [...] put all the pronouncements on a particular work of literature in a term superior and neutral in relation to the earlier nomenclature a term of "ergographics" has been coined (SI 44).

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<sup>7</sup> See L. Gumplowicz, *System socjologii (System of Sociology)*, Warszawa 1886, p. 469.

The word “ergographics” is thus a lexical element of “an intermediary language which makes it possible—as J. Sławiński has put it—to translate statements from one dialect of the science of literature into another.”<sup>8</sup>

The language-intermediary enables us to translate not only from one “dialect” to another but also from the “historical kind” of that branch’s language to another. “Ergographics” is therefore a term relating to a sort of esperanto in literary studies and has been created for two reasons. First there is a need for communication between the representatives of various research schools (users of various “dialects”), and second—a need for a historical synthesis which has to cope with the historical variability of styles in discussing literature.

The descriptive equipment suggested by Markiewicz in his *Wy-miary dzieła literackiego* caters first of all for the first of these needs. The creation of a language-intermediary, neutral in relation to the languages of particular lines of research, makes it possible to refer these lines of thought to one another and thereby to present their output systematically and synthetically. Without a language of that sort the science of literature of today looks like a Babel Tower. Indeed the biblical story about the confusion of languages can be quoted as a topos applicable to the present state of the branch under discussion (and this comparison is used by among others: E. Olson, R. Wellek, E. D. Hirsch).<sup>9</sup> One can consider the plurality of languages as the symptoms of a science’s crisis (R. Wellek) or as a sign of its development (E. Olson). Anyway the stylistic multiplicity in the argumentations of the science of literature makes one naturally think of that branch’s language. E. Olson indicated that a statement is not false simply because it is incomprehensible, though it must be made comprehensible before it can be said to be true.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sławiński, “Problemy...,” p. 213.

<sup>9</sup> See M. Głowiński, “Wieża Babel? Wokół antologii Henryka Markiewicza” (The Babel Tower? On the Anthology of H. M.), [in:] *Style odbioru*, Kraków 1977.

<sup>10</sup> E. Olson, “Zarys teorii poezji” (An Outline of the Theory of Poetry), transl. M. Kaniowa, [in:] *Współczesna teoria badań literackich za granicą*, ed. H. Markiewicz, vol. 1, Kraków 1976, p. 303.

The intermediary language suggested by Markiewicz in his work has to do with the basic morphological categories of literary creation: the stylistic ones—“Uwagi o semantyce i budowie metafory” (On Semantics and the Structure of a Metaphore), “Morfologia dialogu” (The Morphology of a Dialogue), compositional ones—“Autor i narrator” (Author and Narrator), “Zawartość narracyjna i schemat fabularny” (Narration and the Fictional Scheme), “Czas i przestrzeń w utworach narracyjnych” (Time and Space in Narrative Works), “Postać literacka” (Character in Literature), “Odbiór i odbiorca w badaniach literackich,” and the ideological ones—“Dzieło literackie a ideologia” (Literary Work and Ideology). This language covers also: the figurativeness—“Obrazowość a ikoniczność literatury” (The Figurativeness and Iconography of Literature), the literary process—“Proces literacki w świetle strukturalizmu i marksizmu” (The Literary Process in the Light of Structuralism and Marxism), and the literary interpretation—“Interpretacja semantyczna dzieł literackich.”

An important feature of the descriptive equipment proposed by Markiewicz is its capacity to consider literary statements within the context of statements of another type. Thus this equipment makes it possible to integrate literary research with the study of other forms of social communication (dialogue, non-literary narration, ideological statements). The essential component of the suggested equipment is the intellectual apparatus included in the contemporary theory of the text. An application of this particular apparatus can be seen especially in the studies on the figurativeness and iconography, on metaphore, narrative contents and the plot.

In creating the intermediary language Markiewicz has been guided by the principle of “a rational use of literary terminology” (Sl 126). Because of this principle he is against the semantic deformation of the terms: “dialogue” (Wdl, 61), “space” (Wdl, 142), or the categories relating to the reader (Wdl, 224). Being overloaded with meanings and always ready to absorb new senses they have become useless in research.

The necessity to separate phenomena that only appear similar calls for terminological invention which could overcome the shortcomings of the existing nomenclature in the science of literature. In the conclusion of his study “Obrazowość a ikoniczność literatury” the author justifies his linguistic suggestions like this:

These terms [he refers to such terms as "sham metasigns", the reference copying metasigns—*W.T.*] must sound clumsy and complicated—but this is alas the prize to be paid for terminological accuracy in the humanities (Wdl, 42).

Indeed the demand for precision, along with that of methodological neutrality justifies such strings of terms as: the evocatory metaphore, confrontation metaphore, confrontation-evocatory metaphore; the author-narrator, thought-up narrator, asserting narrator, thinking-up narrator, autotropical, allotropical, introspective, extraspective orientation; formulation, link, section, sequence, course of narration, fictional contents, motive, fictional line, fictional network—or such as: the projected reader, adequate reader, virtual reader, potential reader. Markiewicz does not avoid of course the long-standing terms in research, such as "subject," "theme". He also makes use of terms from outside the science of literature ("setting", "steering system"). On each occasion however, he takes the terms that have already been used, investigates their sense, corrects them sometimes, makes clearer and always univocal.

In place of a preface Markiewicz quotes in his book four citations, one of which characterizes very well his research programme. Władysław Tatarkiewicz wrote: "All I want is to clearly arrange the notions I am making use of—this is not so little after all. And I rejoice when they do fit in nicely." In *Świadomość literatury* Markiewicz recalls a related thought of W. Tatarkiewicz: "Ambiguity, once it has been realized, ceases to be dangerous" (SI 125).

Markiewicz declares himself in his latest books as an advocate of methodological pluralism and of many styles when discussing literature. He shows on many occasions how studies referring to various assumptions lead to complementary solutions, correcting one another and becoming fruitful—"Obrazowość a ikonizacja literatury," "Proces literacki w świetle strukturalizmu i marksizmu." So for instance when he considers the question of a language for "the personological description of characters" he opts for a multiplicity of descriptive procedures, wishing them only to be used consciously and consistently (Wdl, 162). While drawing up the "algorithms" in a description of various composition elements (dialogue, narrator, character, reader) he stresses their undefinability and restricted range of application.

The intermediatery language, suggested in Markiewicz's books does not aim—let us stress it once more—to eliminate other ways of dealing with literature. It does however give a chance for the science of literature, for all its methodological and stylistic variety, to preserve its identity. Markiewicz's language is meant for an "internal use," rather without ambition for "external usage." The latter is served by the standard language, the one of dictionaries. To work out it constitutes also a very important task, only partly concurrent with Markiewicz's research programme.

The paradigmatic and multistyle model of the science of literature presented by Markiewicz in his books has been supplemented by him with one more feature. The research paradigms, canons of description, the more or less consistent terms form only a general framework for literary studies. These being also determined to a large extent by the personality of the researcher. Thus the science of literature cannot completely give up names because "a discussion about a work of literature remains always a sort of art" (Wdl, 166).

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Transl. by *Ludwik Wiewiórkowski*

Jerzy Jarzębski, **Gra w Gombrowicza (Game Gombrowicz)**, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1982, 515 pp.

In 1981, the Wydawnictwo Literackie of Cracow published Andrzej Falkiewicz's collection of essays called *Polski kosmos. Dziesięć esejów przy Gombrowiczu (A Polish Microcosm. Ten Essays Following Gombrowicz)*. That was the first book on Gombrowicz to appear in socialist Poland. Falkiewicz's essays, however, are extremely learned in character and at places the author is ramblingly moving away from the main topic. This is why Jerzy Jarzębski's book, which appeared in Warsaw a year later, should actually be regarded as a first-ever comprehensive study of Gombrowicz. Apparently, the early 1980s proved an auspicious period for the author of *Ferdynand*.

Shortly after came out of print Jarzębski's book skimmed two prestigious prizes—that awarded by the Scientific Secretary of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the literary award of the Kościelski Endowment of Switzerland.