

- Niemcy w nowej Europie*, Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 121-36.
- Uffelmann, Dirk (2003a), "Konzilianz und Asianismus. Paradoxe Strategien der jüngsten deutschen Literatur slawischer Migranten", *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 63.2, 277-309.
- (2003b), "Fremd sind wir eingezogen. Und gehören jetzt dazu: Geschichten von deutschen Einwanderern", *Der Tagesspiegel*, 20 July, 28.
- (2006), "Wątek żydowski w literaturze polskiej wobec niemieckiego adresata", transl. Wojciech Osinski, in Mieczysław Dąbrowski & Lina Molisak, eds., *Pisarze polsko-żydowscy XX wieku. Przybliżenia*, Warszawa: Elipsa, 454-73.
- (2010), "Litwo! Wschodzie mój", transl. Michał Kuziak, *Slupskie Prace Filologiczne – Seria Filologia Polska* 8, 165-88.
- Waldstein, Maxim K. (2002), "Observing Imperium: a Postcolonial Reading of Ryszard Kapuscinski's Account of Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia", *Social Identities*, 8:3, 481-99.
- Wojnarowski, Marcin (2008), *Okrutny idiota albo prywatny żart*, Poznań: EP – Euro Projekt.
- Wünschmann, Anita, Leszek Oświecimski & Adam Gusowski (2003), "Das gelang nicht, jenes gelang nicht. Was du auch anfängst, es gelingt nicht. Nichts gelingt. Mit Leszek Oświecimski und Adam Gusowski vom Club der polnischen Versager sprach Anita Wünschmann über Verweigerung, Lebenslügen und die etwas andere Art, erfolgreich zu sein", *Berliner Zeitung*, Magazin, 4-5 January, 4.
- Zahuski, Krzysztof Maria (1999), *Szpital Polonia*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Obserwator.
- Zeller, Michael (2002), "Liebe macht grausam. Dariusz Musers gelungener Großstadt-Roman 'Der Echsenmann'", *Nürnberger Nachrichten* 17 January, http://www.dariusz-muser.de/Presse/Michael_Zeller_2/michael_zeller_2.html (accessed 24 December 2008).
- Znaniecki, Florian (1991), "Upadek cywilizacji zachodniej", *Pisma filozoficzne*. vol. 2. Warszawa: PWN, 929-1108.

URSZULA CHOWANIEC

Displacement, Emigration, and Travel: Contemporary Polish Literature and the Notion of Émigré Literature

Introduction

Exile seems to be as much about leaving home as it is about returning to it, even if this comeback never happens. Coming back seems to be just as indivisible a part of emigration as departing from home. Both movements destabilise the inhabited and known space and re-set the borders. This is how exile is described in Izabela Filipiak's novel *Niebieska menażeria* [*The Blue Menagerie*] (1995). We meet the main character on the first page: a young woman who is also the narrator of the short stories that constitute this hybrid novel.¹ On our first encounter, we find her coming back to Poland from emigration:

Autumn. I have just come back to Poland. The return is not something one can experience easily, just like that... you come back and that's it, you are here. No, one comes back layer upon layer; each one deeper than the previous, deep to the core of your bones, to the pain and the forgetfulness. One leaves in the same way. Bit by bit, you rip off what was common, what belonged to us both, to us and the others, to us and the other place.²

¹ The novel consists of several short stories which are connected by the same character/narrator and constitute a coherent narrative plot, even if each individual story has a plot of its own and could be read separately (cf. Chowaniec 2000). I write about Filipiak's novel at length in Chowaniec 2010.

² „Jesień. Właśnie wróciłam do Polski. Powrót nie jest rzeczą, którą przeżywa się za jednym zamachem, wraca się i jest po wszystkim, i – już się jest. Nie, wraca się warstwami, coraz to głębszą warstwą, do szpiku kości, do bólu i oszaleń. W ten sposób też się rozstaje. Odrzuwając po kawałku to, co było w nas wspólne, należało do nas i innych ludzi, do nas i innego miejsca.” (Filipiak 1995: 5). All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated.

As the above passage reveals, the experience of displacement cannot be instantaneous or immediate. In order to live it, it is necessary to abandon the domesticated space, the place of familiar coordinates, and to go through a radical shake-up, a kind of emotional disturbance which takes over even if 'home' might not have been all that cosy or friendly. Moreover, it is necessary to expose oneself to the psychologically, existentially, and physically foreign. Indeed, the physical dimension of space plays a vital role, primarily because of its connection with our embodied existence. The body seems to make a physical connection with the inhabited space and it plays a crucial role in mapping the new identity of the traveller, émigré or vagabond.

Filipiak's novel of displacement does not stand alone in the Polish literary landscape after 1989, since post-transitional Poland³ has indeed provided a very fertile ground for tales of voluntary and economic dislocation. As a result, one can witness a birth of new literary characters who in their literary journeys float freely between borders.⁴ These are not only geographical borders but also psychological limits of mainstream history, heterosexuality or political taboos.⁵

In the present article, I will focus on these literary journeys and the shifts in understanding geographical, psychological, and gendered borders. It must be stated that the narratives of displacement in Poland after 1989 are not happy tales of border-crossing marked by the opti-

3 Using Zygmunt Bauman's terminology we can call post-1989 Poland, Polish postmodernity (cf. Bauman 2000). This notion was used in an excellent collection of articles on post-communist literatures and cultures (cf. Janaszek-Ivanicková 2005, Kraskowska 2006, Czaplik-Lityńska 2005, Dąbrowski 2006). For a brief comment on contemporary literatures of emigration and their Romantic roots, cf. Chowaniec 2008.

4 Here the reader can refer to such literary analyses as the forgotten tales of the imperialist reordering of the Polish eastern border towards the West after World War II, commonly referred to as Borderlands [Kresy], which caused the suffering of a large number of Poles expelled from this region (Włodzimierz Odojewski's *Oksana*, 1999), as well as to narratives about Germans from Gdańsk and the so called Western Lands [Ziemie Zachodnie] (Ewa Kujawska's *Dom Matgorzaty*, 2007; Olga Tokarczuk's *Dom dzienny, dom nocny*, 1998). There are also new tales of the trespassing of heterosexuality in lesbian literature (e.g. the prose of Ewa Schilling in her novel *Chłopiec*, 2005, and lesbian poetry by Ewa Sonnenberg or Izabela Filipiak) as well as the stories of Polish transvestites (Michał Witkowski's *Lubiewo*, 2005).

mistic vision of the freedom to travel in the new democratic state. Here, leaving and returning stands for a common experience of suffering and for a widely understood metaphor of disturbance, of psychological and physical illness as described by Susan Sontag (cf. Sontag 1991).

The theme of exile as dislocation is often accompanied by pictures of distressed and aching bodies. In turn, these images become a rhetorical device, a narrative vehicle which proves central in weaving mythologies of the 'home', the fatherland or the national space. Of course, the connection between the physical body of the emigrant and the fatherland/motherland she loves and yearns for is nothing new in Polish literature. It has been particularly intense at previous historical junctures, especially during Romanticism (cf. Siwicka & Bieńczyk 1995) and after World War II. The émigré writers of the 20th century such as Maria Kuncewiczowa, Czesław Miłosz, Witold Gombrowicz, Stanisław Barańczak or Adam Zagajewski frequently try to situate themselves in relation to their mother tongue, their living conditions abroad, and their condition as 'émigrés' (cf. Danilewicz-Zielńska 1999; Filipowicz 1989). Like now, their displacement was hardly ever described as easy or happy, and like now, their writing tried to capture a generational, rather than an individual experience. Generally speaking, émigré literature refers to the new social role of the printed word in modern society, in which the functions of sustaining national language, culture, tradition and freedom of speech are particularly crucial.

In this sense, any analysis of the literature of emigration in contemporary Poland must acknowledge the wider question of past Polish émigré literature. But once this disclaimer has been made, it is also important to note that the literature of emigration written after 1989 seems very different from standard émigré literature in the traditional meaning of the term, especially if it is defined from a social and political angle (cf. Pietrkievicz 1956; Weintraub 1959) rather than from a thematic or existential one. The new émigré concentrates on rebuilding her identity by juxtaposing her experience of living at home in the fatherland and the experience of being a foreigner. In this opposition, home is often seen as an enemy and a space that requires from the characters certain masks and demands respect towards many

myths and taboos, such as the myth of national love and patriotic obligations, as well as connected gendered social roles.

As Jerzy Jarzębski has observed, writers such as Witold Gombrowicz, Czesław Miłosz, Jerzy Stempowski, Józef Wittlin, Stanisław Vincenz, Andrzej Bobkowski, and Gustaw Herling-Grudziński constituted a diverse diaspora of "émigré rebels"⁶, rather than a culturally homogeneous group of émigrés. Bearing in mind that the actual correlation between emigration and literary activity has always been very complex, it is fair to say that the term 'émigré literature' has always been characterised by the crucial political fact that the émigré writer was someone forced to leave her country – therefore, not someone who had done so by choice.⁷ As such, the notion of emigration is still present in women's writing during the first half of the 1990s. Writers such as Mannuła Gretkowska or Izabela Filipiak still remembered the regime that limited their freedom to travel (Gretkowska's *My zdies' emigranty* [*We Are Emigrants here!*], 1991; Filipiak's *Śmierć i spirala* [*Death and the Spiral*], 1992). This writing, however, while entering into a literary and intellectual heritage of émigré culture, tries to break with the decisive political and national paradigm of displacement.

In her 1991 novel *My zdies' emigranty*, Mannuła Gretkowska parodies the politically engaged emigration of the 1980s, sketching a character who deliberately rejects any links between her life, her geographical preferences and the political situation of her native country.

In the Arab shop on my street, they take me for a Russian because if I told the curious shopkeeper I am Polish, he would nod that he knows where Poland is,

6 The notion of "émigracyjni buntownicy" was used by Jerzy Jarzębski in his book on émigré literature (cf. Jarzębski 1998).

7 Jerzy Jarzębski argues that among the characteristics of Polish literature there is the fact that it is "overloaded with social servitudes" [„obciążenie ponad miarę społecznymi serwitutami”] (Jarzębski 1998: 7). Later, he writes about post-1989 émigré writers: "The younger were not emigrants anymore – at least the work of writers who lived permanently or temporarily abroad such as Jerzy Łukosz, Mannuła Gretkowska, Marek Jastrzębiec-Mosakowski was not seen in these categories..." [„Ci młodzi 'emigrantami' już w ogóle nie byli – przynajmniej nigdy w takich kategoriach nie ujmowano twórczości mieszkających na stałe lub przejściowo za granicą, Jerzego Łukosza, Manneli Gretkowskiej, Marka Jastrzębca-Mosakowskiego...”] (Jarzębski 1998: 242).

that Waleśa this, that Janużelski that. But I'm interested neither in Janużelski nor in Waleśa.⁸

The last sentence of this statement by a female character who later devotes herself to writing a thesis on Mary Magdalene, can be seen as a generational motto for Polish women writers in the 1990s: a motley group which will gravitate away from the culturally centralised themes (politics, men, the passion of Christ and its relation to the struggle for national liberation, etc.) to the culturally marginal ones (private experiences, women, the suffering of Mary Magdalene, etc.). Even though women's literature was highly personalised during the 1990s (usually incrustated with autobiographical traces), it would be misleading to assume that their experience of exile is simply another example of an individual experience. These narratives are underpinned by a far larger theme, perhaps the most universal in terms of estrangement: being a foreigner. One of the best descriptions of the foreigner can be found in Julia Kristeva's writings. The philosopher and writer defines a foreigner from a psychoanalytical angle:

The foreigner is the other of the family, the clan, the tribe. At first he blends with the enemy. External to my religion, too, he could have been the heathen, the heretic. Not having made the oath to fealty to my lord, he was born on another land, foreign to the kingdom or the empire. (Kristeva 1991: 95)

Contemporary (e)migration literature does not limit itself only to the politically determined problems of nationality, visas or the lack of proficiency in a foreign language – after all, all these form only a sum total of paltry inconveniences associated with modern travel. Much more critically, these narratives pick up on estrangement as a deeply conflictive position: it is the predicament of being the stranger, a foreigner ideologically and culturally, as well as in all other everyday senses such as physical appearance and life experience.

The foreigner's condition has more or less set symptoms. Firstly, there is a recognition of loneliness, both as perceived and real, and a

8 „W arabskim sklepieku na mojej ulicy uchodzę za Rosjanke, bo gdybym na pytanie ciekawskiego sprzedawcy powiedziała, że jestem Polką, Arab pokrzywałby głową, że wie, gdzie jest Polska, że Waleśa, że Janużelski. A mnie nie interesuje ani Janużelski, ani Waleśa.” (Gretkowska 1995: 38).

sense of being chronically misunderstood and rejected. The foreigner is a threat to the harmony of "the family, the clan, the tribe". From this perspective, any reassessment of the interconnections between migration and contemporary Polish writing irrevocably pushes us back to the basics, into the realm of existentialism, and pulls us away (beyond) the arbitrary geopolitical fractures of 'East' versus 'West', at the heart of the Cold War. If the argument made so far is true, then the new literature of emigration opens up an entirely new window onto the migrant, which is one of the names taken by 'the other' when she travels.

Based on my introductory considerations, I will discuss selected texts by Polish women from the 1990s up to the present, in which the notion of emigration (exile and displacement) is captured. I will analyse these themes through a textual dissection of some works by Polish women writers over the last two decades, in particular, of samples from Izabela Filipiak, Manuela Gretkowska, Olga Tokarczuk, Grażyna Plebanek, Joanna Ślubszczyńska-Krauze and Joanna Pawłusiewicz. I want to show how the notion of emigration evolved in women's writing of the 1990s and 2000s.

It is characteristic of post-1989 Polish literature to fill the narrative spaces with various descriptions of tours and places, short-term work experiences abroad, and images of other countries freely chosen as destinations. These experiences of migration have been especially scrutinised by women writers who would connect the notion of being "the other" as a displaced, travelling subject with being "the other" as a woman.⁹

I wish to present three especially important shifts in the cultural understanding of broadly understood exile (as migration, displacement, emigration) that are emerging in this analysis. The first shift can be seen in the narrative move away from a relatively stable identity (as Poles escaping from a communist country and having politically motivated links between each other) to a variable identity, dependent on place, cultural environment and, perhaps most importantly, language. Moreover, one can notice the shift from a narrative of locality, which

is a narrative of a specific space that is constitutive to one's identity, to the tales of globality, where the known and cosy mixes with the global. In the global world, home can be found anywhere with the same details, TV programmes and food. Finally, in the new narrative, there is a shift from the universalised experience of emigration or migration to the gendered experience of displacement, where the feminine aspect is emphasised. In this perspective, the experience of geographical exclusion can be seen as the epitome of gender exclusion.

To scrutinise the abovementioned threefold shifts I will use Julia Kristeva's notion of exclusion as a source of destabilisation of identity as well as a foundation for constituting new identity (cf. Kristeva 1991). Kelly Oliver sees Kristeva's writing as constantly entangled between the notions of exclusion and identity as well as between psychological constitution and politics (nation-state):

Julia Kristeva shows in her writing the process of transformation and constant development of identity, which appears in the displacement of borders. For example in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, she discusses the exclusions necessary for subjects to enter language. In *Powers of Horror*, she discusses the exclusions necessary for religious and moral codes to bond societies. In *Tale of Love*, she discusses the exclusions necessary for narcissistic identity. In *Black Sun*, she discusses the exclusions necessary for subjects' "at-homeness" in language. Finally, in *Strangers to Ourselves* and *Lettre Ouverte à Harlem Désir* she discusses the exclusions necessary for nation-state to exist. (Oliver 1993: 150)

Appropriating Kristeva's notion of the foreigner and the role of exclusions which constitute borders, I will examine the abovementioned shifts in selected women's novels and short stories.

Variable Identity of the Displaced, the Tourists, the Nomads, and the Vagabonds

We have already introduced the character from Izabela Filipiak's novel *Niebieska menażeria*, who recognises the problem of language in displacement. It is in the mother tongue where she finds osmosis between the language and the things around her. She says that "[e]very detail [...] dried-up flowers, decorations, an old-fashioned

9 Przemysław Czapliński scrutinises this phenomenon in his book *Polska do wymiany* (2009).

lamp, reminds me of the life I left behind. [...] One has to be very close, very close to me to feel this enduring stream of pain flowing through me [...]."¹⁰ She continues by stating that in Poland, there is no hidden barrier and she can feel something like a subtle osmosis between herself and the space of language.

The experience of displacement is the source of alienation from language and the consequent exclusion from physical reality. Filipiak does not translate the experience of being a foreigner into a melancholic narrative of someone who has lost the fatherland. She does, however, notice the importance of language barriers, against which her new position (the position of a foreigner) is constituted. Yet, this struggle with language creates the character itself.

For Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian philosopher, living and writing in France, alienation and exclusion, which are the consequence of her personal emigration, are the condition of identity. Through rejection, one can fully understand one's position, rethink one's beliefs. Exile shows that identity is not a stable, once given, and persistent quality, mainly because it changes with language (how well we can see this in Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*, 1989). Kristeva emphasises that the stranger suffers because she cannot speak her maternal language. Through the efforts of acquiring a new language, when the mother tongue becomes redundant, the subject is 'liberated' from the discourse which 'made' her identity (much like an identity card is the basis of one's administrative identity).

In a similar way, Manuela Grekowska, albeit without Filipiak's fine narrative sensitivity, recognises the difficulties of being a foreigner in both her novels, *Kabaret metafizyczny* [*Metaphysical Cabaret*] (1993) and *My zdes' emigranci* (1991). Grekowska, however, does not let her characters dwell in the usual problems of emigrants. She moves them around, allowing them to speak in different languages. She creates artificial, caricatured epitomes of postmodern

10

„Każdy drobiazg, [...] suszone kwiaty, ozdobna, staroświecka lampa, przypominają mi o życiu, które zostawiłam. [...] Trzeba być bardzo blisko mnie, bardzo blisko, żeby odczuć ten nieustannie przepływający przeze mnie, [...] strumień bólu.” (Filipiak 1995: 7).

cosmopolitans (a provocative move against the conventionally understood *émigré* narrative).

The main character in her personal narration thinks about the possibility of changing her origins from Polish to German or Jewish nationality, in case she should be refused permission to stay in France:

I do not feel like becoming a German and explaining all the time that I speak badly in German because I was persecuted for using the language of my forefathers already in my childhood, on the streets of Toruń. If it turns out that I cannot live in France any longer, however, I will go to West Germany. Clearly, when it comes to learning Hebrew and becoming a Jewish woman, I am far too old.¹¹

Nationality, understood as an official registration, is juxtaposed here with the notion of a national identity (intertwined with the problem of memory, childhood, and tradition). They are both mocked as liquid, changeable, and a matter of choice. Moreover, the position of a foreigner in Grekowska's novel is not created by the idealistic or political opposition between fatherland and the foreign country but rather by the opposition between speakers of Polish (or Slavic) language and the French: “We sit together on the floor. Romanians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Poles; more and more cigarette butts around us; we drink tea, wine and we feel so good, so safe together.”¹² Ironically, Grekowska treats the feeling of safety among the emigrants, gathered together in the council house, as a symbolic space for ‘social outcasts’, the unwanted. The illusion of safety is possible only through the common experience (or the community) of being foreign. They are all foreigners (and harbour a similar illusion of Slavic or communist experiences). Through their emigrants’ narratives they maintain their old identity, their previous philosophy of life, acquired from experience in

11

„Nie mam ochoty zostać Niemką i tłumaczyć się, że mówię źle po niemiecku, gdyż już w dzieciństwie prześladowano mnie na ulicach Torunia za posługiwanie się mową ojców i dziadków. Jeśli nie będę mogła mieszkać we Francji, trudno, pojedę do RFN. Na naukę hebrajskiego i zostanie Żydówką, jestem za starsza.” (Grekowska 1995: 9).

12

„Siedziemy na podłodze. Rumuni, Bułgarzy, Czech [sic], Polacy, wokół coraz więcej niedopalków, pijemy herbatę, wino i jest nam razem tak dobrze, bezpiecznie.” (Grekowska 1995: 15).

the native land. The old identity is still valid for a little while in the asylum for emigrants. It is outside the asylum where they will have to face the exclusion, act in the foreign language and through the experience of exclusion revise their identity.¹³

A foreigner can be either a subject of abjection or a subject of curiosity. Fortunately for Gretkowska's character, Polishness in France of the 1980s was a somewhat peculiar but likable trait. In one of the bookshops, the character's Polishness gives her a chance to obtain some important papers. When hearing two characters speaking Polish, the intrigued bookshop owner asks:

– Excuse me, may I ask what nationality you are?

– Les Polonais – we answered with the magic word, always awakening a happy elation among those interested in esoteric studies and the French clergy. I understand the priests, the Pope is a Pole, but thanks to whom do we have such a good opinion among the theosophical and psychic societies, as well as among the brotherhoods of the quicker spiritual development? Perhaps Towiański? (Nerval regarded him as a genius). Or perhaps Hoene-Wroński, the owner of the licence for the Absolute.

Nevertheless, this time the magic of Polishness worked again, and the bookshop keeper smiled: – Poles, that's good, that's very good.¹⁴

The narrator will never explain why it is so good to be a Pole. The reader can only suspect that the Polish foreignness in this circum-

¹³ Literature and literary criticism try to show, following for example Lochak and Kristeva, that the emigrant, "the foreigner is 'a symptom' (Danièle Lochak): psychologically he signifies the difficulty we have of living as an *other* and with others; politically, he underscores the limits of nation-states and of the national political conscience that characterizes them and that we have all deeply interiorized to the point of considering it normal that there are foreigners, that is, people who do not have some rights as we do." (Kristeva 1991: 103).

¹⁴ "Przepraszam, ale jakiej państwo są narodowości? /– Les Polonais – odpowiedziałem magicznym słowem wzbudzającym zawsze radosne podniecenie wśród ezoteryków i francuskiego kleru. Rozumiem duchowych, Papież jest Polakiem, ale kto nam wyrobił taką opinię wśród towarzystw teozoficznych, spirytystycznych i wszystkich innych bractw przyspieszonego rozwoju duchowego na kocią łapę? Może Towiański? (Nerval uważał go za geniusza), a może posiadacz licencji na Absolut, Hoene-Wroński. I tym razem czar polskości zadziałał, pan księgarz uśmiechnął się – Polacy, to dobrze, to bardzo dobrze." (Gretkowska 1995: 117).

stance has been seen as a positive phenomenon, acknowledged through some political or cultural merits.

Gretkowska's story concludes with the character's graduation at the foreign university, which is a symbolic act of acceptance into the society. She celebrates among international friends, one of whom, Michał, "stopped being a Pole and subsequently also being a European"¹⁵, which is another emblematic shift towards the cosmopolitan consciousness. All this is doubly stressed by the French exclamation at the end of the story: "Bravo! Vive l'amour!"

My Cosy Everywhere

Glocality, the fashionable notion of the global local tries to capture the phenomenon of multicultural contacts which result in the transformation of identity (cf. Carr 2004; Featherstone, Lash & Robertson 1995). The reasoning seems to be: I go and I make the place mine, I bring with me what I long for the most, and I take whatever new elements I like. Through the notion of *glocality*, scholars try to explain the phenomenon of migrants' cultural identity and the workings of his/her cultural memory without colonising it from either the local or the global perspective.

Glocality can be then a possible way of understanding the identity of the displaced. The narration of the displaced is always filled with the longing for both what was left and the new to come. It is also part of Zygmunt Bauman's characterisation of tourist life, categorised by looseness of ties, grazing behaviour and frailty of relationships (cf. Franklin 2003). The modern migrant unquestionably is a bearer of a 'tourist syndrome', and never satisfies his desire for the new. As long as he can afford it, the modern migrant/tourist can choose home, and this home is always temporal.

It is important to mention that in respect to the economic necessity of earning money, there is a difference between Manuela Gretkowska's or Izabela Filipiak's literary characters (*My zdajes' emi-*

¹⁵ "[...] przestał czuć się Polakiem, a następnie Europejczykiem" (Gretkowska 1995: 141).

granny; *Niebieska menażeria*) and characters created by representatives of a younger generation, such as Joanna Pawluśkiewicz (*Pani na domkach* [*The Cleaning Lady*], 2006) and Iwona Stabaszewska-Krauze, (*Hotel Irlandia* [*Hotel Ireland*], 2006). While the former writers draw pictures of bohemian characters who treat work as a necessary precondition for the much more important spiritual and emotional life, the younger writers see work as a condition of their existence. Nevertheless, the global culture, the 'ever the same' helps all the migrants to be at home, to find their symbolic Poland in London, Dublin, or Chicago. The Polish shelves in an English *Tesco* shop or poetry verses in the London tube confirm that you are 'at home' wherever actually you are. *Glocality* is not a part of the progressive ideology of the 'enlightened' Western society or a modern utopia within multicultural concepts. It is against the traditional concept of culture, characterised by social homogeneity. *Glocality* takes world culture as a web of various local cultures interconnected with and mutually influenced by each other.

The main character of Joanna Pawluśkiewicz's *Pani na domkach* feels very comfortable in America, in a constantly changing environment. It is her harsh work as a nanny that causes suffering. She feels exhausted: "I am dead. I put them to sleep. I am dying. I have contraction in my arm and it hurts."¹⁶ The displacement, on the other hand, is experienced only when other Polish unhappy, exploited nannies are mentioned. Yet, the Polish memories blend into the present activities: "When I finish mopping this floor, somewhere around the dishwasher, I feel like I did as a child, when at Church the priest said: 'go, the dismissal has been made', and we sighed in relief and answered: 'We thank our Lord!'"¹⁷ Importantly, the unhappy character does not link her exhaustive work with her displacement. Therefore, she feels comfortable once away from her work place, watching *The Sopranos* or *Sex and the City*, most likely the same favourite TV se-

16 „Jestem trupem. Położyłam je spać. Umieram. Mam postzał w ręce i mnie boli.” (Pawluśkiewicz 2006: 152).

17 „I jak kończę mycie tej podłogi, tak w okolicach zmywarki, to czuję się jak w dzieciństwie w kościele, kiedy ksiądz mówił: 'idźcie w pokój, ofiara jest spełniona'. A my z westchnieniem ulgi mówiliśmy: 'Bogu niech będą dzięki!'” (Pawluśkiewicz 2006: 152).

ries that she watched in Poland: "The *Sopranos* are on, so I feel like having pizza and a coke. If it is *Sex and the City*, I drink yogurt, because the women there are so thin. If it's *ER*, I don't eat anything."¹⁸ The narrator, humorously connecting eating habits and movies, relies on the reader's global knowledge of TV programmes, that is, on a global culture of television and the internet. This illustrates how our locality is almost always a globalised locality, a *glocality*.

In most of the novels, written from the perspective of the traveler or migrant, the local mixes with global culture, and the memory of the native land is being interpreted by foreign landscapes. Such is the case in Filipiak's *Niebieska menażeria* and *Śmierć i spirala* (1993), in Grotkowska's exotic trip in *Światowidz* [*World-Viewer*] (1998), in Tokarczuk's anatomy of the traveller *Bieguni* [*Runners*] (2007), and in Grażyna Plebanek's book about the eponymous modern Polish nomaadic cleaning lady *Przystupa* (2007).

The Female Perspective on Displacement

It is worth noting that contemporary women's writing about the experience of (temporary or permanent) displacement resembles that of Polish interwar literature, for instance in books such as *Nad srebrną rzeką* (*Argentyna*) [*By the Silver River (Argentina)*] (1927) by Wanda Melcer.¹⁹ The approach is more that of the tourist than of the migrant (or exile). In this sense, the Polish *Dwudziestolecie* (i.e. 20 years, 1989-2009) is similar to the interwar *Dwudziestolecie* (1918-1939).

This similarity can also be found in the way in which women writers employ the feminist perspective. In books like Grażyna Plebanek's *Przystupa* or Joanna Pawluśkiewicz's *Pani na domkach*, the narrative perspective is deliberately feminine (not only through the personal narration). It is especially vivid in Plebanek's novel where

18 „Jest Soprano, więc mam ochotę na pizzę i colę. Jak jest *Sex and the City*, to piję jogurt, bo tam panie są szczupłe. A jak jest ostry dyżur, to nic nie jem.” (Pawluśkiewicz 2006: 153).

19 This phenomenon is well scrutinised in Ewa Kraskowska's book on Polish interwar women's writing (cf. Kraskowska 1999).

she creates her main character as a cleaning lady, travelling to Sweden and (in the end) to London. This traditionally feminine activity is promoted through the narration as a magical way of learning about other people's lives and transforming the displacement into the creative activity of cleaning.

Olga Tokarczuk's narrative anatomy of displacement in *Big Game* (2007) also does not allow her character to conceal her gender. She is a female traveller. Mainly at London airports (places of European tourist distribution and symbolic spaces of modern *uprootedness*)²⁰ she, the middle-aged traveller, notes that:

As for every woman, year by year time becomes my ally. I become translucent, transparent. I can move as a ghost, peep behind people's shoulders, listen to their quarrels and look at them as they sleep with their head leaning against their backpacks, or as they talk, unaware of my presence.²¹

The gender perspective on travelling can be also seen in other books, especially by writers whose texts have been interpreted from the feminist stance since the beginning of the 1990s, such as Manuela Gretkowska or Izabela Filipiak (cf. Chowaniec 2010). The gender question brings a new element to the experience of displacement, which has

20 Uprooteness can be observed particularly at airports. Olga Tokarczuk writes about them: "They suddenly appear in the arrival terminals and begin existing whenever a custom officer stamps their passport or whenever a kind receptionist gives them a key to the hotel room. They have certainly already discovered their instability and dependence on the places, on the time of day, on language and on the city or climate. Fluidity, mobility, the illusionary – this is what it means to be civilised. The barbarians do not travel, they simply go to or occupy another place." [„Pojawiają się nagle w terminalach przylotów i zaczynała istnieć, gdy urzędnicy wbijają im do paszportu stemple albo gdy uprzejmy recepcjonista w jakimś hotelu wręczy im klucz. Z pewnością odkryli już swoją niestabilność i zależność od miejsca, pór dnia, od języka czy miasta i jego klimatu. Płynność, mobilność, iluzoryczność – to właśnie znaczą być cywilizowanymi. Barbarzyńcy nie podróżują, oni po prostu idą do celu albo dokonują niejażdów.”] (Tokarczuk 2007: 60-1).

21 „Z roku na rok moim sprzymierzeńcem staje się czas, jak dla każdej kobiety – zrobiać się niewidoczną, przetrwać. Mogę poruszać się, jak duch, zaglądać ludziom przez ramię, przysłuchiwać się ich kłótniom i patrzeć jak śpią z głową na plecaku, jak mówią do siebie, nieświadomi mojej obecności.” (Tokarczuk 2007: 25).

been emphasised especially strongly by feminist scholars. Arguably, women's experience of geographical exile in literature is always a metaphor for social, political, and linguistic exclusions²² (exclusion from the paternal, Symbolic order, as Kristeva would say²³).

As I wrote in the beginning of this paper, *émigré* (or migrant) literature has always been a politically charged term, defined by further notions of borders, sovereignty and citizenship, along with the need for a permanent address [“zameldowanie”]²⁴. The story of displacement has been re-written by the new generation of writers for the obvious reason of changed political circumstances. Following their writing, Jerzy Jarzębski, in the above-mentioned book, gave up the term of *émigré* literature in contemporary literature. He states, however, that emigration seen “as a psychological rather than a geographic phenomenon”²⁵ still exists. But is this still emigration, exile? Is this sociological phenomenon still helpful as a literary category? Or should we speak of a common human experience of rejection and exclusion, born out of the existence of borders, limits?

Cześć Miłosz powerfully rejected the notion of emigration in literary discourses. “Poets and readers”, he noted, “may be separated by distance, but a spiritual unity between them is preserved, borders and barriers, whatever their nature, have no power”. This statement by Miłosz is quoted in Filipowicz's key essay on Polish *émigré* literature “Fission and Fusion: Polish *Émigré* Literature” (1989: 161). Fili-

22 Two texts on Marina Tsvetaeva and exile are particularly interesting in the context of gendered experience of exile, displacement, and re-negotiating one's own identity: Ciepiela, Catherine (1996), “The Demanding Woman Poet: On Resisting Marina Tsvetaeva”, *PMLA*, 111:3, 421-34; Stock, Ute (2001) “Marina Tsvetaeva: The Concrete and the Metaphoric Discourse of Exile”, *The Modern Language Review*, 96:3, 762-77.

23 Cf. the interesting summary of Julia Kristeva's work at Michigan State University website on Kristeva: “Feminism and Politics of Marginality”, <https://www.msu.edu/~chenkal/980/POLITICS.HTM> (21 March 2011).

24 In his *Leksykon polskiej literatury emigracyjnej* (*Lexicon of Polish Emigrant Literature*), Jan Zieliński chose the permanent address abroad [“stałe zamieszkanie zagranicą”] as a criterion for selecting the writers (cf. Zieliński 1989). He therefore includes Marian Pankowski (who published in Poland), but omits Stanisław Mackiewicz or Leszek Kołakowski.

25 „[...] raczej jako zjawisko psychologiczne niż geograficzne” (Jarzębski 1998: 244).

powicz defines the literature of emigration as "determined by writer's root in their native culture, not by their immersion in a new milieu or by their experience of clash of cultures" (Filipowicz 1989: 157).

Contemporary literature written by writers based outside of Poland and at the time of writing is hardly an example of literature of emigration (or even migrant) literature, since the writers' roots rarely play an important role, apart from, perhaps, setting an interesting (autobiographical, biographical or semi-biographical) context for their fiction. This is the case with Izabela Filipiak, Joanna Pawuśkiewicz, Grażyna Plebanek, Iwona Ślabuszczyńska-Krauze or Olga Tokarczuk. It is also the case in many other texts such as autobiographical books by Dana Parys-White *Emigrantka z wyboru. Opowieść londyńska* [*Emigrant by Choice. The London Tale*] (2008), and Justyna Tomańska *Polka w Londynie* [*A Pole in London*] (2004). These texts are accompanied by many contemporary narratives by male writers, such as: Grzegorz Kopaczewski's novel *Global nation* (2004) on the generational experience of London and Polish emigration there after 2004,²⁶ Bronisław Świdzki's *Asystent śmierci* [*The Assistant of Death*] (2007) on a thirty-something Pole living in Denmark, and finally, the simplistic

26 Grzegorz Kopaczewski's novel about the young, freshly graduated student Daniel, living and working in London, can be seen as a study of the young generation (which we can call, following the Polish TV series discussed in Joanna Rostek's contribution, the generation of *Londynczycy*, i.e. the Londoners). The first chapter starts with a motto adopted from a song by the rock band *Fury in the Slaughterhouse*: "Every generation got its own disease" (Kopaczewski 2004: 7), implying that migration has not changed substantially for Kopaczewski's/Daniel's generation. The first few words illustrate Zygmunt Bauman's theory of the frailty of relationship in modern society: "Current job... current boss... current friends... current girlfriend... current flat... current flatmates... current bed... current TV set... current toaster... Have you thought about your own wireless kettle that is yours only temporarily? Sometimes they say 'my last job', 'my last boyfriend', 'our last video player', but finally is the last thing that comes to your mind in London." [„Obecna praca... obecny szef... obecni przyjaciele... obecna dziewczyna... obecne mieszkanie... obecni współpracownicy... obecne łóżko... obecny telewizor... obecny toster... Myślicieście kiedyś o swoim czajniku bezprzewodowym jako tylko o obecnym czajniku? Niektórzy mówią: 'moja ostatnia praca', 'mój ostatni chłopak', 'nasz ostatni odwarzacz wideo', ale ostateczność to ostatnia rzecz, która w Londynie przychodzi do głowy.”] (Kopaczewski 2004: 7).

and naïve narrative by Daniel Koziański, *Sociopata w Londynie* [*A Sociopath in London*] (2006).

Halina Filipowicz argues that the term *émigré* literature is crafted by ideological and political animosities, while literature itself is beyond these fractures and tends to penetrate the limits of political categorisation. I conclude by recalling Filipowicz's words on the matter:

Political ideologies have been fond of demarcating between the central and the marginal, or between what they find acceptable and subversive in literature. But the development of Polish literature has been such that what is outside is also inside, what seems alien is also intimate; the ideologies police the frontier between two realms as vigilantly as they do precisely because it may always be transgressed, has repeatedly been transgressed already; and is much less absolute than it appears. When we look at the presumed borders of Poland's literary domain as much as its presumed centre, we can begin to examine Polish literature as varying continuity and cumulative whole. This is not [...] denying differences, but rather acknowledging and deciphering the differences as well as similarities, so that we might build on (and out of) them a web of significant relations which, far from being answers, will allow us to transform our earlier questions into new queries. (Filipowicz 1989: 168)

More questions about and directions toward new research are appearing, especially in the light of the new political ideologies and ideologies, and new centres and margins created by Europe which is still in the process of uniting. It is a new space in which the tales of women must still face borders more difficult to transcend than geographical limits. They must still find ways of crossing the psychological frontiers that divide a world charted by patriarchy.

Bibliography

- Bauman, Zygmunt (2000), *Ponowoczesność jako źródło cierpień*, Warszawa: Sic.
- Cart, Stuart C. (2004), *Globalization and Culture at Work: Exploring Their Combined Globality*. Boston, MA – London: Kluwer.
- Chowaniec, Urszula (2000), "W poszukiwaniu "kobiecego" świata. Proza Izabeli Filipiak i Olgi Tokarczuk" in Stanisław Jarzębski, ed., *Świat nowej prozy*, Kraków: Universitas, 117-48.
- (2008), "Między Sopicowem a global nation", *Nowy Czas*, 3 May, <http://www.nowyczas.co.uk/2008/05/miedzy-sopicowem-a-global-nation/> (accessed 12 November 2009).
- (2010), "Podróż czyli znikanie z map. O podróżującej bohaterce w literaturze polskiej ostatniej dekad: 1997-2007" in Cezary Zalewski, ed., *Od polityki do poetyki. Prace ofiarowane Stanisławowi Jaworskiemu*, Kraków: Universitas, 269-94.
- Czapik-Lityńska, Barbara, ed. (2005), *Podmiotowość, (=Literatury słowiańskie po roku 1989. Nowe zjawiska, tendencje, perspektywy, vol. 3)*, Warszawa: Elipsa.
- Czapiński, Przemysław (2009), *Polska do wymiany. Późna nowoczesność i nasze wielkie narracje*, Gdańsk: W.A.B.
- Dąbrowski, Mieczysław, ed. (2006), *Mniejszości (=Literatury słowiańskie po roku 1989. Nowe zjawiska, tendencje, perspektywy, vol. 4)*, Warszawa: Elipsa.
- Danilewicz-Zielińska, Maria (1999), *Szkice o literaturze emigracyjnej polwiczca 1939-1999*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Ossolińskich.
- Featherstone, Mike, Scott Lash & Roland Robertson, eds. (1995), *Global Modernities: 10th Anniversary Conference*, London: Sage.
- Filipiak, Izabela (1992), *Śmierć i spirala*, Wrocław: A.
- (1995), *Niebieska menażeria*, Warszawa: Sic.
- Filipowicz, Halina (1989), "Fission and Fusion: Polish Émigré Literature", *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 33:2, 157-72.
- Franklin, Adrian (2003), "The Tourist Syndrome. An Interview with Zygmunt Bauman", University of Bristol, http://www.intothepill.net/texts_theory/Bauman,%20Zygmunt%20-%20The%20Tourist%20Syndrome.rtf (accessed 21 March 2011).
- Gretkowska, Manuela (1995), *My zdes' emigranti*, Warszawa: W.A.B.
- (1998), *Światowidz*, Warszawa: W.A.B.
- Janaszek-Ivaničková, Halina, ed. (2005), *Transformacja. (=Literatury słowiańskie po roku 1989. Nowe zjawiska, tendencje, perspektywy, vol. 1)*, Warszawa: Elipsa.
- Jarzębski, Jerzy (1998), *Pożegnanie z emigracją. O powojennej prozie polskiej*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Kopaczewski, Grzegorz (2004), *Global Nation. Obrazki z czasów popkultury*, Wołowiec: Czarne.
- Kraskowska, Ewa (1999), *Piórem niewieści. Z problemów prozy kobiecej dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM.
- , ed. (2006), *Feminizm (=Literatury słowiańskie po roku 1989. Nowe zjawiska, tendencje, perspektywy, vol. 2)*, Warszawa: Elipsa.
- Kristeva, Julia (1991), *Strangers to Ourselves*, transl. Leon S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Oliver, Kelly (1993), *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-bind*, Bloomington – Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Pawluśkiewicz, Joanna (2006), *Pani na domkach*, Kraków: Ha Art.
- Pietkiewicz, Jerzy (1956), *Polish Prose and Verse. A Selection with an Introductory Essay*, London: Athlone Press.
- Plebanek, Grażyna (2007), *Przystępu*, Warszawa: W.A.B.
- Siwicka, Dorota & Marek Bieńczyk (1995), *Nasze pojedynki o romanizm*, Warszawa: IBL.
- Ślabuszevska-Krauze, Iwona (2006), *Hotel Irlandia*, Warszawa: Semper.
- Sontag, Susan (1991), *Illness as Metaphor and Aids and Its Metaphors*, London: Penguin Books.
- Tokarczuk, Olga (2007), *Bieguni*, Kraków: WL.
- Weintraub, Wiktor (1959), *Literature as Prophecy* (=The British Library Collection), Mouton: Den Haag.
- Zieliński, Jan (1989), *Leksykon polskiej literatury emigracyjnej*. Lublin: Fis – Unipress.