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A Piece of Fedora Cake: The Male-Centric Imagination of Jerzy Andrzejewski and the Scholarly Reconnaissance

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We would be hard-pressed to find a common denominator for new readings of works by the author of *Ashes and Diamonds*, aside from the fact that they are linked (I believe) by the “depoliticization” of both the author and his work, the abandonment of what Dariusz Nowacki neatly termed “the Andrzejewski affair.”¹ Contemporary interpreters continue to suggest novel approaches to interpreting Andrzejewski’s work: poetological (Janusz Detka²), biographical (Dariusz Nowacki,³

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- 1 See Dariusz Nowacki, “Ja” *nieuniknione. O podmiocie pisarstwa Jerzego Andrzejewskiego* [The Inevitable “Self.” On the Subject of Jerzy Andrzejewski’s Writing] (Katowice: Wydawnictwo UŚ, 2000). We may surmise that Andrzejewski’s new biography and a critical inquiry into his journals, currently being prepared by Anna Synoradzka-Demadre, will reignite a broader interest in the author of *Ashes and Diamonds* and his work.
 - 2 Janusz Detka, *Przemiany poetyki w prozie Jerzego Andrzejewskiego* [The Transformation of Poetics in the Writings of Jerzy Andrzejewski] (Kielce: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna im. Jana Kochanowskiego, 1995).
 - 3 Nowacki, “Ja” *nieuniknione*.

Jan Potkański⁴), “vampirical” (Maria Janion⁵), gender-based (German Ritz⁶), mythological (Zbigniew Kopeć⁷), and intertextual (Agnieszka Gawron⁸).

Undoubtedly, Andrzejewski’s writings are open to other interpretive modalities with psychoanalytic readings at the top of the list. Its “traces” can be found in the majority of the approaches listed above (e.g. in the work of Dariusz Nowacki). The lack, therefore, of a comprehensive psychoanalytical inquiry into this particular body of work can indeed be confounding.

The rough sketch I will be proposing below is an interpretive attempt, heterogeneous in character. As the subject matter I will be working with is writerly imagination, rather than privileging one particular interpretive language (e.g. the language of psychoanalysis), I am going to propose that we take on a multi-pronged theoretical approach in which the discourses of psychoanalysis and queer theory will play a distinct role in the belief that the light cast by the two discourses together will illuminate the figure of the writer standing on stage better than either of them would singly.

1. “What, Besides our Mates, Can we Believe in?” The Scholarly Perspective

Andrzejewski’s *oeuvre* has been subject to numerous attempts at ordering and categorizing, hammering (to paraphrase the author himself) the pulp that is the work into shape. And so, taking his cues from Miłosz and his *Captive Mind*, Janusz Detka found that the theme of night is a common thread running through Andrzejewski’s work. Earlier, Artur Sandauer attempted to outline distinct creative periods in Andrzejewski’s writing and arrange them in an orderly way, using nomenclature that seemed taken straight out

4 Jan Potkański, “Andrzejewski: perwersje wpływu,” [“Andrzejewski: Perversions of Influence”] in *Lektury płci. Polskie (kon)teksty* [Reading Gender. Polish (Con)texts], ed. Mieczysław Dąbrowski (Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, 2008), 262–278.

5 Maria Janion, “Krucjata niewińątek,” [“The Innocents’ Crusade”] in *Wobec zła* [In the Face of Evil] (Chotomów: Verba, 1989).

6 German Ritz, “Jerzy Andrzejewski: maski pożądania i ich funkcja w poetyce powieści” [“Jerzy Andrzejewski: Masks of Desire and Their Function in the Poetics of the Novel”], trans. Andrzej Kopacki, in *Niś w labiryncie pożądania* [A Thread in the Labyrinth of Desire] (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 2002), 217–231.

7 Zbigniew Kopeć, *Jerzy Andrzejewski* (Warszawa: Rebis, 1999).

8 Agnieszka Gawron, *Sublimacje współczesności: pisanstwo Jerzego Andrzejewskiego wobec przemian prozy XX wieku* [Sublimations of Modernity: the Writing of Jerzy Andrzejewski in Light of the 20th Century Transformations of Prose] (Łódź: Wydawnictwo UŁ, 2003).

of *Ferdynurke*.⁹ Teresa Walas divided Andrzejewski's body of work into two separate parts – one subordinate to the “sphere of morality” and the other subject to the “sphere of history.”¹⁰ Tomasz Burek, on the other hand, focused on the integrity and identity of the work,¹¹ while Dariusz Nowacki examined what he believed to be two separate development phases in Andrzejewski's writing. In the first, Andrzejewski was supposedly implementing the “overachiever strategy,” while adopting the “finding oneself strategy” in the second.¹²

My interest leans towards identifying integrative categories, that is those that will allow us to read Andrzejewski's work not in terms of chronologies charting individual breakthroughs and progressive fluctuations in hopes and disappointments, but rather in terms of the “deep structure” which sees a couple of distinct leitmotifs reappear throughout Andrzejewski's body of work – from *Mode of the Heart* to *Nobody*, the latter published nearly 50 years after the former. By trying to identify a category that could establish a basic continuum, I am repeating the efforts of Janusz Detka, at least to some extent, who believed – with considerable proof to back his claim – night to be such a category. The Kielce-based scholar points out that a nocturnal setting is a dominant compositional feature in Andrzejewski's work, its reign stretching from *Unavoidable Roads*, his debut short story collection published in 1936, all the way to the senile *Nobody*, published in 1981.¹³ One other category that, akin to “night,” runs like a thread through the entire body of

9 Artur Sandauer, *Bez taryfy ulgowej [No Concessions]* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974), passim.

10 Teresa Walas, “Zwierciadła Jerzego Andrzejewskiego,” [“The Reflections of Jerzy Andrzejewski”] in *Prozaicy dwudziestolecia międzywojennego. Sylwetki [Prose Writers of the Interwar Period. Profiles]*, ed. Bolesław Faron (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1972).

11 Tomasz Burek, “Pisarz, demony, publiczność. Jerzy Andrzejewski,” [“Writer, Demons, Audience. Jerzy Andrzejewski”] in *Sporne postacie polskiej literatury współczesnej [Controversial Figures of Polish Contemporary Literature]*, ed. Alina Brodzka (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 1994).

12 Nowacki, “Ja” *nieuniknione*.

13 Andrzejewski himself explained the basis for the prevalence of nocturnal settings in his work: “It is easier for me to deal with men than landscapes [...] it is my awareness of the fact that I find world building difficult that drives the ubiquity of night-time, darkness, dimness, fogs, and blurred contours in my work.” (ZDN 1, 149). See Detka's remarks (226-230). Passages from Andrzejewski's works will be quoted in the following manner: acronym of the title, page number (A – *The Appeal*, Warszawa, 1983; GZC – *Playing with a Shadow*, Warszawa, 1987; NG – *A Kind of Cope and Other Stories*; ZDN 1 – *From Day to Day*, Vol. 1, Warszawa, 1988; ZDN 2 – *From Day to Day*, Vol. 2, Warszawa, 1988). If not otherwise specified all translations of referenced works are provided by the translator of the article.

work of the author of *The Gates of Paradise*, is the category of “masculinity,” defined broadly for the purpose of this essay. Andrzejewski problematizes masculinity across his entire *oeuvre*. The majority of his characters are men, men entering in a variety of different relationships with other men. From this angle, his novels and stories seem to be vehicles for reflection over the conditions upon which masculinity is contingent, and its limits; their author seems intrigued by the social frame of its constitution as well as the relationship between male sexuality and aggression, along with the positions of dominance and subordination ascribed to them. In fact, it is mostly male-male relationships that are problematized across Andrzejewski’s body of work, to the detriment – rather obvious to more attentive readers – of relationships between different sexes, ethnicities, and generations (the latter, often in the form of trans-generational conflict, emerges in his work co-dependent on “male-centric relationships”). One of Andrzejewski’s earliest stories, *Lies*, has an exclusively male cast of characters; in *Mode of the Heart*, published a couple of years later, Father Siecheń, Michaś, and Siermion are caught up in an eroticism-laced psychomachia; the characters of *On Trial* and *Roll Call* set out to test the limits of male solidarity, while *Ashes and Diamonds* gives Jan Błoński reason enough to ask “in what – aside from his mates – does Maciek Chelmicki believe in”¹⁴; the crusade in *The Gates of Paradise* is driven by the forbidden love of Count Ludwik, Aleksy, and Jakub; Ortiz in *He Cometh Leaping Over the Mountains* “leaps over” an affair with the young Françoise who turns out to be nothing more than a medium channeling his youthful indiscretions with Giuseppe Barba; in his final novel *Nobody*, Andrzejewski spins a whole web of male-male relationships and, if we are to believe the excerpts, journal entries, and remarks coming from the author’s friends, *Heliogabal*, the novel Andrzejewski did not manage to complete before passing away, was supposedly focused solely on the bonds between men.¹⁵ This peculiar “fixation” with masculinity evident in *A Kind of Copse*, *Almost Nothing*, and *Now the Annihilation Upon You*, this “male-centricity” mostly eludes readers consuming individual works, where relationships between male characters are inscribed into relevant contexts and conflicts (economic, political, social, etc.). Only a more comprehensive look at Andrzejewski’s *oeuvre*¹⁶ allows us to identify these relationships as a privi-

14 See Jan Błoński, “Portret artysty w latach wielkiej zmiany,” [“Portrait of the Artist in Times of Upheaval”] in *Odmarz [Fall Out]* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1978), 241.

15 For passages from that final novel, see *Kwartalnik artystyczny* 4 (1997): 79–81.

16 When speaking about *oeuvre*, I am acutely aware of the reservations brought up by Dariusz Nowacki (“Ja” *nieuniknione*) which force me to arbitrarily treat the term “oeuvre” as

leged subject, one that seems especially close and moving to the author and particularly inspiring to his imagination. However, in contrast to the self-awareness that the author has demonstrated with regard to “night,” “male-centricity” as a synthesizing category remains undiagnosed or at least – as such – unspoken of, which in turn can breed significant reservations that this “male-centricity” is nothing more than the product of the universally dominant position of the male in public spaces, a fact prevalent across European cultures. This rather obvious situation may have driven the overrepresentation of male characters and “masculinity” in the narratives of Andrzejewski’s highly politicized writings. To some extent that is true. However, we need to point out (and I will develop this particular notion later in the essay) that male-male relationships do not play a stabilizing role in Andrzejewski’s writing – on the contrary, directed against the public sphere, they’re destructive, dangerous, and anarchic; they oppose societal and cultural orders in which that they function in.

A quick and superficial appraisal of “male-centric” themes appearing in Andrzejewski’s most important works forces us to ask the question that was once considered anathema and is still treated with considerable suspicion, that is the question about the biographic context of Andrzejewski’s interest in the issue of masculinity. The most superficial of answers – offered by essayists such as Krzysztof Tomasiak – combines artistic realizations with the biographic homosexuality of the author. The chapter dedicated to Andrzejewski Tomasiak titled “Potential Emancipation”, assuming that in a different cultural climate, Andrzejewski may very well have led a reappraisal of values associated with homosexuality.¹⁷ Tomasiak believes that Andrzejewski had a chance to succeed in such an endeavor given his status as the first public figure “whose image was permeated by homosexual elements” which, in turn, “dovetailed with his body of work into a cohesive whole which could be seen as potentially emancipatory.”¹⁸ Tomasiak’s opinion, absolutely valid as essayistic speculation, is however, potentially dangerous due to its interpretive sterility and somewhat striking in its essentialist treatment of categories which even if not constructed from the ground up, as the more radical proponents

meaning the overall body of texts (and their variants) published during the author’s lifetime. So defined, *oeuvre* encompasses both fictional texts as well as diary entries and memoirs.

17 Krzysztof Tomasiak, “Potencjalna emancypacja. O Jerzym Andrzejewskim,” [“Potential Emancipation. On Jerzy Andrzejewski”] in *Homobiografie: pisarki i pisarze polscy XIX i XX wieku* [*Homobiographies: Polish Writers of the 19th and 20th century*] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2007), 114-123.

18 Tomasiak, “Emancypacja,” 122.

of queer theory would have it, would still require cultural and historical contextualization.¹⁹ Additionally, binding the writer to an articulation of non-normative sexuality in such a manner carries considerable risk of succumbing to a particular reading reductionism which sees literature subordinate itself to some teleology external to its own self (although we should note here, as Tomasiak did, that “*Pulp* achieved cult status among gays.”²⁰) The biographical interpretation of Anna Synoradzka-Demadre engenders similar reservations. In her essay *Epitafium dla E.B. O pewnym wątku w twórczości Jerzego Andrzejewskiego* [*An Epitaph for E.B. On a Certain Theme in Jerzy Andrzejewski's Work*],²¹ this highly distinguished scholar and biographer of Andrzejewski claims that the template, the prototype for relationships in Andrzejewski's work can be found in the love triangle between the author, Eugeniusz Biernacki, and Barbara Siekierzyńska. The scholar identifies specific coincidences between that relationship, outlined or alluded to in certain passages of his earlier works, and the narrative structure of *Mode of the Heart*. She also mentions that a similar romantic arrangement appears in Andrzejewski's work in two versions of *Pulp* – in both the fictional and journalistic sections. I am not sure whether such an attempt to match specific writings to a matrix of their author's experiences is valid and justifiable or an attack against the self-contained nature of the literary text; nevertheless, my deep belief that Andrzejewski's writerly imagination focuses primarily on masculinity and relationships (of all sorts) that men enter into is further reinforced when I realize the actual deficit of representation of male-female relationships, particularly the happy ones; even the Maleckis portrayed in *Holy Week* are written so that Anna, the wife, repulses her husband who, in turn, has some unfinished romantic business with a beautiful and effective Other – Irena Lilien.²²

A study positing that masculinity or homosociality (to use the theoretically resonant category crafted by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick) is the chief problem in Jerzy Andrzejewski's work simply cannot refrain from inquiring into whether

19 Anna Synoradzka is more careful with Andrzejewski's sexual – and gender – identity, preferring to claim in her biography that Andrzejewski was actually “bisexual.”

20 Tomasiak, *Homobiografie*, 114.

21 Anna Synoradzka-Demadre, “Epitafium dla E.B. O pewnym wątku w twórczości Jerzego Andrzejewskiego” [“An Epitaph for E.B. On a Certain Theme in Jerzy Andrzejewski's Work”], *Odra* 3 (2013): 52–60.

22 Let us bring up a couple of similarly written characters from Andrzejewski's works, e.g. the wartime *Intermezzo* (a husband abandons a wife he hates during the fateful September of 1939), passages from *The Return* (the breakup of the Gaszycki marriage) or the late *Dark Star* (the emotional torpor of the Ankwiczes).

there exist any linkages between the author's works and his biography, particularly in the sphere of sexuality. Such a study should also take into account the many degrees of fictionality which, particularly in Andrzejewski's work, define specific receptive modalities.²³

2. "... Origins Dark and Unclean": the Gombrowicz Perspective

No comprehensive monograph of Andrzejewski's journal entries has been published yet, but we can easily put forth a couple of rather obvious hypotheses. Firstly, the entries serve as an extension of his literary work and provide relevant commentary for his works.²⁴ After he completed *Pulp*, the writer's diary became his most important work – and the only channel of communication with the readers left to him after he found himself the subject of the censor's unblinking gaze. Andrzejewski uses this particular platform to experiment with fiction (fragments of his novel *Hundred Years Ago and Now*), sometimes to self-aggrandize, to model the specific readings of his works through self-commentary, and to render literary judgments. On many levels, his journal seems to style itself after the model laid down by Witold Gombrowicz's *Diary* – I would even go so far as to posit that it often leeches off it – the essence of my second hypothesis. Sandauer's opinion that the release of *And Darkness Covered the Earth* marks the moment "Andrzejewski dropped satire and broke out from the influence of Gombrowicz"²⁵ was somewhat premature – the entries from 1972–1981, published in *Literatura*, are both modeled on Gombrowicz's *Diary* and function – in light of the highly regulated availability of Gombrowicz's works – as a veiled argument therewith.

The opening pages of *From Day to Day* contains the following passage:

demons, regardless of the sphere of thoughts and deeds that they oversee and of personal hierarchies, are bound by mysterious ties of kinship.

23 The "literariness" of Andrzejewski's work is multilevel in nature and its relationship to the extraliterary reality also gets complicated – one only needs to bring up the multilevel fictional constructs in *Pulp* or the inflationary multiplication of narrator figures in the journal entries. Cf., among others, Walas, "Zwierciadła," *passim*.

24 See, among others, Erazm Kuźma, "Funkcja dziennika w prozie Jerzego Andrzejewskiego," ["The Role of the Journal in Jerzy Andrzejewski's Prose"] in *Między konstrukcją a dekonstrukcją. Studia z teorii i historii literatury [Between Construction and Deconstruction. Inquiries into Theory and History of Literature]* (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe USZ, 1994), 147–148.

25 Sandauer, *Bez taryfy ulgowej*, 61.

Angels and angelhood I prefer to not discuss, they are not my business, I do not know them nor my way around them. One does not write with angel feathers nor in the shade of their wings. The origins of writing are dark and unclean, and the greatest deficiency of Polish literature is the writers' cowardly unwillingness to acknowledge these internal well-springs. (ZDN 1, 16)

This rather sweeping remark accompanies a question that Andrzejewski poses after reading Iwaszkiewicz's *Sérénité*. The writer asks himself which of his contemporary authors could himself become a character in a novel. The names he ponders include Iwaszkiewicz, Putrament (these two without a question mark), Herbert, Brandys, Strykowski, and Nowakowski (these four with question marks). These seem to be the "demons" bound together by mysterious ties.

Let us contrast the above passage with an entry from Gombrowicz's *Diary* dated 1958:

My springs pulsate in a garden whose gate is guarded by an angel with a flaming sword. I cannot enter. I will never get through. I am condemned to an eternal circling of the place where my truest enchantment is sanctified.

I am not allowed in because... these springs bubble with shame like fountains! Yet there is the internal imperative: get as close as you can to the sources of your shame! I have to mobilize all my reason, consciousness, discipline, all the elements of form and style, all the techniques of which I am capable in order to get closer to the mysterious gate of that garden, behind which my shame bursts into flower. [...] Eternally the same thing! Dress up in a splendid coat in order to step into an inn on the docks. To use wisdom, maturity, virtue, in order to get close to something that is just the opposite!²⁶

The similarity in the methods of presentation and segmentation of content evident in both fragments will become even more clear when we realize that the final lines of the above quoted passage appear in *He Cometh Leaping Over the Mountain* (coming from the mouth of Paul Allard as he sends his lover away), a fact that will later become a bone of contention between the writers. And Reiner von Brösigke, the exalted uncle of the protagonist of *Almost*

26 Witold Gombrowicz, *Diary. Volume 2 (1957-1961)*, trans. Lillian Vallee (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 87-88.

Nothing, dies in an *Inn on the Docks*.²⁷ The threefold reappearance of passages from the *Diary* in Andrzejewski's work clearly proves that the latter attached considerable importance to the book and interpreted in ways that suited his own purposes. Homoeroticism, only suggested in Gombrowicz's take, becomes the "closed fountain" in Andrzejewski's work quite unequivocally – the novelistic allusions (taking place over a dozen years) clearly situate them in this particular context, making them as much dangerous as they are appealing.

In his notation, Andrzejewski reproduces Gombrowicz's specific representation process and the only thing he does is expand the conclusions to cover the whole of Polish literature. He leaves the threefold consequences of describing a body of work revolving around an inaccessible "dark origin" in the sphere of presupposition. Firstly, we are dealing with criticism of its pre-existing condition – and this is where Andrzejewski most resembles Gombrowicz. Secondly, by contrast – it seems to be an artistic declaration – if such is the deficiency of literature, the notation's author seems to suggest that he will try to remedy it to the best of his ability and draw on those "origins dark and unclean." The third problem we run into is linked with the embodiment of the "darkness" and the "uncleanliness" of these "internal wellsprings," with their potential portrayal and the language that should be used to discuss them. Andrzejewski's solution, which we will discuss later in this essay, can be found in the diary entries penned down by the author of *The Gates of Paradise*.

27 Andrzejewski suffered from a Gombrowicz complex. Readers of *From Day to Day* and *Playing with a Shadow* will get the impression that the most delicate point of said complex, if we were to use such a phrase, is both writers' sensitivity to youth: "Gombrowicz," Andrzejewski writes, "spoke often and in a moving manner, seemingly enraptured by youth, about its charms but he saw youth primarily from a physical angle; and because he was highly intelligent, he sought an intellectual formula that would capture flesh – he believed that fascination with form may educate him. [...] It is possibly regrettable that a grand and heroic writer such as Gombrowicz would not be permitted to live out his days in his homeland, because here, in this country, he could possibly realize in his final days that the spirit of youth may turn out to be much more beautiful than young flesh." (ZDN 2, 69). Elsewhere, he discusses Gombrowicz and a renowned critical essay drafted by Sandauer which accuses the author of *Ashes and Diamonds* of pushing derivative ideas: "I do not deny that there may be similarities between Gombrowicz and me in that respect [meaning their proclivity for youth – author's note]. However, any conceptual insinuations suggesting some sort of dependence in one direction or another would verge on the ridiculous; in truth, Sandauer only saw one possibility: that it was I who pinched the entire problem of youth from Gombrowicz" (GzC, 97). The "half-hearted confidences" with regard to the alleged homosexuality of the author of *Operetta* are reflected in Andrzejewski's "partial confessions" (GzC, 158) – as if he truly felt compelled to paraphrase the specific writing style of the Vence-based former acquaintance, as if he couldn't muster the courage to make his language self-contained, autonomous.

If we acknowledge the manifold representations of masculinity to be an essential theme of a body of work self-admittedly driven by the willingness to reach these “origins dark and unclean,” then we naturally have to circle back to the issue of biography, or – to put things more precisely, to the manner in which the author himself situates his masculinity within the context of social relations, the prevalent societal beliefs, and his very own idiosyncrasies. How does he act towards other men? And how do they act towards him?

In the context of Andrzejewski’s biography, it is undeniable that his relationships with the men around him were very complicated. As a result of his homoerotic relationship with Eugeniusz Biernacki, Andrzejewski had a falling out with his father; the novel he based on that relationship led to a disagreement with the conservative circles associated with the *ABC* daily.²⁸ Moreover, the unrequited love for Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński determined the horizon for subsequent, more or less fortunate, affairs and “affairs,” including the one with Marek Hłasko. Although Andrzejewski’s circle of friends included many outspoken homosexuals (including Marek Eiger and – after the war – Wilhelm Mach), and he himself lived with his sexuality more or less out in the open in postwar Communist Poland, in both the early and final stages (the notorious letter affair which was later revealed to be a provocation of the security services) of his writing career, Andrzejewski suffered rejection and exclusion due to the homoerotic nature of these relationships.

The result is, I assume, the internalization of a conceptual apparatus wherein the homosexuality of writers is associated with condemnation, darkness, sin, and stigma. These, in turn, serve as the *primum movens* of writerly activity and prompt the expansion of the limits of individual sensibility. And although Andrzejewski does not confess as much in his self-commentary, he repeatedly “projects” such a “sinful” view of non-normative sexuality and its consequences onto the figures of his writer friends. Such is definitely the case of Maria Dąbrowska. A brief vignette dedicated to her in *From Day to Day* brings up the same associations as the passage quoted above:

Subject to demons and angels, both of them local, homebound; petite, although with a less than striking figure; slightly cross-eyed, with a thicket of flaxen hair (which grew beautifully grey in later years) in a Piast-like bowl cut—she was able to be both a possessive, despotic man and a submissive little woman. (ZDN 1, 71)

28 As Nowacki points out, the release of the book also forever exiled him from the ideological faction that he strived to belong to. See Nowacki, “Ja” *nieuniknione*, 32–34.

Whether Dąbrowska was simply androgynous or Andrzejewski was trying to bring up – and invert – the *anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa* topos, rather prevalent in paramedical discourse, is not really relevant here. What is much more interesting is that Dąbrowska's presupposed position on the intersection of gender and sexuality – subject to the whims of demonic forces (at least to some extent) due to its hybrid nature – equipped the writer with a particular set of receptive qualities:

The woman whose considerable knowledge of love, I believe, was much greater than anything she wanted to (dared to?) write on the subject in her books, once told me, this was still during the war, I think, that *On Trial* was a story about love. (ZDN 1, 71)

Dąbrowska censors herself when it comes to the sensitive – too sensitive for Andrzejewski – subject of same-sex relationships. Her opinion of the wartime story,²⁹ where the power of such a bond reveals itself under dramatic circumstances, can be offered solely in an unofficial manner. With respect to Dąbrowska, Andrzejewski positions himself as an indulgent mentor – according to his own spatial metaphor, he is located closer to these “internal wellsprings” which inform and feed his writing. When it comes to Dąbrowska, Andrzejewski is not certain whether the limitations she imposed on herself are a product of her own decisions or contingent upon external circumstances; what he is certain of, however, is that her actions resemble a sort of spiritual amputation that impairs writing itself.

she [Dąbrowska – author's note] was astonished with the specific style of *The Gates of Paradise*. Was she [...] fully aware of the proud obedience that she herself exhibited in her pursuit of compliance with the severe norms of the societal spirit and the many dark and violent gifts of her nature that she renounced in the name of this said higher purpose of writerly service to the nation?

Among the many clichés that Andrzejewski invokes – as much periphrastic as implying homosexuality – the “dark and violent [...] nature” seems his favorite. The gothic³⁰ lexicon of darkness, violence, and demonic influence

29 “In December, I wrote *On Trial*, a short story which I believe to be the best of everything I have ever written. Maybe this one will prevail...” ZDN 1, 322.

30 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick wrote extensively on the relationship between “deviant” sexuality and the gothic imaginary; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men. English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia, 1985), 83–96. She notices that: “the

resurfaces in profiles of artists whose homosexual orientation often informed the shape of their works and – more often than not – led to personal catastrophes.³¹ Such is the explanation of the “dark origin,” which is both the source of value of Andrzejewski’s work and the source of others’ death and destruction suffered by others. Let us bring up a handful of examples. From Andrzejewski’s reading of Lechoń’s correspondence “emerges a dramatic and grotesque image of Lechoń himself: a snob, a mean-spirited gossip, and simultaneously a man in constant pain, tortured by creative unfulfillment, loneliness, as well as hallucinations and genuine dangers” (ZDN 1, 162). Lechoń’s death, whose homosexual background was no secret in literary circles, seems in Andrzejewski’s take a victory of that “hellish” part of Serafinowicz’s being which

adored the splendor of the upper classes, loved to rub elbows with society types (and those with lesser pedigrees), loved to shine, loved publicity and acclaim, but belonged to the tribe of reprobates, and was bound by dark pacts to suffering and death [emphasis mine]. Eventually, the wretch overcame and wrestled down the elements that still withstood and delayed his demise. (ZDN 1, 163)

The term “tribe of reprobates” brings up very Proustian associations (*la race maudite*) and notions positing the existence of some sort of a gay Masonic lodge that – in line with Gothic imaginary and demonology – concludes dark compacts that bind them to suffering and death. The mentioned pacts will resurface in the discussion of another of Andrzejewski’s gay friends – Wilhelm Mach who “gave himself to causes considered important with a determination some could see as desperation and it was this dark force [emphasis mine], I believe, that led to his untimely and tragic death” (ZDN 2, 508). The common denominator for these two very different men (one was a poet, the other a prose writer, one was a highly conservative émigré, the other a committed socialist, one concealed his homosexuality, the other was out and proud about his emotions and desires) is their “essence,” a sort of dark and demonic force which drove their lives, to fatal results. Józef Czechowicz, another figure discussed by Andrzejewski in his diary, was treated by the author only

Gothic novel [is] an important locus for the working-out of some of the terms by which nineteenth- and twentieth-century European culture has used homophobia to divide and manipulate the male homosocial spectrum.”

³¹ My discussion of existential catastrophes follows the pattern laid down by Tomasz Kaliściak who saw the artistic and existential catastrophism as a constant in many artistic biographies of 20th century writers and poets (see Tomasz Kaliściak, *Katastrofy odmieńców [Disasters of the Others]* (Katowice, Wydawnictwo UŚ, 2011).

slightly better, as his portrayal is focused on emphasizing his dual nature (the duality linking him with other “reprobates”):

A neurotic, he was often seen in a state indicating utter and complete self-neglect; he also had better days, when he walked around bathed and groomed, content like the full moon. Many personal affairs, however, pained him to no end... (ZDN 2, 88)

Andrzejewski used a similar tone to discuss Marek Eiger (Stefan Napierski), calling him a “man hollowed out by misery,” and marked him “a member of that particular caste of men who are unable to experience happiness.”³²

Andrzejewski’s self-referential columns in *Literatura*, where he explored his own relationships with other men, are slightly different in character. The author seems to believe his own experiences and emotions immune from the influence of the “dark forces” (but may be doing so for the readers’ sake). Remarkably, he also used the widely read column to discuss his long-term affair with Eugeniusz Biernacki, as if it was perfectly obvious for everyone,³³ as if the private details of his pre-war affairs and relationships, revealed through the use of a particular diminutive, were perfectly obvious. If we were to treat the notion of approaching the dark pulsating springs borrowed from Gombrowicz seriously, then Andrzejewski’s strategy leading towards it would necessarily entail objectivization and naturalization of description. The issue, however, managed to remain enigmatic because the average reader of *Literatura* in the 1970s had more or less no idea who Biernacki really was and what role he played in the life of the author of *Ashes and Diamonds*. We can hypothesize, therefore, that Andrzejewski’s remarks have a dual reader address: one is broad, while the other, privileged, includes the author’s close friends and loved ones. The dual address hypothesis is lent further credibility by the fact that Andrzejewski often read his works to close friends before they were published as well the fact that some of his works, such as *As If a Copse*, dedicated to Irena Szymańska, were structured in a way that revealed their inherent ironies only to those who knew the author well.³⁴ We should also add here that using a dual reader address is a device writers often employ in order to communicate homoerotic content in an ostensibly “neutral” text. I have pointed out that fact elsewhere with regard to stories authored by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz: *The Maids*

³² As quoted in Kaliściak, *Katastrofy*, 183.

³³ The paradox was pointed out already by Synoradzka in Synoradzka-Demadre, “Epitafium dla E.B.,” 58

³⁴ See Nowacki, “Ja” *nieuniknione*, 53.

of *Wilko* and, above all, *Psyche*³⁵ (with Jerzy Andrzejewski definitely one of the intended, in-the-know readers). The strategy of objectivization and use of informational shortcuts employed by Andrzejewski is, essentially, a mere pretence of objectivity – legible only to a few, leaving the remaining readers without the requisite instruments and the requisite context that would allow them to grasp the true meaning.

Andrzejewski juxtaposes his love for Biernacki with his love for Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, and he speaks of the latter in declarative, measured tones.³⁶ In contrast to the death of the poet, “the tragic death of Gienio B. [“Gienio” is a diminutive of the name Eugeniusz – translator’s note] marked the passing of nothing but memory. It did not take anything living from me, nor did it wound me deeply; I have spent the month after the death of G. on writing *Nights* and it brought me a measure of balance” (ZDN 1, 313). Moreover, Biernacki’s death “opens” Andrzejewski, in his own opinion, to the successful – contrary to his first marriage – relationship with Maria Abgarowicz: “I wrote about Marysia before I ever knew her. That death,” continues Andrzejewski, “opened me up to longing for another, as yet unknown life. I prophesied it for myself” (ZDN 1, 313). Only on the ruins of an archetypical male-male relationships, we may surmise, can a traditional familial arrangement be erected – the marriage with Maria.

In another passage, the author discusses the dilemmas that plagued him in his relationship with Biernacki (forty years earlier), but, we should note, the discussion lacks the demonic and gothic atmosphere of references. In contrast to his affair with Baczyński, his relationship with Biernacki was not mythologized. Rather than “mythologize” and “gothicize,” the writer prefers to discuss psychological processes, as well as the social context that precluded him from releasing his novel in print: “My experiences with Gienio B-cki bore passages of a novel that I rewrote multiple times, and which exhausted me to no end, fragments of which were later printed in *Droga* and later in *Prosto z Mostu* [...] This was when I was 34 and 35, these years were very difficult for me, very complicated” (ZDN 1, 318). It is hard to divine what exactly the difficulty of these years entailed, we know, however, that the novel that so exhausted the author was “autobiographically bold” and that it was to serve as a “liberation, a way to cleanse and justify himself.” It could not have been printed in *ABC*

35 See Wojciech Śmieja, *Literatura, której nie ma. Szkice o polskiej “literaturze homoseksualnej”* [*The Non-Existent Literature. Essays on Polish “Homosexual Literature”*] (Kraków: Universitas, 2010), 20-26; 61-95.

36 I will not be discussing the relationship between Andrzejewski and Baczyński just yet, because, if we adhere to the categories used by Andrzejewski himself, the author of *Elegy for a Polish Boy* was not a member of the “tribe of reprobates.”

which Andrzejewski was a part of back then, because “Piasecki read a draft of *Night* and decided that the author of such a scandalizing book could not be a collaborator of a magazine with the ideological profile of *ABC*” (ZDN 1, 318).³⁷ It is probable, then, that the novel’s narrative was based around Andrzejewski’s affair with Biernacki, the same affair which led to his falling out with his parents.³⁸ Homoerotic desire turns out to be not only the essential foundation of Andrzejewski’s subsequent relationship with Maria, but it also allows the writer to come into being as a sovereign subject.

Biernacki’s death opened the writer to a relationship with Maria, but the death of Baczyński and, before that, the writer’s love for him, prevented that relationship from ever reaching full bloom. If we were to seek the presence of the metaphor of abyss, of dark chasms, then we shouldn’t be looking in non-normative sexuality itself, as Andrzejewski did in the case of Dąbrowska, Eiger or Lechoń, but rather in the sphere of the rupture that separates that which is and that which we would be. Thus, Andrzejewski performs a subtle semantic shift which allows him to question whether he himself is a member of *la race maudite*:

A state of half sleep, desensitization, and numbness. I’m drinking too much vodka, I’m too dependent on the intoxication and the pathetic looseness it brings. Sometimes, I think that only a violent, passionate love could pull me from this slumber. I need a wife – like Marysia, a son – no other than Marcin, and a home to live; I love all of them and all of it, but it would seem that my love is not strong, exclusive, or responsible enough to quash this desire for another love, one that exists beyond those I live with and am supposed to live with ‘til death do us part. Is this desire a value born of Krzysztof’s death? (ZDN 1, 314)

The desire for love referenced here by Andrzejewski is universal and is not tied to one specific gender.³⁹ It is also uplifting in nature – it is, as the writer states very clearly, a value in itself. That fact it is realized as male desire seems only incidental. Unfortunately, satisfying this desire would be ideal, but as such is wholly unattainable; thus, it is this impossibility, rather than the “darkness” of

37 And so, Andrzejewski’s unwritten novel joins the “shadow cabinet” of homoerotic narratives that includes Szymanowski’s *Epebos* (completed but never released), and the early draft of Iwaszkiewicz’s *Conspiracy of Men*, and the novel written by Czechowicz.

38 This is not purely my conjecture. Synradzka-Demadre reached very similar conclusions.

39 And this is one of the reasons why Andrzejewski, contrary to Tomasik’s wishes, could never be an emancipating writer.

desire itself, that becomes the very thing that crushes and destroys the subject (“a state of half sleep, desensitization, and numbness”).⁴⁰ If it ultimately becomes “dark,” then it does so only secondarily, because of the unattainability that ravages the subject. Andrzejewski thus fell into a conceptual trap that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick tried to describe in the chapter of her *Epistemology of the Closet* dedicated to Marcel Proust and his work. In his literary journal, Andrzejewski, in a manner similar to Proust’s opening essay in *Sodom and Gomorrah*, unveils before us the spectacle of the closet, with the aforementioned writers playing the main roles.⁴¹ The spectacle is performed, as we have already seen, with gothic set decorations, and it portrays the “tribe of reprobates” as a minority with an already established identity, whose members become the objects of descriptions drafted by an external observer (Andrzejewski), who places himself, however, on the side of the audience (viewpoint of the closet). That does not mean, however, that there is nothing linking him with the characters in the spectacle. Rather, the difference is born of the double standard of seeing oneself and others (the essence of the conceptual trap): seeing others is highly essentializing (Sedgwick would call it a minoritizing view), whereas self-description gravitates towards the universalization (the universalizing view, according to Sedgwick) of the desiring subject and its desire.

Therefore, the clever concept of the “inevitable self” developed by Darisusz Nowacki also applies to the shapes that the author of *The Gates of Paradise* imposes on literary representations of masculinity: the Self is closely related to them, the Self permeates them, the Self recognizes itself through them. And, in this case, we are not dealing with the psychologism of the straightforward translation of biographical experience into literary images, but rather the identification of a couple of biographical reference points around which condense signs and their constellations within the order of the literary work in order to achieve broad autonomy within its limits.

Later in the essay, I will explore one such “biographical reference point” and I will try to apply it to the “order of the literary work” in its broadest, structuralizing way.

3. “... Seemed Very Pretty to Us”: the Baczyński Perspective

Polish literature is absolutely rife with weak and absent father figures. The crisis of fatherhood is deep and has many aspects. Scattered across different

⁴⁰ The notion of impossible love is explored most comprehensively in *The Gates of Paradise*. See Gawron, *Sublimacje współczesności*, 161.

⁴¹ See Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, 222

texts and often inscribed into different narrative contexts, it seems to elude the more synthetic approaches of literature scholars. And the relationship with the (literal) father and the (symbolic) Father is – to quote Freud and Lacan – constitutive of social ties and the social order, the latter still often labeled “heteropatriarchal.”

Jerzy Andrzejewski experienced the demise of fatherhood first hand:

I did not like my father, felt incapable of liking him, and probably did not want to like him too, among the myriad reasons which decide whether we like someone or not, the will to like that person, the unselfish gesture of respect for an unfamiliar condition, plays a crucial role. And there was no such will in me towards my father.

I cannot unambiguously say whether I appreciated the better qualities of his character while he was still alive. The answer is probably no, they were not my own and he himself presented them in a manner so average that they could never make an impression on me. He was honest towards the norms that prevailed in his circles, whereas I sacrificed that particular virtue on the Altar of Writing quite early in life, leaving the remaining spheres of my life with much more latitude. Father was not miserly, but highly conscientious about his spending habits; I, on the other hand, threw money around with considerable recklessness. He was a reliable and practical man, where I was twisted, full of contradictions [...] I tried to oppose his male egoism with my wastefulness extravagance, spiritual and carnal... (NO, 163)

The fact remains that Andrzejewski was lower-middle class by birth and his family suffered through continuous impoverishment in the 1920s, something that the writer's father was unable to prevent or stop. The writer, on the cusp of his literary career, constructs his artistic personality in opposition to the personality of his weakening, bourgeois father. This opposition is founded upon wastefulness: economic, intellectual (spiritual), and carnal, in which homosexuality played an important part (his relationship with Eugeniusz Biernacki served as a catalyst for his falling out with his family) as the absolute antithesis of the values his father espoused and held dear.⁴²

42 Wasteful spending can easily be associated with sexual promiscuity: squandering money, like homoeroticism or masturbation, brings no tangible returns and is seen as unproductive, contrary to the spirit of capitalism. On the analogies between one and the other, see Tomasz Kaliściak, “Statek Odmieńców, czyli o marynarskiej fantazji Witolda Gombrowicza,” [“The Ship of Freaks, or On the Nautical Fantasies of Witold Gombrowicz”] in *Literatura popularna. Dyskursy wielorakie* [Popular Literature: Various Discourses], ed. Ewa Bartos and Marta Tomczok (Katowice: Wydawnictwo UŚ, 2013), 340; and Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (Kraków: Universitas, 2006), 158.

The empty field engendered by the negation of the importance of the father (biological) – son relationship is then filled with artificial, substitute bonds. Undoubtedly, the same-sex cross-generational relationship is Andrzejewski's *idée fixe*, while the authority of the older man is the value one desires and strives toward (see, e.g., the story *My Boyhood Ideal*).⁴³ The figure of Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński plays a special role here, the relationship with whom is replete with paradoxes, at least as described herein:

I can think that and I can say that: he was my greatest love; its greatness possibly stemming from the fact that it was never fulfilled although always requited; he knew the character of my feelings well and as such accepted them; although he never submitted himself to these feelings, he was made for loyal, loving friendship with one older than himself, one whom he treated sometimes like a father and sometimes like a lover, but always as a friend; thus, he was my greatest love – I can think that and I can say that... (A, 134)

The paradoxical nature of that relationship stems, one may surmise, from the instability of the positions assumed by the father-admirer-friend and the son-the-object-of-admiration-friend, relative to one another. The paradox lies in not only the lack of fulfillment, but also in requiting love or, more precisely, "loving friendship." Such fluctuation is possible only as a sort of self-creation and/or mutual staging, whose existence is contingent on the negation/circumvention (?) of the social injunctions against incest and family structures founded on oedipality. Andrzejewski undertakes to erect, for his own purposes, a separate, alternative order of reality wherein the suspension of these injunctions produces the emergence of a quasi-erotic relationship with Baczyński in which the conceptual crisis of drawing the lines between homo- and heterosexuality will be successfully resolved in favor of the subject and will overlap with the incertitude of the positions taken by the subjects in the symbolic exchange which, according to both structural anthropology and psychoanalysis (incest), should remain unambiguous because only as such can they guarantee the stability of society and culture. This utopian project, which seems to exclude women, is supposed to materialize in a somewhat paradigmatic manner in the author's relationship with Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński. We should also point out that the establishment of this "new" relationship requires effort, including considerable locutionary labor

43 "The theme of young man – old man in Andrzejewski's prose (as an attractive topic of culture) deserves a lengthy, in-depth monograph study of its own," so claims one of Andrzejewski's careful readers; Nowacki, "Ja" *nieuniknione*, 131.

– the author bookends the memory of Baczyński with the phrase: “I can think (that) and I can say (that)” – this “capability” has dual meaning. First: I can, because I am able to, because I verbalized everything that resists verbalization. Second: I can, because I am entitled to, because I have drawn up rules that can be observed by the recipient from outside, from the sphere established by norms whose performativity can be suspended, for its own purposes, by Andrzejewski’s sovereign subject.

From this perspective, Andrzejewski’s memory of the birth of his son, Marcin, is also highly significant. His wife and the mother of his son – Maria Abgarowicz – seems to be completely absent from his recollection,⁴⁴ while the spotlight and center stage seem to be taken by the author of *Elegy for a Polish Boy* who symbolically adopts Marcin as his own by becoming his godfather:

[...] accompanied by Krzysztof, I saw Marcin, then three days old, for the first time [...], before that, I ate dinner with Krzysztof in “Fregata” on Mazowiecka Street, we were both in great spirits, we were a little drunk and we didn’t have flowers, but I brought a slice of the “Fedora” chocolate torte in my jacket pocket [...] it was quite expensive, I remember: it cost five złoty; when Marysia was pregnant, she joked that if we will have a boy, she will get an entire “Fedora” torte as a gift; to make good on the promise, Krzysztof and I brought her a piece. I remember what Krzysztof was like on that day very well – when the nurse brought Marcin down, he seemed very pretty to us, us meaning his father and godfather, as it was arranged that Krzysztof would be my child’s godfather a long time ago; so, Marcin seemed very pretty to us back then, but it was probably because we were in such good spirits, the entire world seemed beautiful; in reality, a three-day-old infant is an unsightly reddish and bluish creature, with a face wrinkled like an old man’s... (A, 135-136).

The writer’s wife seems to be playing the role of surrogate mother here, the toil of her labor rewarded with a slice of cake, although she had expected the whole thing. This slice, brought by the father and godfather, wrapped in a paper napkin, squashed flat in Andrzejewski’s jacket pocket – it is not the symbolic appreciation of/reward for the newly-minted mother, quite the opposite: it emphasizes her rejection after she has served her purpose; Andrzejewski himself highlights the fact that he did not even bring flowers. If we were to see the birth of a son from a transactional perspective, Maria “gives” her husband

44 Just like his daughter Agnieszka was absent from the above-quoted passage: “Sometimes, I think that only a violent, passionate love could pull me from this slumber. I need a wife – like Marysia, a son – no other than Marcin, and a home to live...”

a son, but he fails to hold up his end of the “contract,” he dismisses his wife with a meagre substitute of the expected symbolic equivalent (flowers and cake). The surrogate mother receives her bite-sized reward and that is where her role ends; moreover, the cake is brought to her by two fathers, further reinforcing the separation of mother from her boy child and its (biological) father, and its inclusion into an exclusively male relationship – the entire cultural process of including a child into the social order also takes place beyond the mother’s control: the examination and acceptance (it seemed pretty) of the infant is performed by both fathers; in the above quoted passage, the plural pronouns and first person plural forms of verbs referring to both men appear eight times.⁴⁵ Additionally, the author forcefully emphasizes that the “us” in the passage refers to the child’s “father and godfather.” The mother is incidental and uncertain – she may have bore a girl (then she would not even have got that meager piece of cake); but the reverse is true for the child’s godfather – it is been certain for quite some time who will serve in that particular capacity. The child can be accepted only in the presence of the godfather (“we were in such good spirits, the entire world seemed beautiful”), his gaze uplifting and invalidating the biological Reality (“a three-day-old infant is an unsightly reddish and bluish creature, with a face wrinkled like an old man’s”).

In a world independent of biological ramifications and the social praxis of heteronormativity, the injunctions against incest stemming from the Oedipal complex are suspended, and Baczyński’s position – maybe due to the passage of time – shifts from partner-father towards more of an adoptive relationship:

obviously I know his poems, and a handful of surviving photographs, one of them a small ID picture, it’s been sitting for the past two decades under glass, next to the photo of my son taken when he was two... (A, 136-137)⁴⁶

45 Do not underestimate the pronouns – says Judith Butler, arguing with Lacan in *Antigone’s Claim*: “In Lacan, that which is universal in culture is understood to be its symbolic or linguistic rules, and these were understood to encode and support kinship relations. The very possibility of pronominal reference [...] appears to rely on this mode of kinship that operates in and as language.” Judith Butler, *Antigone’s Claim. Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 19.

46 Baczyński, as the “son-father,” appears also in a dream that Andrzejewski wrote down in *From Day to Day*: “The first thing I managed to remember after waking in the dead of night is a tall, thick wall, then oblivion, and then a black wall crumbling and letting light through [...] suddenly, out of the wall walks Krzysztof – I didn’t know whether he was beyond the wall or inside it. There was also a stroller in that dream of mine, and inside it Marcin, cooing like the 11-month-old that he was; in the dream, Krzysztof bent over the stroller and said something, but I don’t remember what it was...” (ZDN 1, 43). Baczyński (ZDN 2, 372) “was very serious about his position as godfather.”

Today is the thirty-seventh anniversary of Krzysztof Baczyński's death. [...] since then, the belief that whatever was between us back then has remained there took root in my consciousness; as did Krzysztof himself, not a day older than this twentysomething year old, fulfilled in unfulfillment and loyal to the end, exists not in a sudden suspension, but rather persists in an adjournment, no longer lethally wounded by death itself, but friendly towards life, as he may at any moment be called forth from the infinite spaces. And answer the call. (GZC, 285)

In his works, Andrzejewski seems to exhibit a sort of tendency for building paternal relationships, situated however outside the biological context, which – at least in some cases – seems to legitimize fantasies involving incestuous desires usually initiated by the elder. In these relationships, the regulative function of oedipality is negated (further excluding any trace of femininity), allowing the unpunished accretion of erotism within the (symbolic) father-son or, less frequently, brother-brother relationship. Naturally, first and foremost among these relationship is the one between Ludwik, Aleksy, and Jakub in *The Gates of Paradise*, but Andrzejewski has over the years crafted a number of similar couples (triangles), including Father Siecheń-Michaś-Siemion, Maciek Chełmicki-Andrzej Kossecki-Szczuka, Diego-Mateo-Torquemada, Cain and Abel, Reinger von Brösigke-Herman Eisberger-Doctor Lubetzky, and Odysseus-Eumaeus-Noemon.⁴⁷

Translation: Jan Szelągiewicz

47 In the very interesting essay "Andrzejewski: perwersje wpływu," Jan Potkański argues that Bloomian categories of "precursor" and "ephebe," along with their many mutual references (especially when subjected to a peculiar "queerization") can be found in the narratives of *The Gates of Paradise* and *Pulp*. Potkański was looking for biographical references, particularly in the context of the position held by Andrzejewski in literary circles; Potkański claimed that Andrzejewski "strived to supplant Iwaszkiewicz in his privileged position just as the Bloomian ephebus strives to replace the precursor." Without questioning Potkański's hypotheses but still within the context of these Bloomian categories, I would like to point out that Andrzejewski saw not only Iwaszkiewicz but also Gombrowicz as the precursor, while the most important of his writer friends, Baczyński, occupied the position of both precursor (structurally shaping the mature writer and his works) and ephebus (Andrzejewski launches him on his poetic trajectory). See Potkański, "Andrzejewski: perwersje wpływu," 262-278.