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### The role of a small homeland in teaching Polish language at the 4<sup>th</sup> stage of education by the example of Łódź. Axiological considerations

“The cities are sometimes similar to people”<sup>1</sup>

Various functions have been ascribed to regional education over the years. In the second period of 19<sup>th</sup> century it was used as an important tool for patriotic education. In entries compiled by Franciszek Próchnicki and others, heritage lessons about love of the homeland strengthened young readers with everything that was Polish<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, to others, the didactician introduced numerous stories about important places for Poles, as well as history and monuments related to them. He attributed a formative role to the biographies of kings, leaders and authors. Presenting their achievements served to ingrain into young people the conviction of stoutheartedness of their countrymen, who proved their bravery, courage and strong will many times on different fields and in unfriendly conditions.

This defensive image of regionalism changed after Poland regained its independence. *Polish regionalism programme* that was created by Antoni Patkowski<sup>3</sup> and others in 1926, assumed that “total freedom of development of material and spiritual territorial individualities of Polish areas (regions) form the foundations for the rational work division, development of society’s creative energy and cultural richness”<sup>4</sup>. This idea of regionalism become widespread

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<sup>1</sup> A. Piliszewska, [inc. *to przez ciebie, Joanno rdzewiał wtenczas*], [in:] *Kwiaty łódzkie. Poezja miasta. Wybór wierszy nadesłanych na Konkurs Literacki im. W. Reymonta zorganizowany przez redakcję miesięcznika „Piotrkowska 104”*, ed. A. Grzegorzczak, Łódź 2008, pp. 7; hereinafter the abbreviation PM is used

<sup>2</sup> See M. Gajak-Toczek, *Franciszek Próchnicki, dydaktyk – edytor – badacz literatury*, Łódź 2010, pp. 109-114, 124-125, 127, 134-136, 163.

<sup>3</sup> [Rada Naukowa Sekcji Powszechnych Uniwersytetów Regionalnych Związku Polskich Nauczycieli Szkół Powszechnych], *Program regionalizmu polskiego*, “Ziemia” 13-14, 1926, pp. 211-212; see: *Ruch regionalistyczny w Europie*, ed. A. Patkowski, vol. 1-2, Warszawa 1934; A. Patkowski, *Literatura a regionalizm*, “Polonista” 5/6, 1931, pp. 247-249. The necessity to take an interest in “local colour” in literary research was emphasised earlier by B. Chlebowski, *Zadanie historii literatury polskiej wobec warunków i czynników jej dziejowego rozwoju. Znaczenie różnic terytorialnych, etnograficznych i związanych z nimi odrębności ekonomiczno-społecznych, politycznych i umysłowych stosunków dla naukowego badania dziejów literatury polskiej*, “Ateneum” 1885, vol. 1, z. 1, pp. 88-111; vol. 1, z. 2, pp. 302-322; see A. Glimas-Nadgórska, *Regionalizm w szkole średniej w okresie międzywojennym*, “Wiadomości Historyczne” 4, 1991, pp. 208-215.

<sup>4</sup> *Program regionalizmu polskiego*, op. cit., pp. 211. At the end of 1920s J. Krasicka, G. Missalowa, C. Świderkówna, high school teachers published *Bibliografia historii ziem i miast województwa łódzkiego*, “Rocznik Oddziału Łódzkiego Polskiego Towarzystwa Historycznego”, 1928, vol. I, pp. 71-80, 1929-1930, vol. II, pp. 229-243; cf. S. Sadłowski, *Tereny wycieczkowe w naszym województwie*, “Głos Nauczycielstwa Łódzkiego” 4-5, 1936/1937, pp. 81-87.

due to German specialist, Zygmunt Łempicki<sup>5</sup>, who saw it as a tool supporting ideas of national upbringing and of state and state-national upbringing later on<sup>6</sup>. Cultivation of a small homeland served to strengthen the bond with the nearest surroundings<sup>7</sup> and the country. Czesław Pilichowski wrote that regionalism as a cultural trend “aims to put one region above others due to skilful, hard work [...] places a particular region [...] in national culture”<sup>8</sup>. Undoubtedly, Stefania Skwarczyńska, who is considered a precursor of modern geopoetics by Elżbieta Rybicka, presented a cognitively inspiring idea. In her work *Regionalism vs. main currents in theory of literature*<sup>9</sup> she proposed a model of texts research that includes their local character. In her opinion, the actions taken should ensure the development of individual social, economic and cultural values of “nearest neighbourhood”, stimulate mental life of the province in relation to regional resources of history and culture<sup>10</sup>.

Teachers from Łódź also presented interesting educational solutions. Tadeusz Czapczyński in his work *Łódź in the Light of Chosen Literary Works*, suggested focusing on four works during classes: *The Promised Land* by Władysław Stanisław Reymont, *Evil City* by Zygmunt Bartkiewicz, *The Tales of One Bullet* by Andrzej Strug and *Rose* by Stefan Żeromski. The first two fully describe human existence in the town of smoky chimneys. The interpretation of the novel by the Nobel Prize winner allows to discover the everyday life of working class families, governed by the ruthless power of money. The chapter chosen promoted the conviction that *polis* is hostile towards an average man because it drains vitality and often takes life. The Polish scholar presented the ironic vision of Łódź, already included in the title that refers to Old Testament, and he suggested comparing it to Bartkiewicz’s reports that were published a bit later. Such a procedure intensified the significance of negative opinions and reviews as it showed dehumanisation of interpersonal relationships shaped within the city, highlighted exploitation and inhumane treatment of labour workers who worked excessively and suffered from hunger and everyday poverty. Czapczyński included the remaining works into the literary movement of revolutionary act. The allowed to focus on the events of 1905 which stirred Poles to take action together for the first time since January Uprising. Following internecine fights, fates of people involved, was supposed to facilitate the evaluation of those events and lead to seeing the fate of a man in the perspective of great history and individual experiences.

According to the experienced didactician, Polish classes should also include the works of Piecha<sup>11</sup>, who described the pain of the city using authentic metaphors. On the one hand, *polis* was “my mother”, “asylum”, “oasis”, “city of hope”, and on the other, it was

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<sup>5</sup> Z. Łempicki, *Polska i polskość w nauczaniu polskiego*, Kraków 1930.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. F.W. Araszkiewicz, *Idealy wychowawcze Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1978.

<sup>7</sup> See M. Klepacz, *Kierunki organizacyjne oraz idealy wychowawcze we współczesnym szkolnictwie polskim*, Katowice 1937; T. Wieroński also mentioned the birth of “a new kind of Pole”; idem, *O polski system ideowo-wychowawczy*, “Praca Szkolna” 9-10, 1938-1939, pp. 249-255; cf. B. Hadaczek, *Wychowanie przez literaturę w Polsce międzywojennej*, Poznań 1973, pp. 36-38.

<sup>8</sup> Cz. Pilichowski, *O regionalizmie*, „Kultura” 20 (108), 1938, pp. 3.

<sup>9</sup> S. Skwarczyńska, *Regionalizm a główne kierunki teorii literatury*, “Prace Polonistyczne” 1937, pp. 7-52.

<sup>10</sup> Many groups of researchers gathered information about Łódź during interwar period, see “Rocznik Oddziału Łódzkiego Polskiego Towarzystwa Historycznego”, op. cit.; “Rocznik Łódzki poświęcony historii Łodzi i okolicy”, ed. J. Raciborski, vol. 1 [1928]; they were continued in after war issues of “Prace Polonistyczne”; *Literatura i język Łodzi. Materiały z sesji naukowej w Muzeum Historii Miasta Łodzi zorganizowanej w dniach 18-20 kwietnia 1978*, ed. A. Szram, J. Weinberg, M. Kucner, Łódź 1978; T. Błażejowski, *Łódzkie środowisko literackie*, Łódź 1982 and the series started by J. Poradecki, *Zbiór Poetów Łodzi i Ziemi Łódzkiej*.

<sup>11</sup> I wrote about the connections of Piechala works with Łódź in the article *Poezja w szarym mieście – Łódź oczami Mariana Piechala*, [in:] *Mała ojczyzna wobec wielokulturowej Europy*, ed. G. Różańska, Pruszcz Gdański-Słupsk 2013, pp. 45-65.

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characterised by such terms as “filling of captivity in a sore tooth”, “leucoma on the eye of independence”, “golden prosthesis in a toothless mouth”, “a large question mark”.

Jan Zygmunt Jakubowski demanded that poetry of Łódź should be interpreted from the sociological point of view through the prism of current problems. That is why he encouraged to create comparative images: a) dialogical relationship between *Midsummer song on Sobotka* by Jan Kochanowski and the works of Kazimierz Sowiński presented the meaning of work in collective and individual life (2<sup>nd</sup> grade); b) fortunes of a book lover - Andrzej Załuski linked with Marian Pechala's tale of peasant treasure defenders in Dzikowski Castle taught respect for art that was shown by people excluded from the possibility of participating in cultural goods (3<sup>rd</sup> grade), c) including prose works of Eliza Orzeszkowa *At the Turn* and the poem *About Łódź Fabryczna* by Mieczysław Braun into class discourse served the purpose of considering the mechanism of historic changes. Skwarczyńska demanded showing hagiographical tales of people from Łódź who became famous for their great faith and their patriotic deeds. She recommended presenting the biography of blessed Rafał Chyliński or Wanda Malczewska. Wilhelm Fallek encouraged to combine the events from the books with a direct observation of the student. The walk along the old town was supposed to facilitate the understanding of the chosen parts of *The Promised Land* and the visit in Julian and Kazimierz Bartoszewicz's Museum of History and Art inspired contact with modern works<sup>12</sup>.

Regional issues in interwar period were given much attention in children and youth literature, which was presented in an interesting way by Zofia Budrewicz<sup>13</sup>, in her work *The Lesson about Polish Landscape*.

Regionalism was omitted and make believe after the war. Polish People's Republic propagated centralistic, monocultural solutions which very often referred to the wishful history of a particular region or communism ideology. Łódź maintained a stereotype of the city of revolutionary act undertaken by working classes as the expression of rebellion to unfair social relationships. Its labour character was exposed and old history such as the achievements of factory owners, influence of Germans and Jews on everyday life was omitted. Jolanta Fiszbak tried to argue with strong thinking patterns of social awareness in her work *Myths of “the promised land”...*<sup>14</sup>, where she disavows stereotypical concepts of a metropolis as biblical Kanaan, an evil city or a city of revolution of 1905.

Revitalisation of regional identity began after 1989. The phenomena of globalization, migration, nomadic lifestyle, non-places or transfers resulted in returning

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<sup>12</sup> J.Z. Jakubowski, *Dygresje o poetach łódzkich na lekcjach języka polskiego*, “Prace Polonistyczne” 1937, pp. 341-347; S. Skwarczyńska, *Momenty hagiograficzne związane z regionem łódzkim na lekcjach języka polskiego*, *ibid.*, pp. 320-331, W. Fallek, *Lekcje regionalne*, *ibid.*, pp. 380-383.

<sup>13</sup> Z. Budrewicz, *Lekcje polskiego krajobrazu. Międzywojenna proza podróżnicza dla młodzieży*, Kraków 2013; *idem*, *Tradycje i współczesność regionalizmu w edukacji polonistycznej*, [in:] *Region i edukacja. Literatura – kultura – społeczeństwo*, ed. Z. Budrewicz, M. Kania, 2nd ed., Kraków 2010, pp. 11-23. See: *idem*, *Miejsce i pamięć w polonistycznej edukacji regionalnej*, [in:] *Krajobrazy pamięci – pamięć krajobrazu*, ed. Z. Budrewicz, M. Sienko, Kraków 2014, pp. 233-248; *idem*, *Metropolia i okolice – w poszukiwaniu tożsamości i zdomowienia. Spojrzenie dydaktyka*, [in:] *Okolice metropolii. Tożsamość – edukacja – kultura*, ed. Z. Budrewicz, M. Kania, Kraków 2012, pp. 9-26; *idem*, *Podróże i podróżopisarstwo w edukacji regionalnej. Zarys problemu*, [in:] *Podróże po Małopolsce. Literatura – kultura – edukacja*, ed. Z. Budrewicz, M. Kania, Kraków-Bukowno 2010, pp. 7-21; *idem*, *Wyjźmy z muzeum na uliczkę. Zobowiązania kulturowe edukacji regionalnej*, [in:] *Różnorodne aspekty kształcenia kompetencji kulturowej w edukacji polonistycznej*; ed. G. Różańska, Słupsk 2009, pp. 285-301; 20; *idem*, *Polskie krajobrazy w lekturach (1918-1939)*, [in:] *Zapiskane w krajobrazie. Lekturowe obrazy regionów dawniej i dziś*, ed. Z. Budrewicz, M. Kania, Kraków-Bukowno 2008, pp. 11-26.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. J. Fiszbak, *Mity “ziemi obiecanej” w regionalnej literaturze Łodzi. Między grą wyobraźni, fikcją literacką a wyobraźnią*, Łódź 2013, see: *Łódź i okolice. Lekcje edukacji regionalnej – konspekty, scenariusze*, ed. J. Fiszbak, Łódź 2002.

towards locality. The projects aiming to reform the relationships with the centre emerged at that time. They used the following meanings: from anti-centralism, through interactive relationships with centre, to articulating the region as the place of radical openness. Various actions were taken which were directed to scientific and artistic image of the city space.

Regional education, in accordance with core curriculum principles, aims to introduce individuals and small social groups into tradition and current socio-cultural life of the region and local surroundings<sup>15</sup>. It highlights the necessity to develop students by shaping active civic attitude, respect for tradition and culture of own nation as well as involvement in functioning of own surroundings and authentic openness to other communities<sup>16</sup>. Those issues were emphasized in *Polish regionalism card* passed 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 1994 during 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of Regional Cultural Societies in Wrocław.

### Łódź in the eyes of high school students

Due to surveys carried on 383 respondents, it was possible to establish the way high school students perceive Łódź. Majority of them underlined a strong bond with their home town. Young people wrote about its special and unique beauty (97%). They saw it as the witness of their first cognitive initiations and connected it with next stages of maturity (94%). It also became the place of youth fascinations and infatuations with opposite sex (80%). As the neighbourhood of everyday experience, it accompanied getting ingrained in collectivity and encouraged personal development (79%). The affirmative tone of their utterances is something that focuses the attention of the researcher: "I love Łódź. It's amazing and one of a kind", "I admire art nouveau tenement houses, I like the appeal of stained glass windows", "Łódź will always be the first and mysterious", "Although I travel a lot, I can say that there's no other city that is so fascinating". The feeling of city pride extracted from the surveys combined with utilitarian desire to be useful for to others. The idea of a shared responsibility for its fate gained a lot of supporters (87%). The idea of promotion of the city within Europe was seen as proper and right. An action carried on properly will contribute to its permanent presence in social awareness. The trademarks included coat of arms, Piotrkowska Street, Museum of Modern Art and shopping centres among which Manufaktura took a special place. More important, larger than local events – displays, included: Light Movie Festival (99%), Street Food Festival (89%) and Łódź Ballet Festival (67%). The redesign of city space was also an advantage but many respondents complained about too much roadworks. However, the respondents were not able to recall literary images of the city. In most cases they mentioned *The Promised Land* by Reymont (82%) and poetry of Julian Tuwim (77%). However, they did not know modern poets and prose writers.

It is worth highlighting young people's critical remarks. The disadvantages of "the first neighbourhood" include: run-down tenement houses, narrow streets, traffic jams. They are concerned with demographic problems. They pointed out that old people are often isolated and forced to live in loneliness, pain and suffering. Job opportunities and the vicinity of Warsaw were also evaluated in a negative way. Lack of job opportunities and poor working conditions

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Edukacja regionalna dziedzictwo kulturowe w zreformowanej szkole*, ed. S. Bednarek, Wrocław 1999.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. P. Petrykowski, *Edukacja regionalna. Problemy podstawowe i otwarte*, Toruń 2003. The researcher investigates the notion of ambiguity of regional identity in the chapter *Tożsamość regionalna – przegląd stanowisk* (pp. 180-209).

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cause young people to migrate to the capital or England and Ireland. In order to illustrate this, it is worth recalling some quotes. "I like my city but I cannot see any future for myself", "I've been looking for a job for over a year. I've found a job in Warsaw without problems". "The salary they offered me didn't provide chances of survival", "Why is so little done to make people in their prime remain in the city?"

Furthermore, contrasting descriptions of the city should also prompt to didactic considerations. The respondents wrote about a colourful, warm image of the city at night. The magic of lights makes, according to them, the metropolis fascinating in terms of its distinctiveness, mysteriousness and being European. Its day image was described in grey colours, although they were able to see some changes. There were remarks about colourful neighbourhoods and buildings that have been constructed recently.

### Łódź in poetry during Polish classes

I limited the literary images of the third largest city of Poland to poems<sup>17</sup> included in two volumes: *Flowers of Łódź. Anthology of Poetry about Łódź*<sup>18</sup> and *Flowers of Łódź. City's Poetry*<sup>19</sup>. The image was completed by *Limericks and Other Łódź Poems* by Joanna Papuzińska<sup>20</sup>. The choice of works was emphasised by the pursuit of present poetic images of the city which is not considered too poetic, as well as the possibility to show various stances and observations which the city has invoked within the last 150 years. Such decision was supported by high school students who justified their opinions by e.g. the possibility of cross-cutting, synthetic understanding of the issue due to presenting works of many poets.

I concentrated the thoughts on the following levels: a) the history of Łódź, which from a small settlement transformed quickly into a city, b) collective memory of the past; c) man – man and man – space relationship shown in chosen poems; e) short individual history; f) heritage of multicultural community. Due to the frames of the article, I will limit myself to the first three areas,

It is worth focusing the class dialogue, even at the phase of preparation, on the sense of the city, which creates dynamic space in postmodern world. It is also the place of ethnic turnaround me-you. Tadeusz Sławek gives valuable tips for analytical actions. He accurately defines dualism characteristic of the space by writing: "Each city has two cities: one is consistent with directions of streets drawn on plans, where life is strictly regulated by administrative and

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<sup>17</sup> It is worth adding Łódź has interesting portraits in prose works; see e.g. A. Bart, *Fabryka muchołapek*, Warszawa 2008; K. Beśka, *Trzeci brzeg Styksu*, Poznań 2012; A. Brycht, *Opowieści z tranzytu*, Łódź 1986; P. Fuks, *Dziecko wojny*, Łódź 1994; A. Kwietniewski, *Blondynka z miasta Łodzi*, Łódź 2008; K.T. Lewandowski, *Perkalowy dybuk*, Wrocław 2009; M. Matys, *Łódzka fabryka marzeń. Od afery do sukcesu*, Warszawa 2011; T. Piątek, *Miasto Ł.*, Warszawa 2012; K. Sowiński, *Esplanada*, Łódź 2012; J. Waleńczyk, *Łódź się budzi*, Łódź 1991. Some are described by K. Badowska in an interesting way, *Mapowanie Łodzi*, hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01192956/document, retrieved 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2016.

<sup>18</sup> *Kwiaty łódzkie. Antologia poezji o Łodzi*, works choice, edition and layout of anthology Z. Skibiński, B. Stelmaszczyk-Świontek, Łódź 1982; hereinafter the abbreviation A. is used.

<sup>19</sup> *Kwiaty łódzkie. Poezja miasta*, op. cit.; It is worth remembering that L. Stolarewicz began the anthologies of poems about Łódź, L. Stolarewicz, *Literatura Łodzi w ciągu jej istnienia (Szkielet literacki i antologia)*, Łódź [1935]; written later: *Łódź w walce*, red, i oprac. T. Chrościelewski, G. Timofiejew, Łódź 1952; *Czerwona lutnia. Pieśni robotnicze*, ed. E. Ajnenkiel, Łódź 1964, *W Bi-Ba-Bo i gdzie indziej. O humorze i satyrze z Miasta Łodzi. Od Rozbickiego do Tuwima*, ed. J. Dunin, Łódź 1966; *Pejzaż łódzki*, ed. A. Płauszewski, Łódź 1979; *Poezja bałuckich podwórek*, ed. Z. Dominiak, Łódź 1996 (1995 poetic contest for amateurs).

<sup>20</sup> J. Papuzińska, *Limeryki i inne łódzkie wierszyki*, Łódź 2004.

communication directives, and the other, one that reveals itself only when looking carefully, where the relationships mentioned undergo significant changes”<sup>21</sup>. The city can be interpreted as the system of passages between one and the other by using ways and gates located between *archi*-tectonics and *arche*-tectonics. *Arche* does not mean reaching the basis, source, meaning, but the difficulty of research. One should remember that in the experience of *polis presented in such a way*, we do not destroy anything, we add something. It becomes the kind of bond which binds a man with everything that is non-material. Constructed in movement, it creates a bundle of roads, defined in categories of liquidity. However, interior movement, one that takes place within walls of buildings, is more important than its exterior counterpart. As the space marked semantically, on the one hand it allows cooperation, and on the other it condemns to loneliness whose sense is self-discovery. The Silesian researcher is right when he claims that: “city man is a man without his own place not in the sense of being anonymous in a city crowd, but more seriously – only by »leaving from his self«, meaning »leaving his place« can he experience the place and work for its benefit”<sup>22</sup>. The space defined in such a way should shape the identity narration of the individual, because the question: who am I? should derive from two other: where do I come from and where am I?<sup>23</sup>, as shown by editors of *Troublesome Diaries* – Zofia Budrewicz and Maria Sienko.

#### “No one promised this Land”<sup>24</sup>

Due to peculiar way the city of smoky chimneys came to being, the attempts to mythologise its history became the subject of analytical actions. The poem *The Birth of the City* by Tadeusz Chróścilewski facilitated following the history of Łódź. The poet referred to the groundbreaking plaque issued by Władysław Jagiełło (A, pp. 81-82). The students also read the poetic legend of the city of factory chimneys in the work *Paweł Łódzia Kubowicz* written by Wiktor Dłużniewski (A, pp. 78-81). The author tried to highlight its long history by comparing it to Cracow. The tales of growth of this “giant-city”, “monster-city” were illustrated in class discourse by works of e.g. authors of old such as: Artur Gliszczyński (*At work*, A, pp. 93-87; *Foreman*, A, pp. 97-98; *Artist*, A, pp. 98-101), Julian Tuwim (*Flowers of Łódź*, A, pp. 63-74), Marian Piechala (*Fire and Ash*, A, pp. 25-28) and modern ones: Zdzisław Szczepaniak (*Łódź Triptych*, PM, pp. 27-30), Urszula Kowalska (*Memory*, PM, pp. 31), Witold Kowalski (*The Moon from over the Rousseau Factory*, PM, pp. 32). The reconstruction of the images included there allowed to show the reality of life in Łódź at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. High school students designed portraits of people of that time: a labour worker and a foreman, a child from Łódź and an artist, a factory owner and a banker, they presented the features characteristic of the city and the way of living of its inhabitants. They considered work as the main motif in poetry. On the one hand, work was shown as a destructive, deadly force, and on the other, as “a holy thing” that gives meaning and permanence of the existence of a man. The also proposed a discussion about the visions of revolutionary speeches and they noticed recurring motifs of labour workers’ strikes, demonstrations and marches. They identified the red colour of the flag with blood shed by the exploited people or with the colour of bricks from factory buildings.

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<sup>21</sup> T. Sławek, *Miasto. Próba zrozumienia*, [in:] *Miasto w sztuce – sztuka miasta*, ed. E. Rewers, Kraków 2010, pp. 23.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Z. Budrewicz, *Pamięć i kultura w edukacji polonistycznej. Wczoraj i dziś*, [in:] *Kłopotliwe pamiątki. Trud dziedziczenia*, ed. Z. Budrewicz, M. Sienko, Kraków 2012, pp. 25.

<sup>24</sup> T. Chróścilewski, *Wywód o ziemi obiecanej*, A, pp. 86.

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Roman Gorzelski's *The Tale of the old Weaver* became the summary of their observations. In his metaphoric narration, the artist presented characteristic of Łódź and its "difficult beauty", ambivalence of feelings towards it, ranging from hatred, curse, rebellion to attachment, admiration and love. The experiences shown do not allow to cut the bonds. The representative of such an attitude are words:

"The lines of your wrinkles are combined with  
The network of Łódź's streets,  
No one will cut them with a knife  
And only by closing your eyes will you be set free,  
When you come back for good" (PM, pp. 37)

The comparison of anthology allowed to draw few relevant conclusions. The students considered presenting poverty, wealth and the attitude of the poor towards the metropolis, which is full of fluctuations and hesitation, as a common area of thought. However, they related the differences with the change of tone of the expression: world of old in modern poems was shown, in their opinions, with a lesser load of feelings as compared to texts that had been created earlier, where the images of exploitation and everyday exhausting work referred to emotions of the reader by presenting the fates of particular people. The creators in 21<sup>st</sup> century were more eager to use the symbolism of names, thought generalisation and synthetic perspective.

## Places of Łódź

Reading the poems allowed young people to grasp the developmental line of *polis*. Although both anthologies include the same neighbourhoods, their use serves different purposes. The texts included in the volume edited by Skibiński and Stelmaszczyk-Świontek by e.g. Jan Huszcza (*Łódź, the Evening in Karolewo*, A, s. 201-202), Tadeusz Gicgier (*Night Train to Łódź Kaliska*, A, pp. 203-204), Jerzy Waleńczyk (*Neighbourhood of Youth*, A, pp. 204; *Suburb in the Evening*, A, pp. 204-205; *Widzew*, A, pp. 205-207) or Igor Sikirycki (*Łódź Niciarniana*, A, pp. 207) due to the creation of images of particular parts of the city show the dynamics of its development, present growth and absorption of neighbouring villages. The motif often evoked by the poets is recalling the view of murmuring forests, smell of grass or signing of birds, so the phenomena characteristic of the areas where new districts were built. The readers consistently highlight subjectivity of poetic visualisation, constant emphasis of direct bond with nearest neighbourhood marked in the narration which is done from the point of the native inhabitants who know the presented places really well. They prove that a private character of the utterance served to overcome negative images of "an evil city in the post-war period and to create areas for living which, using the language of Martin Heidegger, were about "taming" the surroundings available<sup>25</sup>.

The participants of the classes considered vagueness of topographic references as a distinctive feature of the volume by Porazińska. The names of neighbourhoods: Górna, Widzew, Chojny, Bałuty, Stoki, Retkinia or Zdrowie were interpreted as a poetic storage used to make the relation, which is somehow "transparent" and which does not reveal the poet's attitude

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Budować, mieszkać, myśleć. Eseje wybrane*, chosen, edited and wrote introduction K. Michalski, trans. K. Michalski et al., Warszawa 1977.

towards the parts of the city. The same way was used when interpreting list of streets: Piotrkowska, Struga, Wschodnia, Plac Wolności in Anna Piliszewska's poem [inc.] *Because of you, Joanna, Time Rusted* (PM, pp. 7). According to them, also Anna Hertmanowska in *The Script of Rainy Saturday Under an Umbrella in Łódź*, by taking away distinctive features from Pomnik Łódzian Tysiąclecia, Hortex, Schiller Passageway which are considered symbols of Łódź's representative street, created its "identity" by using elements characteristic of many areas such as gothic stylised factory buildings, tenement houses, chimneys and indefinite trams (PM, pp. 16). Bedeker character, following Tomasz Cieślak's<sup>26</sup> suggestions, was seen also in Urszula Kowalska's stanzas (*Memory*, PM, pp. 31), Krzysztof Kleszcz's (*My Łódź*, PM, pp. 53-54), Maria Karnecka's (*Where from*, PM, pp. 55-56) or Eugeniusz Depta's (*From Łódź*, PM, pp. 61). The characters important for the culture of the city such as Julian Tuwim, Artur Rubinstein, and Władysław Strzemiński also appeared in the atmosphere of anonymity. The students noticed that the characters who are, similarly to the area devoid of individual features, function as cultural icons, catchphrases, or the symbols of Łódź which is stereotypically identified with cultural desert<sup>27</sup>. The conclusion drawn by high school students are fully justified and state that a place devoid of characteristic features could be defined as "here", which is a voluminous place, one of the many, so each and any. A peculiar impersonality, which was highlighted, allows to pass but it does not create the atmosphere of home. Although it comes to life when interacting with a human, it does not gain the features of "uniqueness". Such a description can be related to many and even the majority of Polish cities.

#### "Each of us richer, / what happened here"<sup>28</sup>

The thought of Łódź's traumatic past of WW II is of particular importance to the image of the city. The texts from *Flowers of Łódź* from 1982 allowed the participants of the project to commemorate the torments of the victims of the Nazi prison in Radogoszcz, which took place at night between 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January 1945, just before the liberation, when the Germans set the building on fire. The foundations for the class discourse on that topic are formed by three works by Mieczysław Jastrun, Włodzimierz Słobodnik and Marian Piechal. Each of them has the same title, *Radogoszcz*. By evaluating poets' efforts, the readers primarily showed the area of their common thoughts. They placed it in the symbol of a tree waking up from lethargy. Similar power was ascribed to the deaths of innocent victims. Their torment and "ashes below ground/ lying by the roots/ are the reason the word/ grows and becomes green" (M. Piechal, *Radogoszcz*, A. pp. 152). Young people were also interested in the poems from *The Walls of Radogoszcz* by Tadeusz Chróścielewski (A, pp. 154-155) and *Memories of Childhood Days* by Józef Henryk Wiśniewski (A, pp. 156), which constituted the complement to the painful *memento* of those days.

The works from the second volume such as: *Mother's Cry* by Longin Żurek (PM, pp. 47), *Macewa* by Przemysław Owczarek (PM, pp. 8) or *Do You Remember the Cat* by Krzysztof Kocewa (PM, pp. 78-79) made it possible to recall the tragedy of the twelve-thousand Jewish community – the inhabitants of Jewish Ghetto. The pupils underlined the sublime way of

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. T. Cieślak, *Kilka uwag o przedstawieniach przestrzeni w łódzkiej liryce*, [in:] *Stolice i prowincje kultury. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesor Alinie Kowalczykowej*, ed. J. Brzozowski, M. Skrzypczak, M. Stanisławski, Warszawa 2012, pp. 490-504.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. e.g. P. Czapliński, *Powrót centrali. Literatura w nowej rzeczywistości*, Kraków 2007, pp. 28-29.

<sup>28</sup> Piechal, *Radogoszcz*, A, pp. 152.



The role of a small homeland in teaching Polish language at the 4<sup>th</sup> stage of education by the example of Łódź. Axiological considerations

addressing the title character, found in the first work, so as not to mourn the death of his baby. It is important to have a collective, not the individual memory. Widely defined art has such power, lyric poetry in particular, which "The suffering of people/ from Litzmannstadt Ghetto/ can express" (L. Żurek, *Mother's Cry*, PM, pp. 47) because "The atrocity/ of this devilish pyre is the intellectual/ impoverishment of civilisation (PM, pp. 47). Evoking in the act of commemoration the past, despite being silent – is terrifying by its monstrosity. It is not surprising that high school students considered snapshot enumerations comparing everyday activities now with the threatening past as important for the process of regaining memory. They emphasised that the walk of a girl and her dog, resting by "Yemy" toast stall do not forecast the horror of the past. They used the words from the poem *Macewa*:

"[...] old paving is the wound of the street, here it was  
a grave. passer's-by grave with the face of a jackdaw.  
I reach my finger and stab the air. *adonai, adonai*  
I'm really not here! and the spirits are at a distance" (PM, pp. 8).

The palimpsest world of ghetto existing on the horizon of Bałuty, according to the students, is a long-lasting, warning sign that is pushed away into the oblivion. The available "here" and "now" constantly has to ask for uncovering traces of the past. While considering this at school, one should think about the meaning of the fact that Annihilation took place in Łódź, not in some different place, and is somehow present in this area where we live every day. We constantly need to form the conviction that the nearest neighbourhood conceals invisible, somehow masked afterimages of it, and think about literary forms of the process of regaining memories of coexisting worlds: Polish and Jewish. The questions about the area of communication which are the attempt to understand, open the gates, establishing bridges between modern reality and the age of Annihilation still remain valid. At the same time, they should be accompanied by the conviction that new narrations about Holocaust are not, and do not want, and are not able to become just testimonials. Being far from referential forms, they use abbreviations, symbols and understatements in order to use suggestions to inspire memory processes as moral duties and obligations to the tragedy of murdered people<sup>29</sup>. "The Blackness of guilt [...] / Chars, / Contours of chimneys" (K. Kostrzewa, *Do You Remember the Cat*, PM, p. 78) and does not allow to escape the unwanted truth.

The process of a quick return of the displaced facts to the social awareness started in 2004 during the commemoration of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ghetto liquidation<sup>30</sup>. The awareness of Jewish past of Łódź was low before and only few inhabitants knew where the ghetto was located during the, the way it functioned and what was its purpose. Although Bałuty are often perceived in a negative way due to negligence, they do not send us back to those events. It is worth remembering that in the year 2000, the students from Łódź together with young people from Israel marked the borders of the ghetto: the signs Litzmannstadt Ghetto 1940-1944 appeared on Bałuty pavements. In the following years such an action was continued: information boards in four languages (Polish, Hebrew, Yiddish, and English) were placed on the important buildings of the ghetto, and Radegast station, where transports of Jews were leaving to Death Camps, received a monument. Survivors' Park was also built, four hundred trees were planted by the witnesses of that tragedy.

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<sup>29</sup> See e.g. A. Bart, *Fabryka...*, op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> See more in *Encyklopedia getta. Niedokończony projekt archiwistów z getta łódzkiego*, eds. M. Polit, K. Radziszewska, A. Sitarek, J. Walicki, E. Wiatr, Łódź 2014.

*My city has a million inhabitants and - me*<sup>31</sup>

The thoughts were concluded by presenting poetic images of Łódź after 1945, when social changes and transformations in poetry caused “the evil city” to become “the city of hope”. The programming-designing works included in Skibiński’s and Stalmaszczykowa-Świontek’s anthology were researched, e.g. Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz’s (*Blizzard in Łódź*, A, pp. 163), Włodzimierz Słobodnik’s (*The Song About Today’s Łódź*, A, pp. 163-164), Jan Sztudynger’s (*To Łódź*, A, pp. 166), Mieczysław Kucner’s (*Łódź*, A, pp. 183; *Łódź – City Design*, A, pp. 183-184), Stefan Wolski’s (*Łódź’s View*, A, pp. 187-189). Young people made the words of the poem by Kucner: “The City unites and divides us/foundations and soil, project and *praxis*” (M. Kucner, *Łódź – City Design*, A, pp. 183) the main thought of the works. These words were considered the answer to the needs of reality or the announcement of implementation of task that would reflect people’s future desires. They saw the counterbalance to those joyful visions in the works of Jan Sztudynger (*Oh, Puny Łódź*, A, pp. 168), Julian Przyboś (*Bread and Roses*, A, pp. 170-173), Dorota Chróścielewska (*Łódź*, A, pp. 187) and Jerzy Jarmołowski (*Blues*, A, pp. 181), which talked about existing social contrasts, interpersonal barriers that were the result of economic unfairness. They focused their attention on a suggestive image of Łódź, which is “badly grown” in an anthropomorphised way, has “narrow hips”, is poor and unable to provide opportunities to its inhabitants (J. Sztudynger, *Oh, Puny Łódź*, A, pp. 168). Such vision justifies describing the city as “clamorous”, “a silly city” where there’s “no conversation” and lies are spread everywhere (D. Chróścielewska, *Łódź*, A, pp. 187).

According to young people, the poets of 21<sup>st</sup> century build totally different relationship with the nearest neighbourhood. They emphasise their affirmative relationship towards it, which is proven in the works of e.g. Izabela Kawczyńska (*Townish*, PM, pp. 15), Krzysztof Kleszcz (*My Łódź*, PM, pp. 53-54), Maria Karnecka (*Where From*, PM, pp. 55-56), Magdalena Dąbrowicz (*My Łódź*, PM, pp. 58-59), Barbara Belczyńska (*Touch of Time*, PM, pp. 64), Teresa Winkowska (*My Łódź*, PM, pp. 97-98). They fully identify with the last stanza of the poem by Marek Andrzej Okoński *City Survival*: “Everything starts from the sign/ with a writing on a green background/ Łódź let’s say/ and behind it there is survival/ a city fitness trail/ of five senses in form and content/ and personal beyond pain in the back of the head” (PM, pp.14).

We made Papuzińska’s limericks the bottom line of our poetic meeting with Łódź, which show the miniature of the city in both a humorous and accurate way<sup>32</sup>.

It seems that the thought on the ways of poetic presentation of Łódź is very important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is marked with fragmented human experience and, which is more important, the notions of space and place belong to the ones that are the most neglected in Polish teaching. The bond with the very first place serves to build consistent identity narration. Thus, it is important to possess the skill to notice its separate features, which is proved by Z. Budrewicz’s ascertainment: “Being in the place – or in other words – living there – is a spiritual relationship based on the sense of closeness and familiarity”<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> J. Koprowski, *Moje miasto*, A, pp. 182.

<sup>32</sup> The volume contains 42 texts, 34 of them are related to Łódź, 6 to Zgierz and 2 encourage to write more poems.

<sup>33</sup> Z. Budrewicz, *Pamięć i kultura ...*, pp. 28.

## Summary

The considerations can bring few practical conclusions related to the role of regional education as a tool preventing from the crisis of culture in humanistic youths.

1. The results of the survey, reading curriculum documents and messages coming from tradition are an important argument in favour of regional education. In Polish teaching it takes places with the help of culture and, above all, through literature. Due to its multi-aspect and multi-purpose character, we can distinguish areas which relate to differently defined category of space. Their common feature is the attempt to combine internal factors (linguistic and stylistic, but understood from the point of view of sociolinguistics, thus related to territory) with external connections: geographical, historical and sociological as well as the way of understanding discipline.

2. Social duties of school in the postmodern world require shaping educational tasks in such a way that their implementation allows to place the content "closer to the student" and facilitate to create situations which stimulate direct, emotional relationship towards an important place. It is important to combine past achievements with present images created in different texts of culture. Such actions will point out areas of the past still present in the city, define problems which cannot be forgotten, facilitate recognition of areas that constitute the set of common symbols and social norms and identify possibilities of creating the world of own individual values.

3. The issues discussed above are related to the need of feeling at home in the closest neighbourhood, which allows to create own, "tamed" places which are available in everyday experiences, and which are not given but constitute problems to solve (are asked to do). We should accept Budrewicz's suggestion that in such a designed way to shape the culture of student's memory, "regional cultural education must be based on teaching hermeneutic reading/interpreting of cultural areas as memorial sites. [...]. This is the foundation which could be used to build relationships with further »areas« of memorial culture"<sup>34</sup>. Educational actions designed in such a way allow to prevent the feeling of fragmentation of the world and perceive available reality as the unity open to the future but conditioned by the past. Proper preparation of the youth will allow them to defeat expansive notions of popular culture, which very often use kitsch and ugliness.

4. Following different ways of presenting basic issues related to surroundings available from the very young age builds dialogic attitude towards various views, judgments and observations. It allows to understand diversity and different trends, teaches critical thinking and encourages to take active part in available present. It also allows to combine the local with the national and international in a wider perspective. Living in a particular place encourages to trekking, as Hanna Buczyńska-Garewicz claims: "The inclusiveness is the most important thing about the place inhabited by a man, not its exclusiveness. Being in many places at the same time, thus combining different content and spiritual quality of areas into one is possible due to assimilation of the place, its spiritual and not purely physical way of existence. [...] Living does not contradict trekking but it conditions it, and trekking expands living and deepens it"<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Z. Budrewicz, *Pamięć i kultura...*, pp. 29.

<sup>35</sup> H. Buczyńska-Garewicz, *Miejsca, strony, okolice. Przyczynek do fenomenologii przestrzeni*, Kraków 2006, pp. 40-41.

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