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DESCRIBING THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HANNA KRALL AND KRZYSZTOF KĄKOLEWSKI

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The author of the article presents profiles of outstanding writers who created the Polish school of Press reportage; they are Hanna Krall and Krzysztof Kąkolewski. She tries to answer the question about the individual style of writing presented by these reporters, who became famous in Polish literature not only as excellent observers of reality, but first of all as theoreticians of the genre (numerous interviews, academic lectures and publications). She analyzes their «describing of the world» through their early- experienced drama of the Second World War, books they read and generational affiliation. However, the most significant seems to be the discussion of the workshop created by these distinguished journalists, which means seeking subjects and heroes. Another important aspect is also the development of individual style, which can be seen in the way of mounting collected materials. Moreover, worth knowing is also the importance of language issues: Krall's economical use of the word and Kąkolewski's colourful description of the reality.

Keywords: Hannah Krall, KrysstofKakolevsky, Polish reportage, narrative, environment, writing of works, author's style.

«We are above all reporters. That is how tend to introduce themselves outstanding masters of genre – Hanna Krall and Krzysztof Kąkolewski. Not writers, who we sometimes are, but reporters, because we are allowed to base only on facts and these can always be checked. Fabrication is not an option» [Miller 1983: 223]. «What do I need fiction for, if real life is more interesting?» – asked Hanna Krall in an interview with Ewa Boniecka [Boniecka 1993: 43]. To three years later give answer to Katarzyna Janowska: «Writer is someone great, who has huge courage, who creates world, populates it, there is topography, there are gorges, streets, houses, man can recognize places and people, like at Faulkner. And I don't create, I speak about world created by someone else' [Janowska, Bereś 1996: 43]. Deceased already Krzysztof Kąkolewski was adding teasingly: «We are like formerly comedians, musicians, cantors. We are barbarians of literature, we are the ugly literature. But it gives us an amazing thing: adventure not for adventure, artificially created, like alpinism, or abstract, pure spiritual adventure, but a synthesis of them both. Explorative adventure» [Kąkolewski 1977: 39].

Marek Miller – the creator of Reportage Laboratory, which are interdisciplinary postgraduate studies at the Department of Journalism, Information and Bibliology at

Warsaw University – described at the beginning of eighties workshops of mentioned reporters. It was for him an important phase of getting to know their working methods – gaining, then composing material (interviews, documents, letters). If we assume, that an impact on reporters style of writing had also their early experiences, reads, generational belongingness, there is no way to skip places, from where they started their journeys and from there they came back. Rooms – workshops, desks, sofas created a kind of theatrical scenography, which was and still is a kind of necessary apposition. Important information about reporters lifestyle – their tastes, likes and sensibility. The author of reportage «Pope and General» – those days sociology student at University of Łódź – remembered a visit in Hanna Krall's workshop this way: «(...) I knocked on the door of the apartment at Małego Franka street in Warsaw. – Don't you think, that this secretary and this wooden table don't go with each other? – I heard, already sitting in a comfortable armchair. How old are you? And it was this way till the end of conversation, if it wasn't only me who wanted to find out something» [Miller 1983: 272]. A couple of years later reporter recounted to Barbara Łopieńska about two other places, in which reports were created – often firstly printed in press (that was with famous «Ahead of God») only then in a book version. «(...) I sleep on a couch and in that room there is a sofa, that I don't want to touch, because organised pages with notes lay on it. (...) I have commodes with huge drawers. When I try to find something, everything from this drawers falls onto the floor and whole commode wants to fall on me. Of course I have folder on shelves, and in this folders everything is written, but then I never remember what's in which folder (...) in the Warsaw house I write on the bed, using pen. I rewrite on the typewriter in the kitchen, because it is brightest there. On these two shelves are my books and translations. Here – the ones I like most. Hrabal, Babel, Schulz, Platonov. Everything without an order, but it's to keep an order.» [Łopieńska 1995: 141]. Reporter mentioned also in the interview with Łopieńska about the workshop in village house near Narwia «(...) there I write at verandah, on mattress. It's big, so it gives me the necessary space for surrounding myself in notes» [Łopieńska 1995: 141]. No needless tchotchkes, artworks or family keepsakes. The place, in which the author feels best is defined by simple furniture and notes. In such raw, dissected from casualness of everyday life space are created works, in which there is not needless word. Frugal, at times broken writing is a consequence of discipline, which Hanna Krall slipped onto her from the beginning of creating reports. She often mentioned, that she wakes up at 5 o'clock and writes only one and half page of text. Then reduces it to three sentences. Keeps rewriting – smoothes, cleans materials from unnecessary words, which could introduce to much emotions.

The same relation between the way of writing and furnishing workshop of the second character of the article – Krzysztof Kąkolewski – points out Marek Miller in the book «Reporters Lifestyle». That's how he remembered his Warsaw apartment at Washington Roundabout: «Big, rectangular room, devided into half by glass door. In one half library, chest with archive, table with columns, spreading Chinese rose – here he works. In the second – three meters long couch covered with red plush, two armchairs and third, huge leather «English club», crystal mirror, table – combination of American furniture and antiques from grandparents – here he invites guests' [Miller 1983: 289]. Kąkolewski wrote also in family manor house in Suchedniów. There he was taking typewriter after forefathers and notes – most important elements of material, from which he composed works. He created at the huge table in the living room. Keepsakes from the past piled up around him – tchotchkes, broken clocks, some lamps and baizes covering furniture. Such kind of

reporter's presence in the world defined him the optic of human's cases, tangled biographies and unexplained thoroughly events. It affected also the language of reports, in which every Kąkolewski's word «(...) is essential, maximally loaded with meaning, the simplest possible, gaining dynamics by connecting with others, and by that beautiful (...)» [Miller 1983: 297]. Kąkolewski was not afraid of emotions. Sometimes he was absent-minded. In conversation with Marek Miller he admitted fighting with himself. He made an essence of his reports out of overcoming laziness and fear: «I drink up tea in the morning and this is the only moment, when being asleep and half conscious, I can make myself work. It is simply that my second «I» – anarchist, independent, disdainful, biggety, which neglect many – surrenders to the will of the second «I», which orders works. I put paper into typewriter and write. You can always create. Inspiration though, is catching genius thoughts, that have not already come to me» [Kruszewscy 1987: 22]. Kąkolewski appreciated people company – especially those, who told him stories from borderland of literature. There was only one condition – they had to be true, with a timeless dimension.

Hanna Krall keeps emphasising that reportage is her destiny and describing world – a duty, which does not come out of metaphysical ecstasies, but a fascination with dailiness. Even a decision about choosing the job of reporter shown in a prosaic circumstances. The author of «Exceptionally Long Line» recalled many times, that she matured to writing on the way for entrance exam for studies – «(...) I give you my word: between Poniatowski bridge and Nowy Świat I gained certainty, that I will graduate, become reporter, I'll be writing. What exactly started then? I have started! Is it possible, that it takes so few? Anyway that's how it was with me» [Zaworska 2002: 18].

Krzysztof Kąkolewski was 19 years old when he started work at «Generation». It was ordinary, dull practising. A kind of being dogsbody. In this prosaic duties – making coffee, lifting papers from the floor, or running to post office – future author of repeatedly reprinted report «How Immortals Die» seen a chance for himself and pale outline of his creative path. With his specific irony he recalled: «I knew, that I'll be writing or I'll be painter or philosopher. This professions tempted me, because they weren't connected with alarm clock. It was a really important thing for me when I went to school. A cruel tool. I don't connect assiduity with getting up early. This is a demotic conceptualization of assiduity» [Kruszewscy 1987:44]. After years he adds, that in his feeling of isolation and seeking journalistic independence he took pattern from extraordinary reporter – Melchior Wańkowicz. Kąkolewski cleaved to the author of «Lafontaine's Carafe», because he seemed to him a free man and during PRL such kind of creational attitude awakened objection of authorities and censors. In conversation with Marek Miller he admitted: «I was very lonely and suddenly I met man, who while being great, wilderness animal, bison or aurochs, is free. (...) Suddenly I've seen, that I am not a weirdo, who lives without support upon his own receipt. Wańkowicz, without talking me into anything, only by his presence «healed me»(...)» [Kruszewscy 1987: 45].

Only creational independence let extraordinary reporters reaching for great subjects. Such, that activated readers imagination, disposed them to bigger reflection or even psychological journeys inside themselves. Though each of them chose different method of writing, generational experience linked them. Hanna Krall lost her parents, survived thanks to Poles who hid her. The tragedy of rejection set in her curiosity for world and maturity, which she could not have experienced as a grown up person – reporter, if not the early experience of fear, suffering and courage despite everything. She was a little Jewish

girl who observed the world through a thin slit. Thanks to that she noticed details, which are the germ of drama creation. She early understood, that it is facts that counts, only this, what is contained in seemingly little things – broken windshields, shot door-frames – can become a germ of universal story. Recall of Fate deserving Dostojewski's genius. Realizing the seriousness of little matters, which build great stories and event sequences. In the interview «Life is Wonderful» she admitted: «(...) all children exit war as reasonable and grown up. In order to survive, they all had to be wise: Polish, Jewish... I wrote about in «Subtenant». There is a weird orphan house there, with children, who weren't children at all. This was grown up people and they put much effort in pretending to be children» [Krajewska 2000: 18]. The reporter rejected romantic vision of inspiration, which assumed waiting for subject – such, which encircles the author, gets into his consciousness so deeply, that he can reach for it just as a mature creator. Reporter repeatedly emphasised, that you have to seek subjects: «Imagine please the dailiness of reporter, who sits and waits for a subject to encircle him. You can wait like that the whole life. Man carries with him, everywhere where he is, his own matters (...) he is haunted by events of his own childhood, his biography. That's how it seemingly is» [Praszyński 1996: 43].

Hanna Krall's great subject – extermination of Jewish world and connected with it irreversibility of past appeared in her reporter's searches while working on the report «Ahead of God». Frugal for words Marek Edelman's story – doctor, one of legendary leaders at Warsaw ghetto activated in reporter the desire for returning to the world that existed before war. For her, it was a lost civilisation. She visited Przysucha, Warka and Kock. She saw destroyed graves at non-existent Jewish cemeteries, devastated churches. There were no witnesses of past. They spoke later: «Wrote to me people from Rio de Janeiro, from Toronto, from Iowa in America. How Singer transported Krochmalna street away to America, they took Kock, some Tykocin, some Otwock – in them they remained forever. In Poland were places, in the world people with their memory» [Bielas 1997: 14]. Characters form volume of reports «Hypnosis» remembered and did not know what to do with this memory. So they started throwing stories out of themselves. Only thanks to do fact, that they have someone who listened, they became free people. Hanna Krall carried these stories into future. She took the subject widely. The matter of Jews extermination became for her and her readers a parable about one of the most important experiences of humankind. No matter the race, origin, or faith. Krall asked about Jewish subject always answered shortly: «For the question, why I write about Jews, I answer – it is not about Jews, this is about people. Interesting, why no one asks Konwicki, why you keep writing about Poles?, no one asks Grass, why about Germans. And about Jews, why?» [Janowska, Mucharski 2000: 17]. War – in other view – was also great subject of Krzysztof Kąkolewski. He was nine years old when the September Campaign started. He never fought though. After years he recalled, that he was – thanks to his mother – excluded from this responsibility. He remained observer: «My later writing was attempts to diffuse through other's fates into the inside of war. Surely dramas of people, who I describe, are the opposite of what I experienced myself» [Woźniak 1979: 13].

Kąkolewski wrote about war – similarly to Krall – without pathos, unnecessary excitations, which could cause mythologizing of reality. Reporter always remain faithful to facts and out of this matter «caulked by Creator» built the plot of reports. Often he was feared, if the stories told by character is a subject: «I feel the biggest fear, before I muster for confirmation that this, what I found, is a subject. Reporter's courage consists in finding

a subject, in inspired processing it into piece of work» [Miller 1983:294]. Kąkolewski asked, why he writes about Auschwitz he answers ironically, that it is a subject, which he experienced, which is somehow close to him. Not Katyń, but Warsaw, land of Kielce, Oświęcim. He connected experience with reporter's premonition. Intuition never let him down. To that, came stubbornness and conviction, that out of couple of heard sentences, can be created an important, and even extraordinary, piece of work. For a possibility for writing a cycle of reports – conversations with Nazis living in the seventies in Germany – he run after for nine years. Only after publishing book «How Are You?» he admitted: «I was afraid of book about Nazi criminals. Everything depended on their permission and way of recounting (...) I shivered, if they will talk in a way, which is appropriate for a book. These are unimaginable things. If I know any real fear and anxiety, it is only if the subject will work out» [Kruszewscy 1989: 79]. Kąkolewski returned to the subject connected with war many times. He avoided though generalness and superficiality. He was less interested in historians notes – though during documenting he always used archives and available books. His subject was human. The best, when standing in front of impossible choices, like in Greek tragedy: «Only after II World War people's eye opened, they started seeing in their fates something special. The same event can be ordinary or special, depending on our look» [Woźniak 1979: 23]. Reporter eagerly shared his thoughts concerning characters. They were his biggest discoveries. It happened though, that he lost, because someone, in who he put biggest faith, turned out to be unworthy of his fate. In conversation with Grażyna and Grzegorz Kruszewski he admitted: «Every man had in his life an experience, which lifted him to the heights and it can be described – it is only necessary to get to it (...) every man has a possibility of being haunted genius, but people either reject this or their parents, upbringing or school take it away from them, destroying all this, what would be turning to infinity and mystery. Because the main element of our life on the Earth is mystery» [Kruszewscy 1987: 41]. Kąkolewski assumed, that reporter's vocation is getting to the mystery – shameful, often hidden, but significant for common work of character and reporter. Accomplishing the moment, in which genius appears, understood as thoroughly finished, extraordinary reportage, he called his vocation and duty. Critics often described his reports as psychological. He himself preferred calling them «journey inside yourself». It was a kind of exploration needed to describe world in the whole richness without escape into literality which he – as a reporter – totally abandoned. Kąkolewski searched for characters and interesting stories, but most often it was them who knocked on his door. Sometimes they wrote letters. It happened, that they called a couple days in a row. Reporter believed, that writing a good – meaning important report, takes some kind of cooperation with character. It was a risky game, in which it came to the confrontation of strong personalities: «(...) belletrist battens on his own poverties, reporter exploits others'. His poverty is addiction of others' creativity, who drove themselves into misfortune, is begging, scrounging up, imposing, buying their capricious authority» [Miller 1983: 63]. Kąkolewski had his theory on the character of reportage. It could not be someone banal, superficially treating fate, who out of God's or Absolute will became his contribution, but so called third person, which is a kind of psychological construction. Its being and final shape put into report depended on reporter's sensibility, his courage in stepping over taboo and character's openness, who as a result of such stated thesis became at Kąkolewski an outright co-creator of reportage. Kąkolewski invited his characters to home – on a red couch. Conversations by tea he called «sessions». Sometimes two was enough. Often though character and reporter met a couple

of times – in a time period. Kąkolewski recalled, that he was getting to know the most always during those first face-off with character: «I strive from the first meeting to give the conversation a big tempo. I try not to interrupt conversation and lead to saying everything right from the start. Such session takes 4 – 10 hours. Then a drink, supper and goodbye or setting up for another meeting. Always though in this following conversations is more psychology, divagation, there is already less discipline, more digression, associations, things not connected with subject. Then there is selection. I walk the opposite direction: the more precisely I collect material, the more I am now remorseless. Then montage» [Miller 1983: 295]. Such kind of relation with character let Kąkolewski achieve deep truth not only about described event – fact, but above all about humans' motivations. And such knowledge must be gained through months. People usually don't want to fully strip. They often lie, run away into understatement, earnestly dissembles that, what in their opinion would cause stultification in the surroundings they come from. Writing was necessary for Kąkolewski. He never called it autotherapy, but he was admitting in interviews, that his own life was never as colourful, surprising, or even improbable as those, who he meets during report sessions: «I have this theory – he admitted – that our character's fates are a kind of reporter's unfulfilled life. Reportage is a substitute of reporter's life, multiplication of it. Reporter is a momma's boy, who is striving to get to know life, but he is afraid, that he doesn't live intense enough. Reportage is a second, unfulfilled life of a reporter. Characters' fates add to one another, creating parallel existence» [Miller 1983: 290]. Kąkolewski often recalled – adding and explaining these mechanisms – working at book «How Are You?». He was meeting Nazis, asked them troublesome questions. He had available car and translators, but it wasn't him who killed. He only tried to find out the truth. In some sense he complemented his life by their experiences – crimes, denaturalization, sometimes complete misunderstanding that what they did was wrong. Reporter remained himself, but for the period of collecting materials he went down to the hells.

Hanna Krall in conversation with Jacek Bińkowski, also admitted to the desire of multiplied life, richer due to meeting people, who experienced their dramas. Reporter – already thirty years ago – admitted: «I'm afraid, that I will grow old, become infirm, die. That I won't manage to write something really important. Life will go on, world still will be interesting, and I wouldn't be able to watch and describe it. It's terrifying!» [Bińkowski 1987: 22]. Such kind of curiosity, or even reporter's hearing for things great, important, worthy of reportage came out of Krall's conviction, that her duty is: find out and describe. Because really reportage is the most important. In her professional life happened those rare moments, when she could in touching other human heard something, which caused distraction, breaking from schemes in thinking and writing. She seek – and still do, who in their lives remain ordinary in spite of often heroic accomplishments. Actually reporter writes about them only then, when they stop being a legend. She characterizes her characters this way: «They are ordinary people, with no noise and clamor around them. Often these are people not known to anyone, but I wrote also about once popular ones, like Lechosław Goździk or Anna Walentynowicz. Got interested in them only when their popularity was gone» [Miller 1983: 44]. In the conversation with Teresa Sołtysiak she admitted, that «(...) people of success don't attract me, I can't create fake interest. The only criterion while choosing characters is my very own curiosity. I go to those, who I really long to get to know. I found Goździk, because I remembered him from October '56. He performed on mass meetings that time, was amazing, and then suddenly he was gone, but it intrigued me –

why?» [Sołtysik 1990:11]. The author of volume «Hypnosis» emphasised, that a character should be non-explicit. The more closed and distrustful, the more interesting. Her role is to assess, if that, what people recount to her, is a subject. Often one accidental meeting awakens ideas for next reports. Sometimes out of this unconstrained, unwittingly led conversations, hatches a subject of life. In Hanna Krall's case, extermination of civilisation. Reporter never writes about it in general. There is always someone, who experienced something, fell down, got lost in life. Only such individual stories are pretext for a wider tale – reflection. The purpose is describing world. Some kind of diagnosis – never an assessment of happening or humans' attitudes. It is worth considering, which role does the title «describing» world play in the life of reporters themselves. For sure it is hard to reject its intentionality. It is necessary for them and readers. Thanks to publicising problems, they can be solved. But it is not all. Reporters sometimes are egoists. The act of writing is for them a way of getting to know themselves – motivations, aims, acts. As Hanna Krall emphasises: «(...) my occupation is to find out (...) its reportage what is most important for reporter» [Miller 1983: 251]. In conversation with Katarzyna Bielas she admits: «I wouldn't be willing to describe everyone. I must hear something, which makes me wonder, make asking questions. Not to people, but to myself» [Bielas 1997: 12]. Krzysztof Kąkolewski seen only one most important aim of writing: «(...) reporter discovers the Truth, announces it, impacts opinions and minds of people (...) it must be fact, an information which is socially useful, necessary for readers, ordered by them, and because of that important for reporter» [Kąkolewski, 1964: 60].

In conclusion it is worth to clearly mention, that reporters write in order to that, what is aimed, socially needed, lift to the rank of art – into space, in which report inscribes. And they live thanks to those rare moments of captivations, fascinations in character and his world. Then their work is treated as vocation, has a deep sense.

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ОПИС СВІТУ ВІД ХАННИ КРОЛ ТА КРИШТОФА КАКОЛЕВСЬКОГО

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У статті розглянуто те, яку роль відіграє заголовний «опис світу» в житті самих репортерів. Тому йому важко закинути «навмисність». Він потрібний їм і читачам. Завдяки акцентуванню на проблемі, це може бути вирішено. Але репортери бувають егоїстами. Процес написання для них є способом пізнання самих себе – мотивації, прагнень, дій. Як зазначає Ганна Краль: «(...) мою професією є дізнаватися (...) для репортера найважливіший є репортаж». У розмові з Катериною Белас вона визнає: «Мені б не хотілося кожного описувати. Я мушу почути щось, що мене зачепить, схилить до постановки питань. Не людям, а самій собі». Кшиштоф Каколевський бачив тільки одну найважливішу мету створення текстів: «(...) репортер відкриває Правду, оголошує її, формує думки і поняття людей (...) це мусить бути факт, суспільно корисна інформація, потрібна читачам, замовлена через них, і через це важлива для репортера».

У висновку ми зазначаємо, що репортери пишуть, щоб підняти до рангу мистецтва задумане, суспільно значуще – в середовище, в яке вписується репортаж. І вони живуть завдяки цим рідкісним хвилинам освітлення, зачарування героєм і його світом. Тоді їх робота, що трактується як покликання, має глибокий сенс.

Ключові слова: Ганна Краль, Кшиштоф Каколевський, польський репортаж, нарратив, середовище, написання творів, авторський стиль.