

Summary

Non-contemporaneity

Temporal Experience in the Latest Polish Literature

The monograph discusses the issue of time as dealt with in recent Polish literature. In the introduction, the author notes that this is an under-recognised problem, and that following the spatial turn in literary studies, it is now a good moment to develop research into temporality. The subject matter of the book has been restricted to temporal experience itself, since the category of experience has already been dealt with extensively in the humanities and can provide a favourable methodological basis for new studies on time in literature. The basic issue that the monograph seeks to describe is the tension observed in recent Polish literature between two ways of experiencing time: an excessively controlled contemporaneity understood, as outlined by Jean Baudrillard, as part of Integral Reality, and forms of non-contemporaneity opposing it. For the experience of non-contemporaneity, it proves crucial to experience asynchrony, a temporal discord that defines the condition of many heroines and protagonists of the most recent Polish literature.

The first part discusses the possibility of creating a history of literature post 1989 as a history of non-contemporaneity. In opposition to Janusz Sławiński's canonical approach, which speaks of synchrony and diachrony in the literary-historical process, a third way is presented, the study of asynchrony. As it transpires, Poland's most recent literature encourages a similar approach, in which processes, trends and phenomena belonging to irreconcilable time rhythms coexist to a greater extent than before. Post-1989 Polish literature is written in various countries (e.g. Polish prose in Israel), it has connections with phenomena from before the war, many aesthetics from the People's Republic of Poland era, the traumas of World War II, the experience of technological ac-

celeration, the postmodern "end of history", etc. This all leads to the conclusion that despite the works belonging to this literature having appeared at the same time, taken together they do not form any common temporal horizon that could be called "contemporaneity". This is why "non-contemporaneity" is needed as a descriptive term to point at a phenomenon that is important for Polish contemporary literature.

The second part features two studies on the literature of everyday life. It includes an analysis of records referring to rudimentary and very ancient scribal practices such as chronicles or annals. The works of M. Malicki and D. Bitner convince us that "inventing the everyday" is maintained thanks to everyday records (according to M. de Certeau). There is a separate discussion of the novels of M. Sieniewicz, who consciously uses writing down the everyday to counter the time of Integral Reality.

The next part presents the return of the "visibility" of the experience of time in recent literature. Following the period of postmodern convictions concerning the "end of history" and the weakening of interest in temporal issues in literature, they return together with the experience of death (the starting point for this analysis is K. O. Knausgård's famous work *My Struggle*). Methodological support comes from A. Lingis' remarks on "catastrophic time" and, first and foremost, E. Lévinas on the specific structure of "not yet" time that appears with the existential proximity of death. In this context, the latest or late poetic volumes by T. Różewicz, U. Kozioł, K. Lars, R. Śliwonik, J. Hartwig, M. Jagiełło, I. Wyczółkowska, J. Szuber, B. Zadura, J. Zalesiński are discussed.

The next section examines literary expressions of the experience of a strongly asynchronous time "once more" (according to Lévinas). It appears in prose describing the phenomenon of the breaking of historical, social and family continuity, which is one of the most characteristic and painful experiences of Polish culture in the 20th century. Meanwhile, many writers try to give another chance, to give "one more time" to something destroyed, as it happens in the prose of F. Springer, K. Brakoniecki, W. Nowicki, H. Klimko-Dobrzaniecki, M. Tulli, and M. Wilk.

Part Five takes a closer look at the records of processual time, which is related to the temporal experience of sufferers described by the contemporary philosopher A. Bielik-Robson. What returns at this point is the experience of a certain temporal continuity, in which the subject must be involved. The return of particular incidental temporal continuities is analysed based on the poetry and prose of J. Łukasiewicz, B. Zadura, J. Jarniewicz, J. Gutorow, D. Suska, P. Mitzner, A.D. Liskowacki, A. Stasiuk and M. Płaza.

The final part presents the problem of the literary recording of events connected with a great change or a socio-political shock. As this phenomenon can no longer be described in terms of the old philosophy of history, C. Malabou's concept of "the plasticity of time" proves helpful in explaining the modelling effect of sudden large-scale phenomena. Contemporary Polish literature still describes the beneficial temporal experience related to the birth of "Solidarity", which is shown as something "memorable" (G. Debord's term), as it is in K. Miłobędzka's poetry and the prose of M. Bieńczyk and J. Dukaj. First and foremost, however, it reacts to the current rapid socio-political processes (both domestic and international), and the plasticity of time is rediscovered by such writers as B. Latawiec, B. Zadura and T. Różycki.

In each of the types of temporal experience described here, the tension between the integrated temporality of contemporary times and various rhythms of non-contemporaneity belonging to the life world of individual people is presented. The experience of asynchrony, the temporal mismatch with integrated contemporaneity, the complexity of what is temporal, which are all recorded by the latest Polish literature, results in disagreement with the dominant temporality of contemporaneity. The asynchrony that is recorded by literature determines the condition of the majority of literary heroines and protagonists, who, due to this often painful experience of asynchrony, are not alienated from social life, but find themselves in a relationship to their temporal location, which is waiting to be discovered.

The conclusion to the monograph expands the research perspective. It is said that contemporaneity perceived as part of Integral Reality can be a tool of both free-market liberalism and authoritarianism that is capable of effective action. Therefore, it is in the experience of asynchrony, in the area of Polish non-contemporary literature and culture, that an active source of social hope should be sought.

Translated by Rob Pagett