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BADANIA NAD JĘZYKIEM I KULTURĄ I

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Tom I

Tradycja i współczesność w języku i literaturze



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Pod redakcją

Swietłany Gaś, Doroty Kalecińskiej, Sandry Wawrzyniak



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Spis treści

Wstęp	7
Foreword	9
Rozdział 1	
Tradycyjnie o literaturze	11
<i>Giedrius Židonis, Jowita Niewulis-Grablunas</i> Korespondencja szlachetnie urodzonego żmudzkiego pisarza i artysty Nikodema Erazma Iwanowskiego i polskiej pisarki Elizy Orzeszkowej. O twórczości literackiej	13
<i>Greta Lemanaitė</i> Katalog Księgozbioru doktora Henryka Gierszyńskiego w Bibliotece Polskiej w Paryżu.....	27
<i>Vida Repšienė</i> The reception of Western literature in the academic area of Vilnius and Kaunas (1918-1940).....	43
<i>Sigita Ignatjeva</i> How to translate parody and pastiche: the use of style models in translation of <i>Ulysses</i> by James Joyce	51
<i>Maria Posledova</i> Может ли настоящая литература быть политической? (Милош, Гомбрович и «Порабощенный разум»).....	57
Rozdział 2	
Współcześnie o literaturze.....	67
<i>Ilga Šuplinska</i> Feminine writing in contemporary Latgalian literature	69
<i>Marek Kątny</i> Nowe czasy i stare problemy. Proza dla dzieci wobec współczesności na przykładzie utworów Grzegorza Kasdepke	81
<i>Kamil Pecela</i> Tradycje wynalezione w literaturze litewskiej.....	93
<i>Dovile Kuzminskaitė</i> Tradition and innovation in Uruguayan poetry of the 20 th century	101

<i>Veronica De Pieri</i> Wagō Ryōichi's net-poetry: tradition and innovation	113
Rozdział 3 Współcześnie o języku	125
<i>Вера Барбазюк</i> Специфика нарративной эволюции окказиональных метафор в контексте.....	127
<i>Екатерина Бондаренко</i> Первый англо-украинский словарь сленга: семантико-идеографический подход.....	131
<i>Beata Jarosz</i> Typologie socjolektów w polskiej literaturze językoznawczej. Implikacje terminologiczne.....	139
<i>Jowita Niewulis-Grablunas, Piotr Grablunas</i> Zapóżyczania z języka polskiego w litewskich gwarach z terenu Polski. Wczoraj i dziś	155
Nota o autorach / About the Authors	167

Wstęp

Niniejsza monografia jest pierwszym tomem z serii *Badania nad językiem i kulturą*. Do publikacji zostali zaproszeni naukowcy reprezentujący różne ośrodki akademickie z Polski, Rosji, Litwy, Ukrainy, Łotwy, Estonii i Włoch. Wszystkie nadesłane artykuły zostały osobno recenzowane. Mimo zróżnicowanej problematyki prezentowanych w tomie prac można znaleźć ich pewien wspólny mianownik - tradycja i współczesność w języku i literaturze.

Rozdział I *Tradycyjnie o literaturze* zawiera pięć artykułów. Giedrius Židonis oraz Jowita Niewulis-Grablunas (*Korespondencja szlachetnie urodzonego żmudzkiego pisarza i artysty Nikodema Erazma Iwanowskiego i polskiej pisarki Elizy Orzeszkowej. O twórczości literackiej*) analizują 40 niepublikowanych listów Iwanowskiego oraz 28 opublikowanych w Polsce listów Orzeszkowej, skupiając się na zawartych w nich wątkach literackich. Greta Lemanaitė (*Katalog Księgozbioru doktora Henryka Gierszyńskiego w Bibliotece Polskiej w Paryżu*) dokonuje szczegółowego przeglądu zawartości biblioteki Gierszyńskiego, próbując na tej podstawie odtworzyć fragmenty życia codziennego przedstawicieli polskiej emigracji postyczniowej. Vida Repšienė (*The reception of western literature in the academic area of Vilnius and Kaunas (1918-1940)*) porównuje nauczanie przedmiotów z zakresu literatury i kultury zachodniej w dwóch ośrodkach uniwersyteckich, w Wilnie i Kownie w latach 1918-1940. Dwa ostatnie artykuły w tym rozdziale poświęcone są przekładom literackim. Sigita Ignatjeva (*How to translate parody and pastiche: the use of style models in translation of Ulysses by James Joyce*) analizuje łotewskie, fińskie oraz rosyjskie tłumaczenie 14. rozdziału *Ulissesa* Jamesa Joyce'a, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem wyboru przykładów z literatur narodowych, dokonanych przez tłumaczy w procesie ekwiwalencji dynamicznej. Z kolei Maria Posledova (*Может ли настоящая литература быть политической? Милош, Гомбрович и «Порабощенный разум»*) zastanawia się nad problematyką percepcji *Zniewolonego umysłu* Czesława Miłosza w Estonii i Rosji.

Rozdział II *Współcześnie o literaturze* również składa się z pięciu artykułów. O kategorii *Innego* w łatgalskiej literaturze, a w szczególności w pisarstwie kobiecym, pisze Ilga Šuplinska (*Feminine writing in contemporary Latgalian literature*). Marek Kałny (*Nowe czasy i stare problemy. Proza dla dzieci wobec współczesności na przykładzie utworów Grzegorza Kasdepke*) analizuje prozę Grzegorza Kasdepke, wskazując na nowe zjawiska obecne w prozie dla dzieci, które są wynikiem szerszych zmian socjologicznych i obyczajowych, zachodzących w ostatnim dziesięcioleciu. Kamil Pecela (*Tradycje wynalezione w literaturze litewskiej*) podejmuje próbę całościowego spojrzenia na tendencje tożsamościowotwórcze, widoczne w literaturze litewskiej XIX i początku XX

wieku, odwołując się do założeń teoretycznych Erica Hobsbawma. Przejawom tradycyjności i współczesności w poezji poświęcone są dwa kolejne artykuły. Dovile Kuzminskaite (*Tradition and innovation in Uruguayan poetry of the 20th century*), analizując twórczość urugwajskich poetów, Amandy Berenguer i Clemente Padina, stwierdza, że niemożliwe jest wyznaczenie wyraźnych granic pomiędzy tradycją a innowacją w użyciu poetyckich środków wyrazu. Natomiast Veronica De Pieri (*Wagō Ryōichi's net-poetry: tradition and innovation*) prezentuje twórczość japońskiego poety, Wagō Ryōichiego, który swoją popularność zawdzięcza portalowi społecznościowemu Twitter i zamieszczaniu na nim tekstów literackich opisujących katastrofę w Fukushima w czasie rzeczywistym. Autorka artykułu znajduje w jego poezji liczne odwołania do japońskiej tradycji literackiej, szczególnie dotyczącej gatunku *genbaku bungaku*, powstałego w odpowiedzi na atak nuklearny podczas II wojny światowej.

Ostatni rozdział *Współcześnie o języku* zawiera cztery artykuły o problematyce ściśle lingwistycznej. Vera Barbażyuk w artykule *Специфика нарративной эволюции окказиональных метафор в контексте* dokonuje analizy metafor w tekstach rosyjskiego eseisty, Michaiła Epsztejna. Z kolei Katerina Bondarenko (*Первый англо-украинский словарь сленга: семантико-идеографический подход*) wyjaśnia koncepcję nowego angielsko-ukraińskiego słownika slangu. Praca Beaty Jarosz (*Typologie socjolektów w polskiej literaturze językoznawczej. Implikacje terminologiczne*) jest próbą krytycznego spojrzenia na klasyfikacje socjolektów w polskim językoznawstwie. Autorka podkreśla podobieństwa typologii oraz wskazuje na nieprecyzyjność pojęć w nich używanych. Rozdział zamyka artykuł Jowity Niewulis-Grablunas i Piotra Grablunasa (*Zapóżyczenia z języka polskiego w litewskich gwarach z terenu Polski. Wczoraj i dziś*), w którym autorzy opisują stopniowe zmiany w charakterze zapożyczeń z języka polskiego w gwarze południowoaukstałkiej.

Zapraszając do lektury, mocno wierzymy, że tom ten będzie źródłem naukowych inspiracji dla kolejnych fascynujących badań nad językiem, literaturą i kulturą.

Redaktorki

Foreword

The presented monograph is the first volume of the series *Badania nad językiem i kulturą* ('Research on Language and Culture'). Various scientists from selected academic institutions from Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia and Italy were welcomed to submit the papers. Despite diverse range of problems presented in the volume they are linked by the common motto – *tradition and modern in language and literature*. All articles have been reviewed by the editorial committee.

Chapter I *Tradycyjnie o literaturze* ('Literature – Traditional Insight') contains five papers i.e.: *Korespondencja szlachetnie urodzonego żmudzkiego pisarza i artysty Nikodema Erazma Iwanowskiego i polskiej pisarki Elizy Orzeszkowej. O twórczości literackiej* ('The correspondence of noble-born Samogitian writer and artist Nikodem Erazm Iwanowski and Polish writer Eliza Orzeszkowa. About fiction and creation') by Giedrius Židonis and Jowita Niewulis-Grablunas analyses 40 unpublished letters of Iwanowski and 28 published in Poland letters of Orzeszkowa, concentrating on their literary connotations; *Katalog Księgozbioru doktora Henryka Gierszyńskiego w Bibliotece Polskiej w Paryżu* ('Henry Gierszyński's book collection as a reflection of the life of Polish migrants in France in the 20th century') by Greta Lemanaitė presents detailed description of Gierszyński's library aimed at reconstructing selected aspects of daily life of Polish post 1863 January Uprising emigration; Vida Repšienė *The reception of western literature in the academic area of Vilnius and Kaunas (1918-1940)* compares syllabuses in western literature and culture at the universities in Vilnius and Kaunas in the years 1918-1940; the next two works are devoted to literary translations: Sigita Ignatjeva *How to translate parody and pastiche: the use of style models in translation of Ulysses by James Joyce* analyses Latvian, Finnish and Russian translations of the 14. Chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses* with a special attention paid to the choice of literary translations from national literature output made by translators when applying the dynamic equivalence method; Maria Posledova in turn, *Может ли настоящая литература быть политической? Милош, Гомбрович и «Порабощенный разум»* ('Can the real literature be political? Milosz, Gombrowicz and The Captive Mind') discusses the issue of Estonian and Russian perception of *Zniewolony umysł* (The Captive Mind) by Czesław Miłosz.

Chapter II *Współcześnie o literaturze* ('On Literature – in Modern Way'), comprises of five papers: Ilga Šuplinska *Feminine writing in contemporary Latgalian literature* concentrates on the category of 'Otherness' in Latgalian literature and feminine writing in particular; Marek Kątny *Nowe czasy i stare problemy. Proza dla dzieci wobec współczesności na przykładzie utworów Grzegorza Kasdepke*

(‘New times and old problems. Children’s prose in the view of contemporaneity as exemplified by works of Grzegorz Kasdepke’) discusses Grzegorz Kasdepke’s books, pointing out new phenomena present in literature for children, resulting from socio-cultural changes taking place in the last decade; Kamil Pecela *Tradycje wynalezione w literaturze litewskiej* (‘The invention of tradition in Lithuanian literature’) investigates identity constructing tendencies seen in the Lithuanian literature of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in the light of Eric Hobsbawm theoretical assumptions; the following two articles deal with tradition and modern in poetry: Dovile Kuzminskaite *Tradition and innovation in Uruguayan poetry of the 20th century* by analysing the output of Uruguayan poets Amanda Berenguer and Clemente Padin concludes that demarcation between tradition and innovation in poetry is almost impossible; Veronica De Pieri in turn in *Wagō Ryōichi’s net-poetry: tradition and innovation* focuses on the output of Japanese poet, who became popular thanks to Twitter and literary texts published there, depicting the Fukushima catastrophe in real time. The researcher finds in the presented material numerous echoes of Japanese literary tradition, especially with relation to the genre *genbaku bungaku* that originated in response to the nuclear attack at the end of WWII.

Chapter III *Współcześnie o języku* (‘On Language in the Modern Way’), embraces four papers devoted to linguistics: Vera Barbażyuk in *Специфика нарративной эволюции окказиональных метафор в контексте* (‘Specification of narrative evolution of occasional metaphors in context’) analyses metaphors in the texts of the Russian essayist Mikhail Epstein; Katerina Bondarenko *Первый англо-украинский словарь сленга: семантико-идеографический подход* (‘1st English--Ukrainian Slang Dictionary: semantic-ideographic approach’) explains the content of the new English-Ukrainian Dictionary of slang; Beata Jarosz in *Typologie socjolektów w polskiej literaturze językoznawczej. Implikacje terminologiczne* (‘Typologies of social dialects in Polish linguistic literature. Terminological implications’) discusses the problem of sociolect classification in Polish linguistics. She underlines similarities in typologies and points out the vagueness of the notions and terms applied in them; Jowita Niewulis-Grablunas and Piotr Grablunas *Zapóżyczenia z języka polskiego w litewskich gwarach z terenu Polski. Wczoraj i dziś* (‘Borrowings from Polish in Lithuanian subdialects in Poland’) depict gradual changes in the character of Polish borrowings in south Aukštaitian subdialects.

The Editorial Board hopes that the presented volume will become a source of research inspiration for the next fascinating investigations on culture, literature and language.

The Editorial Board

ROZDZIAŁ 1

TRADYCYJNIE O LITERATURZE

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Wagō Ryōichi's net-poetry: tradition and innovation

Keywords: Wagō Ryōichi, net-poetry, Hara Tamiki, Tōge Sankichi, Fukushima

Abstract: Wagō Ryōichi is a Japanese poet who met with success after publishing his poetical works on Twitter: a real time testimony of the aftershocks in the devastated Tōhoku area that spread worldwide after 11th March 2011. The term *net-poetry* embraces the double nature of (social) 'network' and 'poetry', combining poetical verses with images and photographs. Nevertheless, despite the outstanding innovation of this literary production, Wagō's poems frequently pay homage to the Japanese literary tradition, especially the *genbaku bungaku* genre 'A-bomb literature'. The aim of this article is to underline the role of Wagō's net-poetry as a literary hub between tradition (especially referring to Hara Tamiki and Tōge Sankichi's literary production) and innovation under the keywords of *catastrophe* and *nuclear power*, digging up a possible connection between Japanese 1945 *genbaku* experience and the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant nuclear fallout.

Introduction: the 3/11

The three-fold catastrophe of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown that occurred in Japan on 11th March 2011 is commonly shortened *san ten jūichi* '3/11'. Scientifically known as *Tōhoku chihō taiheiyō oki jishin*¹, the quake that shocked the country at 2:46 PM (local time), is ranked as the 7th strongest earthquake in world's history. This magnitude 9.0 earthquake was followed by an over 40 metre-high tsunami that caused damage in the Iwate, Miyagi and Miyako Prefectures with a death toll of over 15 thousands victims and more than 2000 people missing².

The Tōhoku coasts affected by the tsunami were also subject to the nuclear alarm raised by the authority for the *Fukushima daiichi genshiryoku hatsudenjo*³, a complex of 18 nuclear power plants numbered among the biggest 15 nuclear power stations in the world before being decommissioned. Located just 150 km far

¹ literally: 'Earthquake off the Pacific Tōhoku coasts'. The earthquake is often referred to as *Higashi Nihon Daishinsai* or simply *Daishinsai*.

² According to the Japanese police agency, 10 March 2015.

³ literally: 'Fukushima first nuclear power plant', simply called Fukushima Daiichi. See TEPCO 2012.

from the epicenter of the earthquake, in the Futaba District (Fukushima Prefecture), the Fukushima Daiichi suffered major damage by the tsunami: the possibility of a nuclear waste pollution in the area and the risk of a nuclear meltdown of the first reactor convinced Japanese governmental authorities to approve the emergency evacuation plan with immediate effect from 15th March; this preventive measure concerned the area within a 20-kilometre radius, then extended to 30-kilometre at the beginning of April 2011 (Sotooka 2012, 39).

The mass media had a fundamental role to keep people updated with any information from the stricken areas, devoting special live issues via radio and television almost 24/7. Anyway, there were the new social networks (Facebook and Twitter in primis) the ones that guaranteed a constant flow of information about the real condition of the areas, the emergency number to refer to, the different ways to volunteer in the Tōhoku district and above all, the warning messages about the aftershocks that followed the earthquake in those days.

Among the huge amount of updates, Wagō Ryōichi's poetical tweets caught users's attention for their capacity to depict 3/11 disaster in real time. The aim of this brief research is to investigate the social commitment of Wagō Ryōichi's poetry by underlining its relevance as a possible literary bridge between the traditional poetical production characterised by lyricism and the innovational choice of social media as a vehicle for this poetical work. Moreover, the tradition/innovation dichotomy is brought to the fore thanks to Wagō's homage to Japanese A-bomb literary classics and his remakes in a new 3/11 light.

Wagō's net-poetry

In the social network era even literature fights its way to get visibility on the Web: pioneer of this new way of creating literature is the poet Wagō Ryōichi (和合亮-, Fukushima, 1968-) who directly witnessed the Japanese 3/11. Wagō's tweets were followed by millions of Japanese users: despite the restriction of writing in no more than 140 characters, the poet was able to convey in words both hopeful and discouraging messages, always reflecting users' mood swings in the form of brief poetical productions (De Pieri 2014, 30-37).

On the 16th March 2011 the poet started publishing poems on his Twitter's profile and got an immediate feedback from the Web users. Nowadays, the author has welcomed the popularity of his poetry and continues his poetical activity by publishing poems on his official Twitter (wago2828) and Facebook (ryouichi.wago) accounts, directly interacting with his readers daily. Moreover, as a promoter of social projects for the recovering of Fukushima area, he is politically involved in turning public attention to the situation of the evacuees and the main humanitarian aid needed in the Fukushima Prefecture.

Shi no tsubute 「詩の礫」⁴ is the title of the first poetical collection published in June 2011 which includes poems composed by Wagō soon after the earthquake. When asked about the title chosen for the collection, in a cross-talk with the non-fictional writer Sano Shin'ichi, the poet declared: "Completely absorbed by Twitter I typed and send out poetry. *Shi no tsubute* is the title I imagined from the pebbles of words that dropped like hurled on me at that moment" (Sano and Wagō 2012, 40). Thrown, flung, hurled words that dropped on the poet, who welcomed them by reorganising his thoughts in the form of brief poems. As often strengthened by the author, in order to create a lyrical but meaningful poetical message within the limit of characters imposed by Twitter, an accurate choice of the vocabulary is necessary: "Since you can't write more than 140 characters on Twitter, within that limitation I thought for the first time about what to write" (Sano and Wagō 2012, 37). Nevertheless, the author has never forced or re-elaborated his feelings: "I almost didn't think about anything. It was like my fingers moved naturally... as it was a normal behaviour typing poetry [like that] and my fingers moved on their own" (Sano and Wagō 2012, 36). The poet was unconsciously able to give free rein to his thoughts notwithstanding the compulsory choice among synonyms, nuances, grammatical structures to suit a composition that does not exceed 140 characters. The result of this literary effort is the poetical collection *Shi no tsubute* that embraces various tweets published by the poet in a longest and more elaborated literary corpus.

Hence the term *net-poetry* which embraces the double nature of (social) network and poetry, combining poetical verses with images and photographs. This neologism is actually considered to be the description of an artistic phenomenon which came to the fore in the late 1990s: as the natural development of a project called "net.art" (Bosma 2011, 50), it soon became the name of a couple of websites devoted to non-professional poetical works. This "literary social networking" (Hicks 2010) represents the attempt to rediscover ancient classics or propose new experimentation of lyricism following the only one rule of not exceeding 140-character maximum imposed by the medium. Hereof the birth of *twitterature* too: coined in 2009 by Alexander Aciman and Emmett Rensin the term is a portmanteau word of 'Twitter' and 'literature' and consists in sharing literary works from aphorisms and *haiku* to other forms of serialized fictional productions on Twitter.

So, what is the difference between *twitterature* and Wagō's net-poetry? Unlike other literary productions on the socials, the net-poetry can be thought of as a psychoanalytic means to overcome the collective trauma of experiencing the 3/11 catastrophe, aided by two qualities attributed to the social media itself: the possibility to communicate in real time and the quality of being a worldwide system of communication⁵.

⁴ literally: "Pebbles of poetry". See Wagō, Ryōichi 2011

⁵ More considerations about the relation between Wagō's net-poetry and catastrophe, as well as the particular development of a "shared literature" can be found in De Pieri 2016.

Moreover, the link between literature and politics is in the spotlight. The authorial choice to take part in events on the theme of 3/11 and to perform his poetry with the support of incidental music has to be revised considering the emphasis the author stresses on particular verses of his poems. Physical gesture, facial expressions, unusual tones of voice can be interpreted as vehicles to promote a social change with political connotation as long as this performing literature not only encourages Japanese *ganbarism*⁶ but intends to be provocative and suggests a revival of Japanese national spirit as well.

Love toward the homeland that gave him birth and raised him up is the main topic of these performances. By the slogan *Fukushima ni ikiru, Fukushima wo ikiru* 「福島に生きる、福島を生きる」 ('Live in Fukushima, live Fukushima'), the poet exhorts the audience to bring back (*torimodosu*) not only Fukushima city to its splendour before the tragedy, but also the whole nation, in other words, to claim back the decisional power that allowed Japanese government to support the choice of nuclear energy. This attempt to make the Japanese population aware and conscious about its responsibility towards the evacuees of Fukushima district is underlined by Wagō by changing his intonation and gesture to intrigue the audience and persuade the spectators that a popular political involvement is all the more necessary. No wonder that a lot of antinuclear demonstrations took place in the following years. In these terms, we may talk about a revival of Japanese nationalism.

A bridge to the past: Wagō Ryōichi and Hara Tamiki

As a teacher, Wagō is familiar with Japanese literary tradition and despite his innovational net-poetry the poet also pays frequent homages to other Japanese authors, especially the *genbaku bungaku* ones. This brief research proposes a comparison between the literary production of the two of them: Hara Tamiki and Tōge Sankichi.

Hara Tamiki (原民喜, Hiroshima, November 15, 1905 - Tōkyō, March 13, 1951) is the celebrated author of *Natsu no hana* 『夏の花』 ("Summer Flower", 1947), an autobiographical novel belonging to the *genbaku bungaku* genre⁷.

Considered by many critics as one of the founders of the Japanese atomic-bomb poetry, Hara Tamiki did not only assume the role of *hibakusha* ('atomic bomb victim') who lost in a flash any concrete connection with his original motherland, but eventually, he also played the part of one of the discouraged and betrayed Japanese

⁶ Japanese attitude to endure hardship. See Gebhardt and Yūki 2014.

⁷ More info about the author can be found in De Pieri 2014. In the same Master dissertation a comparison between Hara's *Kore ga ningen na no desu* and Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* is also suggested.

citizens, who were afraid about the possible usage of the atomic bombing on Korea in the 1950s.

The series of poems called *Genbaku Shōkei* 「原爆小景」 ("Little atomic scenery", 1950) offer different causes for reflection about the use of words in poetry as a means to describe the *hibakusha* experience. Among the nine poems collected in a metonymical order, the opening one entitled *Kore ga ningen nano desu* 「コレガ人間ナノデス」 ("This is a human being") stands out for its provoking style and topic:

コレガ人間ナノデス
原子爆弾ニ依ル変化ヲゴラン下サイ

肉体ガ恐ロシク膨脹シ
男モ女モステーツノ型ニカヘル

オオ ソノ真黒焦ゲノ滅茶苦茶ノ
爛レタ顔ノムクンダ唇カラ洩レテ来ル声ハ

「助ケテ下サイ」
ト カ細イ 静カナ言葉
コレガ コレガ人間ナノデス
人間ノ顔ナノデス

This is a human being.
Please, take a look at the transfiguration
due to the A-bomb.
The body is tremendously swollen
it changes man and woman in the same
form.
Oh, from the tumid lips
burned face, illogically charred, a voice
comes out:
"Help me please"
feeble, silent words.
This, this is a human being.
The face of a human being (Hara 1950).

The poem belongs to the essay called *Sensō ni tsuite* 「戦争について」 ("About war"), firstly published in the *Kindai Bungaku* 「近代文学」 magazine in the 1948, September issue. At a first glance, what pops up in mind is the usage of the phonetic katakana syllabary combined with kanji: unlike some authors, who showed a preference for the use of hiragana in poetry, Hara Tamiki adopted the katakana one, which contributes to a cumbersome and slow reading of the poetical message. Treat affirms: "Hara's resort to katakana makes the poem's lines reverberate with an urgency and intensity beyond what its contents alone can achieve" (Treat 1996, 149).

The lack of orthography, the choice of uncommon and unfamiliar terms and the tendency of leaving the sentences uncompleted, contribute to an unnatural expressivity; the innocence of the opening and ending verses that converges the reader's attention to the subject of the poem, as to say, the human being, are suddenly sacked by the cruel description of vv. 3-8: a human being transfigured by the atomic bomb, without sexual connotation, burned and dying. This poetical technics of estrangement of the reader, the overwhelming distance from the reality described by interspersing it with subtle irony, product what Treat defined as "dislocation of expectation" (Treat 1996): despite of the title of the poetry, Hara's description does not depict the natural appearance of man and woman; instead of being encouraged

and relieved, the reader feels dismay and rejection in front of an *hibakusha* corpse. This feeling is eventually underlined by the oxymoron “silent words” (v. 8): the *hibakusha* claim for help is not understandable by a non-*hibakusha*. But how could it be otherwise? “Lyricism, then, is the ‘crisis’ of atomic-bomb literature” affirms Treat again (Treat 1996, 166); any rhetoric or lexical embellishment represents an intentional modification of the reality witnessed that August 1945, and moreover, an injustice to whom experienced it on their own skins. Hence, the choice of using terms belonging to a technical-scientific lexical background, not very familiar for the reader and extremely more suitable for an objective description of what *hibakusha* struggled.

The poetry of the atomic bombing underlined a change in style from *waku* and *haiku* verses to the free ones, affirming the popularity of the *gendaishi*⁸. This choice can be attributed to a major freedom in expressivity that allows the poet to play with different stylistic technics like similitudes, metaphors and metonymies to obtain the desired effect of estrangement in the reader. Alliterations, as in *Kore ga ningen nano desu* case, are not unusual and are frequently recognisable in the reiteration of names and wails, underlining both physical and moral suffering of *hibakusha*.

As concerns Wagō’s poetical production, the poem that follows is part of an essay, which bears the title of the first collection published by the author, *Shi no tsubute*, now also available on the author’s official website:

0時。ヒサイ6ニチメ。サッキノウソ。コンドハ6ニチメ。イツカカン。ワ
タシハ、ケツチャクヲツケタイ。

‘Midnight. 6th day from the disaster. A lie. Next day will be the 6th. How much time is going by? I want to stop it’ (Wagō 2011)

As a common denominator of both productions, the choice of combining katakana and kanji contributes to an unusual and tiresome reading of the poem: the authors create a deep feeling of estrangement across the spectators by the simple escamotage of transforming katakana from a syllabary used to domesticate foreign words to a common one used to describe everyday ordinary life. The catastrophe depicted by the poets then, becomes something one must deal with daily: the fear of radiation sickness provoked by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on one hand and by the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident on the other, came to the fore as an enemy with whom to live side by side.

In addition, the katakana experimentation in this case, represents a metaphor of the difficulty to understand and accept the catastrophe: no matter how one can try to sympathise with *hibakusha*, there are no words able to express their experience. In an interview the author released to me in 2013, he explained: “About the fact

⁸ modern poetry style

that katakana comes out [in my works], yes, I suppose I use it every time a particular thought comes to light. And I use it also when I would like to add a certain rhythm and tempo to the verse. Something particular, totally different from kanji and hiragana, comes into existence, then” (De Pieri 2014, 32).

Wagō Ryōichi and Tōge Sankichi

Numerous other authors are placed side by side Hara Tamiki in the perpetuation of Hiroshima A-bombing memories; among others, the poet Tōge Sankichi (峠三吉, Hiroshima, February 1917 - Hiroshima, March 1953) stands out. Born by the name Mitsuyoshi, the poet prematurely died at age 36, during a surgical operation in Hiroshima. His *hibakusha* experience inspired his poetical production and the poet, celebrated as a popular hero, is thought to be the *genbaku shijin*⁹ *par excellence*. It is not merely a coincidence that his poem entitled *Ningen wo kaese* 「にんげんをかえせ」 (“Give back human beings”) is engraved in a memorial stone in front of the Peace Memorial Museum of Hiroshima, because it is considered Japan’s most famous atomic-bomb poem. It offers many thought-provoking points, starting from the usage of words, in particular the choice of using only the phonetic hiragana syllabary:

にんげんをかえせ	Give back human beings
ちちをかえせ ははをかえせ	Give back my father, give back my mother
としよりをかえせ	Give old people back
こどもをかえせ	Give children back
わたしをかえせ わたしにつながる	Give back myself the human beings I am connected to, Give them back
にんげんをかえせ	As long as this life lasts,
にんげんの にんげんのよのあるかぎり	this life, Give back peace
くずれぬへいわを	That will never end (Tōge 1952)
へいわをかえせ	

The decision of eliding any Sino-Japanese characters contributes to the diffusion of a universal message thanks to the children-readable hiragana script. Actually, despite of the *mimesis* of the classical structure of 5-7-5-7-7 verses, the innovative usage of hiragana is considered by many as a regression to the simple language of childhood. As the critic Nosaka Akiyo said: “It seems to be the parody of a traditional Japanese poem. On one hand, the fact that the entire body [of the text] was written in hiragana, makes you perceive [the poem] as it is the innocent entreaty of a child” (Nosaka 2005, 38). The use of hiragana underlines the poet’s attempt to eliminate any obstacles between the reading and the message soaked in the poem.

⁹ ‘poet of the atomic bombing’. More information can be found in De Pieri, 2014.

It is easy to spot a considerable difference in style between Tōge and other contemporary poets; as observed before, Hara prefers the phonetic katakana syllabary in order to create an estrangement feeling and in this way he reproduces, even metaphorically, the distance between an inconceivable truth, the one of Hiroshima A-bombing, and the struggle to describe it. Tōge adopts an opposite solution: the attempt is to get the reader closer to *hibakusha* situation thorough a simple, hence easily understandable language; the lack of kanji represents a further facilitation to the reading even for a non-literate public.

Keyword and echo of the poem is the alliteration “give me back”: my father, my mother, old people, child, me myself and human beings; the poet gives voice not only to himself, but also to all the *hibakusha* that on the 6th of August lost any forces to reclaim justice for their own.

Moreover the “give me back” represents a real imperative, rather than a simple request: the feisty Tōge unveils himself expressing his disdain for the 1945 *genbaku* experience. In that “give me back” one can descry a rhetoric, or even a pathetic remark, referred to a past that can never come back. The accusatory tone is perceived in the first verses of the poem but changes almost suddenly in the final verses: from a personal sphere in which the loss of the beloved ones affects Tōge personally to the social sphere that involves not only the victims of the A-bomb but also the Japanese community that lost peace in that attack. It is exactly this universal appeal for peace that engages the efforts of the readers to have a share in Hiroshima experience; there is no more difference between *hibakusha* and non-*hibakusha*: all Japanese people were protagonists of the tragedy - same fate for the poem published on the 25th May 2011 (h 22:19) by Wagō Ryōichi on his Twitter’s profile:

魂を返せ、夢を返せ、福島を返せ、命を返せ、故郷を返せ、
草いきれを返せ、村を返せ、詩を返せ、胡桃の木を返せ

‘Give back my soul, give back my dreams, give back Fukushima, give
back my life, give back my hometown, give back the grass, give back my
village, give back my poetry, give back the walnut tree’.

This free-verse poem was originally conceived as a tweet in itself and then published on Wagō’s official website as a part of a longer poetical work entitled *Suiheisen’yo Chiheisen’yo* 『水平線よ、地平線よ』 (“Horizon Over the Sea, Horizon Over the Land”) published in 2012.

Although the poem’s length goes perfectly by social network rules of writing in no more than 140 characters, the intensity of the themes the poem addresses is remarkable: soul, dreams and life are all synonyms for ‘future’. On the 3/11 soul was grief-stricken, dreams were blown to pieces and several people lost their lives in the same way they lost their hope for the future, choked with fear of radiation,

anxiety for the reconstruction, helplessness in front of an unknown tomorrow. Even the “Fukushima” quotation can be perceived as a metaphor for a double-faced coin: one nostalgic, the other destructive. As to say, in the poem, the name of Fukushima represents not only the devastated prefecture, but also a global space inclusive of people, animals, material assets taken away by the tsunami, first, and by governmental measure of evacuation, later; it can be considered as the personification of 3/11 in its destructive power, as long as it is impossible to pronounce the name of “Fukushima” nowadays without immediately thinking of 3/11 catastrophe. At the same time the imperative “give back Fukushima” results in strolling down readers’ memories of an untouched Fukushima before the earthquake; the same nostalgic feeling is arosed again in the words “give back my hometown” where the author refers to Fukushima, as well as Japan, in a broadest sense for the collective participation of all Japanese people to the tragedy of Tōhoku areas. As seen before in the case of Tōge’s *Ningen wo kaese*, it is not wrong to say that these two verses speak for the passage from the poet’s intimate sphere, as remarked by the following verses about poetry and walnut tree, both dear to the poet, to a sphere of social influence, where Japanese people are involved as a group. The incisive imperative “give”, repeated several times in both poems, hides a feeling of anger: resentment and indignation symbolise the common denominator nourished by nuclear power-linked tragedies experienced by the two authors. Wagō confirmed in a personal interview he released to the author in 2013 that this analogy is not a mere chance: “This is a poem I wrote being inspired by Tōge Sankichi” (De Pieri 2014, 37)

Conclusion

Even if, for some extent, poetry is useless because “it cannot help anybody, it can fill the stomach of nobody” (Sano and Wagō 2012, 33), Wagō continues undaunted to type and publish poetry on his official accounts: the attempt to give a testimony of those days is a responsibility taken by all the authors who witnessed a catastrophe. If language is inadequate, because it lacks words to depict that trauma, new words, as well as a new literary means, are more than necessary. Here, the struggle to give a voice to the *higaisha* (‘victim of a disaster’) is echoed by Tōge’s appeal to create a new poetry capable of representing the trauma with new words. Wagō’s net-poetry could be considered the answer to this need, even if the desire to communicate the experience bumps into the disarming inability to do it: the usage of katakana represents the successful attempt to highlight a gap between the events and the words required, but often unsuitable to describe them. It is not astonishing that among the most frequent words used by Wagō in his poetry, a scientific jargon eventually appears: *shinsai* 震災 (‘natural disaster’) and

hōshanō 放射能 ('radioactivity') are just a few of the words that soften the lyrical response intrinsically attributed to the poetical verses, contributing to the estrangement effect sought by the author; many repetitions of terms and verbs increase the speed of the reading, recreating the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty experienced by the evacuees of Fukushima Daichi area in March 2011.

This never-ending struggle of authors turns into different literary responses to the trauma suffered, which actually give a panoramic overview of the factual events. Moreover, in promoting literary works on the topic, authors like Wagō contribute to the perpetuation of victim's memory: their sacrifice is not wasted and future generations can share the truth about the past history.

I think that social networks suggested us what would be a revolutionary way of communication. I think that poetry should be sensitive to what would be communication, above all. So, I really feel like also poetical means should change. I think every day about the meeting point between social networks and poetry (De Pieri 2014, 189).

A political, or at least social commitment is required even in regards to the *daishinsai*, in order to abolish the nuclear power usage and find a solution for the radioactive contamination of Fukushima area near the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant. While Hara underlined the impossibility to understand *hibakusha* experience, and Tōge underlined the universality of the tragedy, both authors demanded for a political concern; Wagō too, is engaged in social activities: with his poetical production he gives a new value to the global networking, provoking not only Japanese public's eye but also, by exploring the global attribute of the social networks, the public concern about nuclear power issue.

The moral commitment shown by the poet is the same observed in *genbaku bungaku* authors likewise the one noticed in the survivors of Nazis concentration camps or USSR' gulag: the authors perceive the urgency of giving their testimony to the catastrophe they witnessed and explore different literary means to communicate and depict that trauma into words.

As long as there will be at least one person who read or tell [about disaster] I think that work of literature is necessary. Moreover, I think it should become a sort of bridge of words to connect them with next future, expressed in a new way. The fear of earthquake and tsunami, the fear of society's lies, and then, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, the current nuclear fallout...I think that if you don't tell them properly, they will happen again. Then, above all, several people lost their lives due to this disaster: after accepting it, I think you must tell everybody (De Pieri 2014, 189).

As seen before, Wagō's net-poetry's potential should not be underestimated as long as the publication of poetry in real time, on a global platform, can be felt by

users as a means to overcome their trauma: by sharing the same feelings of the author, by empathising the same fear, anxiety and mourning, users are looking for, and actually find, positive and hopeful message in Wagō's poetical tweets. Among the topics for thought in Wagō's poems, according to the frequent considerations about the role of literature, poetry, and the poet himself, there is also a Japanese motto often repeated: *akenai yoru wa nai* 「明けない夜はない」 ('There's no night that does not open to the day'): words embraced by all earthquake victims who, in Wagō's poetry, found brightness after the darkness of the 11th March 2011.

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ROZDZIAŁ 3

WSPÓŁCZEŚNIE O JĘZYKU