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The Feature in Radio – the Elusiveness of the Genre’s Determinants. Notes on the Prix Europa Festival in the Years 2012 and 2013 in the Context of Literary Genetics

„[...] moje bardzo osobiste odkrycie uchyliło mi nowe, nieznane dotąd wrota
do niezwyklej krainy,
w której można malować dźwiękiem, budować całkiem widzialny świat,
wykorzystując scenografię dźwiękową”.
Maciej Drygas¹

“[...] my very personal discovery opened a new, until now unknown door to an
extraordinary land,
where one can paint with sound, build an entirely visible world
using sound scenography”.
Maciej Drygas

This article attempts to answer the following question: how do radio artists in the West understand a *feature*? Doubts about terminological consistency arose following our participation in the Prix Europa Festival in 2012 and 2013². We shall therefore refer to the observations we made during the festival, which concern the analysis of festival materials and scripts of radio programmes, as well as official discussions or conversations overheard behind the scenes. We begin by outlining the term *feature*, then we discuss the main radio categories of the

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¹ M. Drygas, „Wyzwolić wyobraźnię”, in: „Biblia dziennikarstwa”, ed. A. Skworz, A. Niziołek, Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, Cracow 2010, p. 310.

² The full name of the annual festival held in Berlin – Prix Europa. The European Broadcasting Festival.

festival, finally proceeding to present a few selected audio samples from these categories, which either display the features of the genre or diverge from them yet still function under the term feature.

Feature – explication of the term

Feature – a radio genre of artistic expression in the style of a documentary – was born in radio broadcasts in the West. One of the popular definitions of the genre states that:

The radio feature is a genre that is hard to describe in a few words. It is a documentary, but rather than taking on a journalistic approach, it describes reality though an artistic temperament with a strong emphasis on dramaturgy and style, and then much more than that. The microphone can get much closer than the camera, extending into the private space of the feature's subjects, so close that we feel that we sit with them and when the magic happens, even enter their inner world of thought and experience. The radio feature is in many ways close to film and literature and also uses elements and techniques from music, poetry, journalism, anthropology and visual arts as a means of creating context, shining light into hidden places and above all, quite simply, telling stories³.

This metaphorical explication of the term makes it possible to grasp the most important aspect of the genre, i.e. the seizure of the imagination and emotions of the audience by means of an authentic story conveyed in a beautiful, refined form with great care for every acoustic detail and attention paid to an appropriate build up of tension, just as in a film, but in this case we are dealing with an acoustic film – a film without the image.

The feature as an artistic genre in radio is difficult to define⁴ unambiguously, which is proven in the latter part of this article. It is an audial form with extraordinarily fluid boundaries, which escapes scientific classification. Its formal, stylistic and material diversity is certainly among the reasons why that is

³ www.rana.this.is [access: 2.03.2010].

⁴ See the following works discussing the radio feature: H. Odziemkowska, „Feature – gatunek radiowy”, *Przekazy i Opinie* 1982, No. 2/3; A. Budzyński, „Feature – gatunek otwarty”, *Antena* 1983, No. 23; W. Olkusz, „Dyskretny urok sztuki radiowej. W świecie słuchowisk Kazimierza Kowalewskiego”, Uniwersytet Opolski Instytut Filologii Polskiej, Opole 1995; J. Mayen, „Radio a literatura”, *Wiedza Powszechna*, Warsaw 1965; J. Tuszewski, „Co się dzieje w europejskim słuchowisku”, *Odra* 1977, No. 5; M. Kaziów, „O dziele radiowym. Z zagadnień estetyki oryginalnego słuchowiska”, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1973

the case. Natalie Kestecher confirms this observation by producing her radio features, among others *Lighten Up*, *Carlos* or *Tailor Made* and in a way revealing her technique and ways of working⁵. The feature is a response to a very popular radio trend which consists in blurring the boundaries between **the fictional and the documentary**. Describing an Italian production *Amnésia*, an example of adapting mockumentary for radio⁶, Tiziano Bonini argues that it contains both the qualities of a radio drama as well as those of a reportage, however, it is always *non-fiction*. This peculiar combination of documentary and fictional elements creates great opportunities for authors in terms of artistic expression and using phonic means of expression. Joanna Bachura-Wojtasik demonstrates that by analysing particular examples of programmes broadcast on Polish and Irish radio and indicating the new term “**faction**”, suggested by radio artists associated with the genre⁷. “Faction” denotes a new quality, which combines the dramaturgy of reality – FACT with the dramaturgy of literary fiction – FICTION⁸. It was the contamination of those two words that generated the term, which provides new opportunities in this artistic radio genre.

Using this term with reference to works of radio art is extremely rare in Polish scholarly publications. In Poland, works typical for the feature are synonymous with “artistic reportage” or “documentary radio drama”. Wiesław Olkusz also provides other terms for this radio form: *documentary drama*, *documentary radio drama*, *radiophonic suite*, *the new radio drama*, *radio story* or *documentary theatre*. However, the terms *artistic reportage* and *literary radio reportage*⁹ are the most common. Irena Piłatowska, a reporter and the head of the Reportage and Documentary Studio at Polish National Radio, explains: “The feature has the same meaning as artistic reportage or formerly – as people in Poland used to say – literary reportage. It is a reportage with a very complex artistic form, that is, one which uses artistic means of expression and [is created] with attention to acoustic quality”¹⁰. Kinga Klimczak also stresses the artistry of this form of creativity in radio¹¹.

⁵ See: N. Kestecher, “Unreality Radio”, in: “Reality Radio. Telling True Stories in Sound”, ed. J. Biewen, A. Dilworth, University of North Carolina Press 2010, pp. 108–115.

⁶ See: T. Bonini, “Blurring Fiction with Reality: the Strange Case of “Amnésia”, an Italian ‘mockumentary’”, in: “Radio Content in the Digital Age”, ed. A. Gazi, G. Starkey, S. Jędrzejewski, Bristol, UK / Chicago, USA 2011, pp. 83–103.

⁷ See: J. Bachura, “Feature – the marriage of fact and fiction”, in: “Radio: Community, Challenges, Aesthetics”, ed. G. Stachyra, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2013, pp. 277–286.

⁸ See: *ibid.*, p. 285.

⁹ See: W. Olkusz, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

¹⁰ K. Klimczak, „Reportaże radiowe o krzywdzie i cierpieniu”, Wydawnictwo Primum Verbum, Łódź 2011, p. 68.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 68. The researcher juxtaposes and compares the feature in its press and radio form, indicating that both forms are entirely different and distinct. In its press form, the feature functions only as a documentary sketch presenting a certain sample of reality, not trying to explore the core

Before we proceed to discuss and indicate characteristic features of the genre on the basis of a few selected European radio productions presented at Prix Europa in 2012 and 2013, we shall point out the distinctiveness and specificity of Polish and western schools of radio documentary. **Reportage in Poland originated from a social need** as a documentary registering the problems of people and the harsh socio-political reality of the country. Hence, apart from the traditional reportage, in Poland there is also a genre of substantial artistic creativity – the feature. In the West, on the other hand, the term *reportage* has the same meaning as *current affairs* and undoubtedly has nothing in common with its Polish understanding. **The feature emerged there as a kind of artistic programme for the chosen listeners who were prepared for its reception**, and is known there only under that name. We may therefore risk equating the feature with a documentary as far as the West is concerned. These kinds of radio productions were always created in teams of several people, which consisted of, among others, a reporter, producer, sound technician, and editor. **Thus, the premises in Poland and in the West were entirely different since the beginnings of the genre**, and that difference is visible to date [See Table 1]. In today's Poland, apart from social reportages, that is, the ones which are most frequently on the air, new artistic forms appear – the features, which enjoy a growing popularity among authors. In a book devoted to Polish reportage, K. Klimczak emphasizes that the feature is a child of the West; however, the Polish School of Reportage, although it emerged from the social dilemmas and harsh reality in which the reporter was supposed to really help people rather than create artistic audial works with aesthetic qualities, is more and more frequently opening to the more artistic form, one which employs the full palette of sounds, their planes, the wealth of acoustics; it is opening up to the feature¹². Western reporters perceive the feature in the same way as we understand the artistic reportage, an in-depth, extensive documentary which tells a very particular story by means of sound images, painting them with sound on the canvas of our imagination. Peter Leonard Braun, the author of international reporting workshops International Feature Conference (IFC), stresses that the feature “employs all resources available to radio, it allows for creativity”¹³, strongly emphasizing the idea and the form of the reportage.

of the problem; it merely “skims” over the events. In the case of radio, it is just the opposite – it is a formally difficult genre, artistic, precious and elitist.

¹² See: *ibid.*, p. 69.

¹³ From the e-mail sent by J. Jankowska to E. Pleszkun-Olejniczakowa (23.08.2003).

Table 1. The differences in understanding the terms feature and radio reportage

	POLAND	THE WEST
feature	in-depth artistic reportage, in-depth documentary	documentary
reportaż	documentary	current affairs

Source: own work.

Radio categories as part of the Prix Europa Festival

Radio programmes submitted to the Prix Europa 2012 and 2013 competition contended in three categories: **Radio Documentary**, **Radio Fiction** and **Radio Music**.

In 2012, the main prize in the music category was contended by 18 programmes from 14 countries, whereas in 2013, 21 programmes from 15 countries entered the competition. One winner was selected in the Music Programmes category, named as the Best European Radio Music Programme of the Year 2012 and 2013 respectively¹⁴.

Two prizes were awarded in the remaining radio categories.

The programmes submitted to the Radio Fiction Category (31 programmes from 21 countries in 2012; 33 programmes from 21 countries in 2013) contended for the title of the Best European Radio Drama of the Year 2012/2013¹⁵ and the Best European Drama Series or Serial of the Year 2012/2013¹⁶. In the case of a series or a serial, one chosen episode was presented (or episodes – if a single episode is relatively short).

¹⁴ In 2012, the title was awarded to the production entitled *Warsaw Variations*, Great Britain, Falling Tree Production (production company), Alan Hall (author, director, producer), Peregrine Andrews (sound). In 2013, the main prize was won by the programme *The Art of Noises*, Germany, Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg – RBB / ARD (entering organisation), Thomas Fitzel (author), Holger Kuhla (director), Martin Seelig (sound), Juergen Balitzki (producer).

¹⁵ In 2012, the main prize was won by *Wie ich Fats Domino aus dem Hurrikan Katrina Rettete* (Eng. *How I rescued Fats Domino from Hurricane Katrina*), Switzerland, Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen SRF / SRG SSR, David Zane Mairowitz (author/director), Ueli Karlen (sound), Fritz Zaugg (producer); whereas in 2013 by the Polish production *Andy*, Polskie Radio S.A., Andrzej Czczot (author/director), Andrzej Brzoska (sound), Teatr Polskiego Radia (producer).

¹⁶ In 2012, the main prize was won by the production entitled *I-minnutje* (Eng. *I-minute small*), Netherlands, Radiomakers Desmet, Katinka Baehr, Stef Visjager, Bente Hamel, Maartje Duin, Nyk de Vries, Laura Stek, Tjitske Mussche, Lotte van Dijck, Carolien Euser, Eric de Jong, Chris Bajema Arno Peters, Alfred Koster (Key Staff), Radiomakers Desmet (production company); whereas a year later by *Francisco*, Ireland, North West Broadcasting t/a Ocean FM (entering organisation), Donal O’Kelly (author, director), Ray Duffy (sound), Donal O’Kelly (producer).

Similarly, two¹⁷ Prix Europa prizes were awarded in the category of Radio Documentary. The Best European Radio Documentary of the Year 2012/2013¹⁸ and the Best European Radio Investigation of the Year 2012/2013¹⁹ were selected from among all programmes submitted in this category (31 programmes from 18 countries in 2012; 33 programmes from 22 countries in 2013). The way in which the organizers themselves comment on the significance of this category is noteworthy. The description of the documentary category reads that: “This category is looking for **feature production** and journalistic research programmes focusing on in-depth information and investigative journalism”.

While the premises of the Investigation Category seem clear, the alternating use of words *documentary* and *feature* or *feature production* arouses interest and the need to clarify the application of these terms. The term *feature* was definitely the most common during the auditions in the Radio Documentary category. Discussions conducted after each day of the auditions as well as conversations with the authors of the documentaries reveal that the terms *radio document* and *feature* are used interchangeably. Interestingly, the term *feature* appears in relation to auditions submitted in the Best European Radio Documentary category, but almost never in relation to those submitted as part of the Best European Radio Investigation. The latter are most commonly named – in short – as *investigations*. The programmes contending for the title of the best radio documentary are diverse in terms of theme and production. They bring numerous distinct formal solutions. There are also programmes which include narration and authorial commentary, archival sound recordings in which actors are used. Some bear the hallmarks of history programmes, others of a radio reportage built on the basis of formal minimalism. Then, there are those which formally correspond to what in Poland we might characterize as the feature. However, during the Prix Europa festival all these programmes were interchangeably named as either *radio document* or *feature*. Let us then look at a few selected radio documentaries described as features.

¹⁷ It is worth adding that in the case of the documentary and drama categories, the documentaries are divided into subcategories at the stage of national preselection.

¹⁸ In 2012, the main prize was awarded to *Holiday for Life – Über die Pflege Europäischer Demenzkranker in Thailand*, a year later to *Documentary On One – Message in a Bottle*. More details regarding both programmes are to be found at the end of this text.

¹⁹ In 2012, the main prize in this category was awarded to *Project Simoom*, Sweden, Sveriges Radio – SR, Daniel Öhman, Bo Göran Bodin; whereas a year later to *The Girl who Got Tied Down – ‘Captain Skirt’ is Nothing*, Sweden, Sveriges Radio – SR / P1 Dokumentär (entering organisation), Daniel Velasco (author, director, sound), Ylva Lindgren (sound, producer).

Selected examples

We have made an attempt to organize them terminologically; however, it is only an attempt and, as demonstrated by radio productions at international festivals, it is difficult to talk about an unambiguous understanding of the feature. Each year, radio artists cause surprise by submitting programmes escaping any systematization and characterized by diverse structure as well as interesting but non-standard formal solutions. We decided to provide detailed accounts²⁰ of a few such examples. The selection was decided by their subject matter and form.

The winner of Prix Europa 2012 in the Radio Documentary category, *Life’s holiday – über die Pflege Europäischer Demenzkranker in Thailand* (Eng. *Life’s holiday – European dementia patients in care in Thailand*) constitutes an example of audio drama constructed according to all the principles of dramaturgy. The perfect dynamism of the story was achieved by combining scenes – images from the lives of patients suffering from senile dementia and conversations they had with their carers. *Life’s holiday...* fully exemplifies one of the essential features of radio reportage – the audial story of the “vacation” the patients have in Thailand is an encounter with a man, his fragility, sensitivity, and clumsiness. The narration of the story is not rushed, there is ample time to meet the patients, learn about their interests and problems. Like a camera, the microphone observes the everyday situations taking place at the care centre for patients with Alzheimer’s. Baan Kamlangchay house located on the outskirts of Chiang Mai, a town in northern Thailand, is a place where patients suffering from senile dementia from Germany and Switzerland spend the last years of their lives as if on vacation. Each of them has their own carer, who is more of a part of their family than a representative of the health service. The patients may enjoy every moment of their lives under constant and excellent care. The audial scenes show Bernard, Elizabeth or Philippa during meals, strolls or doing crosswords. The documentary includes a few scenes portraying the beauty and closeness of the relationships between patients and their carers. One of them is particularly touching, an expression of respect for another human being, a metaphor of understanding human weaknesses. This story is told by Christina, the wife of Bernard, a resident at Baan Kamlangchay: during one of the first months of his stay in Thailand, Bernard wanted to leave the home, which is one of the symptoms of the disease. He packed his things into a suitcase, stayed by the door and looked at his carer. What did she do? She did not stop him. She did not try to talk him out of the idea; she did not even try to make him stay. She took his hand and his suitcase and they left together. They were

²⁰ We provide the details of the discussed productions (author, director, producer, broadcasting station etc.) at the end of this article.

strolling until Bernard got tired. Then, the nurse called Martin, the director of the centre, who sent a taxi to pick them up. Bernard happily returned home. “Something like this could have never happened here in Europe” – Christina comments. The programme employs different radio devices: a word, music, acoustic sounds; all of them are used in a precise and sensitive manner so as not to disturb the dynamism of the story. The pace of this tale is variable, as are the moods and emotions. Fear, and the feeling of helplessness accompany the stories told by the patients’ family members; they recount how their loved ones started to display the symptoms of the disease, losing things, running away from home, hearing voices. The fairy-tale atmosphere is introduced by the narrator, who describes Baan Kamlangchay as a place where the residents are referred to as “guests”, not “patients”. Entirely different emotions are evoked as we take a look at the conversations the “guests” have with their carers. Conversations full of understanding, respect and liking, which may be sensed, for instance, in the conversation of Elisabeth with Gao – her carer:

Elisabeth: Well, I don’t know how long will I have to stay here. How long will I have to stay here? When will I go back home?

Gao: You have to stay here forever.

Elisabeth: Why do I have to stay here forever?

Gao: Vacation.

Elisabeth: Vacation? Ah, the vacation of a lifetime... the festival of life... (laughs)

Gao: Long holiday... (laughs)

The entire conversation, full of kindness and understanding, is an expression of the respect that lies at the heart of relationships in Baan Kamlangchay. This documentary constitutes a dynamic entirety, employing (as in the feature genre) all devices available to radio, but, above all, being a profound tale of a man whom we can meet owing to the way in which the story is told.

Message in a Bottle, the winner of the Prix Europa 2013 in the Radio Documentary category, is undoubtedly an example of the feature in the Polish understanding of the term. The story is based on an authentic event from almost seventy years ago; it employs the authentic sounds registered during the reporters’ research, the voices of actors reading old letters with feeling, weaving in fragments typical to radio drama, and finally using music to establish the atmosphere of post-war America and Ireland. The reporter also impersonates one of the characters of his story – he turns *Message in a Bottle* into a classic feature, which fulfils many of the formal aspects of the genre. The story of the letter in a bottle begins at Christmas in 1945, when a twenty-year-old American soldier Frank Hayostek throws a bottle with a letter tucked inside it off of a ship. Eight months later, the message is found by an eighteen-year-old Irish girl, Breda O’Sullivan.

She answers the letter, receives another one, and so begins a correspondence between Philadelphia and the town of Kinnard in Ireland, which lasted thirteen years. Over this time, Breda wrote seventy letters to Frank. The last one is dated 1959. The author of the documentary, Peter Mulryan, follows Breda’s and Frank’s tracks and serves both as the guide and as a character. The search for the traces of this extraordinary correspondence begins near Kinnard, where he meets the cousin and the oldest son of Breda. Here, he learns the name of Frank’s son and flies to Philadelphia to meet him. It turns out that Terry Hayostek has kept all seventy letters his father received from Breda. The letters are intact and still in their original envelopes. Thus begins the main part of the story; thanks to actors who render the emotions which might have accompanied the characters while reading and writing the letters, we get to know their content and, to some extent, the moods and personalities of their authors. The reading of the letters is complemented by post-war music, which introduces the listeners to the atmosphere of these times, makes the story more vivid and imparts a somewhat sentimental character. The letters make it possible to learn not only about the characters, but also about their interests, problems and living conditions of the time – in response to one of Frank’s letters, Breda claims, for example, that nobody in the area owns a TV. The correspondence unfolds naturally until 1952, when Frank is planning a trip to Ireland. At this time local newspapers took an interest in Breda’s and Frank’s relationship, exaggerating all the events surrounding the young people and turning their correspondence into an international *love story* as well as contorting the facts; they informed, for example, about the whereabouts of the couple’s first meeting and the meal they had on their first date, even though they had never actually met. This fragment has a radio drama character – actors dynamically, sometimes in a reporter’s fashion, some other times with a dose of emotion, read out fragments of press news with the 1950s music in the background. When the journalists realize that the young people have never met, and their relationship has lost its intimacy, they lose interest in the matter. The correspondence ends in 1959; at this time both Fred and Breda marry their fiancés and begin new lives. After the unrealized meeting, their exchange of letters is no longer intimate and emotional. The author finds the reason in the letters from August 1952, when Frank confessed to Breda that he had been married to a non-Catholic for a year. For an Irish Catholic living in the 1940s a close relationship with such a man was unacceptable. Breda concludes her indignation with a statement that is amusing to the listener, but for her was probably an expression of great anger: “it seems you have thought me as green as the island I come from”.

Message in a bottle is moving, full of humour and charming; the story introduces the listener to the atmosphere of the 1940s and 1950s with words and music. It is a perfectly constructed radio feature, which undoubtedly deserved the title of the best documentary in 2013.

The extraordinary feature *Poetry*, which certainly fits the Polish understanding of this term, was presented at the festival in 2012. Its author, Pejk Malinovski, took the listeners for a subtle and humorous journey to and through poetry – literally and figuratively. He recorded a programme about poetry in “Poetry”, since Poetry is a small town in Texas. Malinovski, being a poet and radio journalist himself, decided to venture to Texas in order to discover the essence of poetry. The small town became a beautiful metaphor for art. So, what is poetry? – the author asks the inhabitants. In the programme, we listen to many people who sometimes view the town in entirely different ways. Rick Rice, a man living alone in a trailer with his dog, says that to him Poetry is very hard work and people toiling long and arduously on the land so as to make an honest dime. Don Strickland, a pensioner and the unofficially declared mayor of Poetry, talks a little about the history of the town, and says that in Poetry there are no prospects for young people, who more and more often leave anyway; regardless, the magic of the town’s name attracts the inhabitants of neighbouring areas; even people living nearby in The Bottoms, Bachelor Hill and Bosely Hill claim that they live in Poetry. Pastor Robert Wheat watches the inhabitants, talking about their behaviour and the specifics of their lives. Margaret Royse, a writer living in Poetry, has always been interested in the history of the town, and she expressed that interest in her book. There is also a poet in Poetry, Kathy Wilson, the author of a poem in honour of the town, who nostalgically looks at her beloved home and does not hide the tears she sheds for the irrecoverable past and progressive changes which deprive her of inner peace. Not only a poem was created in honour of Poetry, there have also been a few songs. Danny Davis, their author, who works at the church, eagerly presents one of his pieces in the feature. Statements made by the inhabitants of Poetry reveal the different faces of the town to the listeners; they are like a jigsaw puzzle creating a complete and enchanting image of the place in the imagination of the listener. The structure of the feature, its concept and realization certainly deserve recognition and appreciation.

The Austrian feature *Ein Platz in der Welt* (Eng. *Looking for a shelter*) presented during Prix Europa 2012 is a programme that can be defined as a **radio reportage** free of any formal means of artistic expression. It is an unusually ascetic tale, which takes place on the planes of word and silence: devoid of any acoustic sounds, commentaries, or music. The strength of the story presented to us by the main character – and the co-author of the programme – Nuran Beriwan is so shocking that no phonic embellishments are necessary. What is more, they would be simply inappropriate, and could even strip the story of its expressiveness, rooted in the simplicity and authenticity of the narration. *Looking for a shelter* is the shocking story of a Kurdish woman, Nuran Beriwan. As a twenty-one-year-old Political Sciences student, she participated in a pro-Kurdish demonstration in Istanbul. Her arrest began a wave of refined tortures, which inflicted unimaginable

suffering. The first signs of contempt and refusal to treat her as a human being were manifested in the fact that she read about the punishment she had been sentenced to in a paper. The representatives of the court did not personally inform her that she had been sentenced to capital punishment. The punishment was changed to life imprisonment due to her young age. In Turkey, this means thirty-five years of prison, torture, rape and cruelty. Nuran’s story is full of shocking details.

“And then they started torturing me. They were beating my feet. With a club. I lost all toenails. They turned completely blue [...] And then they gave me electric shocks – to my tongue, breasts, vagina, fingers and toes” – says the girl.

After a moment, she adds: “And then they caught me. They tied me... And then a dog started to penetrate my body... and that was totally... totally...” – Nuran cannot finish the sentence. Every subsequent fragment of the story brings new details of the crimes committed against the student, subsequent proofs of cruelty, subsequent naturalistic details, which almost physically thrust themselves into the mind of the listener; they not only stimulate the imagination, but also evoke fear and dismay. One would rather run away from these details, but there is nowhere to go. Free of any acoustic effects, the composition of the whole programme makes it impossible to flee. There are no sounds in the acoustic narration to allow for a moment of rest, no music to let the listener take a breath. Nuran falls silent after the sequence of emotional statements; the listener may only be under the impression that the reportage has stopped, that something had happened to the recording. But when the girl’s voice keeps being interrupted in order to introduce a long period of silence, we begin to understand that it is intentional. The silence serves as a commentary to Nuran’s memories. Lost for words – how else does one relate to her story. That is the kind of tale Nuran tells. The woman relives her memories anew, but she does not dazzle with emotions. She does not sink into despair. Her voice sometimes falters, she is occasionally lost for words, sobs at times. But she does not attack with an overflow of emotions. Her story is crystal clear, free of needless epithets, or comments. The entire reportage was composed in such an ascetic way. Today, after she escaped from Turkey to Sweden and was deported to Austria, Nuran does community service with women who – for different reasons – seek refuge. Just as she did.

Radio France programme *Comment j’ai perdu mon père* (Eng. *How I Lost My Father*) is a big surprise; it contended for the main prize of the festival in the Radio Documentary category. The participation of creative and fictional elements in this work was huge. One could say that it has many of the characteristics of a **documentary radio drama** or – as its authors Gabrielle Edelman and François Teste prefer to call it – *forme de documentaire-fiction* (Eng. *docufiction* – a documentary based on creation, fiction and arranging events and statements). In 1983,

surgeon Hadrien Edelman operated for the first time in his career and cut himself with a scalpel. The wound was not deep, so it did not bother the doctor, who was entirely unaware of the consequences the cut would have years later. The woman he operated on had AIDS. Not until ten years later did the disease make itself felt; doctor Edelman was diagnosed with inflammation of the brain and spinal cord. Unfortunately, the disease progressed and its cause was established in 1994. Prior to that, Edelman had even been treated in a mental hospital. His behaviour and personality changed beyond recognition. He became irritable, nervous, aggressive, simultaneously weakened, went into a coma, had sensory disorders; all of these symptoms were also accompanied by disorientation. It was especially difficult for his family, particularly for his little children, who were living not with their father but somewhere beside him over the course of his illness, until his death in 2005. One night in 2013, his almost thirty-year-old-daughter Gabrielle, who was seven at the time when her father's illness manifested itself, decided to record a radio documentary. Radio made it possible for her to meet the father, whom – as she admits – she barely knew. A few dim childhood memories and some documents which saw the light of day after Edelman's death were all she had. The image of her father was supposed to be built with the memories kept by her mother, older siblings, nanny and father's physician, Dr Steiner. It would not be surprising if it turned out that, apart from professor Steiner's, all the accounts were read out by actors. Edelman's stories were also invented and bear the hallmarks of radio drama fiction. This programme would have certainly been striking had the author decided to record her family members instead of employing actors and including authentic records.

Our attention was also attracted by the category of Radio Music Programmes. It is worth stressing that the aim of this category was to search for broadcasts – widely understood radio programmes – which present new ways, possibilities and channels of reaching a wider audience, which introduce and promote classical music, jazz, folk or the music of the world. Some of the productions which fall into this category were described by their authors as features. It should be assumed, then, that they ought to display the characteristics of this genre, and that was not always true, as in the case of the Icelandic radio programme *Bruma, elding og lífsástin sjálf* (Eng. *Thunder, lightning and love of life*) devoted to Björk Guðmundsdóttir and her album *Biophilia*. Björk is undoubtedly an unconventional artist, whose musical experiments and penchant for taking advantage of capabilities provided by sounds are always surprising. Her newest album *Biophilia* is in fact a complex multimedia project comprised of a studio album, an application intended for iPhone and iPad, a new website, concerts and – what is very important in the case of the feature genre discussed here – educational workshops for children. **The radio programme *Bruma, elding og lífsástin sjálf*** by Elísabet Indry Ragnarsdóttir, although extremely interesting and inspiring in educational terms, is hard to classify

as a feature. It is an over fifty-minute-long radio programme focused on workshops for children, which took place in the Autumn of 2011 in Reykjavik, and which were subsequently used in *Biophilia*'s promotional campaign. The programme tells us about the way in which the workshops were carried out, what their contents were, what children learnt, and how they created their own musical compositions, which we hear. It also includes Björk's own pieces and interviews conducted with the children (age 10–12), scientists, musicians, and Björk's collaborators as well as with a writer and a philosopher. It is noteworthy that she collaborated with people representing the worlds of science and music while she worked on *Biophilia*, which allowed her to achieve a wonderful effect. She created a unique project combining the strengths of nature, music and technology; a project which explores the universe. It is through *Biophilia* that Björk tried to draw attention to the need for greater independence, creativity and individuality in the work of children at school, as opposed to the preferred system of academic education, which only consists in studying from books, a reproductive learning. The workshops stimulated the children to work creatively; they began with lectures devoted to, for example, earthquakes, crystals, storms, tectonic movements, rocks, continued through lessons with music teachers and ended with children learning to use modern technologies (iPads, touchscreens) to compose their own music. Björk repeatedly stressed that children should be given the possibility to learn the world through the environment that surrounds them, and which they live in, using new inventions since they also belong to their world and reality. Polish National Radio had its own representative in the category of Radio Music Programmes. Maria Brzezińska, a journalist of Polish National Radio in Lublin, presented a programme devoted to John Cage entitled *Everything is possible*. From the beginning of his artistic work, John Cage expressed the need to revise the traditional approach to music and made attempts to broaden the world of sounds, to extend the boundaries of sound imagination. Brzezińska recorded – as she described it – a collage-reportage (in the West the programme would undoubtedly be characterized as a feature), a programme coherent in terms of composition and dramaturgy, telling the story of Cage's experiments and artistic practices, his attitude to sounds, both those of the surroundings as well as those generated by different devices. The dramaturgy of this artistic reportage relies on the compositional combination of sound images – scenes, which develop beautifully with every minute, revealing new information to the listener and offering new aesthetic experiences. 2012 was the year of John Cage in Lublin. The reporter recorded chosen events which accompanied the celebration of the centenary of this avant-garde composer's birth, which fell on the 5th of September. On this day, a musical happening was organized with the participation of students from local music schools on Litewski Square in Lublin. In the evening, the Musical Theatre hosted an extraordinary concert of an American pianist of Chinese descent, Cage's former collaborator – Margaret Leng-Tan, who plays on a toy piano,

proving how serious this instrument can be, and that it requires great precision in performing the pieces.

In the reportage (feature), the recordings from both of these events are accompanied by anecdotes – so called lectures of John Cage, published in issues number 1 and 2 of “Akcent” quarterly, which the composer gave as a background, context, a sort of musical accompaniment to the choreographies of his friend Cunningham; he treated these texts as music. Warsaw actor Maciej Wyczański performed and interpreted Cage’s literary texts. What is more, Cage’s biography, authored by Jerzy Kutnik, *John Cage – a paradoxical case* was published in Lublin. The participation of professor Kutnik in the programme is substantial; the listeners learn a number of interesting facts which help to grasp the essence of Cage’s artistic work from him. The aim of this programme is to show that in Cage’s point of view, every sound – coming from a piece of music or from the surroundings, even silence which is commonly understood as the lack of sound, may constitute a building material for a musical or sound composition. In this way, the author “explains” to the listeners the importance of Cage to present-day composers and performers; John Cage, however, is not only a gift to the professionals, he is also a gift for every one of us, since he encourages us to broaden our imagination and engage in a sound game with music and silence.

Conclusion

The analysis of the programmes submitted to the Prix Europa 2012/2013 competition, referred to as features, allows us to make a few observations:

1. The term feature is significantly more prevalent in the West than in Poland. It results, among others, from the fact that programmes of this character, extensive, employing all means of expression available to radio, are popular in Western Europe. Many of them are made there, and their production is of a large-scale character: a number of people are usually involved (an author, producer, director, sound technician). In Poland, the majority of the work is carried out by only a pair, sometimes even one person. This obviously stems from other differences – in Poland and countries such as Austria or Ireland – financial resources available for the production of the feature are often limited. It is also worth stressing that neither the substance nor the technical value of Polish programmes diverges from the standards of similar productions in the West.

2. The term feature is used interchangeably with radio documentary. It probably results from the above-mentioned fact – the documentaries made in the West are of an artistic character. Social reportages are reserved for news bulletins and are less sophisticated.

3. The term feature occasionally comprises music radio programmes based on an authentic event, depicting a real person. These radio programmes are extensive in terms of production and they search for a profound knowledge on a given topic.

4. The point of departure for the production of a feature radio programme, regardless of how complex it is, is always the truth, the authentic event, the character.

At the end of our work, we must remark that while participating in Prix Europa 2012 and 2013 we did not notice any firm adherence to nomenclature. The terms have wide, often inaccurate application. Might that be further evidence for the convergence of genres?

The text discusses the following radio productions:

Comment j’ai perdu mon père (Eng. *How I Lost My Father*)

Entering organisation: Radio France

Author: Gabrielle Edelman

Director: François Teste

Sound: François Teste

Commissioning editor: Irène Omelianenko

Producer: Gabrielle Edelman

Production company: France Culture – Sur les Docks

Length: 55 min.

Original language: French

First broadcast: France Culture.

Documentary On One – Message in a Bottle

Entering organisation: Raidió Teilifís Éireann – RTÉ, Radio 1

Author: Peter Mulryan

Directors: Peter Mulryan, Liam O’Brien

Sound: Peter Mulryan, Liam O’Brien

Commissioning editor: Liam O’Brien

Producers: Peter Mulryan, Liam O’Brien

Title of series: Documentary On One

Length: 44 min.

Original language: English

First broadcast: RTÉ Radio 1.

Holiday for Life – Über die Pflege Europäischer Demenzkranker in Thailand (Eng. *Holiday for Life – European Dementia Patients in Care in Thailand*)

Entering organisation: Österreichischer Rundfunk – ORF

Author: Franziska Dorau

Director: Franziska Dorau

Sound: Christian Gorz
Commissioning editor: Elisabeth Stratka
Producer: Monika Kalcsics
Length: 53 min.
Original language: German
First broadcast: ORF.

Looking for shelter

Entering organisation: Elisabeth Putz
Authors: Nuran Beriwan, Helene Fuchs
Director: Antonia Gilani
Sound: Elisabeth Putz
Commissioning editor: Elisabeth Putz
Producer: Elisabeth Putz
Length: 54 min.
Original language: German
First broadcast: ORF.

Poetry

Entering organisation: Falling Tree Productions
Author: Pejk Malinovski
Director: Pejk Malinovski
Commissioning editor: Caroline Raphael
Producer: Pejk Malinovski, Alan Hall (Executive producer)
Length: 28 min.
Original language: English
First broadcast: BBC Radio 4.

Wszystko jest możliwe (Eng. *Everything is possible*)

Entering organisation: Polskie Radio S.A.
Author: Maria Brzezińska
Director: Maria Brzezińska
Sound: Jarosław Gołofit
Commissioning editor: Andrzej Szwabe
Producer: Radio Lublin S.A.
Length: 25 min.
Original language: Polish
First broadcast: Radio Lublin S.A.

Þruma, elding og lífsástin sjálf (Eng. *Thunder, lightning and love of life*)

Entering organisation: Ríkisútvarpið – RÚV

Author: Elísabet Indra Ragnarsdóttir
Director: Elísabet Indra Ragnarsdóttir
Sound: Úlfhildur Eysteinsdóttir
Commissioning editor: Bergljót Haraldsdóttir
Producer: Margrét Marteinsdóttir
Length: 54 min.
Original language: Icelandic
First broadcast: RÚV.

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**The *Feature* in Radio – the Elusiveness of the Genre’s Determinants.
Notes on the Prix Europa Festival in the Years 2012 and 2013 in the Context
of Literary Genetics**

(Summary)

The goal of the article is to answer the question: what do radio broadcasters in the West understand to be a ‘feature’? A lack of clarity in terminology in this respect was especially visible during the Prix Europa 2012 and 2013 festivals. The article begins with an outline of the term ‘feature’, followed by discussion of relevant festival categories, and ending with a presentation of several selected audio examples that indicate both the characteristics of the genre and cases where, in spite of divergences from these qualities, the term ‘feature’ continues to function.

Keywords: feature, artistic radio, Prix Europa Festival.