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Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights* as an example
of genre transformation in the contemporary novel –
a linguistic and literary view

Drawing from both German and Polish linguistic and literary perspectives, the article attempts to examine genre changes within the genre pattern of the *novel* and decide whether Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights,* described by the author herself as a novel, should be attributed to this genre. We assume that linguistic and literary tools will allow us to determine the most characteristic features of contemporary novel productions to decide on the nature of changes taking place within the studied genre. Looking at Tokarczuk's work not through the prism of a single genre but, following Maria Wojtak, Kirsten Adamzik or Ulla Fix, from the perspective of inter-genre relations, allows not only to conclude that the analyzed material is located on the fringes of the genre pattern of the *novel* but also to see other inter-textual dependencies and consider the text under study as a *genre in the form of a collection*.

Keywords: genre, novel, text type, text pattern, Polish and German perspective in genre studies

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Olga Tokarczuks *Bieguni* als Beispiel für den Gattungswandel im zeitgenössischen Roman – ein linguistischer und literaturwissenschaftlicher Ansatz

In dem Artikel wird versucht, sowohl aus deutscher wie auch aus polnischer sprach- und literaturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive die Gattungstransformationen innerhalb des Gattungsmusters *Roman* zu untersuchen und zu beurteilen, ob Olga Tokarczuks *Bieguni*, von der Autorin selbst als *Roman* bezeichnet, dieser Gattung zuzuordnen ist. Wir gehen davon aus, dass linguistische und literarische Instrumente es uns ermöglichen werden, die charakteristischsten Merkmale zeitgenössischer Romane zu identifizieren, um über die Art der Veränderungen innerhalb des untersuchten Genres zu entscheiden. Betrachtet man Tokarczuks Buch nicht durch das Prisma einer einzelnen Gattung, sondern – in Anlehnung an Maria Wojtak, Kirsten Adamzik oder auch Ulla Fix – aus der Perspektive der gattungsübergreifenden Beziehungen, kann man nicht nur zu dem Schluss kommen, dass das analysierte Material an der Peripherie des Gattungsmusters *Romans* anzusiedeln ist, sondern auch andere Beziehungen darin zu erkennen sind, einschließlich intertextueller, und sich der untersuchte Text als *Gattung in Form von Kollektion* betrachten lässt.

Schlüsselwörter: Gattung, Roman, Textsorte, Textmuster, Textsortenlinguistik

Bieguni Olgi Tokarczuk jako przykład transformacji gatunkowej we współczesnej powieści – ujęcie lingwistyczne i literaturoznawcze

Spoglądając z germanistycznej i polonistycznej perspektywy lingwistycznej i literaturoznawczej, w artykule podejmujemy próbę prześledzenia i zbadania przemian gatunkowych w obrębie wzorca gatunkowego *powieść* i rozstrzygnięcia, czy *Bieguni* Olgi Tokarczuk, zgodnie z określeniem użytym przez samą autorkę, temu gatunkowi powinni zostać przyporządkowani. Zakładamy, że narzędzia lingwistyczne i literaturoznawcze pozwolą nam określić najbardziej charakterystyczne cechy współczesnych realizacji powieściowych, by zdecydować o charakterze zmian zachodzących w obrębie badanego gatunku. Spojrzenie na twórczość Tokarczuk nie przez pryzmat jednego gatunku, ale – za Marią Wojtak, Kirsten Adamzik czy Ullą Fix – z perspektywy relacji międzygatunkowych, pozwala nie tylko stwierdzić, że analizowany materiał sytuuje się na obrzeżach wzorca gatunkowego *powieść*, ale także pozwala w nim dostrzec różnego typu zależności, w tym intertekstualne i uznać badany tekst za *gatunek w formie kolekcji*.

Słowa kluczowe: gatunek, powieść, rodzaj tekstu, wzorzec tekstowy, lingwistyka rodzajów tekstu, genologia lingwistyczna

1. Preliminary provisions

The novel will typically create a certain image in the mind of the reader as a genre that displays certain features such as: fictionality, considerable volume, a multithreaded plot, events presented in a chronological order and the narrator, in first or third person, who relates in prose the lot of the main hero(s) in a narrative formally divided into chapters. And yet, at the time when contemporary text

realizations comply with their generic models more and more loosely, and less and less often approach their canonical variants[1] the way these are understood by Maria Wojtak, the Polish linguist specializing in the complexities of linguistic geneology (Wojtak 2004: 18), the question arises if the novel has retained its classic properties, given that they can be clearly defined? Or has it followed the trend of breaking the canon as manifested by 'montage', 'blending of text patterns'[2] or 'breaking the pattern'[3] (see Fix 1997: 97)[4]?

Taking as an example one of the most widely read and commented on novel by the Polish Nobel Prize winning writer Olga Tokarczuk we will attempt to capture the genre changes in the novel and to indicate its contemporary realization. The questions we ask in this context are as follows:

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[1] According to Wojtak, the canonical variant of the pattern includes the most persistent structural, pragmatic, cognitive and stylistic quantifiers that determine the identity of the genre. Alternative patterns are those "which arise as a result of the transformation of individual components of the canonical pattern" (Wojtak 2004: 18). These transformations may consist in transformations of the structure, extension of the structure with a new component, or even the compilation of structures. Adaptive patterns, on the other hand, refer "to foreign genre patterns […]. The aforementioned filiations may include various communication spheres and styles when the predominant genre is the intention (communication idea)" (Wojtak 2004: 18).

[2] It should be noted here that, in line with German writing, *text pattern* is not a term identical with the Polish understanding of this term as synonymous with the term *genre*. *Textmuster* [text pattern] is an abstract model, an ideal type of text containing only its most essential and typical features (Heinemann 2009), *Textsorten* [types of text], in turn, are related to specific realizations of the pattern; they can display both very typical and less typical features of a given type of text. For Wojtak, however, genre pattern is "a set of rules that define the most important levels of the organization of the genre schema, the relationships between these levels and the ways in which these levels function." The author does not treat the standard as „a constant (permanent) quality or a measure of the degree of perfection of individual performances." She adds, however, that it is important to recognize the status of the pattern, as it is related to the "configuration of pattern variants" in genological analyzes. As can be seen, Wojtak then goes back to the tradition of German studies in this field, as she distinguishes both the genre pattern and the genre and (Wojtak 2019: 272), at the same time, does not exclude the synonymy of both concepts, describing the genre as "an abstract creation (model, pattern)" (Wojtak 2004: 16)

[3] In original: *Musterbruch*, *Textmustermischung*, *Textmustermontage* (see Fix 1997: 97). According to Fix, "pattern montage" takes place in the case of combining a greater number, at least two copies/ types of text, referring to different text patterns, which are intentionally homogenous. Texts characterized by "text pattern mixing" are recognized by Fix as instances referring to other patterns, i.e. showing connections with other text patterns/ types of texts. We deal with the so-called "pattern breaking" or "pattern disturbance" when a text realization displays features of a certain textual pattern, but at the same time is characterized by features that cannot be unequivocally ascribed to any textual pattern (see Fix 1997: 97–98). For transgressive genres and genre nebulas see also Witosz (2005)

[4] Similar procedures within the implementation of text patterns, such as those described by Fix as pattern mixing, consisting in deviations from generic norms, are called by Hartmut Lenk (2012: 163) *pattern extensions*.

a. Does Olga Tokarczuk's novel retain genre properties of a classic novel, and if yes, to what extent?
b. What peculiarities and features that are unusual for a classic novel can be distinguished in the analyzed work?
c. What are the possibilities for genre description and delineation of *Flights*?
d. What are the benefits of combining a linguistic and literary view of a literary text?

In order to establish analogies and discrepancies between the canonical form of the novel and contemporary trends in this area, we will analyze Tokarczuk's novel in a multilayered way. We assume that by applying a holistic approach, considering both linguistic and literary tools, we will be able to determine the most characteristic features of contemporary novelistic productions and, by studying them, infer about the nature of changes taking place within the studied genre. The linguistic analysis of the explored material will be carried out on four levels which, from our point of view, best illustrate the genre properties of the novel. We will use the proposed genre description presented by Wojtak (2019), as it has been intended for analyzes that are not limited to functional texts. It is a universal set of criteria that Wojtak offers not only for the study of genres specific to sub-disciplines within Polish studies such as linguistic genology, literary or media genology but also for related disciplines (see Wojtak 2019: 20). The above-mentioned planes of analysis include structure; the cognitive aspect – that is thematic-cognitive analysis; pragmatics, and stylistics (Wojtak 2019: 20)

Genre intricacies of the novel will be described and organized not only from the linguistic and literary perspectives but also in the context of Polish and German studies in this area. The intention behind choosing this perspective is to enrich the discussion on the genre issues of literary and non-literary texts with the Polish perspective within the context of German studies. While the German perspective is often presented in the specialist literature, the Polish approach is little known because of the hermetic nature of Polish culture and language and the limited access to Polish research as it is rarely translated into German or English. The aim of this article is, therefore, to expand research on literary and non-literary texts with a new, interesting research perspective to initiate a broader discussion around complex genre issues in an interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective.

We are aware of the fact that genre studies are currently not the main focus of Polish and German linguistic research. Linguists are more likely to turn to discourse analysis, cultural linguistics and analysis in the field of multimodal and multimedia communication. Messages and formats are more eagerly talked about as are various domains of social activities and, within them, thematic areas

or series, that is, the "primary cognitive categories"[5] (Adamzik 2010: 40). Can we imagine, however, that in the era of communicative reality changing on daily basis, of the mixing of genre patterns as a result of their deliberate breaking and adapting to new technological possibilities, and of increasing hybridization of textual production, we refuse to be guided by any patterns, that we do not try and characterize the increasingly complex forms of communication, their most important determinants, that we do not attempt to describe them?

2. Literary texts in linguistic studies in Poland and Germany

On the German ground, both literary studies and linguistics have undergone similar changes in the last 50 years. They include, among others, a significant expansion of research interests of both sub-disciplines, and a clear differentiation of theoretical and methodological approaches. On both sides, we can also observe openness to all textual phenomena produced and rehearsed in old and new media (see Adamzik 2017). However, since the beginnings of textual linguistics, and since the establishment of the linguistics of textual types, both subdisciplines have been mainly linguistically oriented; in other words, their research interests have focused on functional texts. What is more, even though both literary scholars and linguists see the need to open up and reach towards one another, after an unsuccessful attempt to do so in the 1960s, as Hausendorf (2008: 320) rightly points out in the introduction to one of the volumes of *Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik*, entitled "Zwischen Linguistik und Literaturwissenschaft" (2008), even if quite a few linguistic works on literary texts as well as literary studies using linguistic concepts are published, they lack a "common overarching interdisciplinary framework" to make cooperation possible. In this context, Adamzik speaks emphatically about the limited mutual interest of both disciplines[6], pointing to a specific paradox of this situation:

> The fact that literary studies and linguistics feel alien to one another, especially in the face of repeated attempts on both sides to establish a better dialogue must be surprising and not only to those who do not know the context in the field science policy (Adamzik 2017: 98).

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[5] In original: primär kognitive Kategorien (Adamzik 2010: 40).

[6] In original: Dass Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaft überhaupt, erst recht aber angesichts immer wieder unternommener Versuche, besser ins Gespräch zu kommen, miteinander fremdeln, muss nicht nur Außenstehende – d.h. jene, die mit den auch wissenschaftspolitischen Hintergründen nicht vertraut sind – erstaunen.

What is more, she cites arguments for the importance and chances of success of integrated research within both disciplines, and even suggests some interpretative solutions allowing for integrative approach to literary and functional texts. However, Adamzik herself does not give any hints as to how such research might be conducted, nor does she propose a specific approach to literary and non-literary texts. Importantly, however, she suggests a reinterpretation of the main features of literary and linguistic texts as dimensions that could be applied to all kinds of linguistic statements. She proposes such possibility of interpretation that would make it possible by relativizing some features which, at first glance, are characteristic of literary texts only and so unacceptable for genre descriptions of functional texts. Among those features there are: fictitiousness and literariness of a text (Adamzik 2017).

Contrary to the independent and autonomous research paths of contemporary German linguistic and literary studies, Polish studies of text types have their roots in literary genre studies (see Skwarczyńska 1965) and remain clearly influenced by Bakhtin's theories, as has been noted, among others, by Witosz (2005, 2015). Linguistic genological research was also inspired by dissertations on the systematics of literary genres and the findings of the Prague School. Pragmatic stylistics was also used as part of the emerging new research sub-discipline, the findings of Barbara Sandig in particular. The results of her research were widely disseminated in Poland, especially by Jan Mazur and Maria Wojtak, and used in Polish studies of the types of texts. However, the most decisive and groundbreaking for Polish linguistics was Wojtak's use of the concept of text patterns developed by Barbara Sandig (1979, 1987, 1991, 1993), and the use of "prototypical" and less "prototypical" text patterns for linguistic description of text types/ genres[7]. This is because in Polish genological research, the dichotomy between literary texts and functional texts is not emphasized (Wojtak 2011: 534). Detailed, specialized analyzes which are part of their linguistic research treat types of texts, whether functional or literary, on an equal footing.

Drawing on the rich Polish tradition and inspired by the aforementioned scholars and schools of thought, Wojtak developed and described her method of analyzing texts using her original research perspective, a new way of perceiving and describing genres within three genological subdisciplines: literary, linguistic and media genology. At this point, however, it needs to be stressed that, for Wojtak, it is not only the type or genre of a text as a phenomenon that matters but, above all, the relationship between texts, and this will be also important for our considerations and observations of Tokarczuk's novel. This approach is of particular importance for the development of linguistic text types and genology,

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[7] On the basis of these findings, Wojtak develops her own genre model in which she distinguishes between canonical, alternative and adaptive variants of genre patterns.

as the researcher takes the contextualization of types/ genres of texts as a starting point. This, to some extent resembles the trends in German studies on types of texts (see, for example: Adamzik 2001 and Adamzik 2016 on the topic of the network of text types). In her analysis, Wojtak distinguishes *a genre in the form of a collection* and *collections of genres*. In the case of a genre in the form of a collection, it is a holistic phenomenon that consists of various genres coexisting with each other (e.g. everyday [functional] and artistic statements in a calendar) which have a structural and functional dominant. In turn, a collection of genres is based on other relationships – the presence of individual components is associated with a general discursive function or feature. Each of the components shows full autonomy as these are complementary messages (e.g. interview and biography). The characteristic feature here is the lack of a structural dominant. Whether one can talk about a collection is determined by isofunctionality and its presence within the communication scenario (Wojtak 2019: 125f).

3. Analysis

3.1. Structure and composition

Olga Tokarczuk's work referred to as a novel[8] is distinguished by a very specific structure and composition. *Flights* consists of a dozen seemingly unrelated stories such as: the story of Kunicki ("Kunicki. Water" and "Kunicki. Earth"), Eryk's story ("Ash Wednesday Feast"), Menchu ("Harem"), doktor Blau's story ("Dr Blau's Travels" I and II), Filip Verheyen's ("The Achilles Tendon", "The History of Filip Verheyen, Written by his Student and Confidant, Willem van Horssen"), the story of Professor Ruysch's collections ("30,000 Guilders", "The Tsar's Collection"), Annoushka's story ("Flights"), the story of the Polish woman living in Australia (Godzone), or of bringing Chopin's heart to Poland ("Chopin's Heart"), interwoven with many digressions, comments, and remarks in the form of inclusions and even anecdotes. There is a large volume range of individual texts. Some texts are long stories, others, such as letters, short reports or anecdotes, advertising slogans or maxims and dictums, are considerably less voluminous.

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[8] Tokarczuk herself refers to *Flights* as a *constellation novel*. She first used the term in the context of her previous novel, *House of Day, House of Night*: "Linear storytelling seems to be a falsification of reality. If we are to write in such a way as to somehow describe our reality, then we must find a way to reflect its polyphonic noise, the many tangled narratives attacking our ears. It is possible that in Flaubert's time the world was linear, but today it is multi-layered, the real mixes with the unreal. This is why when I wrote *House of Day, House of Night* I created what I call a constellation novel. It means finding enjoyment in the fragment, and trusting that the novel will be assembled in the reader's mind, like an assembly model, rather than by the author. It is also the feeling that the whole we long for can be found between details (Gawrońska 2007).

Characteristic for the analyzed book is the fact that all the above-mentioned forms of expression, even those with the smallest, minimum volume, have a title. However, there is no division into chapters in the traditional understanding. Some of the stories are broken down into smaller parts, episode-like, interspersed with digressions and interjections, creating a sort of an episodic story. There is then the story of Kunicki which is divided into three parts: "Kunicki Water 1" and "Kunicki Water 2" are interlaced with two texts, formally separated with the use of headings entitled: "Benedictus, qui Venit and Panoptikum". The last part of the story about Kunicki is entitled "Kunicki: Earth" and it is located only in the final part of the novel. Examples of similar structural measures can also be found in other parts of the novel: the passage "Travel Psychology", like Kunicki's story, has been broken down into three parts and here the concept of titles is constructed in a similar way: "Travel Psychology: Lectio Brevis I", "Travel Psychology: Lectio Brevis II" and "Travel Psychology: Conclusion". As in Kunicki's story, the first two parts are numbered and the third one repeats the first part of their title. The first two parts are separated by a considerable distance in the text but not the last two. "Travel Psychology: Lectio Brevis II" is separated from "Travel Psychology: Conclusion" only by a short text entitled "Compatriots". The construction of subsequent stories was based on an analogous principle. These include, among others, the following stories: "Dr Blau's Travels I" and "Dr Blau's Travels II". These two parts of the text are separated by another story composed based on a tripartite structure – Josephine Soliman's three letters to Francis I, Emperor of Austria. There are also other broken-down stories in the novel. What is characteristic of them, however, is that they do not share the same title and are not numbered. A very interesting example of such a triptych composition is "The Story of Filip Verheyen", which is divided into three parts which do not share the same title but follow one another in succession: "The Achilles Tendon", "The History of Filip Verheyen, Written by his Student and Confidant, Willem van Horssen", and "Letters to the Amputated Leg", which could also be seen as part of Willem van Horssen's story. The story of Professor Ruysch's collections was built in an analogous way. It consists of a text entitled "30,000 Guilders" and the immediately following text entitled "The Tsar's Collection". In the last two examples, only by analyzing the content can we consider the two texts as two parts of the same story.

The structure of the novel, as has already been mentioned, is not based on the division into chapters. The book does not have a Table of Contents that would organize it and facilitate the reader's orientation in the text. Still, all texts collected in the book and shaped into a kind of a mosaic or text collage, have been given a title. The stories of particular characters or objects mentioned in the introductory part of the article are interspersed with smaller textual forms which often resemble entries in a travel journal, even if they do not exemplify all typical elements of this genre, such as the date, the time of day or the day of

the week. There are also letters, descriptions of places, objects, forms resembling a biography in descriptive form, encyclopedic entries, anecdotes, reports of stories overheard somewhere, interviews, parts of reports, travel notes, reviews, philosophical treatises, etc. Often, these are not pure forms, that is canonical examples of a specific genre pattern However, an attentive reader will easily distinguish individual genre forms, as in the following example:

> **Pilgrim's Make-Up**
> An old friend of mine once told me how he hated travelling alone. His gripe was: when he sees something out of the ordinary, something new and beautiful, he so wants to share it with someone that he becomes deeply unhappy if there's no one around.
> I doubt he would make a good pilgrim (Tokarczuk 2019: 171).

The cited example is a separate, independent text unit with a title which, in terms of genre, can be described as an anecdote. The text entitled "Sanitary napkins" is a collection of maxims, general truths about the world as well as scientific facts. There are a number of fragmented texts, excerpts from tourist guides containing descriptions of places, customs or, as in the case of the text "Relics. Peregrinatio ad loca sancta", beliefs and superstitions related to the Catholic faith. We will also find fragments of interviews which preserve the generic form, as in the text "Apuleius the Donkey" – an interview with a donkey breeder. There are also descriptions of airports, railway stations, advertisement-like descriptions such as the one in a drugstore in which mini-products for travellers are advertised: "Here, one can obtain anything and everything one might want on a trip". Interesting examples of separate texts are also reviews, such as those included in the text entitled: "New Athens". We can find here reviews of the travel guide by Benedykt Chmielowski and of Melville's *Moby Dick*. There is even a text containing only the content of an advertising billboard. Interestingly, the title of this passage is a translation from Russian for those unfamiliar with that language and not literate in the Cyrillic alphabet: "Mobility is Reality". A less typical genre form are text-maps: authentic maps of cities, a map of the network of underground corridors, a subway map, maps featuring islands, and city centers, in various languages, and from different epochs, intertwining or rather intersecting selected texts in the novel.

3.2. Cognitive and content elements

Mapping in *Flights* happens at the textual level as well. For example, both the human body and space are given careful attention, even if their portrayal is fissured and incomplete. The body is one of the central leitmotifs in the novel. The narrator examines her own body and describes her physiology early on in her

narrative: "I'm petite, compact. My stomach is tight, small, undemanding. My lungs and my shoulders are strong" (Tokarczuk 2019: 13). Then she goes on to describe her internal organs and blood morphology. Interestingly, this is the first and only complete body image that is drawn attention to in the text; it is captured at a specific moment in time and its certain aspects are bound to change.

Just as the structure of the novel is composed of seemingly separate, disconnected textual forms, various, separate body parts resurface as the stories unfold. At the Cabinet of Curiosities that the narrator visits, body bits and pieces are laid out for a curious eye to examine. The brain is first singled out as the source of our existence: "we exist primarily through our brains", to be later mockingly attributed to the faded post-Cartesian worldview. Then, the heart is presented as "greyish, brown, ugly […] the colour of insides, of darkness, of places light can't reach, where matter hides in moisture from others' gazes" (Tokarczuk 2019: 27). Here, they have been removed from their original destination. One specific heart reappears later in the novel, belonging to the late Chopin, as it is smuggled to Poland by his sister in a jar hidden in the folds of her dress. Unlike the jarred hearts ripped from their owners' insides and put on display, this heart is carried in the darkness, safely hidden from view. Blood, in contrast, is presented in its full extravagance, as a warning when "the casing of the body has been breached" (Tokarczuk 2019: 27). Attention is drawn to body anomalies, overgrown intestines, curved spines and ribs in ribbons, skulls with growths, and bones wrecked by arthritis. The narrator explains apologetically her attraction to these human specimens: "I believe, unswervingly, agonizingly, that it is in freaks that Being breaks through to the surface and reveals its true nature" (Tokarczuk 2019: 23). The underdeveloped, overgrown, mutilated or otherwise incomplete specimens draw attention to what a healthy, complete organism would not reveal, like the heart hidden in the darkness of the body, but still pumping its blood and keeping it alive. In their fragmentation and abnormality which prevents them from smooth functioning, they draw attention to the loss of completeness that is otherwise taken for granted.

There is another parallel between the fragmented bits of the body and the dissipation of the narrative into separate stories. The parts of the body are labelled the way each separate entry in the novel is given a title. Thus, the fragmentarity of the plot could be seen as drawing attention to the loss of completeness of the form of the novel, and a sense of longing for its underlying essence. Such understanding is supported by the subplot concerning Philippe Verheyen's phantom pain. Born in 1648, in Flandria, the Dutch anatomist lost his leg while being a student of theology and, as he believed in the resurrection of body and soul, he made sure to keep the amputated limb in his room. With time, he more and more acutely experienced sensations of pain in the places where his leg would have been.

"Separated from him, it took some sort of demonic autonomy simultaneously maintaining with him a painful relationship" (Tokarczuk 2019: 218). The obsession with his amputated leg cost Verheyen his reputation and, eventually, sanity. What has been dissected, divided, and fragmented remains haunted by the sense of lost completeness. The owner of the missing limb wonders:

> Why do I feel this lack, sense this absence? Are we perhaps condemned to wholeness, and every fragmentation, every quartering, will only be a pretence, will happen on the surface, underneath which, however, the plan remains intact, unalterable? Does even the smallest fragment still belong to the whole? If the world, like a great glass orb, falls and shatters into a million pieces – doesn't something great, powerful and infinite remain whole in this? Is my pain God? (Tokarczuk 2019: 218)

There are other such disconnections haunted by an underlying primordial sense of wholeness in the novel. One of them is the separation of human and nonhuman nature. The human body is made of the same matter as other things in nature and its parts "are discovered as though one were forging one's way upriver in search of sources in the way one follows with a scalpel along some blood vessel and establishes its start" (Tokarczuk 2019: 193). Human parts are presented in flower and animal imagery (orchids, stamens, antennae, whiskers), and in landscape vocabulary (waves, dunes, craters, elevations, mountains, valleys, plateaus) thus connecting human characters with both animate and inanimate world around them. The sense of separation is also shown to be a result of the misunderstanding of the process of evolution as based on competition between individual organisms. Symbiotic communal relations are presented as a more prevalent model of living than individualism, the form of imagined separateness. One of the protagonists, a biologist, voices the contemporary understanding of evolution: "all animate things cooperate in this growth and bursting, supporting one another, permit one another to make use of them […] it's just an accord that men find frightening" (Tokarczuk 2019: 294).

The human body is not only part of its environment, but it also mirrors, in a microscale, the cosmic dimension. Not accidentally, two important sixteenth-century publications are placed next two one another – Vesalius's *De Human corporis fabrica* and the first chapters of Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium celestium* – both published in 1543. As subsequent discoveries have shown, both mappings, of the human body and of space, were far from complete at that time, and yet, there they were, placing the inner and outer worlds under human control. Sixteenth century was the time when such grand ambition still seemed plausible and desirable. By the twenty-first century, as seen in *Flights*, it has been reduced to the fragmented collection form of anecdotes and fissured storylines: "Standing

off to one side. Seeing only the world in fragments, there won't be any other one. Moments, crumbs, fleeting configurations – no sooner have they come into existence than they fall to pieces" (Tokarczuk 2019: 186).

3.3. The stylistic aspect

The world presented by Tokarczuk is characterized not just by fragmentation but also by constant movement and it is determined by the unending compulsion to make choices. The only thing that remains constant in this world, that becomes a routine is, as Trygar writes, "a habit changing habit" (Trygar 2015: 18). It is a world where the boundaries between the subject and the world are blurred, and the human identity is a task to be performed (Trygar 2015: 18), and the lack of definite and finite identity practices is associated with its state of forever being under construction. This kind of searching and constructing is also reflected in the structural and stylistic layer of the novel.

The style of *Flights* is the sum of the styles of individual genre forms, ranging from the large epic forms to lapidary aphoristic entries which we can name, after Lyotard (1997: 28), "small narratives" connected with one another with the idea of a journey understood not only as movement in space but even more so as a metaphor of life, of crossing psychological, social and cultural boundaries, or travelling into the past or future. Some passages display elements of a travel journal, a letter, an argument or a philosophical lecture, a parable, and a crime story, but there are also loose notes scribbled on tickets, quotes, advertising slogans, and elements of an internal monologue. The author also weaves into the narrative quotations and excerpts from books, for example Emile Cioran's *The Trouble With Being Born*: "And it was clear to me that our mission was to graze the dust in search of a mystery stripped of anything serious" (Tokarczuk 2019: 29). There are dictionary entries and a fragment of an epigram from Mozart's *Requiem*, which add to the collage structure of the novel:

> Mors stupebit et natura,
> Cum resurget creatura,
> Judicanti responsura.
> Liber scriptus proferetur,
> In quo totum continetur,
> Tinde mundus judicetur.
> Judex ergo cum sedebit
> Quidquid latet apparebit:
> Nil inultum remanebit (Tokarczuk 2019: 326–327).

There is also a passage: "All the articles used in the service of the tabernacle, whatever their function, including all the tent pegs for it and those for the courtyard are to be of bronze" (Tokarczuk 2019: 29).

More than a hundred, at first glance loosely connected passages, are, as mentioned previously, not formally linked by the Table of Contents which is typical of a novel. This is a deliberate procedure which aims at creating an even greater sense of distraction and a sense of chaos. There is one narrative strand, however, that acts as a glue holding the separate elements together and not allowing them to fall apart – the vicissitudes of the constantly moving narrator, pausing only for brief moments in her journey at different airports around the world and keeping a kind of a travel journal in which she puts down her thoughts and travel observations.

The language of the intellectual argument is revealed in the numerous short but at the same time sharp assessments of the world, represented in the novel and scattered throughout the text. This language is, therefore, a conglomerate of various forms, fragmented, disintegrated, and breaking a certain continuity. It is elusive as a whole, and yet, coherent with the message of the novel which longs for continuity and completeness within disintegration. In other words, at the first glance, Tokarczuk's novel, in terms of its composition, content and style, seems to be implementing the concept of the "rhizome" and nomadology as developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1988: 220–251). Its structure is open, allowing for an ongoing individual process of co-creation on the part of the reader. The above-mentioned genre forms display traces of individual styles characteristic of these genres: "Among the Maori" has an encyclopedic character – it is related in the factual way – a series of facts presented in simple sentences, without stylistic coloration or attributions as in: "The heads of deceased family members are mummified and conserved as objects of mourning. Stages of mummification include steaming, smoking, and coating in oil. Through such treatments, the heads may be maintained in good condition, with their hair, skin, and teeth" (Tokarczuk 2019: 150). "Mobility is Reality", in turn, presents an advertising slogan in the Russian alphabet "МОБИЛЬНОСТЬ СТАНОВИТСЯ РЕАЛЬНОСТЮ" (Tokarczuk 2019: 234). It is written in capital letters, characteristic for a billboard ad – and the fact that it is preserved in the Russian language, adds credibility and situatedness to the passage. Then, there is a note on a side of a ticket in the passage "A Very Long Quarter of an Hour", which is short and concise: "On the plane between 8.45 and 9 a.m. To my mind, it took an hour, or even longer" (Tokarczuk 2019: 124). There is a philosophical observation in "Map of Greece", which uses poetical metaphors: the Peloponnese is "the shape of a great maternal hand, not a human one, that is dipping into water to check if the temperature is right for a bath" (Tokarczuk 2019: 372), and it uses more sophisticated vocabulary:

e.g. "reminiscent", "reciprocally". The language used in this passage is intellectual, philosophical, and stylized to appear scholarly.

The language of *Flights* is also a language describing journeys within the human body, journeys in time which portray the development of the history of anatomy. It is the language of medical terminology. We will find here precise, elaborate, and specific descriptions of preserving human organs, or damaged fetuses, in formalin, formaldehyde or alcohol. There are descriptions of autopsy, tissue preparation or mummification:

> Do you know what this is?' says Filip and points with the nail of his pinky finger to the lighter substance above the bone. 'Touch it.'
> The guest's finger extends to the dead tissue, but doesn't reach it remaining suspended in mid-air. The skin was cut in such a way as to reveal this place in a completely unexpected manner. No, he doesn't know what it is, but he makes a guess:
> 'It's the musculus soleus, a component of it.'
> His host looks at him for quite a while, as though looking for words.
> 'From now on it is the Achilles Cord,' he says.
> Van Horssen repeats after Verheyen, as though memorizing these two words.
> 'The Achilles tendon."
> "His hands, which he's wiped off with a rag, now take out from under the files of papers a diagram sketched out from four perspectives, incredibly accurate: the lower leg and foot comprise a single whole, and it is already hard to believe that once they were not so put together, that in this place there was nothing at all, just some blurred image, now completely forgotten; everything had remained separate, and now it is together (Tokarczuk 2019: 192).

And yet, all these narrative bits and pieces are filtered through the main narrator's voice, experience, opinions and ideology. Paradoxically, the topic of fragmentation, the rhizomatic lack of centre, constitutes the novelistic centre of its own, one around which all other stories revolve. Even if the separate fragments display generic features of an advertising, encyclopedic entry, an internal monologue, or an anatomy lecture, they are all infused with the narratorial intrusions: "At the airport, a big ad on a glass wall *all-knowingly* asserts (…)" (Tokarczuk 2019: 234, emphasis added) – the phrase "all-knowingly" is not neutral but displays narratorial shading. On the note scribbled on a ticket, the narrator adds: "To my mind", clearly indicating personal opinion (Tokarczuk 2019: 124). In some passages, the narrator's voice is not obviously present, still, it resurfaces in other ways. For example, in Doctor Blau's travels, the eponymous doctor shares the main narrator's fascination with bodies preserved in formaldehyde. In Josephine Soliman's letters to Francis I, there is a plea not to consider humans in a hierarchical way, the black race being situated between the white race and

the animal kingdom. This is in tune with the narrator's tenderness towards and attraction to all beings and forms which depart from the accepted norm.

There are also other seams holding the novel together. These include numerous leitmotifs and cross references that appear throughout most of the passages, like the above-mentioned motif of preserved bodies, even if these are travellers at an airport who only give an impression of dead, preserved bodies ("Airports"). Dr Blau, who specializes in body preservation, considers himself to be committed to, among others, Soliman and Vesalius– names that recur in other novelistic entries. Vasalius's name is referenced, for example, in "The Achilles Tendon" and in "The History of Filip Verheyen"; Soliman is given his own separate sections in the form of his daughter's three letters to Francis I, Emperor of Austria. Altogether, the recurrent motifs and cross-references constitute a map across time and space, guiding the reader across the presented world. The Russian advertising slogan, likewise, can be read as a cross-reference to the Russian cult (Bieguni) which gives the novel its title in the original Polish version. Maori heads re-appear in Dr Blau's travels with added emotional shading in the description: "A small collection of shrunken Maori heads, masks made out of human skin – two extremely disturbing examples of these had also wound up in the crematorium" (Tokarczuk 2019: 143).

The narratorial voice, mindset and experience seems to be thus a filtering agent, and the main voice seeping through the disparate fragments and piecing them all back together into wholeness. In the next section, we will take a closer look at the narratorial strategy in the novel.

3.4. The Pragmatic Aspect

In the pragmatic context, the sender-receiver situation in *Flights* is particularly interesting. The opening parts are told from the point of view of the first-person singular narrator who is a participant in the story. This homodiegetic narrator reappears throughout the novel, marking a thematic full circle, from the moment of her childhood recognition of her own individual self: "there's nothing anyone can do now, here I am" (Tokarczuk 2019: 8), through her experiences during her travels, up to the final parts where she perceives the change she has undergone: "I've progressed" (Tokarczuk 2019: 402), and the entrance onto a plane in the final section which is equaled with the death and potential re-birth of the self. In Fowler's (1996 [1986]) distinction of the first-person narration, which is a more nuanced reworking of Uspensky's (1973) theory of narration, this is an Internal Narrator Type A[9], that is the story is told from the point of view of the character's consciousness, manifesting her evaluations of events, objects, phenomena,

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[9] See also Neary (2014).

and other travellers. In this particular case, however, the narrator refrains from revealing her feelings, there are no *verba sentiendi* or other descriptions of the narrator's emotions. Instead, the reader experiences a matter-of-fact narration that prefers extended passages of physical description to psychological exposition: "I have a practical build. I'm petite, compact. My stomach is tight, small, undemanding. My lungs and my shoulders are strong. …" (Tokarczuk 2019: 13). To better understand nuances in the way this story is told, we will apply Paul Simpson's modal grammar of point of view (Simpson 1993), in which narrators can be further subdivided into positive (Simpson 1993: 56) (which lays bare the psyche of the narrator), negative (Simpson 1993:56) (less tangible, the reader is uncertain about the facticity of the events told), or neutral (Simpson 1993: 60) (not attempting to carry out any kind of a psychological evaluation, depending on their modality). According to this distinction, this particular type of narration would be called neutral, as opposed to positive or negative shading.

This main narration is, however, broken up and peppered with other characters and their stories. These include other first-person narrations, like "Josephine Soliman's letters to Francis I, Emperor of Austria" which is certainly not told in the neutral mode, as is the main narrator's story. Even when there is a descriptive passage, it reveals anger, frustration, and grief among others: "My father was skinned like an animal, stuffed haphazardly with grass, and placed in the company of other stuffed human beings among the remains of unicorns, monstruous toads, two-headed fetuses floating in alcohol and other similar curiosities" (Tokarczuk 2019: 270). This first-person narration displays thus positive shading. There are passages written in third person singular narration, e.g. "Dr Blau's Travels", "Ash Wednesday Feast", "Kunicki", or "Harem (Menchu's Tale)" (Tokarczuk 2019: 113) with a second person direct appeal to the reader: "So picture perhaps the cells of a honeycomb…". Third person, heterodiegetic narrations in Uspensky and Fowler's understanding constitute External Narrators which can also be further subdivided into positive, negative, or neutral depending on their modality. Third person narration can switch, however, between the narratorial mode, that is from outside a character's consciousness, and reflective mode, told from within the consciousness of a character, as well as between the positive, negative and neutral mode. In Kunicki's story, for example, phrases such as: "He *must have* smoked a cigarette, and *maybe* even two" (Tokarczuk 2019: 270, emphasis added) create a distance between the narrator and character, the former expressing his guesses, and thus uncertainty about the story told. They would belong thus to the narratorial mode. These are followed by the character's *verba sentiendi*: "He hated when she asked him what he was thinking about" (Tokarczuk 2019: 32), where the distance disappears, and we enter the reflective mode. In the collection, there can also be found first person plural narration, as in the passage entitled "Belly Dance": "We lowered our voices because we were forced to do so" (Tokarczuk 2019: 110).

In each of these voices, however, the reader can recognize an echo of the author herself, most obviously in the main first-person narration which opens and ends the novel and is interweaved in between other voices. Thus, it can be assumed that the sender-author of the message-novel hides behind the narrator, a contemporary traveller, a twenty-first century nomad who shares many characteristics and biographical facts with the author herself, including her interest in psychology – both the narrator and author studied psychology at Warsaw University but abandoned this career choice and opted for writing instead. As the author's alter ego, the narrator expresses a range of beliefs and attitudes and poses existential and philosophical questions ringing loudly at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Interestingly, as Simon Statham and Rocio Montoro (2019: 366) notice, in recent years, there has been a revival of the figure of the author whose demise began with Roland Barthes 1967 essay "The Death of the Author". Guy et al. (2018, qtd. in Statham and Montoro 2019: 366) write about authorial intention, Shen (2018), pronounces the "resurrection of the author" (Shen 2018: 61, in Statham and Montoro 2019: 366) and notices the trend towards "a more balanced view of the author, the text and the context", Hadar (2018) proposes that in the process of reading fiction we can "account for authorial image by focusing on those cases in which characters and authors conflate."

On an inattentive reading, the variety of narrations we briefly outlined above would, once again, lead to the conclusion that there is little holding the separate stories together. However, focusing on the authorial presence in *Flights*, the various voices can be seen as different ways of expressing the author's opinions or ideology. They provide a larger freedom of expression than any of the narrative types would allow in isolation. For example, while first person narratorial entries are restrained by the narrator's unwillingness to reveal her feelings, this can be compensated for by giving the voice to other characters in either first, or third person narrations using *verba sentiendi*.

Flights – an attempt to define the genre

The analysis has demonstrated beyond dispute that the novel *Flights* departs from the genre model of a classic novel. Its composition is fragmentary and dissonant. Individual chapters are not composed in accordance with the cause-and-effect principle. Some relate to each other, but not in a linear progression. Some are linked by a specific thread, others only by the theme of the novel. Structurally, it is then a collection of loosely related stories in a first- or third-person singular or plural narration. There is no central hero around whom the events would revolve. Instead, there are single-threaded, sometimes only several-paragraphs long text forms which present a single thought, illustrate a detail, explain an event, a statement, or state of affairs in an extremely concise, often

aphoristic way. What brings the separate pieces together, though, is the persona of the main narrator who travels around the world, in space and time, and also within, and the leading theme of the novel – of the broadly understood journey.

In the face of the fragmentarity of the text and the multiplicity of genre forms, can we then use, in relation to Tokarczuk's text, the term created by Wojtak to describe similar forms but in the domain of media and functional communication as *a genre in the form of a collection*?

Beyond doubt, compositional elements of the novel meet the criteria mentioned by Wojtak (2019: 276):

a. In its final form, the novel is built out of various genres listed in the analytical part.

b. There is a clear textual frame in the form of the title of the novel and specific compositional rules defined by individual chapters and their titles. The title does not provide cues as to a genre type (which is in accordance with Wojtak's rules), nor does it paraphrase the genre type. It nevertheless indicates coherence and thematic correlation with the texts included in the work. The title alludes to the Russian religious sect which originated in the seventeenth century and believed that the world is the work of Satan and the only way to free yourself from his influence is to be constantly on the move, in motion, as man who is motionless is particularly susceptible to its destructive influence. The leading theme of *Flights* is the rejection of such stillness. What is important to notice, however, is that the author does not think of a journey only in the literal sense. On receiving the 2008 Polish literary prize Nike, she explained: "It is not a book about travelling. There are no descriptions of landmarks and places. It is not a travel diary or a reportage. I wanted to have a look at what it means to travel, to be on the move. What is the meaning of it? What do we gain by it?"

c. Regarding the fixed and repetitive compositional regularities distinguished by Wojtak, i.e.:
    1) the sylvan composition, in which monothematic and isofunctional utterances representing various genres are grouped
    2) block systems, and
    3) structure based on contamination (Wojtak 2006: 145), the text we are discussing is characterized by a multi-genre but monothematic composition, as all component texts are linked by the theme of a journey in Tokarczuk's rendition of it.

d. Moreover, the condition of the functional culmination is met. This is because the discussed work, as well as its individual textual realizations, can be assigned a specific global function, in accordance with Wojtak's assumptions. For example, the global function of the novel is not a simple sum of the genres

it comprises. With regard to the communication goals assigned to individual components of the genre in the form of a collection, we are dealing in this case with a subsidiary system (on this level, Wojtak distinguishes between hierarchical and conjunctive systems, in addition to subsidiary systems).

e. What is more, a parameter relating to one of the rules ordering the transmitter-receiver relations and other communication parameters is met. In *Flights*, this relationship is not regulated.

f. Tokarczuk's novel also fulfills the multi-plot condition, as evidenced by the analyses in parts 3 and 4.

In addition, the content analysis of the novel indicates the dispersion of plot lines but also the possibility of assembling them together into one unity, forming a logical whole. In fact, the work, despite being made up of multiple genres and styles, and unregulated transmitter-receiver relations, produces a complete text with a specific global function which does not match the functions of individual components. Meeting these conditions and complementing them with content analysis brings one to the conclusion that this novel can be considered an example of *a genre in the form of a collection*.

4. Conclusions

The conducted analyses have demonstrated that *Flights* are, from the genological point of view, a novel departing from the canonical form of the genre pattern. It does not retain the cause-and-effect relationship typical of the classic novel, it does not introduce or create the main protagonist who would participate in all the narrative strands. Tokarczuk's novel, moreover, breaks the characteristic for a classic novel rule of chronology of events.

The attempt at analysing the novel using the tools proposed by Wojtak, thanks to relativizing what to most linguists is an impassable barrier of the literary character of a text, and thanks to Adamzik's latest findings, allows for precise conclusions to be reached concerning Tokarczuk's work. This very combination of two points of view (Wojtak's and Adamzik's) allows, in turn, to make claims about the universality of the method Wojtak originally proposed for media and religious texts, and its potential application to study functional, media and literary texts, and also those texts which are represented in related fields. Concerning the analyzed text, it confirms the view that Tokarczuk's novel should not be analyzed through the prism of a single genre only but, following Wojtak and the representatives of the German linguistics, Adamzik and Fix, from the perspective of inter-genre relations. Such an approach allows not only to conclude that the analyzed material verges on the fringes of the genre pattern of the novel, but also

allows to notice other intra-textual dependencies and consider the analyzed text as a genre in the form of a collection, as indicated by both the structural, stylistic, and pragmatic interpretation but also and the cognitive analysis conducted from the position of a literary scholar.

Bearing in mind the fact that Wojtak's method, complemented with the relativizing assumptions of Adamzik, has been successfully applied in the study of this exemplary literary text, we are convinced that future attempts of similar analyses may pave the way, in the German studies, to integrate the literary and linguistic approaches to studying literary, functional, and other related texts. Thanks to the common goals guiding us in our research (as a linguist and a literary scholar), and thanks to the combination of linguistic components with content analysis conducted from the perspective of a literary scholar not limited to genre considerations, it has been possible to recognize two levels of the collection: genre in the form of a collection in relation to genological considerations, and a collection of content elements which ultimately come together to create one coherent whole of artistic expression. And yet, in the context of the latter there emerges a question whether the novel as a collection of disjointed fragments is a successful way of portraying contemporary reality? Or is such quartering, in the novelistic anatomist Philip Verheyen's words, only "a pretence" that happens "on the surface, underneath which, however, the plan remains intact, unalterable?" (Tokarczuk 2018: 218). In other words, if the default way to access reality for an honest twenty-first century reader, a few decades after the onset of postmodernist deconstruction, seems to be through such randomly accessible fragments, is a novel made up of just such fragments a serious imaginative feat, inviting a proper engagement with this reality, or is it an act of simple metonymic mirroring, confirming the prevalent worldview? What is certain, even given the massive technological developments over the last few centuries, the phantom pain remains incurable, and our bodies long for completeness.

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