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TEXTUAL CAVES: EXPANDING THE LITERARY WRITING SPACE

Abstract: Marecki discusses three textual caves created by Polish concrete poets: Stanisław Dróżdż's *Między* (1977); Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka's *Krótka historia przypadku* (1997); and Dróżdż's *Żyłki* (2002). The medium of all three works was a white cubicle placed in a gallery. Each piece played with the corporeality of the viewer and their experience of networked space, expanding the concept of writing space in literature. *Między* is an original work of international importance, whereas the two later caves are re-mediations, recycled variations of the original subject. The true innovation of *Między* is the idea to place text in a space beyond the page, picture or gallery wall. Dróżdż's break with tradition created a networked piece; the body of the viewer is physically inscribed on the work when he or she enters it. Dawidek's installation, created two decades later, has been called a hypertext in space. Therein, the artist incorporated new physical solutions, including links to the lexias, which were written by hand and glued to the walls. Dawidek thus nuanced the use of corporeality in her work, which was designed for a particular space (the viewer moves through the book by following physical links; for instance, when the text mentions exiting, the viewer actually follows a link towards the door). Finally, Dróżdż's 2002 work *Żyłki* constitutes another step forward. In a similar manner to Dawidek, the artist used physical links. By placing the work in the space that was occupied by *Między* back in 1977, he thus recycled his initial medium. Marecki utilizes tools for describing the nature of the writing space developed by thinkers like J.D. Bolter and applies Zenon Fajfer's concept of "Liberatura" to develop a media-specific analysis of these three textual caves, as well as the intertextual relations between them.

Keywords: writing space, remediation, cave writing, textual caves, concrete poetry, visual text, spatial humanities, digital humanities

> "Space is everywhere and its definitions are legion. We are inherently spatial beings: we live in a physical world and routinely use spatial concepts of distance and direction to navigate our way through it. But this routine and subconscious sense of space is not the one that engages us as humanists. We are drawn to issues of meaning, and space offers a way to understand fundamentally how we order our world."
>
> David J. Bodenhamer, *Spatial Humanities*

The above statement might serve well to lead us into the present description of experimental spatial writing techniques.[1] The digital humanities now recognizes space as a most important tool in researching and describing both history and contemporary life. Paradoxically, owing to the "flat" nature of the book, which was the chief medium of knowledge and learning in the print era, the role of space previously went undiscovered. As a result, there was nothing like "spatial reading" or, in broader terms, a spatial sensitivity. By contrast, now defined as an integral part of textual inscription, space becomes a major point of reference in contemporary literary theory.

A crucial step in this direction was Carl Darryl Malmgren's 1985 work *Fictional Space in the Modernist and Postmodernist American Novel*.[2] Malmgren understood narrative as the creation of various spaces, among which he distinguished iconic space, alphabetical space, lexical space, the space of the page, and compositional space. His work encompassed writers' spatial techniques over the course of the previous century, as well as experimental uses of the materiality of the text in the medium of the book. Sharon Spencer took another approach;[3] exploring the open and closed spaces of modernist and postmodernist novels, she discussed the use of multiple perspectives and, following Einstein, the application of the category of time in space. Similar investigations appeared in the work of Michael Kauffman, who proposed the term "Textual Bodies."[4] In Poland too, in 1999 the artist and theorist Zenon Fajfer launched his manifesto "An Appendix to the Dictionary of Literary Terms". Therein he discussed not only the space of the represented world, but also the form of the book itself, which, as a medium, held as much significance for him as the contents of the work. Fajfer surveyed selected concepts that were already included in the dictionary of literary terms, and proposed the inclusion of a new category, "the space of the literary work". He asked:

> For what is THE SPACE OF THE LITERARY WORK? If we believe the terms quoted from the dictionary, it is nothing. There is no such entry, there is only space within the literary work, in other words (with some simplification), the scene of the action. And yet the first and most fundamental space we see, even before we delve into the work, is the book—a material object! Printed sheets of paper bound between covers—this is the space of the literary work, which contains all the other spaces of the work. And unlike the latter, it is utterly real.[5]

The present article turns to discussions about three textual "caves", works that are situated at the crossroads between visual art and literature. The works are all

1   D.J. Bodenhamer, J. Corrigan (eds.), *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010, p. 14.

2   C.D. Malmgren, *Fictional Space in the Modernist and Postmodernist American Novel*, London–Toronto: Bucknell University Press, 1985.

3   S. Spencer, *Space Time and Structure in the Modern Novel*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1971.

4   Cf. M. Kaufmann, *Textual Bodies: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Print*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994.

5   Z. Fajfer, "Aneks do słownika terminów literackich", in: idem, *Liberatura czyli literatura totalna* [*Liberature, or: Total Literature*], Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010, p. 13.

examples of transitional, remediating literary experiments that broaden the horizons of textual experience and the space of literary texts. In each case, the author has classified the work as literary and has aimed to create a "book", but none of them have used the medium of the codex. This allows for pioneering explorations into the spatiality of literature and its networked nature. The works described below emerge from experiments in concrete poetry but can also be read in the light of electronic media (networks, ergodicity, non-linearity), using tools from the realm of literary studies and art criticism. Textual caves are seen as a new medium for text, exploring new properties through the use of the spatial and physical conditions of the text.

The Analogue Hypertext of Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka

Speaking about her 1997 "hypertext in space" *Krótka historia przypadku* [*A Brief History of Chance*], Małgorzata Dawidek (b. 1976) said that "Technological thinking was so foreign to me then that I wrote the first version of the book by hand."[6] This authorial declaration is unique from creators of literary hypertexts, which is unambiguously perceived as a digital genre. At the same time, it reveals the author's intuition in recognizing the capabilities of the hypertext before it became widespread, a medium that is able to map new sensitivities and to situate the body of the viewer/reader in the space of the text in an innovative way. As Dawidek added in an interview from 2005: "At the time, I was not thinking in terms of «hypertext» or «Net art». I wasn't even thinking in terms of the medium of the computer. My premise was to make a book in space. To construct and write a book into which one could physically enter."[7] This "book in space" came about through a combination of two spheres of activity: the author simultaneously explored the fields of literature and the visual arts, while writing post-disciplinary theoretical reflections. Dawidek wrote by hand and, as a painting student in Jarosław Kozłowski's studio, hung her hypertext upon the walls of the Poznań Academy of Fine Arts. Her hypertext book, exhibited as a graduation project to a small audience of interested parties, was displayed in the Academy's exhibition hall.

As Mariusz Pisarski once wrote, Dawidek's analogue cybertext came about at a time when "the theory of hypertext was being born near the fjords in Bergen."[8] As such, we should hardly be surprised that no critical readings of the work emerged in the 1990s. These only surfaced when the book was presented in the space of Ha!art's

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6   "«Książka w przestrzeni» i «przestrzeń książki»" ["«The Book in Space» and «The Space of the Book»"] – Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka in Conversation with Piotr Marecki], *Ha!art* 2005, no. 19 (z. B), pp. 187-191.

7   Ibidem, p. 189.

8   M. Pisarski, "Spacer z siostrą Ariadny" ["A Walk with the Sister of Ariadne"], *Ha!art*, http://www.ha.art.pl/felietony/972-mariusz-pisarski-spacer-z-siostra-ariadny-o-krotkiej-historii-przypadku-malgorzaty-dawidek-gryglickiej.html [accessed 2014-04-21].

editorial office in Krakow in 2010. For a period of over two months (from June to August) visitors could enter the book.[9] A further exhibition of *A Brief History of Chance* in Częstochowa the following year generated more readings.[10] Articles were written by Mariusz Pisarski,[11] Izabela Kopania,[12] and Ewa Wójtowicz,[13] who began to map out the reception of the work, stressing that this was a delayed response.

The point of departure for Dawidek's project is theoretical reflection, writing, and the production of art – visual texts, textual objects, analogue hypertexts. The artist is, on the one hand, a concrete poet and a painter who makes projects in space. On the other hand, she is an academic researcher whose works include the monumental *Historia tekstu wizualnego: Polska po roku 1967* [*History of Visual Text: Poland after 1967*],[14] which is her theoretical point of arrival and *magnum opus*. Her critical reflections concern the links between the word, its designator, and images. *A Brief History* is just one of several spatial literary works by the artist; these also include *słowo* [*word*] (installation, 1998); *Wspólny pokój* [*Shared Room*] (short stories in space, 1999); and *Trzy opowiadania o czekaniu* [*Three Stories about Waiting*] (short story in space, 1999). Other works that use iconic space are *De-kody* [*De-codes*] (2003), a book built around the axis of the alphabet, and *DEFINICJA* [*DEFINITION*] (2005), a textual/painting installation taking place between texts (or the meanings of words) and three kinds of white. A work made in 2013, *Bajka o Człowieku Zwanym Ram Tam Tam* [*The Fairy Tale of a Man Named Ram Tam Tam*] is another analogue hypertext (this time for children) made up of seven chapters (or lands) situated in seven aquariums, among other places. Because of its use of movement and the sense of touch, it is also suitable for visually- and hearing-impaired children.

Stanisław Dróżdż: The Anxiety of Influence?

As Dawidek describes in the long interview *Odprysk poezji / A Piece of Poetry* (2011), the concrete poet Stanisław Dróżdż (1939-2009) played a major role in her development. The discussion between Dawidek and Drożdż in *A Piece of Poetry*

9   M. Dawidek Gryglickia, *Krótka Historia Przypadku*, Ha!art, Kraków, 27 June – 30 August 2010.
10 M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Krótka Historia Przypadku*, City Art Gallery in Częstochowa, 14 May – 12 June 2011.
11 M. Pisarski, *In the Textual Caves of Malgorzata Dawidek-Gryglicka: Nonlinearity and Ergodicity in "A Short History of an Accident" and "Definition"*, Cybertext Yearbook 2010, University of Jyväskylä [accessed 2014-04-21].
12 I. Kopania, "W sieci przypadku, w sieci wyboru" ["In the Net of Chance, in the Net of Choice"], *Czas Kultury* 2010, no. 5, pp. 119-123.
13 E. Wójtowicz, *W przestrzeni tekstu* [*In the Space of the Text*], O.pl Polski Portal Kultury, 19.05.2011, http://magazyn.o.pl/2011/malgorzata-dawidek-gryglicka-miejska-galeria-sztuki-czestochowa/ [accessed 2014-04-21].
14 M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Historia tekstu wizualnego. Polska po 1967 roku*, Kraków–Wrocław: Korporacja Ha!art – Wrocław Museum of Contemporary Art, 2012.

is unique: they are less interviewer and interviewee and more two equal conversationalists. Dawidek speaks of her eleven-year relationship with Dróżdż as a process of "absorption while maintaining distance."[15] Their first meetings were the result of her research as an art school student, which led to occasional correspondence and telephone conversations and transformed into the first signs of trust. Dróżdż, whose sickness generally prevented him from granting interviews (throughout his life he gave only a few short ones), decided to hold a longer conversation with Dawidek, thus breaking down the distance which generally separated him from his critics. In outlining Dróżdż's character, Dawidek states that he was always a man of few words, who always got to the heart of things. The conversation/portrait/monograph turns into a relationship, which Dawidek calls an understanding.

In her introduction to *A History of Visual Text*, Dawidek explains the significance of the year 1968, denoted by the work's subtitle, which for her is the starting point for visual text in Poland. In a broad sense, this relates to the socio-cultural transformations of the nation; in a narrower sense, Dróżdż's literary debut occurred in this year. Dawidek writes:

> Dróżdż was the first poet to abandon metaphor and narration in favor of visuality—a new dimension of language. He did so at a time when visual artists were giving up figuration and representation in favor of communication through the written or spoken word. That swapping of artistic means, connected with the rejection of a language devalued by the former political regime and of art placed in the service of power, resulted in the most original and interesting artistic movements in post-war Poland: conceptual art and visual poetry.[16]

As a central figure for concrete poetry in Poland and, perhaps, the whole of Central Europe, Dróżdż stands as a singular figure, an original voice in experimental writing techniques.[17] *A History of Visual Text* was published simultaneously with the conversation described above; the volume contained a quantity of work by Dróżdż, which Dawidek had managed to compile after years of research in the artist's archive, and serves as a monument to a key figure in both literary and visual art criticism. We ought to parenthetically add that an earlier book *Tekst-tura* [*Text-ile*], edited by Dawidek in 2005, referred to Dróżdż as the patron of visual text experiments in Poland.[18]

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[15] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Odprysk poezji. Stanisław Dróżdż mówi / A Piece of Poetry: Conversations with Stanisław Dróżdż*, transl. K. Bazarnik, Kraków–Warszawa: Korporacja Ha!art – National Center for Culture, 2012, p. 326.

[16] Ibidem, p. 332.

[17] Dróżdż's work has been the subject of many articles, cf. *Historia tekstu wizualnego*, op. cit., pp. 117-203.

[18] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Tekst-tura. Wokół nowych form tekstu literackiego i tekstu jako dzieła sztuki* [*Text-ile: On New Forms of Literary Text as a Work of Art*], Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2005.

Between

A Brief History of Chance is a kind of conversation with Dróżdż's best-known work, the 1977 piece *Między* [*Between*]. Indeed, when describing Dróżdż's work, Dawidek herself calls *Między* "absolutely the most important."[19] The work is composed of the individual letters of the word *między* [*between*], which, according to the principles of combinatorics, are scattered about the white walls of a cube-shaped gallery space. *Between* covers the walls, ceiling, and floor of the gallery. Through this strategy, and even in spite of the fact that the individual letters are in two dimensions, the work itself "happens" in space, "between" the letters.

This is the first textual piece that Dróżdż made in space; its unique innovation was in going beyond the two-dimensions of a sheet of paper. This is why, in relation to the reception of the work, Dawidek theorizes that *Between* prompts a departure from traditional means of interpreting text; instead in Dróżdż's work there is a "virtual, visual transfer and combination of its parts."[20] Dawidek also proves that *Between* is the first piece of visual text "with a network structure."[21] Reading and interpreting Dróżdż's work seems key to Dawidek in these investigations of the writing space of the text. She examines changes in the status of the reader, from outside of the text to within the text, and the integral link between the work and the reader's body. She believes that we ought to underline the material aspect of Dróżdż's work and thus shift the act of reading/seeing from a mental plane to a material one.

Understood in this way, and considering the work's affinity with concrete poetry, every material aspect is essential. As Dawidek notes, the size of the letters is of fundamental importance here, as this determines the process of separation from the text. The letters are enlarged and placed on the walls, ceiling and floor, places heretofore reserved for the display of visual art; in this way, the letters become icons. Here the reader/viewer is a physical/material part of the work. It is only here that the text comes into being; the work ceases to "happen" when the viewer exits the gallery and no longer experiences it within its environment. The process of reading/looking is also unconventional—the word is made concrete in the reader's mind in a different way. The text scattered before/behind/above/under/beside the reader assails them, seems to follow them, bending over the reader. Tadeusz Sławek compared the process of reading *Between* to the flight of a fly.[22] The reception process has neither a beginning nor an end; the viewer is always "between", caught up in the process and action of reading, which does not happen if, for instance, the work is reproduced on a sheet of paper or on film.

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19   M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Historia tekstu wizualnego*, op. cit., p. 170.
20   Ibidem, p. 172.
21   In *Historia tekstu wizualnego* Dawidek Gryglicka describes a forgotten work by Wojciech Sztukowski, *Dno* [*The Bottom*], which ought to be regarded as the first Polish textual cave.
22   This trope is described in detail in *Historia tekstu wizualnego*, op. cit., p. 173.

Explaining the combinatoric mathematical structure of *Between*, the Dróżdż stressed that:

> The key to this work is firstly, that there is never the word *między* ["between" or "among"] written linearly. Secondly, and lastly, the word *między* can be read if you follow a stepwise order. But there are still other possibilities: in this respect, one letter can be in one diagonal position, the second in the second, the third in the third, and so on, up to the sixth. And that's all, that's the whole secret.[23]

As remarked above, the materiality of the work is executed through the viewer/reader being physically inscribed within it. The networked structure comes in turn from seeing and reading the symbols, from reading what lies between the letters, i.e. from going beyond their physical shape. If the spatial arrangement was lacking, this form of reading would be impossible: "His body finds itself in the body of signs, which do not create the word itself; nonetheless—through the physical presence of the viewer—it is present here, as it rebounds from every letter as an echo, hanging somewhere in the space «between» them."[24] It is the scale, the non-linear reading, and also the processual and performative nature of this act that affect the reading of the work:

> The shift in the roles of the text-as-subject and the reader-as-object is very clearly sketched out here. The text is made equivalent to, even dominates over the reader/viewer, who concretizes, transforms into a structure, into a text, is read by the text. The connection between the viewer and the text shifts from the mental plane to the material.[25]

Chance

Remediation expert Jay David Bolter describes written media from the earliest forms of writing through to the age of the computer; and he is convinced that it is possible to create print hypertexts. To his mind, one could even use print and handwriting to achieve many of the literary and rhetorical effects of hypertext.[26] Dawidek's analogue hypertext can therefore be viewed as an enactment of the American critic's theoretical model. Dawidek's work begins with a lexia marked Number 1:

I
A rainy morning.
Seven fifty-eight.
The bus is packed.

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[23] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Odprysk poezji…*, op. cit., p. 254.

[24] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Historia tekstu wizualnego*, op. cit., p. 174.

[25] Ibidem, p. 173.

[26] J.D. Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, New York: Routledge, 2001.

I take the same route several times each day, excepting holidays and weekends. I go from the north part of town through R., part of P. and T., past the city library, the old university buildings, and end up at W. Square by the 30 loop. I stand there for around three minutes, because this is generally the amount of time it takes for the passengers and the lights to change. Then, because of the tight corner, the bus drives slowly down K. Street. It passes the entrance to the park by Hotel Georges, then the hotel itself, and turns right down N. Avenue toward S. Roundabout.

B. is shoved by people boarding and retreats to the rear of the bus, turning toward the window. Rain starts to fall. A bus driving the opposite way pulls up to a stop on the other side of the street.
The windows of the vehicles draw near.
Then B. sees her.[27]

The last sentence initiates the action of the book in space: in the next lexia, we discover that the figure spotted on the passing bus recalls someone who was dear to the protagonist over a decade ago. B. realizes that the person looks almost the same, has the same ticks and gestures, and flicks her hair from her shoulder as before. The action speeds up because the figure, seen from a distance, gets off the bus. B. has to act quickly and so does the reader. Thereafter the reader can choose to follow various paths through the multilinear narrative.[28]
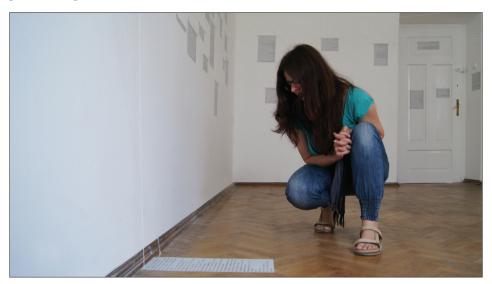

Photo 1: M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Krótka historia przypadku*, Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010. By Ilona Łyżwa.

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[27] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Krótka historia przypadku*, Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010. All quotes are taken from this version of the exhibition.

[28] Mariusz Pisarski has written on the subject of narratives of hypertexts, non-linearity, and ergodicity in *In the Textual Caves of Malgorzata Dawidek-Gryglicka*, op. cit. The critic researched the properties of analogue hypertext with tools suggested by A.J. Aerseth for the category of hypertexts.

One version of the story involves a swift decision to get off the bus and follow the woman; the male protagonist visits several places in the city but never manages to catch up with the woman, so he eventually decides to head home. In another version, the doors slam shut, so the protagonist must wait to get off at the next stop. He picks up the trail of the woman he noticed, who vanishes into a hotel. After a short conversation with the porter, the man returns home. In the third version, the man goes to work and returns home, where he is visited by a taxi driver friend. The friend describes an accident in front of the hotel. They go off to the hospital together, only to find that the woman has been hit by a car.

Ewa Wójtowicz notes that Dawidek's work can be compared to experiments in geolocation and location media; this means navigating real spaces in order to find virtual signs and non-analogue objects. As Wójtowicz notes, hypertext need not be tied to virtuality, because movement within the hypertext can mean navigating a real, geographic space.[29] This game between old and new, between print and digital-based media, is a key attribute of Dawidek's work. As Bolter writes:

> A hypertext is like a printed book that the author has attacked with a pair of scissors and cut into convenient verbal sizes. The difference is that the electronic hypertext does not simply dissolve into a disordered heap, because the author also defines a scheme of electronic connections to indicate relationships among the slips.[30]

As an analogue hypertext, *A Brief History of Chance* is then structured as a kind of loop. Adopting Sławek's metaphor, and drawing a comparison between Dawidek and Dróżdż, the work is like the flight of a fly; however, it is built out of physical nylon threads, a multi-linear tale composed of lexia. As befits a work created by a concrete poet, the gray color of the paper is significant, as are its laser-cut letters, which, when glued to the walls, windows, doors, and floor, adopt the color of the surface to which they are affixed.[31] Lexia Y19 is one of many that matches the rainy atmosphere of the day on which the story is set:

> Slipping in the freezing rain B. goes down K. Street, through W. Square by 30 loop, passes the old university buildings, the city library, cuts through parts of T. and P., and heads on north through R.
> Cold.
> Wind.[32]

It could be because of the cloudiness of the chilly day on which the story is set that the artist decides to include an overwhelming quantity of details: signs, times of day, descriptions of spaces, radio bulletins. This excess of detail stands in for emotions that are not described in the text; Dawidek mostly eliminates adjectives, and the work

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[29]   Cf. E. Wójtowicz, *W przestrzeni tekstu*, op. cit.
[30]   J.D. Bolter, *Writing Space*, op. cit., p. 35.
[31]   This refers to the 2010 version, which was not handwritten.
[32]   M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Krótka historia przypadku*, op. cit.

becomes a catalogue of stage directions. This can be seen in Lexia Z17, which reads as follows:

> An explanation—The point is that. Today I got the impression. I saw her on the bus. On K. Street.
> By the Hotel Georges.
> Confusion. A pursing of lips.
> A question—Is it possible to return to the city?
> Waiting.
> Confusion.
> Listening.
> A slap of a hand on a countertop. Hanging up.[33]

Adjectives impede the action, define it, build atmosphere. By contrast, in Dawidek's work, the mood builds through the color of the pages, the monotony of the gray paper, and the (mainly) white letters. The work can be compared to a fragmentary, impulsive database strung out in space, filled by the reader and his or her movements within the textual body of the analogue hypertext. Dawidek's looped reader is not, however, transparently immersed in a spatial text with transparency of style. The author uses the physical and architectural attributes of the space in which the book is executed: the daytime scenes are situated nearer to the windows, the concluding scenes nearer to the exit. The reader is forced into some acrobatics if he or she is to hold the threads of the work together; when an object containing text falls from a drawer, the reader/viewer, moving in parallel with the protagonist, has to stoop or kneel to read its contents.

Critics have compared the structure of Dawidek's work to Krzysztof Kieślowski's famous 1981 [1987] film *Blind Chance*. The film toys with the fate of protagonist Witek (played by Bogusław Linda) and shows three different versions of his life story, each of which depends on whether or not he manages to catch a departing train. In one version, Witek becomes a fiery communist, in another he joins the political opposition, and in the final version he adopts a position that is a sort of compromise between the two extremes. Dawidek's reviewers indicated that her structure was borrowed from Kieślowski's film, that the artist had recycled the film director's idea by replacing the train with a city bus. In this instance, the "to be or not to be" moment depends on whether or not Grylicka's protagonist manages to get off the bus to chase the woman.

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[33] Ibidem.

Photo 2: M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Krótka historia przypadku*, Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010. By Ilona Łyżwa.

Grylicka's borrowing from the medium of film is not limited to structural ideas, e.g. the use of stage directions. It is also present in a certain kind of dynamic, motion, or spatiality. This comes through in the author's use of verbs and is associated with the idea of movement (driving, running, walking) or the lack thereof (standing, waiting, eating, drinking coffee). This focus on the detailed presentation of "micro-activities" recalls the structure of a film script; the principle of transforming actions into screen-time means that a page of script equals a minute of film. For Dawidek, the verbal description of movements and micro-activities translates into a physical pursuit of the logic of stage directions. Grabbing at the physical threads of the story, the viewer moves past the scattered lexia, physically ranging from one wall of the gallery to the next, coming near the windows, approaching the door, performing the same actions as the protagonist in the story (looking through the window, moving, stooping over). When the reader follows this haptic thread to Lexia Z11—text that is stuck to the window—he or she physically approaches the glass and reads: "Wiping the face. Looking at a hand. Opening a window. Rain."[34] As is the case with Lexia Z8, the reader must, like the protagonist, stoop to the ground in order to read the paper glued to the floor:

> Finding nothing, he tosses everything in disarray.
> He goes to the wardrobe.

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[34]   Ibidem.

He kneels on floor.
Again he pulls out a few drawers.
He sorts through some objects.[35]

As Dawidek herself states, *A Brief History of Chance* was about building a new form of reading, based on changing the position of the body and the mobility of the reader; in sum, the transition from static to dynamic reading. This movement is the only action that endures throughout the story, imposed by the structure (the short chunks of text or lexia) and the content (the search for the vanishing person). When asked about her methods of creation, Gryglicka states that she obsessively takes notes from her surroundings:

> I know no other way of reading, including the reading of the world, other than with a pencil in hand. This is a kind of work, but also a preparation for writing, or painting, for creation, it is nourishment, a kind of feeding oneself on phenomena, on texts, of satiating oneself with the other.[36]

For Dawidek, writing is a state of attention: capturing symbols and designing and responding to stimuli. As she states, owing to the "fairly delicate construction of the body" this process involves constant tension and the commitment of large amounts of energy, overactivity, impulsiveness, and danger.[37]

When preparing *A Brief History of Chance* in 1997, Dawidek was conscious of Dróżdż's position as the "Strong Poet" and of the role that he had played in the development of her own visual text. With this in mind, Dawidek's work can be understood as an attempt to overcome a certain anxiety of influence. When asked many years later about her relationship with Dróżdż, Dawidek emphasized Dróżdż's interest in physicality, the degree of trust that he placed in language. To her mind, Dróżdż explored the phenomenon of language through the accidental, iconic, and conceptual side of structure; his approach, however, was based on an affirmative trust in the system. Dawidek has a diametrically different attitude to language, which is filtered through a corporeal perspective. This is an approach that is above all based on a lack of trust, on revolt, and on a constant, impulsive, corrective relationship with the system of language.[38]

In creating their respective textual caves, the point of departure for both artists was therefore the same: they sought to break through the barrier of the piece of paper and to make the text spatial. It would seem, however, that the approach to the ques-

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[35] Ibidem.

[36] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Errata* [exhibition catalogue], transl. K. Bazarnik, Poznań: Galeria Muzalewska, 2011, p. 27.

[37] J. Jedliński, *Albo pisanie, albo malowanie: wywiad* z Małgorzatą Dawidek Gryglicką [*Either Writing or Painting: An Interview with Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka*], O.pl Polski Portal Kultury, http://magazyn.o.pl/2011/malgorzata-dawidek-gryglicka-errata-galeria-muzalewska-poznan/ [accessed 2014-04-21].

[38] Ibidem.

tion of physicality was defined and executed differently in each case, and, with this in mind, we might compare two relevant statements from both artists.

STANISŁAW DRÓŻDŻ
That was a great leap! That leap was a consequence of my work. It didn't come out of nothing. I simply didn't have enough space on a sheet of paper. I had to leave it and enter the [space] of the walls. What I wanted to say didn't fit the space of a sheet of paper anymore. The whole design of *Między* [*Between*] occupies the space of six pages. Just as it covers six walls of a room.[39]

MAŁGORZATA DAWIDEK
It was fundamentally important to me that the book should happen in space, that the reader/viewer could physically enter my fiction and follow the path of the narrative that he chose himself among all those I put forward.[40]

In another document, Gryglicka emphasizes the importance of what she describes as two streams of reading. In a rhythmic text with an A-B-A-B-A structure, the reader is caught in the net of the text. Here, A represents a focused state of reading and B represents movement.[41]

A comparison of the above statements proves already that there are significant differences in the ways in which the two artists approach language and physicality. For Dróżdż, language is a system in which one can find hidden structures, games, and generators that speak of it as a system. The mind and intentionality play the leading roles; the expansion of the writing surface into the spatial dimension means that the old medium is no longer sufficient ("What I wanted to say didn't fit the space of a sheet of paper anymore"). At any rate, the work is designed for the mind to decode in the cube-shaped gallery space. The body, movement, and the senses might play an important role, but they remain secondary.

In Dawidek's work, the primacy of the mind is replaced by the logic of the body that writes. Thus, in contrast to Dróżdż's precise, systematic, and combinatoric work, hers is fragmentary and chaotic. She gives primacy to the senses (sight, touch) and uses the whole body; the work is organized around movement, stops and starts, ruptures and uncertainties. Dawidek states that is important for her that the book "came about in space", a sentence which is a far cry from Dróżdż's strongly intentional statements. For Dawidek, the physicality of the book comes first, including the physicality of its reception. The most outstanding expression of this is the intuitive decision to write the first version by hand. In speaking of her spatial works, Dawidek makes reference to the sphere of physicality, its properties, how it can be felt, and the ways in which it can be used to absorb the surroundings, as well as the relationships between "people clad in corporeality". She uses the body of language:

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[39]   M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Odprysk poezji…*, op. cit., pp. 319-320.
[40]   "«Książka w przestrzeni» i «przestrzeń książki»", op. cit., p. 189.
[41]   M. Dawidek Gryglicka, artistic statement to the exibition *Krótka Historia Przypadku*, Ha!art, Kraków, 27 June – 30 August 2010.

It concerns both problems that concern me in my creative work, and tools with which I analyze them. Most of my works refer to the sphere of the body, its characteristics, ways of experiencing it, and ways of experiencing one's environment through it, as well as relations among people clad in corporeality. But in order to speak about all this I use another body, the body of language. In my opinion these two matters, the two bodies implicate and determine each other. The language of the body blends into the body of language. Thinking and communication in a certain language determines a conscious functioning in a given community. That is why in my work I focus on expanding corporeality by incorporating it into a linguistic context.[42]

In his reflections on the clash between old and new media, Bolter stresses the importance of space in both its individual and social dimension. According to the American scholar, the writer's thoughts are externalized during the course of writing. Writing, even writing on a computer screen, is a material practice, and it becomes difficult for a culture to decide where thinking ends and the materiality of writing begins, where the mind ends and the writing space begins. With any writing technique—on stone or clay, on papyrus or paper, and on the computer screen—the writer may come to regard the mind itself as a writing space. The behavior of the writing space becomes a metaphor for the human mind as well as for human social interaction.[43]

Bolter's thoughts constitute an ideal rendering of Dróżdż's working method: in seeking to intentionally express the principles of language, he transcended the sheet of paper. Bolter's ideas do not, however, cover the point of departure for Dawidek's work, at the core of which is a corporeal perception of the world and an attempt to express this corporeality (it is she who decides to expand the writing space). The materiality and spatiality of the writing are tightly bound to corporeal materiality, bringing us close to the field of new materialism (which grew out of the experiences of feminism).[44]

Nylon Threads

In summing up her long interview with Dróżdż, Dawidek states that, at the time when she and Dróżdż were becoming closer, he was interested in her projects, repeatedly asking her to bring in photographs and sketches.[45] She relates how Dróżdż was shown the above-described book-in-space, its hypertext structure, and the physical media that joined together the various lexia of the tale. It is not impossible then that Dróżdż's 2002 work *Żyłki* [*Nylon Threads*] was inspired by Dawidek's work, or more specifically by its technical solutions. A survey of Dróżdż's extant statements does not betray his ties to the work of his "student". However, in her review of *Nylon Threads* for *Czas Kultury*, Izabela Kopania suggests a revision of the old "master–disciple"

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42 M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Errata* [exhibition catalogue], op. cit., p. 32.

43 J.D. Bolter, *Writing Space…*, op. cit., p. 13.

44 Cf. R. Dolphijn, I. van der Tuin (eds.), *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*, Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2012.

45 M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Odprysk poezji…*, op. cit., p. 326.

formula. She speaks instead of a flow of inspiration, a confrontation between artists, or a sharing of similar suspicions.[46]

Nylon Threads was one of Dróżdż's most radical works. It also recycled certain elements of *Between*: the work was prepared for exhibition at the Foksal Gallery, making use of the same cube-shaped room, and the use of this familiar space allowed Dróżdż to initiate a game. *Nylon Threads* was meant to map out the material form of a reading of *Between*; it became a visualization of the above-described flight of the fly. It was built out of ten kilometers of millimeter-thick nylon thread, strung between the walls so that it was impossible to enter inside the structure. The lighting was also significant, as it concealed the points where the threads were attached to the white gallery walls. The threads themselves were a visible and well-lit part of the work; the masses of crisscrossing lines, with no beginning or end, indicated that the event was fragmentary and processual.

> Words are so contextualized that they fit one another. However, not every word requires a context. The nylon threads don't have it, but they were installed in such a way that they were inserted into the floor, ceiling and walls. The thread seemed to run from somewhere above, from the moon. It then ran through the gallery, and only there was it crossed. We only saw that piece of it. There was no beginning or end.[47]

It is significant that Dróżdż, who did not use a single word in *Nylon Threads*, saw his work more as being more literary than visual. In the long interview with Dawidek, he firmly dismisses the critics' intuition that the piece could be thought of an "environment."[48] Dróżdż's radical work goes one step further than the two caves previously discussed; it departs from both the sheet of paper and the walls of the gallery, and does not allow the reader to explore its interior. This is concrete poetry reduced to nothing, replaced by the line apprehended as a symbol, which is meant to be a model for the acts of reading and writing. It is the negative of *Between*, and it does not allow us to enter.

Conclusions

With the development of the digital humanities, the use of space in the field of the humanities could become a remarkably valuable tool. The analogue works of Dróżdż and Dawidek, situated between print and digital media, map in various ways the properties of spatial and networked methods of reading. These works call attention to their physical dimension, the materiality of the text, and raise questions concerning the expansion of the writing space. Therein, and as described by Grusin and Bolter, old and new media clash in a spirit of remediation. Analogue textual caves intuitively

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[46] Cf. I. Kopania, "W sieci przypadku, w sieci wyboru", *Czas Kultury* 2010, no. 5, p. 122.
[47] M. Dawidek Gryglicka, *Odprysk poezji…*, op. cit., p. 149.
[48] Cf. ibidem, p. 168.

paved the way for other experimental spatial writing techniques, including the use of solely digital media. One example is the famous Cave at Brown University, where visitors are immersed in text by wearing goggles and entering an advanced 3D environment.

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