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Research Article

The Countertextual Peripeteias of the Contemporary Humanities as a Political Challenge

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The aim of the article is an attempt at a philosophical recognition of the sense of changes that have been taking place in the contemporary humanities for several decades, as well as their political and institutional consequences. The subject of analysis are not any turns in the humanities, but only those that directly or indirectly question the primacy of writing and literacy as crucial means of opening access to the understanding of what a human being is. In the first part, I discuss the philosophical meaning of the metacategories of "turn" and "return" in the contemporary humanities. In the second part I present briefly a few turns that question the traditional sense of the humanities, understood as *studia humaniora*. In addition to the oral turn, I take into account the rhetorical, performative, memory, ludic, somatic, media, affective and post-colonial turns. In the last part I concern research on the institutional consequences that bring into question the primacy of writings in the humanities. I pose a question about the university and try to respond, referring to the Turner's concept of a *communitas*.

> Of all that is written, I love only what a person hath written with his blood. Write with blood, and thou wilt find that blood is spirit.
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> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*
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> *A Book for All and None*
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> Trans. Thomas Common

The turn and return categories in the humanities

Countless are the "turns" that have allegedly taken place in the most recent history of the humanities since the proclamation of the so-called linguistic turn. The value of all historical categories has been considerably downplayed by the vast number of successive turns that we know to have taken place in the humanities. The word "turn", whose original sense implied an essential change, a directional change or the changing of the possessor of a thing, today invokes a fashion, an ephemeral trend, rather than a pivotal moment that splits cultural history into periods. However, the periodisation effect attained with the concept of turn, albeit not without its problems, is one of several conceivable applications of this category, raising legitimate doubts. What we also need to address is its normative function, which must not be ignored out of hand.

Therefore, before we dismiss the "turn" as a category describing change in the humanities, we must identify and appreciate the positive intentions that inspire both the originators of turns and those who research them. The meaning of this category can be reduced neither to commercially effective terminology nor a content-based enunciation of a metahumanistic diagnosis on the direction of historical changes in scholarly interests. The category has an obviously normative aspect, too. The turn takes place *against* something and *towards* something. This movement against and towards something is never without its consequences for the humanities. A change in humanistic interests results typically from positive (humanistic, as it happens) concern for the human being, which is manifested in dissent against the reductionist view of the essence of humanity, prevailing at the time. A turn is a critical deflection in the trajectory followed by the dominant and seemingly progressive knowledge that man has of himself. What I have in mind is not some vulgar substantiation of the essence of man and his history, which must be readily dismissed, but virtually any interpretation of him that solidifies into a system, theory, discourse, formula, designation, or a slogan. The turn, in the negative sense as a turn against something, is essentially based on various positive experiences of the exuberant diversity of human reality. The negative movement against the incompleteness of the prevailing view of man, which the turn tries to correct in some measure ("twist", "bend"), at times leads to the perpetuation of reductionist errors, which plague the earlier anthropological proposals that have been subject to critique. This critique is entirely natural and essential for every type of knowledge. The humanities that show sensitivity and concern for their "object" hinge on constant calling into question that which naturally appears as self-evident and is oversimplified. As Sloterdijk puts is rightly, "humanism as a word and as a movement always has a goal, a purpose, a rationale: it is

the commitment to save men from barbarism."[1] The term "barbarism" can be used in reference to any reduction of the human being to something else: an animal, reason, the body, history, the *cogito*, human nature, "man", culture, a person, spirit, a mortal, *Dasein*, a sinner, a humanist, etc. In this sense, the turn is a category that is inclusive despite acting counterwise: namely, it demands that the reflection on man includes what has previously been excluded, marginalised, or undervalued.[2]

Using the category of turn also presupposes a specific understanding of the humanities – not fully neutral, either. This is can be perfectly seen if compared with another category, perhaps less familiar, yet featured in metahumanistic discourse: the category of return. Both capture change in the humanities differently. Whenever turns in the contemporary humanities are mentioned, the subject that effects change is the humanities themselves. They have the power and privilege of turning to something that may have been (or perhaps was not) their subject. A "turn towards" can have the quality of absolute novelty, not necessarily implying a reinstatement of something old. If the turn is really towards something, to a thing that has previously been present in some way in the humanities, the implication is that the thing somehow endured the time when it was of interest. The fact that the thing endured means that the humanities practised at a particular time do not correspond to the totality of man's knowledge of himself. A similar situation obtains in the case of something that returns: returning is conditional on temporary absence – a thing returns to the humanities after a time of being banished from their domain for some reason, and remaining outside of it ever since. It returns either in the old style or in a changed form – but it comes back, anyway, as the same thing, oder slightly different – it haunts the humanities like a spectre. Other than with the turn, here the initiative is on the part of the phenomenon itself, which returns to the sphere of the contemporary humanities. The category of turn is connected with the active participation of the humanities, while the category of return presupposes their passivity.[3]

Which of these categories has more utility depends on what, all in all, one understands as the humanities or, conversely, how far their temporal, spatial and thematic boundaries extend. For if we grant that the humanities were born at a certain point in the development of Western culture or at a certain stage of general history, and that they constitute a European – elite, nonetheless[4] – form of human self-understanding, it is possible that certain themes have never been part of them, therefore, they cannot resurface; at best, the humanities can reach for and adopt those themes as their own (new). Thus conceived, the humanities are capable of bringing to light what has never been the subject of human self-reflection. The humanities do that – let's take it at face value – for the sake of man. The

limitations existing at a given time – both theoretical and practical – of how man understand himself, inspire a turn consisting in seeing something that belongs to man but has not been the object of his concern so far. However, if we find that the humanities did not begin – even symbolically – at a moment in history but they have existed since time immemorial, when humans started to reflect and articulate knowledge about themselves, then we can wonder whether there exists any theme that falls within the purview of the humanities but has not been addressed ever before. Even if such extraordinary and hitherto unknown phenomena possibly exist, connected with, for instance, the unprecedented technological progress (transplants, abortion, genetic engineering, etc.), this does not rule out the fact that the categories and patterns which these new phenomena conform to do not originate in the past. Hence the problem of verifying their supposedly absolute novelty.[5] The fact that knowledge of the distant past is lacking is not an argument against it but might actually speak in favour of it. Something has been forgotten so utterly that nothing is known about it, so it must be reinvented anew. In this situation, perhaps, we would be better off using the category of return or repetition. This temporal extension of the humanities and attributing their beginnings to the birth of humans as self-aware beings cannot, for sure, be limited to a particular geographical region (e.g. Europe). It is a situation where the humanities are perceived simply as man's universal knowledge of himself. Of course, such an extension of the humanities may raise objections, so it would be more advantageous in this context to speak of the humanities in the strict and the broad sense. Assuming that we can defend our understanding of the humanities as people's knowledge of themselves, existing at any time and in any place, and with content that is strictly corresponds to particular environmental and cultural circumstances, it seems safer to speak of the recurrence of certain themes, which have somehow fallen outside people's interest but very likely they once were the subject of reflection and representation (most probably, of course, non-theoretical). Things are no different with the spatial and geographical limitations of the humanities.

Therefore, the overriding question determining the choice of a specific category is one about the scope and content of humanistic knowledge – a question that reaches further: it points to certain preferences for a particular vision of man. It follows that if we consider that man has always shown interest in himself, as illustrated by his frequently asking questions about himself (e.g. about love, death, struggle, illness, home, community, nature, gods, time, etc.) and replies to them, both adding to the ever existing and universal "humanistic knowledge" – which is barely extended or developed by both humanism and the modern humanities – the category of return will be prominent. If, however,

man is a unique creature, mutable and self-creating every time, it may be that some themes concerning himself have not existed before. In this case, one can make use of the category of turn.

Bound by time (the last 2,500 years or so) and space (the "West"), the concept of the humanities, in a narrower sense, can assign a degree of primacy to the concept of turn – and it really does – also because this human self-knowledge, restricted to European culture, understands itself as the result of the operation of the knowledge-generating subject, as a performative testimony to the content that is presented through knowledge, that is, the fact that man is a reflexive, autonomous and creative being, that he is both the object and subject of knowledge, that he becomes what he is by virtue of understanding himself. Put differently, man creates himself and becomes a subject through self-understanding. The humanities so understood reflect man's active attitude towards himself and the world. This attitude presupposes that man is a being distinct from others, unique in some way and deserving knowledge in its own right. The humanities derive their ideological framework regarding man from humanism, understood as the European "anthropological-philosophical project,"[6] according to which "human is only one who fully embodies (or tries to embody) the human nature – *humanitas*."[7] This can be done in two ways, the latter being much more important: either – as Aulus Gellius observes in the famous fragment of *Noctes Atticae* – through "friendly spirit and good-feeling towards all men," thus what the Greeks called φιλανθρωπία, or through "education and training in the liberal arts" (*eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes*), which the Greeks referred to as παιδεία.[8] *Humanitas* can thus be summarised in three words: "goodness, kindness, humanistic studies."[9] By pursuing such studies, involving familiarity with a specific culture, texts and languages, man acquires some moral qualities and becomes a complete human being. In short, "*studia humanitatis* give us the only opportunity to become humans."[10] And since "*studium humanitatis* is, above all, the study of classical works" – "literary, historical, and philosophical"[11] – the obvious claim of humanism is this: "reading the right books calms the inner beast."[12] Literature is not only a vast resource of role models that can be imitated, but due to the relative durability of the medium it also safeguards the purpose of a beautiful and good life: eternal glory.[13]

It goes without saying that becoming human, so understood, is linked to being part of a rather small cultural area and a system of education. The growth of medieval cathedral schools and the emergence of universities was an institutional affirmation of man as a subject and object of the humanities – an academic subject taught to prepare for further education at the philosophical faculty. Philosophical instruction was dominated by themes relating to the so-called liberal arts (*artes liberales*). They are

bundled as such because, as we know, their practice requires no physical effort,[14] therefore the liberal arts can be pursued only by those citizens who have plenty of free time (*schole*). The Italian Renaissance linked a teacher of these arts with a man called *umanista*. The latter is chiefly a philologist who, on the one hand, based on models drawn from classical literature (another term, other than 'canon', which is closely linked to the humanities), and a knowledge of artistic literature (*bonae litterae*), on the other hand, formulates statements of anthropological-philosophical nature.[15] In the latter ages, the teaching of languages and ancient culture became the foundation of "general education" (*Bildung*). The humanities so conceived gained the fullest self-understanding in the nineteenth century, when the term *Humanismus* first appeared (F. I. Niethammer, 1808). It refers, for one thing, to the most "humanistic" epoch – the Italian Renaissance – and, for another, to the most common education system based on the teaching of models drawn from the literary study of antique culture.

Things look different when we extend the scope of the humanities so that they embrace every historical self-reflection of man – irrespective of the time and place at which it occurs – a reflection producing "humanistic knowledge", which represents an inalienable element of cultural heritage of humanity. In this context, the humanities, their subject – and object, at the same time – need not have a uniquely activist sense. In this way, a space is created for the category of return as a situation where, at the knowledge level, a thing shows up, which arrives by itself, as it were, or which enters a person's consciousness without involving his freedom, rationality or creative abilities, especially his literary skills and interests. In this sense, humanism would be something that could be called "perpetual and ever-recurring humanism", to use the oft-quoted phrase of Stanisław Łempicki. "Humanism did not come about once in the history of humanity, but [...] it would 'return'," says Łempicki.[16] Hence the need for specifying individual humanisms by adding a fitting adjective: European, antique, medieval, Italian, German, Arab,[17] Indian,[18] African,[19] etc.

A reflection on countertextuality referred to in the title may provide some guidance in dealing with or sorting out the issues mentioned above. For the subject of this essay, I chose not so much arbitrary changes in the paradigm of the contemporary humanities but only those showing a countertextual bias. To achieve that, I chose but a handful of them; it is a separate question whether they are the most representative – having at least one thing in common: their opposition to textuality or textualism. Such a reduction of the subject proves that certain issues have been solved in the humanities; it can also explain why I included the category of *peripeteia* in the title, which I intended to bridge returning

with turning. It happens that only those humanistic themes that stand in opposition to text, thus presupposing its significance and presence in the human world, can be countertextual. Therefore, themes whose traces can be found in general history but which were present already before the invention of writing cannot return. They cannot come back: being countertextual, they could not emerge in the humanities before people learnt to write. In other words, the adjective 'countertextual' can be used only to describe subjects that were formed through a collision with writing. The birth of the culture of writing, especially alphabetic writing, creates a new theme for the humanities. The humanities turn to writing and – as we have found – constitute themselves as the humanities in the strict, narrow sense, that is, as European humanistic culture opposed to "barbarity". This means, first, that the humanities that we discuss in this article do not overlap with man's extensive knowledge about himself; second, the countertextuality alluded to in the title refers to a situation where the narrowly understood humanities turn against themselves, betray themselves, so to speak, contradict themselves, and they do that, as we may suspect, not for cognitive pleasure or publicity but for the sake of humanities in a wider sense, therefore in the name of a broader understanding of man.

The title suggests, however, that we interpret this "betrayal" through the lens of *peripeteia*, which we intend to somehow capture the link between the turn understood as falling off the set course (πίπτειν) and returning (περι). How so? By turning against its own textuality, the humanities turn against the limitations of their own perspective, within which man appears as *homo litteratus.* This "turn against" is rooted in the "turn towards", which is driven by the returning experiences that outgrow and decompose the textual fabric of the humanities in the stricter sense. The humanities do not turn to them – rather, it is experiences coming back: once banished and bruised but never completely annihilated, because they have survived thanks to the humanities in the broad sense. These experiences take revenge, in a way, on the humanities for turning against them for the sake of the writer. The humanities seen in a narrower sense are constituted by their positive turn towards writing and a negative turn against certain experiences, which now are returning as extensions. Or to put it another way: the rise and development of the humanities in a narrower sense compromised some experiences from which the humanities in a broader sense drew abundantly, and which now crop up and bend the main line of development in the humanities understood narrowly. Countertextuality implies precisely this clash of the broader and the narrower perspective of the humanities.

The idea of *peripeteia* that I use here brings to mind (quite rightly) Aristotle's theory of drama, which – as we know – is quite important for all humanities. "Reversal of the situation is a change by which

the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity."[20] An allusion to a situation where the action escapes the doer's intention (*peripeteia* refers to a case of falling off the track, out of the race) is invaluable for the turns and returns discussed here, because it points to something that originates outside one's action or the plot itself (e.g. a god) unexpectedly, all of a sudden and surprisingly – not utterly destroying the plot but furnishing a novel solution. Just like action in the drama, the humanities – caught up in their textualism – need to break with action and open up to a new event.

Just as the Greek *peripeteia* does not occur anywhere in action, its arrival must be, as it were, prepared spontaneously; the turns we are concerned with do not occur by chance in the humanities. The question is how these repressed humanistic experiences were able to return in the contemporary humanities and why they have only in recent decades. Most probably, the first movements that led to the countertextual turns described below occurred much earlier, most of them, most likely, during Romanticism. I am persuaded that the space of humanistic "library" was opened, somewhat paradoxically, by text-loving poststructuralism, which, on the one hand, tightened the bond between the humanities and textuality thus verging on absurdity (the world as text, truth as translation, science as literature, etc.), and, on the other hand, revealed the internal limits of the understanding of human reality in this light (deconstruction). The below-mentioned countertextual *peripeteias* were able to upset the contemporary humanities, because due to the rise of the modern media of communication – perhaps for the first time since antiquity, when the model of literary pedagogy became universally accepted – the humanities were forced to confront their own medium. Like in the time of the Roman Empire, today the humanist must engage in the ubiquitous "media contest",[21] which radically reshapes the meaning of the humanities and their role in culture.

From text to the word and beyond

An exhaustive presentation of countertextual *peripeteias* in the modern humanities is not possible given the limited scope of this article. What I intend to say here is not a fully-fledged account of this phenomenon but rather draw the reader's attention to the negative point of reference, common to its various forms, that is, textualism. I do so hoping to be able to further reflect on some (also practical and political) ramifications and challenges resulting therefrom and facing the humanities, as well as the institutional status of the latter.

Let me begin by presenting the oral turn. It represents a convenient point of reference for understanding the sense of the other countertextual (re) turns in the humanities, since it originates in the realm of the humanities, which for centuries has been considered as exemplary in terms of how one contemplates man and his culture. It is right there, at the very core of the humanities – in the study of origin of humanism – that they are subject to fission. Moreover, as will be shown, the individual moments of the oral turn involve nearly all qualities – typically in embryonic form, however – which other countertextual turns have fully developed.

"The theory of orality was devised mainly to clarify the genesis of Homeric epic poems, but within half a century it evolved into a comprehensive theory of culture," writes Paweł Majewski.[22] In the opinion of Eric A. Havelock, the oral turn in the humanities took place in the early 1960s, when a few seminal works were published; the interest in orality, nonetheless, goes back to to the pre-war era.[23]

It all started with Milman Parry's pioneering studies and research expeditions. In the first half of the 1930s, after graduating in classical philology and publishing his first works on Homer, Parry travelled to former Yugoslavia, where he hoped to verify his research hypotheses regarding the manner in which illiterate bards composed and performed songs whose length, structure, and themes were very much like those of Homeric epics. The material he had gathered corroborated his earlier findings; it also changed the way philologists understood how the earliest literary works of ancient Greece might have been created.[24] In just a few decades the world that had earlier evoked images of a dead language and ruins, started to shimmer with sounds, singing, dancing and performances of singers who, albeit illiterate, could memorise and improvise songs containing up to a dozen thousand lines or more. Perry believes that it was possible not only thanks to the mentality of people living in an oral culture but, most importantly, thanks to the special technique of song-making that made use of the so-called formulaic style. "In the diction of bardic poetry, the formula can be defined as an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea. What is essential in an idea is what remains after all stylistic superfluity has been taken from it."[25] Owing to the discovery of formulaic style and the dynamics of composition, performance and transmission of songs, the research now focused on the singer and his performance. The findings of Parry and his student, Albert B. Lord, changed the optics of research carried out at the time, not only on Homer's epic poetry. It emerged that the key to analysing Homeric epic poems and other similar works created in different places and times, such as English chivalric romances of the medieval period, are not rules governing the extant text but those concerning the performance of songs. Since song is not text, which – as any

text – makes reference to the context of its creation, loosely or not at all, to analyse it is to constantly consider the cultural and historical environment of those who perform the song and those witnessing this act.

Lord's book titled *The Singer of Tales* was published in 1960.[26] In 1963, Eric A. Havelock's landmark work was published, titled *Preface to Plato.*[27] In it, Havelock highlights the fact that Plato's philosophy is, above all, an educational project that is replacing the waning Homeric world – perfectly comprehensible for the oral mind – with a new cultural order, cut to measure for the literate mentality.[28] It follows that poetry occupies the central position in Plato's *Republic*, which from the modern vantage point must seem a rather peculiar strategy. Poetry, however, is not for the ancient Greeks – as it is for us modern people – one branch of literature, but a traditional principle organising human life in oral society. Poetry is a living, collective, sanctified, performative memory containing instructions, examples, models to follow and admonitions concerning life in its practical and symbolical dimension. It is something like the "tribal encyclopedia" of the time.[29] No wonder, then, that if the *Republic*, being Plato's grandest work, is a political treatise, and even more so a treatise on civic education and good social intercourse, it is exactly poetry that arrests the attention of the Greek reformer. The change in communication techniques of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, which triggered a total reorganisation of social relations, that is, a transition from oral to literate society,[30] called for an extensive consideration of new forms of coexistence. From this springs the motivation for the philosophical activity of Socrates, Plato and sophists. In the era of writing, philosophy, when understood as *episteme*, supersedes poetry, now degraded to a *doxa* form. The excessive intellectualisation of life, which Nietzsche would impute to Socrates, would soon become a fact of general culture owing to the growth of writing culture.

The evolution of the approach to Homer's epics, which made "the singer of tales" the focal point of research, led not only to a partial paradigm shift in classical philology and philosophy, but the turn towards orality in the research on ancient Greece coincided with at least several other changes in research perspectives in the humanities, which took place in the latter half of the twentieth century. They all not only challenge the universal-cultural primacy of writing and its overriding importance for the humanities, but they also take into consideration something that is genetically, structurally, socially and politically linked to writing: the philosophical and cultural primacy of reason, science, propositional language, logic, theory, conceptual cognition, universalism, essentialism, the idea of progress, a linear understanding of history and, as a result, also the spurious universality and the

necessary existence of educational systems, social structures, economic systems, globalisation, the technology and political orders.[31]

1. Focus on orality coincided with the revival of the study of rhetoric, perceived not so much as the art of elaborate speech – this treatment of rhetoric is seen as fairly derivative – but rather as the fundamental ability to actualize man's innate capacity for speech and being with others.

The "rhetorical turn"[32] in the modern humanities occurred more or less at the time when, Havelock argues, the most seminal works inaugurating the oral turn were created, more specifically in the 1960s and 1970s, although the first [significant] texts appeared before World War II.[33] Soon, each of the elements of the rhetoric situation (*pathos, logos, ethos*) was subjected to thorough examination, but – much like before – every emerging theory favoured one of them, subordinating the others to it. In his compilation of rhetoric theories of the twentieth century, Michel Meyer argues that rhetoric competes with the theory of argumentation, sometimes even overlapping with it; hence the diverse panorama of views that align with the rhetoric turn: Kenneth Burke, Jürgen Habermas, John Searle, who focus on *ethos*; Oswald Ducrot and Groupe μ, Chaïm Perelman, and Stephen Toulmin, who emphasize *logos*; Ivor A. Richards, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wolfgang Iser, and Hans-Robert Jauss (the Constance School), who accentuate *pathos.* For all that, Michel Meyer tries to maintain a balance between these three elements of the rhetoric situation. He sees problematology as underpinning rhetoric understood as "the art of negotiating the distance between individuals at a particular time"[34].

2. Since the study of songs affirms the singer and his performance, which, as such, shares the general rules governing all other performances, studies of orality coincided with the performative turn. This turn is not only about appreciating and describing the living presence and acting of performers, seen in the light of their corporality, in particular, but also about discovering the performative properties of language itself (*speech acts*).

We can speak of two sources of the performative turn in the humanities, whose presence is easily detectable in studies of orality. The first are John Austin's landmark studies on the effect of language on reality and their best part: the theory of performatives; the second is anthropological, sociological, aesthetic and ethnographic research on non-routine behaviours, such as, above all, rituals, ceremonies and shows.[35] The constantly extending scope of phenomena analysed in this way caused, on the one hand, all uses of language to be treated as overtly or implicitly performative utterances,[36] and, on the other hand, all activities and social events have the form of performative behaviours.[37]

According to Ewa Domańska, the performative turn is characterised by three transitions: 1. movement from text to an event, 2. movement from contemplating to acting, 3. movement from anthropocentrism to posthumanism.[38]

3. The turn towards orality brings into focus living memory, history, tradition and myth, because they form the essence of song, which while preserving and manifesting them on various festive occasions re-enacts the identity of the community (the memory turn).

"Everything points to the fact that the concept of memory constitutes the basis for a new paradigm of cultural studies that will shed light on all the interconnected fields of art and literature, politics and sociology, and religion and law,"[39] says Jan Assmann. A similar claim is made by Pierre Nora, who calls the last several decades an "era of memory and commemoration".[40] Jey Winter spins his reflections on the "memory boom".[41] The pioneering works of Maurice Halbwachs[42] and Aby Warburg[43] today belong to the canon of texts on memory.[44]

4. As the performance of a song involves the mastery of composing and presentation techniques but also the delivery of content that has little to do with literature (as belonging to the pre-literary era), turning to orality implies studying the nature of various means of communication. In so doing, quite surprisingly, the Homeric question triggers a reflection on the kind and the extent to which means of communication prevailing at a given time and place determine social, political and cultural life (media turn).

The appearance of two pioneering books by Herbert Marschall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) and *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), marks a turnabout in researching the issue of cultural means of communication. In his exceedingly chaotic narrative, whose form has become legendary, McLuhan describes the simultaneous evolution of perceptual experience – consisting largely in the isolation from the organic whole of the sensory receptivity of human sight and translation of all other senses into its own ways of accessing the world – technical devices, social organisation, art and mentality. Apart from the invention of the wheel, there are three crucial moments in this evolution: the invention and spread of alphabetic writing in ancient times, the invention of printing in the Renaissance, and the arrival of the modern era of electricity, which gives rise to the society of "secondary orality". For McLuhan himself, the key moment for understanding the contemporary shape of the world is the revolution sparked by the dissemination of printing. This stage of human evolution can, however, be interpreted as secondary to

the change in thinking and social organisation that was triggered by the spread of alphabetic writing. The unprecedented character of this transition from orality to literacy (alphabetic) is underscored by Havelock, whom we mentioned above, but most importantly McLuhan's student, Walter Ong,[45] and Jack Goody.[46]

5. It comes as no surprise that turning to orality, which is the founding principle of illiterate, semi-literate of pre-literate cultures, causes the contemporary humanities to go beyond the Europocentric perspective; this, in turn, helps us notice and appreciate other cultural spheres which suffered violence inflicted by different, not only European, literate civilizations (cultural and post-colonial turns).

In his work *Orientalism* (1978), now an "absolute classic"[47] and a symbolic point of reference for scholars of the post-colonial turn in the contemporary humanities – with its roots, as with the other turns discussed here, going back to pre-war times (e.g. Mahatma Gandhi) – Edward W. Said reveals the ideological premises of Western thinking about Eastern cultures. In the same way, as with other geopolitical figures of collective imagination concerning, for example, Jews, Indians or inhabitants of the "Third World", "The Orient was almost a European invention."[48] It was quickly noticed that the study of the Orient and orientalism could be easily extended to analysis of the imperialistic relations of the Europeans, and not only them, to other cultures as well. In this way, a broad area of research on other cultures was initiated in the context of their contacts with European and non-European colonisers, who forced their cultural patterns on the indigenous peoples, including writing, most often leading to the destruction of their native culture. The traumatic experiences of colonisation, which are barely mentioned in the original sources and today, and whose negative consequences are felt to this day in a given society, have become the subject of intense research in many parts of the world. The attempts at restoring the truth about those events, which, from the colonisers' perspective were typically presented as praiseworthy and notable victories of the "civilised world" over stupidity, backwardness, barbarism, illiteracy and superstition, have been supported by research carried out as part of the memory and ludic turns. Greater consideration for this subject area has revealed that post-colonial criticism often reproduces in its literary form what it regards as the source of colonisation. The fact that "in the colonial context 'the English book' (the Western text, whether religious like the Bible, or literary like Shakespeare) is made to symbolise English authority,"[49] provides ground for seeking new means of expressing for culture studies.

6. Going beyond textual interpretation towards the song event makes it necessary take into account – alongside the singer and the other human participants in the spectacle – the presence of things. Turning towards orality and the accompanying criticism of culture and means of communication draw our attention to the medium as a tool that – as discussed by Heidegger and McLuhan – never functions alone but in a network of references. For "the singer of tales", there is no reference to culture understood as an archive or library. Symbols do not dwell in letters and on paper but in activity, words and things. At this level, precisely, symbols are formed, presented and transmitted. This implies that, unlike in the case of meaning embodied as writing, sense is intimately linked to the materiality of things, on the one hand, and corporality of culture participants on the other. Rediscovering the fact that things and bodies – so-called material culture – are not only passive vehicles of sense, but the primary locus where sense is made and preserved, where sense exerts influence and is exchanged, is a meaningful step towards reclaiming reality by the contemporary humanities, which was formerly slightly obscured by the textualist bias prevailing in the Western culture.

Ewa Domańska claims there are five tendencies that support the "turn towards things" in the contemporary humanities: 1. transhumanism and critique of anthropocentrism; 2. redefinition of the consciousness–body and spirit–matter relationships; 3. the crisis of human subjectivity and inclusion in its identity of that which is different; 4. criticism of consumer society; 5. a move away from structuralism and textualism.[50] Turning to things does not entail trying harder to be more objective, uninvolved – to let facts speak for themselves. As Latour observes, returning to things in place of "matters of fact" lets one see matters of concern.[51] By this token, Latour makes reference to Heideggerian understanding of things as an encounter, a common cause (*Ding, res publica*), that which the world gathers around itself. Turning towards things is expected to enable a better understanding of the human being. So the core disciplines that stimulate this turn are archeology, anthropology and social science.[52]

To round up this short presentation, we might want to mention two other turns that I merely allude to here. 7. Since the songs that Parry and Lord studied have been performed for the last several centuries – although by no means in the time of Homer, when songs were the entertainment of mainly the upper classes[53] – chiefly by illiterate rural dwellers, it was their world and environment that became the object of study for the humanities interested in the living word. In so doing, orality researchers found support among culture anthropologists, ethnographers, historians and sociologists, whose

works inspired the increased interest of the humanities in folklore (folk turn).[54] It is a world that had been completely ignored or negated in human studies, with exemplary figures were representatives of the ruling class, or treated with sentiment (the bucolic aspect of humanism, the idea of Arcadia, Romanticism, Young Poland's penchant for highlanders' culture, etc.).

8. Last but not least, turns towards rhetoric, folklore, performance studies, and means of communication align well with the influential current in the contemporary humanities that puts emotions and feelings at the centre (somatic and affective turn). This life of emotions and feelings – tightly connected with our bodily condition – not rationality, empowers the song and is its audience at the same time. If one calls contemporary culture a culture of "secondary orality", it might as well be called – contrary to the Enlightenment – a culture of emotions or affect.[55] Today, emotions are attributed not only to individuals or groups, but also to entire cultures (melancholy, nostalgy, grief, awe, boredom, etc.). The emotional turn[56] in the humanities, just like other turns that challenge textualism, is a response to changes that occur in contemporary culture, which questions the old order – in this case, the order of authority, social strata, or modes of being of the human being. Drawing inspiration from various sources, the affective turn coincides with the memory, feminist, somatic, aesthetic, performative, pictographic and media turns.

Countertextualism as a political challenge

The above-presented turns and returns in the contemporary humanities are grounded in certain philosophical proposals that offer a general metaphysical, epistemological, ontological, ethical and aesthetical framework for detailed studies. It is impossible to list all of them; however, given the depth, radicalness and weight of the philosophical standpoints that are invoked as the ideological framework of those turns, their enumeration could considerably reinforce the conviction about their historic "indispensability". All of them, as we have stated above, question the primacy of the logocentric attitude, reason as the supreme tribunal, the subject as the spirit, understanding being in terms of presence, the human being as *animal rationale*, history as progress, knowledge as uninvolved, scientific observation and description of facts, technology as a tool, etc.

It follows that the oral turn can be justified philosophically by making reference to Austin's theory of speech acts, Plato's critique of writing, but, first and foremost, to understanding ancient philosophy as an existential exercise (Pierre Hadot, Michel Foucault, Juliusz Domański). The rhetoric turn is preceded, most importantly, by new research on antiquity and the Renaissance, Perelman's

philosophy, as well as Heidegger's thought and his intepretations of Aristotelian rhetorics as the philosophy of existence. The performative turn can either apply to the philosophy of performatives (John Austin, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler) or the philosophy of performance (Jon McKenzie's reading Gilles Deleuze). The memory turn is grounded in studies of Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger or Paul Ricoeur, but it also draws inspiration from psychoanalysis (recollections, nostalgy, mourning). Researchers of the media turn can refer to diagnoses made by the representatives of the Frankfurt School and the philosophy of the media (Vilém Flusser, Jean Baudrillard, Paul Virilio, or Niklas Luhmann). The post-colonial turn owes the most to Marxism (critique of capitalism), post-structuralism (Foucault's "knowledge is power", Derrida's post-Heideggerian critique of metaphysics and logocentrism), feminism and the Jewish philosophy of dialogue. The philosophical turn towards things has its underpinnings in Heidegger's philosophy, Benjamin's and Marx's thought, psychoanalysis, Bataille's philosophy, Latour's Actor Network Theory. The somatic turn just mentioned, for instance, would not have been possible without phenomenology, feminism, new materialism and cognitive science, whereas interest in folklore is, perhaps, best supported by the philosophy of Heidegger, Levi-Strauss and Bachtin.

This list does not purport to be complete, but it gives us a broad overview of standpoints presented by contemporary philosophers, and frequently serves as the philosophical inspiration of the above-mentioned (re) turns. If we assume, with benevolence, that these changes in the humanities do not entail a complete disinterpretation of those philosophical standpoints, but they trigger various consequences in keeping with them, one can say that the countertextual peripeteias discussed here reach the very foundation of the contemporary humanities. Obviously, a more credible substantiation of this thesis would call for a demonstration (something we do not have the space for) of how the premises of those (re) turns can really be traced in the said philosophical systems. But, perhaps, it would be even more important to show (which cannot be noticed at first blush) how these philosophical ideas turn the humanities against textualism. This is not visible as some of these standpoints (take Derrida's thought, for instance) are regarded as an extreme manifestation of textualism. So, shouldn't we say that their attention to certain content (orality, performance, folklore, corporality, multiculturalism, media, etc.) can be attributed to creative interpretation of the listed and unlisted philosophies, while the general direction, which we called "countertextual", they owe to themselves?

A credible answer to the latter question can be found only through analysis of the above-listed philosophical positions in terms of their alleged countertextuality. Unfortunately, the scope of this article permits me to merely state, unsurprisingly, that the above-mentioned turns and returns not only contribute new content to researchers' sphere of interest but also – and this can be confirmed beyond any doubt by referring to their strictly philosophical underpinnings – question the traditional metaphysical-anthropological approach of the humanities to man and his reality. It is also worth showing how this questioning of the fundamental "understanding of Being" (Heidegger) leads to a movement that is opposed to textualism, even if this movement is withheld or hidden. Briefly, this can be done if we recall, once again, what humanism is – since it was and still is the ideological substrate of all the humanities – and what place they occupy in it. It seems that the questioning of the textual slant of the humanities is a logical consequence of challenging its metaphysical-anthropological principles.[57]

The matter is by no means resolved considering things like, for example, the latest developments in the humanities, which, while seemingly distanced from the classical forms of the humanities and their philosophical-theological grounding, they do not question their pro-textual approach or they take their ambivalent stances with respect to it. Let me use one example only. I agree with Michał P. Markowski's general view of the humanities, namely, that they should always problematize reality and avoid certainty;[58] that "the humanities are only a *critical disposition*";[59] that they should abandon the ideal of an uninvolved observer and become "imagination training" (Richard Rorty) and "self-training" (Foucalt, Sloterdijk);[60] that the humanities are not a science at all;[61] that the university with the humanities at its core should be a space for experiencing;[62] that the humanist is a *Versucher* (Nietzsche), who leads others into temptation;[63] that "the humanities are a space for a continuous renewal of existence";[64] that the humanities are about "extending their existence ad infinitum" (Novalis)[65] and forming "a sense for the art of living" (*Lebenskunstsinn*) (Friedrich Schlegel);[66] that "the humanities are about naming that which exists"[67] and including life and existence in communication; that "the humanities need flexibility in speaking different languages to describe the same reality";[68] "that the humanities is an art of communication";[69] "that there is no language which, as it were, should enjoy a privileged position in our culture";[70] that the humanities have the right to "say everything" (*parrhesia*) (Foucault);[71] that against this background the former humanism is a restrictive ideology of the humanities;[72] that "humanism is an ideology of radical separation: arts and liberal arts from everyday life, library from existence, the proper use of language from improper

one, theory from practice,"[73] etc. I think the turns and returns presented here meet Markowski's proposition. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the extension of the humanities, as mentioned by Markowski, applies only to their content and style, but it is not a call to move beyond the written medium. Given the spirit, though, while Markowski appears to be distancing himself from the literary and protextual bias of the humanities, the overall tone of his assertions seems to confirm the need for this means of communication if his own proposal of "pragmatic humanities" were to exist. He says, "from the anthropological perspective, there is no difference between literature, fiction and existence."[74]

If we further explore Markowski's theses, we get the impression that we are but a small step from asking about text itself and literature as an element for the practice and existence of the humanities. Markowski, however, does not pose this question; nor does he draw all the consequences of his understanding of the humanities in the spirit, *inter alia*, of the romantic thought of "extension of existence". If the humanities proposed by Markowski are to abandon the ideological assumptions of humanism that affirm the role of literacy and literary education – proposing to replace them with the precepts of the aforementioned, contemporary philosophical approaches – what is known thanks to those (re) turns in the contemporary humanities about the civilisational formation of the "literary mind" and thus, in a way, a specific form of man, must be followed by the issue of writing. Markowski writes: "Humanism is the result of a particular – i.e. proper – use of language. What use? Such that – God forbid – is not used by *vulgus.* Humanism is built on the exclusivity of performative acts or, to put it concisely, on the performativity of exclusion."[75] If the humanities, interpreted as an extension of existence, are to really, i.e. in practice, counter this sort of exclusion inherent in the choice of their proper language, they must ask not only about the style, form, genre, grammar, vocabulary, etc., which might prevent that, but they should go further to ultimately ask about the very medium of writing as their own environment, their own possibilities and own performativity – in a word, how they work. Asking about writing is therefore returning to the central question of humanism, mentioned by Sloterdijk:

> The question of humanism is more than the bucolic assumption that reading improves
> us. It is, rather, no less that an issue of anthropodicy: that is, a characterization of man
> with respect to his biological indeterminacy and moral ambivalence. Above all, however,
> from now on the question of how a person can become a true and real human being
> becomes unavoidably a media question, if we understand by media the means of

communion and communication by which human beings attain to that which they can and will become.[76]

Asking about the medium in which man exists and creates himself is not only the question of some isolated discipline called "humanities", but essentially a question about the community in which messages are circulated. A literary society is a kind of political society, the reproduction of which is achieved through education that is not free from "symbolic violence".[77] The community of writers and readers is comprised of isolated individuals who communicate through writing while physically absent, separated by time and space, always in the past (readers) or in the future (writers) in relation to here and now, practising by reading and writing, in solitude, silence, distanced from the world, constrained by their apartments, studies, libraries, archives… Looking from the performative perspective, the literary society is an imaginary community of people who are lonely, inward-looking, motionless, silent, detached from others, the world and themselves (their own bodiliness and activity). From the developmental vantage point, they are a community of people who, educated through the written medium that is treated as a goal in itself, have no chance of developing the habitus of real cooperation, involvement, overcoming the resistance of matter, physical effort, etc. Finally, they are a community of people who do not rely on their own experience, but settle for someone else's or merely imagined experience – as if they have experienced it personally. They are a community of mourners[78] rather than adventure-hungry body snatchers, "brethren true to the earth" (Nietzsche). Exactly this way of life – *vita solitaria, vita contemplativa, vita literata* – became a model of understanding the "humanistic" subjectivity that opposed the world, action, the body, matter, nature, people as a nameless mass, and city crowds.[79]

The above-cited overarching question of the humanities, framed as a "media question", is answered by Sloterdijk in a way that does not settle anything but rather underscores the problematic nature of the question about the humanities when framed as a political question:

> The period when modern humanism was the model for schooling and education has passed, because it is no longer possible to retain the illusion that political and economic structures could be organized on the amiable model of literary societies.[80]

This would mean that the object of the humanities, conceived as the common literary cause (*res publica litteraria*), by virtue of contemporary technological advancements and hence social change, can no longer be identified with the underpinnings of the contemporary political community. A profound

"transformation of the public sphere," causing the writing community to lose its influence on the public sphere, was announced much earlier.[81] That the question of which medium and what kind of language can and should be used by man to shape and describe his reality is a political matter is indisputable, at least since Aristotle's *Politics*. Here, "politics" should be understood, in the first place, as any reference to the Other, and then, and only secondarily as power relations, although the latter, in practice, most likely overlap with all interpersonal relations. Markowski himself attributes the central position to the political dimension of the humanities. He assumes that "everything that happens in the public sphere (*polis*) is political," while for him "the public sphere is not a specific physical space [...] but a set of languages."[82] "The politics of the humanities follows from a simple fact: the participation of the humanities in the polyphony that makes the public sphere meaningful."[83] The humanities owe their birth and growth to the need to compensate (Odo Marquard) for the several centuries long sense loss, resulting from the growing domination of the natural sciences and the resulting technologies, which bring mononarration and flatten sense to a single layer called objectivity. The community, which is built around the scientific and technological worldview, resembles a corporation, possibly a supermarket, where the entirety of human reality is reduced to the working of cogs in a machine, or to consumer choices. Notwithstanding, man develops to the fullest where there is a pluralism of standpoints, attitudes, senses, goals and discourses, where man's multiple attributes find expression, such as his imagination, emotions or memory – not just intellect, which is fixated on following cognitive procedures. "There is no language that deserves, as a matter of course, a privileged status. [...] The politicalness of the humanities [...] is implicit in the possibility of shifting boundaries between disciplines, changing languages, and by the same token [...] changing the objects of study."[84] It is, then, easy to conclude that the best conditions for practising the humanities are found in democracy, which grows stronger where humanistic thought flourishes most exuberantly.

The most powerful proof that the humanities are downright political lies in their institutionalised forms: schools, academies, universities and research institutes. Obviously, the presence of the humanities is highly problematic in the modern university (to mention only this organisational form), which is increasingly adapted for natural and technical sciences.[85] Since the creation of universities and the philosophical faculty, subordinated to the others, where former liberal arts were taught, the humanities defined themselves as working with text. Just as they had been expected to prepare the student for studies at higher faculties, nowadays the humanities are required to have the same level of

scholarship that natural science and technical faculties provide. They find it hard to operate in the police organisational model that envisages narrow fields of specialization, rigid procedures, and quantitative criteria.[86] For the humanities, this is indeed "university in ruins". Their presence within the walls of institutions so narrowly designed forces them to adapt constantly to requirements coming from the ideologized image of natural and technical science.[87] It might be said that the constant pressure exerted to make the humanities adapt their forms of expression to the "truly" scientific urges them to mind the language they speak. The problem is that this imperative does not favour the expansion of forms of expression, experimentation and questioning the well-established conventions, but, on the contrary, it leads to the self-limitation and subordination of the humanities to what is alien to them. The very confinement to the written medium is – and this is what I am meaning to articulate here – limiting for the humanities, yet fully sympathetic towards them. However, this reduction to writing only goes much further. Of the inexhaustible wealth of literary forms of expression, the humanities settle for but a few, almost identical, forms: scientific article, monograph, review. The aforementioned forms are assigned quantitative parameters, which are correlated with the commercial publishing market, the actors of which, together with state authorities, in a police-like manner, monitor the purity of the imposed forms. Moreover, this mode of presenting content, imposed on the humanities, causes "specialist knowledge" – written in a hermetic language – to give up its involvement in everyday public life and the influence it has on current politics, which, of course, does not occur the other way round. In this way, the "pen community" – confined by the university – becomes largely a passive object of organisational, and political as a result, manipulation.

As regards the above postulates of the extended humanities and their immanent politicalness, the fundamental question I ask in this essay is this: If the goal of humanistic education is for "students to acquire flexibility using various languages to describe the same reality, whose multitude of linguistic forms will make it even more complex"[88] – hence the unceasing turns and returns in the humanities – why should they be limited to literary language and not benefit from the vast pool of means of expression, such as body movement, gesture, sound, image or performative action, etc.? Why shouldn't they fully exercise their right not only to do "that classical alliance of the constative and the performative, but to singular *oeuvres*, to other strategies of the "as if" that are events and that affect the very limits of the academic field or of the Humanities."[89] The answer to this question is not, by any measure, a common-sense indication that these things fall, after all, within the remit of art. I

agree with Markowski that "between particular spheres of human experience there are clear transitions and therefore a careful segregation of activities seems plainly artificial today."[90] If the humanities are to effectively "transform the social *imaginarium*,"[91] they have to fight against such divisions. It is for this reason that language instruction with which man can effect such transformations should not be restricted to literature. As Markowski himself rightly points out,[92] as humans we speak many languages, not only verbally. I side with the author of *Polityka wrażliwości* also in that "the humanities are, so to say, the closest to the body, which is as fragile and fortuitous as all institutions that we erect."[93] Why not, then, invite the body, which "as a source of emotion is as important as refined argumentation,"[94] to universities and let it speak? How else to practise the humanities if they "want to say everything," which assume that "this dual belief in the purity of language and the autonomy of the discipline is pernicious and fatal"?[95] As long as verbal languages are privileged while the need to develop other languages is dismissed as irrelevant, the humanities suffer from limitation – something they oppose *in littera.* In its reliance on literature, the humanities, in fact, align themselves with mathematics and the related sciences – two greatest products of literacy bias. It seems to me that there is no other way to break with "performativity of exclusion", mentioned above, than by inclusion of performativity.

Indeed, in order to perform such an inclusion and introduce the body to the humanities, one needs to deconstruct the existing institutions. Markowski follows Derrida in this regard and says that

> this consists in including all the concepts the university invokes to sanction its existences in the sequence of uncontrolled events that these concepts interfere with, problematise and make less banal. In a nutshell, the deconstruction of the university would consist in (assuming it is possible at all) infecting the university sovereignty with the incurable virus of heteronomy.[96]

The university cannot be changed by its own devices (e.g. literature). It needs to go out and face the singular, that which does not conform to the conventionalised routine of institutional repetition; then, upon re-entry, the singular will become part of the institution, yet – quite miraculously – preserving itself.[97] Cooperation must prevail over "conflict of the faculties" (I. Kant). I partly agree with the Derridean idea of "university without condition", promoted by Markowski as well, on condition that, contrary to Derrida but in keeping with Markowski's textualism, we abandon our preference for textual orientation.[98] Markowski says, after Derrida, that "we must be faithful to the

impossible".[99] Only with this can we try to turn the literary university into a community of experience.

Markowski rightly reminds us that *universitas* invokes the notion of "community", but its etymology implies, rather, "turning something into one" (cf. *vertere* – 'turn').[100] This turning motion lies at the root of university movement and our turns and returns (*peripeteias*). The turning of this unity – without destroying community – and moving away from its totalising practices (e.g. thinking and writing articles after the fashion of natural sciences, questioning the scientific character of the humanities, admission of other forms of expressing humanistic experience than writing alone, etc.) represent an institutional reversal of the turns and returns referred to above. The establishment of the university, which is a "turn towards unity", is always linked to a gesture of exclusion, which always turns against someone else. If the unity achieved in this way is not subjected to "subversive, perversive, controversial and diverting" movements[101] (all these words are derived from Latin *vertere*), which, again, affect that which is abandoned, what turns against its own purpose and solidifies in the apparent and superficial.

Another version of the community that, in the context of the countertextual turns mentioned earlier, could provide an alternative to both the traditional university and the Derridean idea of the "university without condition" – founded on textually-oriented deconstruction that I believe continues, in fact, aesthetic *Bildung* – and that could serve as a model for a common humanist experience, but no longer as part of *universitas*, but more so as diversitas or Turner's *communitas*. Turner himself pointed out that the institution of university can be combined with ritual practices of the liminal type, or more liminoidal, which make up a *communitas*-type community.[102] This community gathers both actors and experiencers; only by extension can it be treated as a community of writing and reading individuals, which is where Derridean humanists would most like to see the university. According to Turner, such a community appears where a temporary suspension of the "structure" occurs. This happens at the intermediate stage of rites of passage, the liminal phase, which is characterised by ambivalence, underspecification, questionability, and marginalisation.[103] The institutional ("normative") *communitas* – alongside the existential and ideological one – within which we can locate a university susceptible to the effects of countertextual (re) turns in the humanities, would be a community that preserves and nurtures (a situation that verges on paradox) the questionability and transitionality of the liminal phase. A university created on the basis of communitas would be a "place in which nothing is beyond question."[104] A community like this would

be "a community of questioning" (M. Heidegger) performers, "using" themselves, others and the world to experience and express these experiences through various means of communication, using the rich repertoire of our body's capabilities as process and event: movement, gesture, image, taste, smell, and their synesthetic complications. At the centre of "university without condition" so-conceived there would no longer be deconstruction but performance studies. This would in effect lead to the transformation of not only the form of analysis and publishing but also of teaching, as well as the spatial and temporal conditions for the existence of the institutions of knowledge, society, politics and economy – ultimately, then, to a change in "concept of truth and of humanity".[105] In this way, the turns and returns we have been dealing with can be treated as precursors and the hotbed of a genuine revolution in the way of human life – something that the humanities have always advocated, but which is today eagerly undertaken by the nascent post-humanities.

Footnotes

[1] P. Sloterdijk, "Rules for the Human Zoo: a response to the »Human Letter«," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2009, volume 27, 15.

[2] In this sense, my appraisal of the category widely differs from Paulina Arbiszewska's proposal, see her Stereotyp zwrotu, inflacja przełomów we współczesnej humanistyce, in: "Zwroty" badawcze w humanistyce. Konteksty poznawcze, kulturowe, społeczno-instytucjonalne, ed. J. Kowalewski and W. Piasek (Olsztyn: Instytut Filozofii UWM, 2010), 46–47.

[3] M. Rusinek, "Powrót, zwrot i różnica w myśleniu o retoryce," *Teksty Drugie*, no. 2 (2001): 167–68.

[4] Cf. P. Sloterdijk, *Rules for the Human Zoo*, p. 13.

[5] Postsecularism provides a good example: in an allegedly secular world, it discovers the same religious and theological mindsets prevailing in religious times. In virtue of that, for example, transhumanism, which is keen on technological innovations, turns out to be yet another version of traditional and well-defined thinking about history in theological terms.

[6] A. Borowski, "Humanizm jako przedmiot współczesnej humanistyki," *Humanizm. Historie pojęcia*, ed. A. Borowski (Warsaw: Neriton, 2009), 106.

[7] A. Kliszcz, "Homo – humanista – humanizm. Humanizm w źródłach słownikowych," *Humanizm. Historie pojęcia*, ed. A. Borowski (Warsaw: Neriton, 2009), 28.

⁸ Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, trans. John C. Rolfe, book 13, chap. 17, available at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?

doc=Perseus:text:2007.01.0072:book=13:chapter=17&highlight=eruditionem.

⁹ A. Kliszcz, „Homo – humanista – humanizm," 30.

¹⁰ Ibid., 34.

¹¹ M.P. Markowski, *Polityka wrażliwości. Wprowadzenie do humanistyki* (Kraków: Universitas, 2013), 111.

¹² P. Sloterdijk, *Rules*, 15.

¹³ P. Dybel, „Wiek XX. Czy kryzys idei humanitas?" Humanitas. Projekty antropologii humanistycznej. Część druga: Inspiracje filozoficzne projektów antropologicznych, ed. A. Nowicka-Jeżowska (Warsaw: Neriton, 2010), 353–355.

¹⁴ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć* (Warszawa: PWN, 2012), 22.

¹⁵ P.O. Kristeller, „Humanizm i scholastyka w renesansie włoskim," *Humanizm i filozofia. Cztery studia*, trans. G. Błachowicz, L. Szczucki, and M. Szymański (Warszawa 1985), 56.

¹⁶ S. Łempicki, "Renesans i humanizm w Polsce," *Wiek złoty i czasy romantyzmu w Polsce*, edited by J. Starnacki (Warszawa 1992), 28.

¹⁷ Cf. P. Burke, *The European Renaissance. Centers and Peripheries (Making of Europe)* (Oxford: **[wydawca]**, 1998), 3; Marcel Boisard, *Humanism in Islam* (Oak Brook, IL: American Trust Publications, 2014).

¹⁸ Cf. M. V. Nadkarni, "Humanism in Hinduism," *Ethics For Our Times: Essays in Gandhian Perspective*, 1st ed. (Delhi, **[wydawca]**2011; online ed. (Oxford Academic, 24 Jan. 2013).

¹⁹ Egbunu Fidelis Eleojo, "Africans and African Humanism: What Prospects?", *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 4, no. 1 (January 2014): 297–308.

²⁰ Aristotle, *Poetics*, chap. 11, line 25.

²¹ P. Sloterdijk, *Rules*, 16.

²² P. Majewski, "Wstęp do wydania polskiego," E.A. Havelock, *Muza uczy się pisać. Rozważania o oralności i piśmienności w kulturze Zachodu*, trans. P. Majewski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo UW, 2006), 9.

23 Eric A. Havelock, The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present, New Haven and London: The Yale University Press, 1986, 25.

24 Parry's original research material, comprised of sound recordings, text transpositions, or even short films, was digitized and made available at https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/milman-parry-collection-of-oral-literature?utm_source=library.harvard.

25 M. Parry, The Making of Homeric Verse. The Collected Papers Of Milman Parry, ed. A. Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 13.

26 Lord, Albert B., *The Singer of Tales.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960.

27 Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

28 Eric A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to,* 8.

29 Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 66.

30 The process did not take place overnight, but rather it proceeded in stages, from total illiteracy, through craft literacy and semi-literacy, to the general literacy of elites, and ultimately the lower echelons of society. Cf. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 47.

31 J. Goddy, The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society (Studies in Literacy, the Family, Culture and the State), Cambridge University Press, 1986.

32 M. Meyer, M. M. Carrilho, and B. Timmermans, *Historia retoryki od Greków do dziś*, trans. Z. Baran (Warsaw: Aletheia, 2010), 255.

33 A compilation of works on rhetoric that in Meyer's opinion are crucial and were published in the twentieth century can be found in ibid., 260.

34 Ibid., s. 297.

35 M. Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, London-New York: Routledge 2018.

36 J. L. *Austin. How To Do Things* With *Words.* The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955 (Oxford, 1975).

37 R. Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, London-New York: Routledge 2013, 30.

38 E. Domańska, „»Zwrot performatywny« we współczesnej humanistyce," *Teksty Drugie*, no. 5 (2007): 52–53.

[39] Jan Assmann, Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), vii–viii.

[40] Pierre Nora, "Czas pamięci," trans. W. Dłuski, *Res Publica Nowa* (July 2001): 39.

[41] J. Winter, "The Generation of Memory. Reflections on the 'Memory Boom'," *Contemporary Historical Studies* 27 (2006): 69–92.

[42] M. Halbwachs, *The collective memory*, New York, Harper & Row Colophon Books, 1980.

[43] A. Warburg, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Studienausgabe), Vol. II.1: *Der Bilderatlas MNEMOSYNE.* Ed. by Martin Warnke and Claudia Brink. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2000.

[44] J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory*, 87–103.

[45] Walter Ong, Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word, London-New York: Routledge 2005.

[46] Jack Goody, The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society.

[47] L. Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory. A Critical Introduction*,Columbia Unversity Press 2019, 63.

[48] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1979), 1.

[49] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 89.

[50] E. Domańska, "Problem rzeczy we współczesnej archeologii," in *Rzeczy i ludzie. Humanistyka wobec materialności* , ed. J. Kowalewski, W. Piasek, M. Śliwa (Olsztyn: Instytut Filozofii UWM, 2008), 32.

[51] B. Latour, "Why has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (2004): 232–233.

[52] W. Kędzierzawski, "Zwrot ku rzeczom: nowy status kultury materialnej we współczesnej humanistyce," in *Głód: skojarzenia, metafory, refleksje*, Stromata Anthropologica 9, ed. Katarzyna Łeńska-Bąk and Magdalena Sztandara (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2014), 207–30.

[53] A.B Lord, The Singer of Tales, 6.

[54] W.A. Wilson, "The Deeper Necessity: Folklore and the Humanities," *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 101, No. 400 (Apr. - Jun., 1988), 156-167.

55 For the present purposes, I shall not draw a distinction between affect and emotion, bearing in mind that such an identification is problematic, or can even be plainly wrong. Cf. B. Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique*, no. 31, 1995, 83–109.

56 *The affective turn. Theorizing the social*, ed. Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley (Durham–London: Duke University Press, 2007). *Emotions and Social Change. Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, ed. D. Lemmings and A. Brooks (New York: Routledge, 2014); *Theorizing Emotions. Sociological Explorations and Applications*, ed. D. Hopkings et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2009).

57 This is what Heidegger does in his *Letter on »Humanism«*.

58 Michał P. Markowski, *Polityka wrażliwości. Wprowadzenie do humanistyki* (Kraków: Universitas, 2013), 42–43.

59 Ibid., 81 (emphasis in the original).

60 Ibid., 48–49.

61 Ibid., 89, 100.

62 Ibid., 54.

63 Ibid., 66.

64 Ibid., 74.

65 Ibid., 290, 336, 346.

66 Ibid., 306.

67 Ibid., 55.

68 Ibid., 61.

69 Ibid., 121.

70 Ibid., 63.

71 Ibid., 82–84.

72 Ibid., 86.

73 Ibid., 113.

[74] Ibid., 201.

[75] Ibid., 114.

[76] P. Sloterdijk, "Rules for the Human Zoo," 16.

[77] P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, transl. R. Nice, London, Newbury Park, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1977, xx-xxi.

[78] On the humanistic subject in light of the psychoanalytic notion of death, mourning and commemoration, see also P.M. Markowski, *Polityka wrażliwości*, 151–73. On page 173, we read: "the humanities, which I would love to see as the failed work of the mourning for ourselves."

[79] P.M. Markowski, *Polityka wrażliwości*, 124.

[80] P. Sloterdijk, "Rules for the Human Zoo," 14.

[81] J. Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1989).

[82] P.M. Markowski, *Polityka wrażliwości*, 56.

[83] Ibid., 61.

[84] Ibid., 63.

[85] B. Readings, *The University in Ruins*, Harvard University Press, 1996.

[86] A distinction between a policy and politics, in this context, comes from Jacques Renciere (see his *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. S. Corcoran, London-New York: Continuum 2010). The distinction made by Renciere is cited by Markowski when he discusses the presence of the humanities at university. Cf. idem, 61–63.

[87] Natural and technical sciences as such do not build the organisational forms of scientific life, but their ideological interpretations.

[88] P.M. Markowski, *Polityka wrażliwości*, 60–61.

[89] J. Derrida, "The future of the profession or the university without condition (thanks to the "Humanities," what could take place tomorrow)," *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, edited by T. Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 52.

[90] P.M. Markowski, *Polityka wrażliwości*, 72.

[91] Ibid., 79.

[92] Ibid., 56.

[93] Ibid., 80.

[94] Ibid., 184.

[95] Ibid., 211.

[96] Ibid., 372.

[97] Ibid., 369.

[98] Ibid., 85.

[99] Ibid., 369.

[100] Ibid., 373.

[101] Ibid., 375.

[102] V. Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology." *Rice Institute Pamphlet – Rice University Studies,* 60, no. 3 (1974).

[103] V. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*, New Brunswick-London: Aldine Transaction, 2008, 132-150.

[104] J. Derrida, "The future of the profession or the university without condition, 26.

[105] Ibid.

Declarations