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abstract:

A monographic presentation of the work of Jacek Kryszkowski, the artist active in the1980's, connected to the Łódź's Kultura Zrzuty (Pitch-In Culture) community. On the ground of his writings, statements and actions, the author (re)constructs "escape from culture" project that lies at the heart of Kryszkowski's oeuvre. In the first part of the article (Zrzuta) the author presents a portrait of Kryszkowski, in the second one (Wyprawa – The Expedition) he focuses on a famous Kryszkowski's action of self-appointed importing of Witkacy's ashes from Jeziory to Poland (1985). The results of the "investigation" and the presentation of his action become a tool to demonstrate the core of Kryszkowski's cultural criticism.

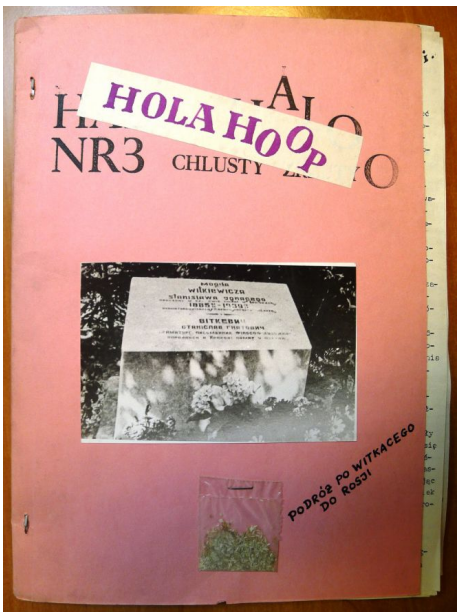
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Jacek Kryszkowski: Fugitive from Culture – Part 2: The Expedition

Chlusty Zrzuty [Zrzuta's Splashes]

"I greet the person (God forbid, artist) that is Ignaś [diminutive of Ignacy] Witkacy. The exceedingly likeable old man has been sitting around our Strych [Attic] for years",[1] wrote Jacek Kryszkowski in the postscript to his essay *Sztuka zanieczyszcza środowisko* [Art Pollutes the Environment]. From then on, he returned repeatedly to Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (aka Witkacy).

Witkacy is painted in Kryszkowski's writings[2] as someone "that was made a durable cultural product occupying a prominent place in history"; "For society, you only exist insofar as it is able to portray you as a genius for itself", said Kryszkowski. For Kryszkowski, however, Witkacy was someone who existed "altogether differently than is required by his participation in the 'register of phenomena worthy of inclusion in human heritage,'" "outside production and against it," as someone who "abandoned painting, then drama, to finally discard philosophy". The works that Witkacy is praised for are, for Kryszkowski, "trivial", "leftovers", "trifling works" or "knickknacks". Because Kryszkowski's Witkacy is "'a discoverer' of events inaccessible to history and art"; "of values inexpressible by means of any pattern of cultural knickknack or a talent worthy



Cover of *Hola Hoop*, 1985

of remembrance in human heritage" – "mythological splashes".

In Witkacology, "splashes" functions as a term for Witkacy's wild piano improvisations. Kryszkowski took over this term and made it his own, including it in the subtitle of the first two issues of the magazine *Chlusty Zrzuty* [Zrzuta's Splashes] and making it synonymous with Zrzuta. On the side of "splashes" there is "a reality at odds with the ambitions of culture and civilization", "personal contact", "situations of communing with others head-to-head", and staying "in a group not defined by anything". Their territory is defined by the area of Witkacy's mythologized social life, i.e. his rows "with Stern, Wat and Płomieński in Zakopane", "visits to the Trzaska's restaurant in Zakopane", and "situations jointly created in pubs during night escapades". On this side – this is an interesting thread due to a distant analogy with the idea of martial law as a "hole in culture" – there is also Witkacy's stay in Russia as the moment when "life intrudes with all severity", shattering the forms of culture. Kryszkowski finds a trace of such splashes in the "dissonance between art and life, between the form and the man" written on the pages of *622 Upadki Bunga* [The 622 Downfalls of Bungo]. Apart from "Witkacy's obstinate and uncertain suggestions", the reality of splashes is also indicated by Witkacy's comrades' "contradictory, vague and tendentious" accounts which "suggest something", "smuggle", and "indicate the existence of something beyond form". However, splashes were an "enigmatic reality, for the existence of which he did not manage to create any lasting evidence". "I attempted to give cultural importance to the splashes", says Witkacy, but "the splashes proved themselves to be remarkably resilient"; "all the 'methods' and 'measures' that I tried have proven to be deficient and smelly in relation to the splashes". Consequently, Kryszkowski's splashes also remain a mystery to the reader of his essay: "C'mon, let's talk about the splashes of Zrzuta, so turn off the mic, it won't cope…", Witkacy

breaks off the conversation.

An intriguing feature in Kryszkowski's writings is the cracked portrait of Witkacy who is standing astride culture and Zrzuta and finally turns out to be a conformist and coward, "a failure, an indecisive and hysterical man". Witkacy "reveals before us a reality that he is, however, unable to enter into"; "he remains in relation to it as an artist – passive, unproductive and helpless". Kryszkowski rewrites the conflict between culture and Zrzuta into a conflict between Witkacy's father's authority and one Sabała's magnetism. Sabała was a "village pauper", a "highland scoundrel", a "chronic loafer", a "weirdo", an archetype of the "drifters and oddballs from the underworld" who populated Witkacy's works, with "an impetuous need for company, spending time among people and deciding with them about these contacts, without looking around to see the results, without expecting any help from outside or interference from organizers or guardians". Thanks to his wanderings with Sabała, Witkacy discovered "that it is not art, nor religion or science that is the underlying source of the attitudes and activities that determine reality". On the other side of things, there is the father whose authority keeps him from escaping from culture into the reality of splashes. The father represents "the myth of greatness and indispensability of art and science", "the power of being an artist [...] at home, in the household and in the nation" and the obligation to "take on values great for the culture and the nation". One might speculate as to whether it is Kryszkowski's personal story that is appearing here as, from his childhood, he was placed under great pressure to become someone (he had ballet, violin and drawing lessons). It is not hard to see in Witkacy's father a symbolic Father representing the ideals of the Super-Ego, guarding order and a repressive culture.

It is from the perspective thus outlined, the antinomy between culture and Zrzuta (splashes) as embodied in the life of

Witkacy, that the *Podróż do Rosjii po Witkacego* [The Trip to Russia to Fetch Witkacy] should be looked at.

Culture protects against emptiness



Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego [*The Trip to Russia to Fetch Witkacy*], 1985. Photo from *Hola Hoop*

The essays on Kryszkowski's "masters", that is Witkacy and also Partum and Baader, can be treated as handbooks for disappearing: not only was it their inherent aptitudes but above all a variety of strategies (disguises, fakes, manipulations) that made Kryszkowski's heroes difficult for culture to grasp. Also, all of them went through with their abandonment of culture completely: they embarked on "a great escape from history" and finally disappeared. "They simply ceased to exist", to paraphrase Kryszkowski. Baader, as Kryszkowski used to say, "suddenly disappears from history".[3] Kryszkowski provided his essay on Partum with the subheading "The Killing of Partum" and, drawing on the fact that Partum moved to Copenhagen in 1984, he states in the introduction, "for me, this guy is dead".[4] Witkacy disappears in 1939 "happily faking his own suicide".[5] In 1988 it is Kryszkowski himself that disappears.

"Your absence extends into infinity, and everybody is worried by the lack of any news from you; and this silence lying heavily around your person is impossible, it is now unbearable", we read in a letter from Kryszkowski's preserved archive,written by Jolanta Ciesielska and dated 22nd May 1988. "Where are you? Why are you silent?" – "Lots of people are looking for you". According to Wojciech Włodarczyk, Kryszkowski, inspired by Witkacy, faked his own death in the Tatry Mountains and only informed a few of those closest to him about it.[6] But the reason

for his disappearance might be more mundane: at that time Kryszkowski split up with his wife. On the other hand, the date of the disappearance, i.e. May 1988, does not seem random. In Ciesielska's letter we read, "...at Witkacy's funeral, half of the participants who were in the know regarding the secret matter were waiting in suspense to see a guy in a hat, with small glasses, with a fiddle under his arm, with a plastic bag containing Witkacy's lumbar bones in his hand, throwing his share into the pit, or digging a lonely hole for Witkacy nearby... But, surpisingly, you did not appear, neither then nor later...".

This game with death, one in a series played by Kryszkowski, allows us to see in death a specific form of escape from culture to an "unidentified" place, beyond the symbolic order – in accordance with the pithy phrase, "A dead guy is a safe guy".[7] The abandonment of culture as practiced in the bosom of Zrzuta, "triggered a sense of emptiness that no one knew what to do with",[8] wrote Kryszkowski in 1986. Beyond culture, "there extends emptiness", and "culture protects against emptiness",[9] he had written in 1985. Although Kryszkowski stated in one place that "the herd" was to make sure that individualism was maintained, in another one he described the herd as a radically "perishable" form, located at the opposite pole to culture, a form which protects the individual against the feeling that it is a "completely transient phenomenon".[10] In the process of "overcoming death", a process produced by culture, there is also the production of individualism, he asserted.[11] And when describing his (alleged) escapes from home in his adolescence – precursors to his later escapes from culture – Kryszkowski talked about "a feeling in which 'freedom' does not lapse into the slightest contradiction or disjunction with 'death'".[12]

Kryszkowski never equates Zrzuta and death. However, he consistently considers death to be a scandal which jeopardises culture and which eludes culture. At the same time, and this is

a particularly important point, he does not absolutise it. On the contrary, death turns out to be a place of problematic escape from culture due to the cultural practices that attempt to utilise, tame and intercept death. "What sort of suggestiveness can there be of a likeness expressed in a monument to the original that is only destined for the phase of being a corpse and decomposing. The overcoming of the passing of time is certain!", he wrote regarding the production of "a grave, monument, masterpiece, medal".[13] A grave or burial both belong to the same list of cultureal practices that a work of art belongs to. Taking sides with the abjectness of "a corpse and decomposing" means taking sides with that which is not subject to the practices of symbolization. It is in this context that the action aimed at repatriating the remains of Witkacy to Poland can be read: as Kryszkowski wrote, he was guided by the desire for his "tormented society" to be deprived of "yet another occasion for the usual euphoria and celebrations that would certainly take place if the nation as a whole were presented with the whole skeleton".[14] It can be said that Kryszkowski was trying to seize Witkacy's body from the Father:

> I would like to greet all Poles. May we all be aware of the significance of this moment... of bringing to our country the ground up remains which are now among us... and somehow affect us. We have him here at last. In our Fatherland. This is something we really missed... I cannot continue... I am so deeply moved...[15]



Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego [*The Trip to Russia to Fetch Witkacy*], 1985. Photo from *Hola Hoop*

The antinational quality of Kryszkowski's gesture is expressed slightly differently by Ewa Domańska when she writes about a conflict "between treating the remains of Witkacy as part of the nation's heritage and the possibility of private individuals possessing a fetish (a potential relic)".[16] (In "...having a bit of this bone dust at home" the owner 'draws close to Witkacy to a degree that cannot even be achieved by having the master's manuscripts stored at home, or his colorful portraits",[17] wrote Kryszkowski). Domańska sees this conflict in "the divergence between the 'sacred body' that was the object of the funeral celebration and the profaned remains that the artist Jacek Kryszkowski treated as a thing".[18] If reference is to be made to profanation, then it is in the meaning that was given to it by Giorgio Agamben. Deriving the etymology of the word "religion" from "relegere" indicating "the meticulous and attentive attitude that should characterize our relationships with gods" as well as "the uneasy hesitation [...] towards the forms (and formulas) that should be adhered to so as not to breach the division between the sacred and the profane", Agamben defined profanation as "negligence, which ignores separation", and as the "inappropriate use of the sacred",[19] typical of playing children. This strategy of subversion in the field of culture can also be found in the reflection offered by Kryszkowski when he wrote in *Szczeniackie Hali-Gali* about the "light-hearted and totally unrestrained handling of things"[20] that is characteristic for children when acting as a "herd". It is from this perspective that one should regard not only the inappropriate handling of the remains of the deceased, the extension of which is the information provided by Kryszkowski

and supplied to him by his friend, Marek Sobczak, circa 1987, concerning the fate of Witkacy's ashes attached to his copy of *Hola Hoop*: "I returned the son to the mother, i.e. I took some of Witkacy's ashes to Zakopane and filled the empty grave".[21] On this side there is also the light-hearted, clownish tone of Kryszkowski's account of the expedition ("...hold on, hold on; what brand were the pants? ...ah, Montana. OK, so I'll put some Montanas in the suitcase to sell them"[22]). Kryszkowski's "private initiative", with its anarchic light-heartedness and inappropriateness, was an act of performing Zrzuta – just like a funeral, especially a state one, is an act of performing culture. This is precisely what appalled Waldemar Żyszkiewicz, and hence the evident relief with which he stated, following his meeting with Kryszkowski in 1999, "Today the pioneer of the 'private initiative' with regard to Witkacy's exhumation has distanced himself from that language; he knows full well that he made a mistake".[23]

As we know, the exhumation and subsequent funeral of Witkacy took place in 1988. In an email reply to a question of mine about Jacek Kryszkowski in that regard, Janusz Degler wrote on 5th September 2016:

> I remember that the profanation of Witkacy's grave by Jacek Kryszkowski was mentioned in talks between some officials from the Ministry of Culture and Art and Anna Micińska, possibly in early March 1988, when the date of the exhumation and relocation of Witkacy's corpse from Jeziory to Zakopane was announced. They demanded that she produce Witkiewicz's death certificate (!!). After explaining that no such certificate was issued, she asked if the delegation would include any researchers on Witkacy and if they would be present at the exhumation. She heard that the Soviet side did not expect the presence of any members of the Polish delegation at the cemetery with the exception of

> thePolish Consul in Lviv and employees of the BONGO, the company carrying out the exhumation. One of the reasons was the defiling of the grave and desecration of the remains in it by three people from Poland in the spring of 1985, which was evidenced by a newsletter in which the whole incident was described, with a bag attached containing ground bones retrieved from the grave. Thus, none of us was included in the Party-cum-governmental delegation to Jeziory. At the last minute Stefan Okołowicz succeeded in getting Jacek Schmidt, from the Educational and Documentary Film Studio in Lodz, to join the film crew; he was granted permission to film the ceremony bidding farewell to the coffin containing Witkacy's remains.

Degler summarises:

> The charge of "barbaric profanation" was certainly a perfect pretext to prevent any Witkacologists from being present at the exhumation. If any of us had been present, that fatal mistake would certainly not have happened.

One might say that Kryszkowski actually did "deprive the nation of euphoria". His expedition to fetch Witkacy was a performative act. And a triumph of Zrzuta over culture. It was best stated by Janusz Degler:

> After all, Witkacy did take a "running jump" in his style, not only from the Polish delegation but also from Kryszkowski. The bone retrieved from the grave, the one he ground up, did not belong to Witkacy. At the place where the tombstone stood, BONGO's employees came across the corpse of a baby. They did not touch it and started to dig about a meter to the side, encountering a perfectly preserved whole skeleton.
> A professor of anthropology from Minsk stated in her analysis that it was a well-built man, approximately 50 years of age. He was laid in a tin coffin which was sealed and then placed in a smart coffin made of oak. The following day, a solemn

> farewell ceremony took place in the yard outside the school in Jeziory where there is a memorial room devoted to Witkacy; it was attended by the authorities and all the inhabitants of the village of Jeziory Wielkie. On 14th April 1988 the coffin was placed in Witkacy's mother's grave at the Na Pęksowym Brzyzku cemetery in Zakopane. In November 1994, a commission appointed by Kazimierz Dejmek, the then Minister of Culture and Art, concluded, following an examination, that the remains brought from Jeziory were of a young Ukrainian woman who probably died in childbirth; her baby, resting next to her, had not survived, either.

Thus, Kryszkowski was kind to Witkacy because he is still resting at that tiny Orthodox cemetery with a view of a lake where he was buried on 19th September 1939.[24]

Various people very often deceive

The antinomy outlined in the previous paragraph consists in the conflict between the ritual, symbolic body and the material body. The problem is that this antinomy cannot be maintained for long due to the uncertain status of the material in the plastic bags.



Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego [*The Trip to Russia to Fetch Witkacy*], 1985. Photo from *Hola Hoop*

Maryla Sitkowska, an art critic and a close acquaintance of Kryszkowski's, quoted by Waldemar Żyszkiewicz, asserts that Kryszkowski's photos from the expedition "were subjected to a careful visual examination and found not to be the result of any photomontage": the powder, however, was not examined. Hence, of key importance is a sensational sentence in an article by Żyszkiewicz stating that an examination of the ashes in the bags has finally been carried out and "allegedly confirmed that these are the remains

of the skeleton of a man, aged over 50, who had remained for a sufficiently long time in damp ground".[25] Domańska consulted professor Janusz Piontek, a physical anthropologist from Adam Mickiewicz University, concerning this statement and his verdict was that such tests are highly unreliable and he also stated emphatically that "it was not possible to ascertain the sex based on a pulverised bone. There are no such methods".[26] In order to check, it was enough to contact Żyszkiewicz. On 11th March 2016, in answer to my question, he stated: "The news on the examinations that allegedly confirmed the authenticity of the remains obviously came from JK".[27] "He bends history in whatever way he needs",[28] as Elżbieta Kacprzak said, let us recall.

I also would like to return to her entry under the account of the expedition: "I would like to say here that there are a lot of fake bags with the remains going around. Various people very often deceive…".[29] It is worth adding that Kryszkowski attached another small bag to the same issue of the magazine, one containing "soil from the grave of Maria (Konopnicka, for that matter)" with the comment: "Here, there was to be a snapshot of the grave of Maria K. with Rzepecki in the background. Unfortunately, with God's help it vanished…". It has to be said, Kryszkowski did a lot to not erase the traces.

It is difficult to understand why none of those who wrote about Kryszkowski's expedition did not contact the participants in the expedition to Witkacy's grave in order to verify Kryszkowski's account. Elżbieta Kacprzak met Kryszkowski in 1983; they were married until 1988. Kacprzak graduated from the Faculty of Painting at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts; she took part in many events with Kultura Zrzuty; currently, she practices her profession. I met up with her on 12th March 2016.

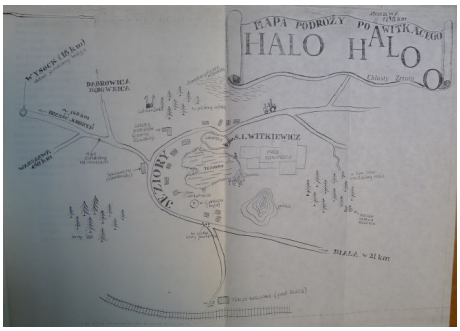
> It took me a long time to get back to it. A year ago I read about it on the Internet. It made me laugh that everybody took it seriously. I wanted to tell the story. Then I left it aside,

> and well, you appeared. You are the first person I will tell about it.
> No, there was no expedition. It was a hoax.

She went on:

> I myself took part in the preparations; we made the grave of Witkacy together. It was a stage set made in some friends' garden, outside Warsaw. We made it in order to produce the documentation. The grave was made of cardboard with sand glued to it: first we put on some glue and then threw some sand on, and it stuck. Jacek used to make a lot of such bits and pieces, some scale models, objects; he loved it. I made the lettering on the grave myself. The Pioneer [Soviet Girl Scout – translator's note] was played by a friend of ours; she has turned away so that she can't be identified. Everything was well thought through. And the ashes in the bag? They are ground animal bones. All the preparations took a few days, and the event itself two hours.[30]

Kryszkowski met Mikołaj "Miken" Malinowski through Kacprzak. They were friends: Malinowski appears as an interlocutor in some of Kryszkowski's dialogues and as a would-be editor of *Hali-Gali*. With a Master of Science in Engineering, in the 1980s he worked as a ship and aircraft navigator. He only turned up occasionally at Kultura Zrzuty events; he did photography and is the one who took the photographs documenting the circle's events. Nowadays, he works as a TV producer. I met up with him on 13th May 2016. I concealed the fact that I had earlier seen Elżbieta Kacprzak, so as not to suggest any answers; but Malinowski, in contrast to Kacprzak, thought the matter was



Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego [*The Trip to Russia to Fetch Witkacy*], 1985.
Photo from *Hola Hoop*

obvious, and straight away he considered the thread of fakery in Kryszkowski's output to be one of the most powerful ones. He gave his answers while browsing through some photographs from the expedition:

> It was in Radość. The grave was made by Kryszkowski. I took the photos, with a Plaubel Makina camera, a very rare one. The Pioneer on guard at the grave was played by my then wife. The bags? We searched for them there, amongst rubbish… this is a poultry bone or a dog's… Ah, yes! Just there, at the place where he dug, someone had once buried a dog, I think. So, we encountered those bones. And he says, "Listen, these bones must be ground". He was obsessed with graves… We used a drill, to break up the bones a bit, so there would be some research material for historians.[31]

The accounts given by "Miken" and Kacprzak are confirmed by the fact that in 1992 Kryszkowski handed over a canvas, 100 x 125.5 centimeters, depicting an accurate reproduction of the inscription on Witkacy's gravestone, to the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (headed by Maryla Sitkowska). In accordance with Kacprzak's account, *Nagrobek Witkacego* [Witkacy's Gravestone], dated 1985, is covered with sand and the inscription was made in oil paint.[32] Using the same technique, Kryszkowski produced Bakunin's gravestone which is in the collection of that same museum. *Nagrobek Witkacego* is an accurate reproduction of Witkacy's gravestone at the cemetery in Jeziory, immortalized in a photograph from the collection of Włodzimierz Ziemlański and often reproduced in the press.[33] A detailed analysis is not necessary to confirm that it was this precise photograph that was featured on the cover of *Hola Hoop*.

The readers of our magazine demand the truth

I suspect that there is a circle of "insiders", friendly

with Kryszkowski (art historians and artists), who have observed, to their amazement, how Kryszkowski's expedition has become a historical fact over the last thirty years. And all of this despite the fact that the people who were involved in the expedition to Witkacy's grave have questioned its authenticity. Recently, Daniel Muzyczyk wrote that Kryszkowski's action was "a fully conscious operation on the fetishistic habits of the public"[34] and perceived in it an extension of Kryszkowski's characteristic strategy of dematerializing art. He did not, however, verify the premise of the exhibition *Poszliśmy do Croatan* [We Went to Croatan] where, together with Robert Rumas, he "displayed the documentation of Kryszkowski's actions (Jacek Kryszkowski, *Russia '85 Expedition to Fetch Witkacy: Documentation*)" and contrasted it with "extracts from the feature film *Mystification* which were shown at the exhibition"[35] (a 2010 film by Jacek Koprowicz, based on the suggestion that Witkacy faked his suicide). Muzyczuk failed to notice Kryszkowski's habitual recourse to faking. Despite the doubts, like all researchers, he finally treats the expedition as something that took place.

The contrasting of the "documentation" with the "faking" is made possible by the authority of the archives, i.e. the fact that Kryszkowski supplemented his account with photographs and a map. With premeditation, since he wrote, "what can be more credible than tangible proof?"[36] "A collection of evidence is being built, enriched with a map. This assemblage will capture the minds of readers. They are performing some most extraordinary analyses (including bone examinations) and interpretations", he wrote, claiming, "The readers of our magazine [...] demand the truth! We



Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego [*The Trip to Russia to Fetch Witkacy*], 1985. Photo from J.K.'s archive

do not constitute such a reliable source of it as tangible proof seems to be: the photographs, the travel journal or the map".[37] "The photographs, the travel journal or the map" seem to constitute a source of the truth, says Kryszkowski. With his hoax he shows emphatically how "photography constructs an imaginary world and passes it off as reality" thereby showing "how photography serves to legitimate and normalize existing power relationships" while photo archives "maintain a hidden connection between knowledge and power".[38] After all, as Rebecca Schneider points out by quoting Derrida, "the word archive stems from the Greek and is linked at the root to the prerogatives of the archon, the head of state. Tucked inside the word itself is the house of he who was 'considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law'".[39] If in the culture of the archive bones are to speak of the "disappearance of flesh",[40] then in Kryszkowski's Zrzuta, "the ashes of Witkacy" speak exclusively of going beyond the logic of an archive which places emphasis on loss and disappearing as methods of maintaining this hegemony. By undermining the culture of the archive with his fabrications, Kryszkowski assumes an "attitude rejecting authority, the 'power of the master'",[41] as Piotr Piotrowski wrote in relation to *Masters* and *Positives* by Zbigniew Libera.

Kryszkowski demonstrates how in "photographs as historical illustrations [...] history takes on the character of *spectacle*".[42] In the perfidiously arranged shift between the historical performance, fortified in the authority of the photographic archive, and reality there emerges a shift between the spectacular experience of the participants in the expedition to Witkacy's grave in Jeziory and the actual experience of the participants in the hoax in Radość just outside Warsaw. Between the spectacular emotions ascribed by the viewers to Kryszkowski as he holds a bone of Witkacy's in his hand, and the actual emotions of Kryszkowski holding a dog bone as if it were

a bone of Witkacy's. This falsification works in favor of Zrzuta and the Witkacyan splashes – as proof that culture (archive) is a performance obscuring reality. "The excursion to get Witkacy was something different than what the photographs, the text or the map were capable of suggesting to the reader",[43] Kryszkowski would say. The problem is that "'the truth' about [the expedition] is only being searched for in a collection of objects. And this collection is capable neither of expressing experiences nor of coping with this whole motley crew of different oddballs entangled in one situation".[44]

Consistently, however, in accordance with Zrzuta's theory, that which is on the side of reality, on the side of experience, remains intangible. "Our experiment proved that there is a reality whose sense goes beyond the Witkacyan episode" and which Witkacy "discovered in that the way it eludes form (and thus also culture and culture's history)".[45] "We do not constitute a reliable source of truth", Kryszkowski would say of himself and his companions on the expedition. He also organized the account of the expedition in a similar manner, as a compilation of his own statements and those by Malinowski and Kacprzak, not necessarily forming a coherent whole. The result was, he writes, "a hybrid text, a motley assemblage of statements, a heap of random memories", sometimes contradictory ("It is not easy to write together. Everyone sees things differently, interprets them in their own way"[46]). Ultimately, the result of the expedition as an experience of Zrzuta came to be a text arranged in such a manner that it ended up on the side of that which eludes meaning and form. It was not for nothing that the whole expedition was summed up as an intention devoid of "any deeper meaning".[47]

So weak, so helpless, and actually there is

nothing to appeal for help to

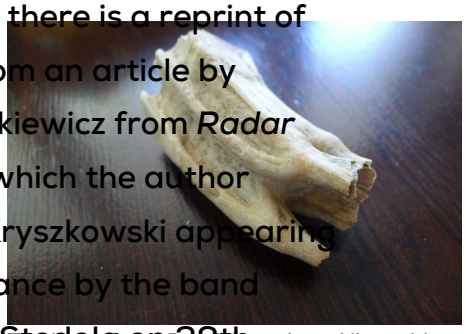
"The need to construct 'the truth' in order to unambiguously and ultimately cow the materials provided by us is terrifying",[48] said Kryszkowski. From this point of view, my investigation – providing arguments to consider the expedition as a hoax – does not differ in any way from the attitude of those researchers who, guided by the authority and logic of the archive, assumed that the expedition was a fact. Therefore, I want to contrast here the excitement that accompanied me when Elżbieta Kacprzak confirmed my suspicions with my uncertainty when, immediately after our conversation, I realised that actually I had no strong evidence that Kacprzak was telling the truth. Or perhaps she and Malinowski were executing Kryszkowski's perverse will together? There is a bone preserved in Kryszkowski's archive – could it be a bone belonging to Witkacy? At this point, I would like to take a firm stand in defence of this uncertainty – as the essence of Zrzuta and of the project to investigate the subjectivity it contained.

Because if Zrzuta advocates the position of not identifying against culture seen as a space of the repressive Law of the Father, then Kryszkowski comes out against the metaphysics of presence, against thinking within the categories of foundations and sources, against attempts to cow the individual within some externally imposed field of truth (it is no coincidence that he places the word "truth" in quotation marks). The purpose is, as he put it, to "tear away thinking and acting from that which leads to naming, classifying, dividing";[49] to take sides with that which is (in humans) unstable, unlocated, processual, which is (in humans) on the side of mediation, transmission, negotiation. the uncertain identity of Witkacy is significant in this context: resurrected, he exists in a dialogue with Kryszkowski, *Rozmowa starca z przygłupem* [An Old Man's Conversation with a Nitwit], on the uncertain boundary between life and death. It is exactly in the

same kind of border non-place – between the material and symbolic being and non-being – that Witkacy negotiates his existence in Kryszkowski's exhumation stunt.

"Humanity abhors man glorifying his 'image'", says Kryszkowski in the dialogue with Witkacy, who states in turn, "These 'opuscula' suggest in an immobilised and arbitrary manner some erroneous convictions regarding my present dealings. After all, I am changing...".[50] "So go beyond morality, normality...",[51] urges Kryszkowski, problematizing the categories of truth, good and evil (understood as operational categories and cultural constructs), and placing the category of unidentifiedness, crucial to Zrzuta, within the field of activity of culture's disciplining forces. He calls an individual existing outside the scope of these procedures at one point "a naked human".[52] Such an individual "is so weak, so helpless and actually has nothing to appeal to for help", says Kryszkowski, pondering that chasm which divides their possibilities from "the possibilities that are at the disposal of [...] a decision maker or political groups, pressure groups".[53] Hence the theory of Zrzuta becomes a politics of weak identity which affirms, against all odds, non-identifying and thus opens itself to every form of non-normativeness. Witkacy recalls the splashes: "People there changed over time, they were obscure, concrete, ambiguous, cheeky, unfriendly or embarrassing but neither mass-like nor elite-like. They changed in a manner that was unpredictable by means of any structure or form"[54]. "The only noteworthy thing, I think, may be that which we once took sides with – the recognition of the existence of ourselves and of others as the only "values" worthy of interest, inexpressible and irreplaceable",[55] wrote Kryszkowski to his colleagues from Zrzuta in 1985.

Painter of Art



Photograph from Jacek Kryszkowski's archive

In *Hali-Gali* there is a reprint of an extract from an article by Joanna Paszkiewicz from *Radar* magazine in which the author remembers Kryszkowski appearing at a performance by the band Praffdata at Stodoła on 28th January 1986. "If anyone uses me in the mass media again, presents me as a protester, an artist or another buffoon, then I will concoct for him some pleasure greatly exceeding that which Kantor experienced at the Foksal gallery",[56] threatens Kryszkowski. In the same issue, in an article called *Uprzedzenie* [Prejudice] he writes his "Last Will and Testament" in which, among other things, he declares: "CONTEMPT – for the individuals that will take advantage of my person for purposes that have nothing to do with any willingness to be in my (undoubtedly most likeable) company"; a "PROHIBITION – on gathering, storing and publishing any sort of materials related to me"; and a "COMMANDMENT – to destroy any object that would be ascribed to my person"[57]. In the same year, in a letter dated 7th March preserved in Kryszkowski's archive, Maryla Sitkowska wrote, "As a matter of fact, you are still doing crypto-performances, quasi-theory, neo-dada-objects-trouvé-et-produits, and even – horror of horrors! – good old painting – although you are ashamed of it. Whether you like it or not – you are in the museum anyway". Did Kryszkowski actually fail to escape from culture?

The simplest answer would be that given by Sitkowska or Stefan Morawski, with whom Kryszkowski corresponded: any escape from culture is impossible. There are hundreds of arguments for this. This is evidenced by the fact that Kryszkowski's objects are present in the collections of the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts or are on permanent display at the Art Gallery of the 20th and 21st Centuries at the

National Museum in Warsaw. This is also shown by the fact that each gesture or object made by Kryszkowski can be (according to institutional theory) classified as art due to the fact that is was made by a certified artist. It can also be said that Zrzuta, being by definition an escape from culture, is attached to it because it exists in constant relation with culture, which sets its boundaries. Kryszkowski by no means treated his writings as literary output, as suggested by Daniel Muzyczuk, but even more so neither did he treat it as an "attempt to invent a new way of producing art"[58] – which, however, does not mean that his essays cannot be treated in such a way, especially because they are written in a very conscious, well thought-through manner, and with great talent. Kryszkowski occupies a very marginal place in the history of art but there is every reason to move him to a more prominent place. This can be achieved, inter alia, through essays devoted to him, like this one. By making Kryszkowski's output the subject of logical commentary and by merging him into various traditions, I am effectively depriving him of the position of unidentifiedness, thus violating his Last Will and Testament.

One might wonder, was that Will honest? Kryszkowski was amazingly talented manually, as shown by the scale models, "briefcases" and other objects he made in the 1980s. These items embarrassed him, so Kryszkowski wrote, "I made two hundred pop-ups from my stay in Teofilow (I include them in *Hali-Gali*). During that short time I experienced what a Polfa employee does after forty years of putting caps on Pini syrup bottles (i.e. nothing!)".[59] "I suspect you like it", wrote Sitkowska in the letter quoted previously, and penetratingly charged Kryszkowski with a lack of consistency: "you suggest others rely on their natural inclinations, pander to their whims, not restrain their impulses". Did the prohibition of artistic production as a condition for escaping culture not ultimately become censorship, a norm, the ideal of the Super-Ego that Kryszkowski imposed on himself?

And what's more: did the position of being "unidentified", outside a culture "protecting one from emptiness" not have its mundane side?

Kryszkowski finally ceased to be an active participant in the art world in 1990. He took part in the last en plein air session in Teofilów, a death knell for Kultura Zrzuty, and left for Düsseldorf. After a few years he returned to Poland. He used (or wasted) his talent doing paid work, drawing caricatures for the *Parkiet* and *Nie* magazines and the *Rzeczpospolita* daily's *Plus i Minus* supplement.



Nagrobek Witkacego [Witkacy's Gravestone], 1985, Academy of Fine Arts Museum in Warsaw.
Source: Museum website

Remembering the fact that death in Zrzuta is beyond the symbolic order, beyond culture, beyond art, one might think that on 21st October 2006 Kryszkowski finally eluded culture. It should, however, be remembered that – as Kryszkowski himself taught – this was not a certain way at all. "If anyone calls Witkacy an artist, they will only give expression to their cheeky reinterpretation – one that anyone can allow themselves regarding a corpse"[60], he wrote. "Jacek Kryszkowski. Painter of art", says the inscription on his gravestone.

This essay is part of a book being prepared on Kultura Zrzuty and the 'third way' in Polish culture of the 1980s.

My thanks are due to Elżbieta Kacprzak and Mikołaj Malinowski for our conversations, without which this essay would not have come into being.

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Above all, I wish to thank Dorota Kryszkowska for giving me access to the archive, her consent to reprinting various photographs, an inspiring conversation, help, trust and her

enormous warm-heartedness. And finally, for the delicious dinner that she and her husband and son treated me to in their home.

M.K.

1 J.K., *Sztuka zanieczyszcza środowisko* [Art Pollutes the Environment], *Tango*, 1985, no 7 (18). In the footnotes, I will use the initials J.K. for Jacek Kryszkowski. Numbering of *Tango* magazines: see the first part of the text: *Jacek Kryszkowski. Uciekinier z kultury. Część 1: Zrzuta*, [Jacek Kryszkowski: a Fugitive from Culture. Part 1: Zrzuta], in: *Widok* , 2016, no. 13.

2 All quotations until the end of the paragraph come from two essays by J.K.: *Rozmowa starca z przygłupem* [An Old Man's Conversation with a Nitwit], in: *Hola Hoop* , 1985; and *Prowokacja Jubilata* [The Birthday Man's Provocation], in: *Hali-Gali*, 1986.

3 J.K. interviewed by Bożenna Stokłosa, interview for *Ankieta Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki „Artyści plastycy '84–86" [*Survey of the Association of Art Historians, *'Visual Artists 84–86'] in June 1985; typescript in the Library of the Institute of Art History at the Warsaw University,* 27. After the 1920s, Baader disappeared from the annals of history, *'at the end of his life he probably went astray'* . Ibid, 18.

4 J.K.: *Partum*, in: *Partum z wypożyczalni ludzi (historia bycia twórcy)* [Partum From a Human Rental Store (the Story of Being a Creator)], (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Dom Słowa Polskiego, 1991), 1 (page numbers concern the typescript reprinted in the book – the publication as a whole is not paginated; text from ca. 1987). The spelling of the quotes is the same as in the originals.

5 J.K., *Aukcja u Marka Grygla* [Auction at Marek Grygiel's], in: *Halo Haloo*, 1985.

6 Author's conversation with Wojciech Włodarczyk, 20th June 2016; recording in the author's collection.

7 J.K., *Partum*, 1.

8 J.K., *Najdłuższe zaproszenie do knajpy* [The Longest Invitation to a Pub], in: *Hali-Gali*, 1986.

9 J.K., *Rozmowa starca...*

10 J.K., *Partum*, 9.

11 J.K., *Dla E.K. i najbliższych znajomych. Listy* [For E.K. and the Closest Acquaintances . Letters], circa 1987, 11.

12 J.K., [*Autobiography*], ca. 1985, manuscript (title comes from the author of this article).

13 J.K., *Dla E.K...*, 10-11.

14 J.K., *Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego* [The Trip to Russia to Fetch Witkacy], in: *Hola Hoop* , 1985.

15 Ibid.

16 Ewa Domańska, *Transhumanacja, czyli przepędzanie zwłok Witkacego* [Transhumanations or the Driving of Witkacy's Corpse], in: *Didaskalia*, 2010, no. 96, 47.

17 J.K., *Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego*.

18 Ewa Domańska, *Transhumanacja czyli...*, 47.

19 Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, transl. by Jeff Fort, (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 75.

20 J.K., *Szczeniackie Hali-Gali* [Puerile Hali-Gali], in: *Hali-Gali*, 1986.

21 J.K., *Partum*, 12.

22 J.K., *Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego*.

23 Waldemar Żyszkiewicz, *Dwie ekshumacje i pogrzeb* [Two Exhumations and a Funeral], in: *Tysol*, 1999, no. 7; on-line: http://waldemar-zyszkiewicz.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=208&Itemid=35, accessed 27th January 2017.

24 E-mail from Janusz Degler, 6th September 2016; in the author's collection.

25 Waldemar Żyszkiewicz, *Dwie ekshumacje...*

26 Ewa Domańska, *Transhumanacja czyli...*, 47.

27 E-mail from Waldemar Żyszkiewicz, 11th March 2016; in the author's collection.

28 J.K., *O Teofilowie (i nie tylko)* [About Teofilow (and More)], 1987, 42.

29 J.K., *Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego*.

30 Author's conversation with Elżbieta Kacprzak, 12th March 2016; recording in the author's collection.

31 Author's conversation with Mikołaj Malinowski, 13th May 2016; recording in the author's collection.

32 Cf. *Sigma – Galeria Repassage – Repassage 2 – ReRepassage*, ed. Maryla Sitkowska, (Warsaw: Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, 1993), 145. On the Academy's website the gravestone is dated 1988.

33 Cf. *Sztuka*, 1985, no 2-3.

34 Daniel Muzyczuk, *Cześć czarnej sztuce. Twórczość literacka Jacka Kryszkowskiego* [Glory to Black Art: Jacek Kryszkowski's Literary Output], *Miejsce* 2015 no. 1.

35 Ewa Domańska, *Transhumanacja czyli...*, 48.

36 J.K., *Prowokacja Jubilata*.

37 Ibid.

38 Allan Sekula, *Reading An Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capital*, in: *The Photography Reader*, ed. by. Liz Wells, (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), 443, 447.

39 Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, (London, New York: Routlege, 2011), 97.

40 Ibid, 103.

41 Piotr Piotrowski, *Zbigniew Libera: anarchia i krytyka* [Zbigniew Libera: Anarchy and Criticism], in: *Zbigniew Libera. Prace z lat 1982-2008* [Zbigniew Libera: Works 1982-2008], ed. Dorota Monkiewicz, (Warsaw: Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, 2009), 16.

42 Allan Sekula, *Reading An Archive...*, 448.

43 J.K., *Prowokacja Jubilata*.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 J.K., *Podróż do Rosji po Witkacego*.

48 J.K., *Prowokacja Jubilata*.

49 J.K., *O Teofilowie...*, 39.

50 J.K., *Rozmowa starca...*

51 J.K., *O Teofilowie...*, 50.

52 Cf. J.K. interviewed by Bożenna Stokłosa, 16, 21.

53 Ibid., 62.

54 J.K., *Rozmowa starca...*

55 J.K., *Drogi Jóźwiaku* [Dear Jóźwiak], *Hola Hoop*, 1985.

56 J.K., *...Ale oto otrzymałem list* [...But Then I Received a Letter], *Hali-Gali*, 1986.

57 J.K., *Uprzedzenie* [Prejudice], *Hali-Gali*, 1986.

58 Daniel Muzyczuk, *Cześć czarnej sztuce...*, 71.

59 J.K., *Hali-Gali w Teofilowie. Obfite fragmenty* [Hali-Gali in Teofilow: Generous Fragments], *Hali Gali*, 1986.

60 J.K., *Prowokacja Jubilata*.