

# Tomasz Pułka's personal blogs – concepts and notebooks\*

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The goal of the present article is to tentatively determine the functions of Tomasz Pułka's personal blogs in the wider context of his literary *oeuvre*, published both on the Internet and in print. I am particularly interested in two blogs created at the turn of 2008 and 2009, which exemplify different blogging strategies. One is the conceptual dream diary *Insertjazz*<sup>2</sup> and the other is a blog in the form of a digital notebook entitled *Techniką i wychowaniem* [Technology and upbringing].<sup>3</sup> Both projects were created at the end of 2008, at a time when Pułka was already actively publishing his works on two literary websites (*Nieszuflada* [Non-drawer] and *Poezja Polska* [Polish Poetry]),<sup>4</sup> and at the same time he co-ran the blog *Cichy Nabiau* [Quiet Dairy],<sup>5</sup> where he published his musical and poetic recordings, graphic art, and multimedia posts. Back in 2008, he also started writing critical texts for the *Niedoczytania* [Unreadable] webpage.<sup>6</sup> This raises the question about the role of Pułka's personal blogs in the context of so many other parallel digital platforms.

<sup>1</sup> Tables and lists organizing the work of Tomasz Pułka, along with archival material collecting the poet's online output, can be found in the research data repository. See: P. Chorzewska-Rubik, *Twórczość Tomasza Pułki* [The Work's of Tomasz Pułka], Dane Badawcze UW, <https://doi.org/10.58132/E0H5OK>, date of access 30 Sept. 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Pułka, *Insertjazz*, <http://www.insertjazz.blogspot.com/>, date of access 29 Dec. 2022.

<sup>3</sup> PUŁKA\\ [Tomasz Pułka], *Techniką i wychowaniem* [Technology and upbringing], <http://www.techwych.blogspot.com/>, date of access 29 Dec. 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Fernando Pessoa [Tomasz Pułka], <http://www.nieszuflada.pl/autor.asp?idautora=11227>, date of access 30 Dec. 2022; Tomaszek Halfka [Tomasz Pułka], <http://www.poezja-polska.pl/fusion/profile.php?lookup=57>, date of access 30 Dec. 2022.

<sup>5</sup> *Cichy Nabiau* [Quiet Dairy], <http://www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/>, date of access 30 Dec. 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Tomasz Pułka, <http://www.niedoczytania.pl/author/tomaszpułka/>, date of access 30 Dec. 2022.

In the present article, I am interested in the blog as a genre in the wider context of the tradition of digital life writing, which determines the reception of posts and, above all, challenges the generic stability of entries which may be classified as literary texts.<sup>7</sup> Pułka's blog entries differ: we may find among them (quasi) diaristic entries which describe (sometimes at random) everyday life, entries in which the poetics of the personal is combined and intertwined with a distinct poetic style, to, finally, entries in which Pułka shared the prose or poems which would later be republished in print or on other websites as literary texts. Such a classification of sources leads to the question about which of the indicated generic frameworks (be it literary, fictional or autobiographical<sup>8</sup> – as a blog entry<sup>9</sup>) dominates or prevails in the respective texts. In the present article, I examine how the genres of different texts (poem, post, diary entry) published by Pułka on his blog signify in the context of the textual conditions imposed by Blogger.com.

## Techniką i wychowaniem – sketchbook, notebook, jotter

In order to identify the moment when Pułka decided to expand his online literary presence by adding yet another – this time autobiographical – format we should study the history behind and the initial entries of Pułka's first personal blog. *Techniką i wychowaniem* was a blog

<sup>7</sup> Julia Novak, writing about experimental life-writing, draws attention to how sometimes overt dependencies between the author's autobiographical and fictional works undermine the ontological status of texts which may be classified as both. Irene Kacadens, respectively, points to the role of paratexts in distinguishing between fiction and autobiography. Kacadens also draws on Philippe Lejeune and argues that if the paratext makes the reader perceive the text as fiction, it cannot be classified as autobiography. The evolution of Philippe Lejeune's views on this subject was discussed by Paweł Rodak. See, respectively, Julia Novak, "Experiments in Life-Writing: Introduction", in: *Experiments in Life-Writing: Intersections of Auto/Biography and Fiction*, ed. Lucia Boldrini, Julia Novak, Palgrave Studies in Life Writing (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 18; Irene Kacadens, "Experimental life writing", in: *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*, ed. Joe Bray, Alison Gibbons, Brian McHale (London, New York: Routledge, 2012), 380–392; Paweł Rodak, "Wstęp. Autobiografia i dziennik osobisty jako przedmiot badań Philippe'a Lejeune'a" [Introduction. Autobiography and personal diary as the subject of Philippe Lejeune's research], in: Philippe Lejeune, "Drogi zeszyt...". "drogi ekranie...". O dziennikach osobistych ["Cher écran": Journal personnel, ordinateur, Internet/ "Dear screen": Personal diaries, computers and the Internet], trans. Agnieszka Karpowicz, Magda Rodak, Paweł Rodak (Warsaw: The University of Warsaw Press, 2010), 15.

<sup>8</sup> While many critics may see the blog as a neutral space and platform, its most popular colloquial synonym, i.e. "a web log" or "an online diary," triggers associations with autobiographical practices. This association is also important for literary scholars who study blogs – they refer to it as a diary (or, in Polish criticism, *silva rerum*). The Internet critic Geert Lovink emphasizes how strongly new digital practices are defined by early adopters, who define models that are later repeated; in the case of blogs, these models were autobiographical. Lovink points out that regardless of the topic, the distinguishing features of blogging are: self-presentation and referentiality, subjectivity, and the audience's expectation that the featured text is non-fiction. See: Geert Lovink, *Zero comments: blogging and critical Internet culture* (New York, London: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> See works which define the blog in terms of genre and medium: Marta Więckiewicz, *Blog w perspektywie genologii multimedialnej* [Blog in the perspective of multimedia genology], *Oblicza Mediów* [Faces of the Media] (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2012); Jill Walker Rettberg, *Blogging* (Polity, 2014); Ruth Page, "Blogs", in: *The Johns Hopkins guide to digital media*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, Lori Emerson, Benjamin J. Robertson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 42–45; Ignacio Siles, "Blogs", in: *The SAGE Handbook of Web History*, ed. Niels Brügger, Ian Milligan (Los Angeles [California], Boston, Massachusetts: SAGE Reference, Credo Reference, 2020), 359–371; Anna M. Szczepan-Wojnarska, "Blogs jako forma literacka" [Blogs as a literary form], *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (2006): 191–201; Marta Cywińska-Milonas, "Blogs (ujęcie psychologiczne)" [Blogs (a psychological approach)], in: *Liternet. Literatura i internet* [Liternet. Literature and Internet], ed. Piotr Marecki (Kraków: Rabid, 2002), 95–109. Anna Gumkowska, Maciej Maryl, Piotr Toczyski, *Blog to... blog. Blogi oczyma blogerów. Raport z badania jakościowego zrealizowanego przez IBL PAN i Gazeta. PL* [A blog is... a blog. Blogs through the eyes of bloggers. Report from a qualitative study carried out by The Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Gazeta. PL] (Warsaw, 2009), 4; Sara Akram, "Blog – gatunek w formie kolekcji czy kolekcja gatunków?" [Blog – a genre in the form of a collection or a collection of genres?], *Acta Humana* 8 (2017): 61–72; Maciej Maryl, Krzysztof Niewiadomski, Maciej Kidawa, "Teksty elektroniczne w działaniu: typologia gatunków blogowych" [Electronic texts in action: a typology of blog genres], *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 59, 2 (2016): 51–73.

that the poet ran independently from November 14, 2008, to December 30, 2009. A few days before the publication of the first post, Pułka was very active on one of his accounts on the *Nieszuflada* website. However, he broke the rule which stated that users could post only one poem a day and within a few hours he filled his profile with several short trollish<sup>10</sup> entries which seemed to describe the consumption of psychoactive substances in real time. Most commentators perceived them as spam. One user told Pułka to “lock the computer in the other room, cut off the Internet cable with scissors, and restrain from entering the room.”<sup>11</sup> The blog does not impose restrictions similar to those imposed by the *Nieszuflada* website – there is no limit to the number of entries the poet can post. Also, it no longer matters whether the text in question may be called a poem, which further complicates the genetic and generic status of posts. Often, as I will demonstrate below, it is difficult to determine what the nature of the entries is – whether they were early versions of literary texts, diary entries, or full-fledged literary texts published on the blog. Works posted on the blog, unlike those published on the *Nieszuflada* website, are not automatically graded. The goal of publishing your work on the *Nieszuflada* website (as suggested by the interface and the note posted by the administrators on the home page, and above all users’ choices) was to obtain critical feedback to your poems. Pułka’s blogs were not as popular as the *Nieszuflada* website and only a few comments may be found under *Techniką i wychowaniem* entries. In practice, this “online diary” turned out to be more private than the poetry website. Popularity (or lack thereof) corresponds to the differences between the website and the blog. On the website, Pułka was just one of many active users and other users did not necessarily visit the website to read poems by specific authors. It is difficult to accidentally find a blog that was not promoted as part of a broader structure. Blogger.com, unlike other blogging portals, for example the Polish platform blog.onet.pl, did not have a dedicated home page with a list of bloggers and promoted entries.<sup>12</sup>

I analyze the content and form of Pułka’s blogs on the basis of the versions archived online after the poet’s death in 2012. The Internet Archive does not contain any versions of the blog that would allow me to determine whether Pułka edited and/or deleted some of his entries.<sup>13</sup> Such modifications, as we know, could be made on Blogger.com. This is an important reservation in the context of my analysis of the structure, coherence, and chronological arrangement of entries. It is impossible to tell whether the archived version of the blog and the actual blog are identical, so it is difficult to determine whether the poetics of randomness and fragmenta-

<sup>10</sup>Marta Koronkiewicz argues that the category of the trickster should be used to interpret subjectivity in Pułka’s poetry. In the case of his online presence, I think that a more appropriate category would be a troll, who first examines the preferences of a group of users (e.g. associated with a specific website), and then deliberately acts against their expectations and tastes. See, respectively, Marta Koronkiewicz, “Posłowie” [Afterword], in: Tomasz Pułka, *Podczas siebie: wybór wierszy* [During Yourself: A Selection of Poems], ed. Marta Koronkiewicz (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Wojewódzkiej Biblioteki Publicznej i Centrum Animacji Kultury w Poznaniu, 2018); Magdalena Kamińska, “Konflikt, przemoc, prowokacja w cyberkulturze” [Conflict, violence, provocation in cyberculture], in eadem: *Nieczne memy: dwanaście wykładów o kulturze internetu* [Naughty Memes: Twelve Lectures on Internet Culture] (Poznań: Galeria Miejska Arsenał, 2011), 15–34.

<sup>11</sup>Jacek Dehnel, Commentary, <http://www.nieszuflada.pl/klasa.asp?idklasy=123272&idautora=11227&rodzaj=1>, date of access 4 Jan. 2023.

<sup>12</sup>Blog Onet. Main page, <https://web.archive.org/web/20081231012603/http://blog.onet.pl/>, date of access 14 Jan. 2023.

<sup>13</sup>The first archived version of the blog dates back to August 19, 2013, so it was archived after Pułka’s death in July 2012. The home page of Pułka’s profile on Blogger.com states that the blog titled *Techniką i wychowaniem* was run by Pułka alone. The “Team Members” tab only lists Pułka’s profile. Cf. <https://web.archive.org/web/20100903175424/http://www.blogger.com:80/profile/17188899762195186561>, date of access 3 Jan. 2023.

tion identified in the blog's structure is a result of deletions and modifications or a conscious practice.<sup>14</sup> The posthumous version contains texts which may be found scattered throughout the blog as a whole and in individual posts:<sup>15</sup> fragments of prose, poems, short diary entries, digital drawings, and glitch collages. Despite their fragmentary nature, the published texts are arranged in several separate series, draft versions, and interconnected sketches. The blog is like a sketchbook or a notebook in which the writer works on several projects at the same time, makes personal notes (describes his dreams, meals, phrases heard during social gatherings, plans, opinions about books), as well as shares memes, anecdotes, and jokes hastily drawn in MS Paint: "Próbowałem wejść na bani do mieszkania, ale zamiast klucza wyjąłem z kieszeni 10 złotych. Na drzwiach nie zrobiło to żadnego wrażenia" [I tried to enter my apartment drunk, but instead of the key, I found 10 zlotys in my pocket. The door was not impressed]; "Ludzie, kupujący kiwi dzielą się wyłącznie na dwie kategorie: ludzi, którzy lubią kiwi oraz ludzi, dla których kupienie kiwi coś znaczy" [There are two types of people who buy kiwis: people who like kiwis and people for whom buying kiwis means something]. A superficial read may suggest that Pułka numbered his entries, thus achieving some sort of narrative continuity. However, these numbers are quite random (39, then 184, and then 91).

Although it has not been discussed critically so far, the *Techniką i wychowaniem* blog is undoubtedly an interesting text that can be read both as a collection of autonomous texts and as a notebook. The latter is a genetic term:<sup>16</sup> the notebook documents the writer's creative process, how they worked on texts which were later published in other formats and media.<sup>17</sup> For example, the post titled "39" can be interpreted as a draft, a narrative background, for the poem titled *Łuk* [Arc]:

Mój kot ma na imię Program  
i wykonuje polecenia.

<sup>14</sup>Fragmentation, achieved, among others, by marking omissions in texts, can also be read in terms of the poetics of the blog entries. This interpretation comes to mind especially in the case of two twin ironic posts which explore the notions of redundancy and self-referentiality: Z cyklu "Cykl cyklu" (dwa fragmenty) [From the series "The Series of the series" (two fragments)] and Z cyklu "Cykl cyklu" (jeszcze jeden fragment) [From the series "The Series of the series" (one more fragment)] (*Techniką i wychowaniem*, 16 Dec. 2008, 20 Feb. 2009).

<sup>15</sup>For example, a post from December 31, 2008 combines a fragment of a poem, a diary entry, and graphic art. All quotations referring to Pułka's blog entries discussed in the present article are marked with the following abbreviations: the *Insertjazz* blog – IJ and the date of the post; the *Techniką i wychowaniem* blog – TiW and the date of the post. If more than one entry was published on the same day, I also include the title of the post.

<sup>16</sup>See: Pierre-Marc de Biasi, Maria Prussak, Filip Kwiatek, *Genetyka tekstów* [Text Genetics] (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, Wydawnictwo, 2015), 72–74; Mateusz Antoniuk, "Jak czytać stronę brulionu: krytyka genetyczna i materialność tekstu" [How to read a notebook page: Genetic criticism and textual materiality], *Wielogłos* 1 (2017): 39–66. The "notebook" nature of the *Techniką i wychowaniem* blog does not mean that other, more traditional, analog, private, unpublished genetic documents may not be found in the corpus of Pułka's works, such as manuscripts, sketchbooks, and rough drafts. See: Krzysztof Sztafa, "Nota redakcyjna" [Editorial note], in: Tomasz Pułka, *Wybieganie z raję* [Running out of paradise], ed. Krzysztof Sztafa, Joanna Mueller (Stronie Śląskie: Biuro Literackie, 2017), 409–410.

<sup>17</sup>Maciej Maryl writes about a similar issue in his essay devoted to Sylwia Chutnik's *Cwaniary* [The Hustlers] and the novel's early version – a series of blog entries. Maryl reads the text originally published on the blog in terms of a "literary startup," i.e. a test version of the novel, which, after achieving success (as demonstrated, among other things, by the readers' reactions) "is removed from the Internet and replaced with the final product – the printed book." See: Maciej Maryl, "Startup literacki. Blog a powieść w odcinkach na przykładzie pierwowzoru «Cwaniar» Sylwii Chutnik" [A literary startup. A blog and a serialized novel – a discussion of the original edition of Sylwia Chutnik's *Cwaniary* [The Hustlers]], in: *Teksty kultury uczestnictwa* [Texts of the culture of participation], ed. Andrzej Dąbrówka, Maciej Maryl, Aleksandra Wójtowicz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2016), 85–110. Pułka published his texts online not so much to test their popularity but rather to test how they signify in a non-print medium. Moreover, it was not always his intention to publish his works in print.

Interesujące, czarno-białe fotografie (?) przedstawiające  
rozrywki filozofów: kawę, szachownicę, papierosy.

Każda z nich wygląda tak samo.

Jak jest być poetą pracującym jako monter,  
który – mimo młodego wieku – nosi wąsy,  
aż słyszy w Chorzowie od naćpanego fetą  
starszego kolegi: „Wantuj to, kurwa, i raczuj!”  
i zastyga w przerażającej beztrosce, nie wiedząc,  
co to może znaczyć?

Jak jest myć się po pracy? Rozmawiać o czymś weselszym?  
Zajebiście.

Czternaście starych, spoconych kobiet,  
pracujących w „Gellwe”, nakleja  
ukraińskie etykiety na napój „Tiger”,  
a ja piję już trzeci za paletą z budyniami.

Magazynier opowiedział mi o dwóch  
zgonach wynikłych z przedawkowania,

bym po robocie przywdział zbroję żuła  
i w dychę zarobił godzinę.<sup>18</sup>

My cat's name is Program  
and it carries out commands.

Interesting black and white photographs (?) showing  
philosophers' pastimes: coffee, chessboard, cigarettes.

They all look the same.  
What's it like to be a poet who works as a fitter?  
who – despite his young age – has a mustache,  
until he hears in Chorzów from his older friend high on speed: “Want it, fuck it and crawl it!”  
and he freezes in terrifying carelessness, not knowing  
what could this mean?

<sup>18</sup>Tomasz Pułka, “Łuk” [Arc], in idem: Zespół szkół [Area school] (Kraków: Ha!art, 2010), 21. Translation by Małgorzata Olsza.

What is it like to take a shower after work? Talk about something nicer?  
Fucking awesome.

Fourteen old sweaty women  
at "Gellwe", are gluing  
Ukrainian labels onto the bottles of "Tiger" energy drink,  
and I'm already drinking my third behind a pallet of puddings.

The warehouseman told me about two  
overdose deaths,

so I would put on my hooligan's armor after work  
and earned an hour in a tenner.

The blog entry in question reads:

### 39

Pracowałam wówczas w zabierzowskim Gellwe, przy pakowaniu napojów energetyzujących. Byłam jak limitowana seria coca-coli: dla wszystkich, a jednak kusząca i oryginalna. Jednorazowa jak te plastikowe siatki, co je ze sklepów wycofali na rzecz rozkładających się (!) [I was working in Gellwe [a food manufacturing plant] in Zabierzów at the time, packaging energy drinks. I was like a limited edition of Coca-Cola: for everyone, yet tempting and original. Disposable like those plastic bags that have been withdrawn from stores in favor of biodegradable ones (!)] (TiW, 11 Dec. 2008).

The Polish text makes it clear that the I is female (all verbs have female endings). When we take into consideration that "Gellwe" and "energy drinks" are mentioned both in the blog entry and in the poem, we should probably read it is a note – a draft version – of *Łuk* which shows the perspective of one of the "fourteen old sweaty women." In the poem, however, the perspective of the male poet-fitter dominates – other people's points of view are introduced only through quotations. The blog entry expands the spectrum of techniques used in *Łuk* to show a different perspective (also as regards gender). It is one of the "fourteen women" who speaks in the blog entry. Assuming that the perspective of the I is crucial in this poem,<sup>19</sup> the questions of labor and its social conditions become even more pertinent. The poem touches upon power relations in the context of animals and technology, hired labor, physical labor, play and rest. The way in which the respective characters are introduced also seems to be important: the "philosophers" in the old photograph (which activates the metaphor of temporal, spatial, and social distance) may be contrasted with the I, that is the emotionally complex male poet-fitter. He is a defined

<sup>19</sup>I wrote about politics in Pułka's poems and the techniques used to convey the changing points of view in another essay. See: Paulina Chorzewska, "Pozwól, że ci przerwę" [Let me interrupt you], *Mały Format* 7/8 (2018), [www.malyformat.com/2018/08/pozwol-ze-ci-przerwe/](http://www.malyformat.com/2018/08/pozwol-ze-ci-przerwe/), date of access 13 Jan. 2023.

and complex figure, explaining “what it is like to be” him. Krzysztof Sztafa thus writes about subjectivity and identity in *Łuk*:

Finally, the poet establishes a different vector of lyrical expression, whose default reference is no longer a specific “I” or “you” but a productive – that is, capable to articulate many points of view, based on inclusive syntheses rather than dysfunctions – deconstruction of the layers of the self [...] Who is this I? This young male poet-fitter with an anachronistic mustache? The I is one of the dysfunctional forms of identity produced at the level of social control in discursive-representational mediation. Pułka wants to move beyond this identity crisis, this molar impasse. His strategy of lyrical emancipation is based on this idea.<sup>20</sup>

An autobiographical reading of the text is not so much suggested by the conventions of the blog but rather by one of the paratexts in the collection in which *Łuk* appeared. The poet-fitter is not only the “protagonist” of the poem, but also a term used to describe Pułka in a short bio note on the cover.<sup>21</sup> The woman’s labor highlighted in the blog entry only seemingly acts as an introduction – grammatically, it appears as a context which helps one locate events in time (“I was working ... at the time”) – but then it turns out that in a capitalist economy, hired work may be found everywhere – in the metaphors, images, reflection on gender roles (“I was like a limited edition of Coca-Cola: for everyone, yet tempting and original”). The text in question has a much broader history than the quoted entries, which should be discussed in greater detail in a separate essay. Prior to its publication in the online magazine *e-splot*, and then in the collection *Zespół szkół* [Area school] (both versions of the poem are identical), altered fragments of *Łuk* were published as a blog entry in the form of *code work*<sup>22</sup> and as a short entry on a poetry website.<sup>23</sup> However, the blog entry discussed above is the only version that can be genetically linked to *Łuk*. At the same time, it stands on its own, because the idea it describes, a draft version, was not part of the final poem.

The thesis that *Techniką i wychowaniem* takes the form of a notebook or a draft is not limited only to the question of genetic criticism. Let us return to the question of the blog as an autobiographical genre, raised in the introduction. I shall now discuss textual relationships between blog entries and poems which were also published online, albeit in a different generic framework. The post titled *11* reads: “Dzisiaj dowiedziałem się, że w lutym zmarła Janina Zofia Klawe, tłumaczka. Wczoraj chciałem pisać o jakimś wspomnieniu, ale o nim zapomniałem” [Today I learned that Janina Zofia Klawe, a translator, died in February. Yesterday I wanted

<sup>20</sup>Krzysztof Sztafa, “Pasja kresu. Przyczynek do poetyckiego rejestru Tomasza Pułki” [The passion of the end. Tomasz Pułka’s poetic register], *Wielogłos* 4 (2021): 174 ff.

<sup>21</sup>See: Tomasz Pułka, *Porządkowanie magazynu* [Organizing a warehouse], <http://www.archiwum.ha.art.pl/projekty/felietony/625-tomasz-pulka-porzadkowanie-magazynu>, date of access 13 Jan. 2023.

<sup>22</sup>Codework is a genre of electronic literature that combines programming languages with natural languages. As N. Katherine Hayles writes: “Code work’ in its purest form is machine readable and executable [...]. More typical are creoles using ‘broken code,’ code that cannot actually be executed but that uses programming punctuation and expressions to evoke connotations appropriate to the linguistic signifiers.” N. Katherine Hayles, *Electronic literature: New horizons for the literary* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame, 2010), 21.

<sup>23</sup>*Kopcimy Cygaro* [We’re smoking a cigar] [Tomasz Pułka], *Ekloga* [Eclogue], [www.nieszufłada.pl/klasa.asp?idklsasy=129111&idautora=11881&rodzaj=1](http://www.nieszufłada.pl/klasa.asp?idklsasy=129111&idautora=11881&rodzaj=1), date of access 13 Jan. 2023.

to write about a memory, but I forgot about it].<sup>24</sup> A clear time reference (“today,” “yesterday”), the use of the first-person singular, and a self-referential theme – writing down and remembering – the proximity of other similar short personal entries, as well as the broad autobiographical context associated with the blog all contribute to the classification of this entry as a diary entry. As regards the temporal reference, it should be noted that the translator mentioned by Pułka did indeed die in February 2008, which means that the poet refers to actual and relatively current events (the entry was published in November 2008). What is interesting from a textual, literary, and creative perspective, however, is not so much the entry itself, but the history of its further transformations and how Pułka expanded the boundaries of the poem, turning the publication into a digital performance.<sup>25</sup> The same day (22 Nov. 2008), Pułka posted exactly the same text on the *Nieszuflada* website. He changed his nickname to Fernando Pessoa especially to post this particular entry.<sup>26</sup> Readers confirmed in the comments that they noticed the (conceptual) change. One user thus commented on the entry and its context: “The chosen nickname is part of the poem. The author would like his readers to think that Pessoa is mourning his translator.” Janina Zofia Klawe, mentioned by Pułka, translated, among others, the works of Fernando Pessoa. Pessoa is most famous for coining heteronyms. This context is important because Pułka “pupated” many times.<sup>27</sup> He posted his works on the same website (mainly *Nieszuflada*) under many different nicknames.<sup>28</sup> The fact that the same text was published in a different genre (a transition from a blog entry to a poem published on a poetry website) and under a pseudonym which corresponds to the entry make us read this version of the poem in terms of an autofictional experiment,<sup>29</sup> defined by impersonating fictional characters thanks to the possibilities offered by the digital avatar.<sup>30</sup> By publishing the same text in the context of other paratexts, Pułka questions the autobiographical associations triggered by the blog.

<sup>24</sup>TiW, 22 Nov. 2008.

<sup>25</sup>On time as one of the aspects of experimental autobiographical writing, see: Kacadens.

<sup>26</sup>The *Nieszuflada* website allows its users to easily change their nicknames. If that happens, all previous posts are displayed under the new nickname. Therefore, the history of old nicknames is not easy to reconstruct. Archived versions of the website (i.e. material that I could not work with) and comments posted by other users in which they address other users using their nickname may be helpful in this respect. By analyzing the latter, I could determine that before “Fernando Pessoa” Pułka used the nickname “strona Birkut” [Birkut page].

<sup>27</sup>I borrow this term from Rafał Gawin’s essay. See: Rafał Gawin, “Jak niewiele mógł znaczyć dla mnie Tomasz Pułka” [How little Tomasz Pułka could mean to me], *Inter- 4* (2017), [www.pismointer.wordpress.com/numery-archiwalne/nr-414-2017/rafal-gawin-jak-niewiele-mogl-znaczc-dla-mnie-tomasz-pulka-retroperspektywa/](http://www.pismointer.wordpress.com/numery-archiwalne/nr-414-2017/rafal-gawin-jak-niewiele-mogl-znaczc-dla-mnie-tomasz-pulka-retroperspektywa/), date of access 10 Jan. .2023. On the connections between Pułka’s poetry and Pessoa, see further: Joanna Bociąg, “Projekcja, przepracowanie, Pułka, Pessoa” [Projection, reworking, Pułka, Pessoa], *Mały Format 7-8* (2017), <http://malyformat.com/2017/08/projekcja-przepracowanie-pulka-pessoa/>, date of access 30 Nov. 2023.

<sup>28</sup>Pułka’s alter egos, hidden under pseudonyms, also appear in Pułka’s printed works. For example, Tomas Hålfka from Pułka’s second book of poems. See: Tomasz Pułka *Paralaksa w weekend* [Weekend Parallax] (Olsztyn: Stowarzyszenie Artystyczno-Kulturalne Portret, 2007).

<sup>29</sup>Agnieszka Czyżak, “Autofikcja” [Autofiction], *Autobiografia Literatura Kultura Media 2* (2020), 93–98.

<sup>30</sup>On subjectivity and digital avatars see: Amy J. Elias, “Virtual autobiography. Autobiographies, interfaces, and avatars”, in: *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*, ed. Joe Bray, Alison Gibbons, Brian McHale (London, New York: Routledge, 2012), 512–527.



Two years later, the original blog entry returns as a fragment of the poem [*Jeżycjada upływa*] [*Jeżycjada transpires*] published in *Zespół Szkół*.<sup>31</sup> In the poem published in *Zespół Szkół*, the temporal references “yesterday” and “today” were removed. In his online publications, Pułka consciously referred to and worked with the date and time which were displayed on the website, next to the entry. Real time provides constant context for the digital text. In the poem published in *Zespół Szkół*, there is no such detailed date, but time remains an important theme and structural element of the poem. It manifests itself primarily as a motif of memory – as reminiscing, forgetting, remembering, and preserving the past. By repeating the anaphor “In February,” the subject is able to remember something. Still, general time-frame, and not specific dates, is important for the process of remembering. The poem in question (without the digital context, only as a printed text) was interpreted by Agnieszka Waligóra. Waligóra is mainly interested in self-referentiality, and more specifically in the motives of writing, translation, and intertextuality. Janina Zofia Klawe appears in Waligóra’s analysis simply as an archetypal figure of a translator (although the scholar reflects on her role and realizes that she was not an obvious choice).<sup>32</sup> Waligóra draws attention to the complicated unformed subjectivity in [*Jeżycjada upływa*], which, I argue, could be combined with the meanings found in the previous digital versions of the poem. For Pułka, Klawe is primarily Pessoa’s translator. And Pułka processed Pessoa’s practices of hiding and multiplying his literary identities in his works.

### *Insertjazz* – a conceptual dream diary

Pułka’s other solo blog, unlike *Techniką i wychowaniem* with its “notebook” poetics, is a conceptual project that the poet pursued briefly yet intensively at the turn of 2008 and 2009. Some of the entries on the *Techniką i wychowaniem* blog also describe dreams – at times also in a musical context – “Śni mi się, że Madzia śpi obok, a ja – jak niemy DJ, puszczając Cheta Bakera – wywołuję w niej sen o bezprzewodowości” [In my dream Madzia is sleeping next to me, and I – like a silent DJ who plays Chet Baker – make her dream about wirelessness] (TiW, 20 Dec. 2008). A few days after posting this entry, Pułka created *Insertjazz*, and he no longer described his dreams on other blogs, which demonstrates that he took a “draft” version of a specific concept and found a dedicated space for it. The *Insertjazz* blog, similarly to *Techniką i wychowaniem*, is neither discussed nor acknowledged in critical texts devoted to Pułka’s works. Importantly, unlike *Techniką i wychowaniem*, the entries on *Insertjazz* were original and not republished. The subtitle in the header explains the idea behind the new blog: “«CODZIENNIE» JEDNA PŁYTKA NA DOBRANOC, ZAPĘTLONA W ODTWARZANIU. «RANO» – CO SIĘ ŚNIEŁO] [‘EVERY DAY’ ONE CD, PLAYED ON LOOP, TO WHICH I FALL ASLEEP. ‘IN THE

<sup>31</sup>Tomasz Pułka, “[Jeżycjada upływa]” [*Jeżycjada transpires*], in idem: *Zespół szkół*, 28. The poem was also later published without any changes (compared with the version published in *Zespół Szkół*) in the magazine “Zeszyty Poetyckie.” The poem was also published in the digital collection *Dziewięć wierszy jako nocleg* [Nine Poems as Accommodation]. Typography and layout were modified. See: Tomasz Pułka, “[Jeżycjada upływa]”, *Zeszyty Poetyckie* (2009), [www.zeszytypoetyckie.pl/poezja/235-tomasz-puka#](http://www.zeszytypoetyckie.pl/poezja/235-tomasz-puka#), date of access 13 Jan. 2023. Tomasz Pułka, “[Jeżycjada upływa]”, in: *Dziewięć wierszy jako nocleg*, 3-4, [www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2008/11/dziewi-wierszy-jako-nocleg.html](http://www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2008/11/dziewi-wierszy-jako-nocleg.html), date of access 13 Jan. 2023.

<sup>32</sup>Agnieszka Waligóra, *Nowy autotematyzm: metarefleksja w poezji polskiej po roku 1989* [New self-referentiality: meta-reflection in Polish poetry after 1989] (Kraków: Universitas, 2023), 135.

MORNING' – MY DREAM]. Each post is formatted according to a strict pattern: the title refers to the CD and the the dream is described in the entry. The entries are more or less the same length, and each also includes the album cover. Similarly to Pułka's other projects on Blogger.com, *Insertjazz* is a multi-media concept, where digital text, image, music, and film intertwine (changes in scenery in Pułka's dreams are visually announced by the word "[cut]" which refers to montage and film editing).

Quotation marks in the words "every day" and "in the morning" seem to be important for the entire concept, because Pułka uses them to indicate his distance to the challenge he set for himself. He emphasized that it would be difficult to complete this "task," and that the implied consistency is but an assumption. Pułka's blog entries are a daily routine and as Geert Lovink explains blogging – as a cultural practice – can help one organize and structure one's life.<sup>33</sup> Imposing strict concepts and goals on blogs is a practice deeply rooted in the history of the genre, as pointed out by Jill Walker Rettberg, who writes about blog narratives constructed around a specific sentence, resolution, or routine, which require perseverance and consistency. One example may be blogs-diaries focused on weight loss or debt help blogs.

Pułka's dream diary is an experiment in the field of consciousness and language. Textual effects are combined with themes important to Pułka, such as subjectivity or repetition. The subject in Pułka's poems distances himself from his narrative, comments on it, asks himself questions, and engages in a dialogue. Pułka's poetics is also defined by multiplying perspectives. He often writes about looking and visual disturbances (as also announced by Pułka in the titles of his early collections *Rewers* [Reverse] and *Paralaksa w weekend* [Week-end Parallax]).<sup>34</sup>

Dreams are described in the first person, and their narrator often takes on the role of someone else. In some cases, this experience is presented directly and combined with the adoption of a different point of view:

Jestem diodą obserwującą swoje siostry [...] [I am a diode watching my sisters] (IJ, 5 Jan. 2009)

Ja sam jestem nauczycielem muzyki i widzę siebie z perspektywy oczu mojego brata, gdy wychodzę z pokoju nauczycielskiego i wolnym krokiem zmierzam w stronę klasy [...] [I am a music teacher and I see myself from the point of view of my brother when I leave the teachers' lounge and slowly walk towards the classroom] (IJ, 3 Jan. 2009)

Jestem moim własnym sąsiadem z dzieciństwa, [...] obserwuję jak „sam siebie odwiedzam” (!), tj.: będąc swoim sąsiadem, odwiedzam się (siebie) jako dziecko, wraz z synem sąsiada, Michałem. To dziwne uczucie, bo obaj (ja z dzieciństwa i ja-sąsiad) „wiemy”, Michał nie [...] [I am my childhood

<sup>33</sup>Lovink, 28.

<sup>34</sup>See: Paweł Kaczmarski, "Wzdłuż linii załamań" [Along the fold lines], *Dodatek LITERACKI* 8(9) (2011): 16–17; Jakub Winiarski, *Paralaksa dla Poli Raksy* [Parallax for Pola Raksa], [www.nieszufada.pl/klasa.asp?idklasy=105371&idautora=8786&rodzaj=5#](http://www.nieszufada.pl/klasa.asp?idklasy=105371&idautora=8786&rodzaj=5#), date of access 13 Jan. 2023; Jerzy Suchanek, "Kaszel jest jak topiący się chłopczyk" [Cough is like a drowning boy], *Akant: miesięcznik literacki* 2 (2008): 42–45.

neighbor, [...] I observe how I “visit myself” (!), i.e.: as my neighbor, I visit myself (me) as a child with the neighbor’s son, Michał. It’s a strange feeling, because we both (my childhood self and my neighbor) “know,” Michał doesn’t] (IJ 26 Dec. 2008)

In the above entry, quotation and exclamation marks inserted in brackets emphasize the absurd and demonstrate that the dreaming subject is aware of how unusual the situation is. However, other texts which describe a similar experience do not thematize the multiplied perspective. The situation is described without questions or comments. In a different text, Pułka saturates the text with details – negations, quotation marks, and lists – as if he were trying hard to capture the uncertainty of the dream in language. Still, he also leaves traces of original ideas, attempts, and linguistic doubts:

Jestem nauką języka. Nie, nie “nauczycielem”, nie “lektorem”, nawet nie “podręcznikiem”. Jestem nauką języka, i to nawet nie “języka obcego”; ale jakąś bezkształtną (a mimo to jakby “kościastą”; “chitynową”) gramatyką, składnią, fleksją, etc. [...] [I am the learning of a language. No, not a “teacher,” not a “lecturer,” not even a “textbook.” I am the learning of a language, and not even a “foreign language;” but some shapeless (and yet somehow “bony;” “chitinous”) grammar, syntax, inflection, etc.] (IJ, 27 Dec. 2008).

Pułka often uses parenthetical question marks which disrupt the coherence of the text: “Więc dopiero po kilku latach (?) władze zauważają, że już niewiele studni «operuje» wodą, że są same dla siebie; jak te pawie ogony, mające przyciągnąć partnerki” [So only after a few years (?) the authorities notice that only a few wells “operate” with water, that they exist because they exist; like those peacock tails designed to attract partners].<sup>35</sup> Such interjections disrupt the narrative and raise questions about the I and the self-referential nature of the texts. They create confusion at the level of the sender, posing the question: who is the source of doubt expressed using question marks? Is it the dreaming subject or the narrating subject? Do question marks refer to the inaccuracies and misunderstandings within the described dream world or the work of memory that recalls a given dream?

I do not think that the purpose of Pułka’s blog is only to describe (“reflect”) what it feels like to dream as precisely as possible. I agree with Arkadiusz Wierzba when he writes that, as in Pułka’s narcotic prose published in the collection *Vida local*, also here “the emphasis is shifted [...] from subjectivity to the tool that constructs it.”<sup>36</sup> The dream diary describes, similarly to prose fueled by drugs, an altered state of consciousness. Moreover, even if we carefully investigate Pułka’s online presence, we will not find out whether the poet actually listened to the music mentioned in the blog in his sleep, and whether the entries describe his actual dreams. It should be assumed that Pułka’s dream diary, like many other fictional blogs, may be only a generic framework for a (quasi)autobiographical literary text.

<sup>35</sup>IJ, 27 Dec. 2008.

<sup>36</sup>The critic refers to the following quote from an introduction to a collection of Pułka’s short stories: “The three stories in the collection discuss a psychedelic experience through which ‘language’ goes.” Tomasz Pułka, “Zamiast (?) wstępu” [In lieu of (?) an introduction], in: *Vida local* (Kraków: Ha!art, 2013), 5.

I treat Pułka's concept with suspicion because I take into consideration the technological conditions of the project and its online nature. In the header, Pułka stated that his entries would be published "in the morning" and, indeed, the entries would appear between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. However, the user may freely manipulate posting times without leaving any visible traces on Blogger.com,<sup>37</sup> which means that the timestamp next to the entries should not be trusted unconditionally when dating sources.<sup>38</sup> Blogger.com allows users to turn time into a literary tool. Another clue that challenges the interpretation of Pułka's blog as an "authentic" record of life is the structure of the entries: descriptions do not necessarily reflect the often disordered and interrupted narratives of dreams. They are, in that sense, literary. Pułka often relies on some sort of conclusion or climax (e.g. in the entry from 23 Dec. 2008) and frame tales (in the post from 24 Dec. 2008, the motif of coughing appears only in the first and the penultimate sentences: "Najpierw kaszlę przez pół nocy, [...] Dookoła kaszel; jakbym stał na skrzydle i słuchał silników" [First, I cough for the better part of the night, [...] There's coughing all around; it's as if I were standing on a plane wing, listening to the engines]).

### The blog as a neutral format or an autobiographical frame – between rigor and chaos

The autobiographical adds an additional layer of meaning to Pułka's works published on the blog. *Techniką i wychowaniem* is a diary, a notebook, a collection of draft versions of his works. Devoid of rules, it relies on chaos, fragmentation, narrative loops, repeatability and recurrence. The ideas noted down in this "notebook" were often used and reworked later. *Insertjazz*, on the contrary, is based on a very specific concept. It is an inverted diary in which the author records his dreams and not the events of the day. Interestingly, Pułka chooses an orderly and repeatable formula to describe the (unconscious and uncontrollable) experience of dreaming. He tries to "condition" his dreams using music, and later describes them in a rigorous manner. The extent to which the autobiographical is revealed depends on the platform and the generic framework imposed by it. The blog triggers autobiographical interpretations, which is especially evident when the text is first published on a blog and then in a different medium. I do not discuss all instances in the present article but twelve entries on *Techniką i wychowaniem* were also later republished somewhere else; six of them were published in *Zespół szkół*.

Entries published on the blog constitute the second largest part of Pułka's digital corpus.

<sup>37</sup>The source code of the website informs us about the date of the last edit of the post and the time zone set by the blogger, but it is impossible to determine whether the set date and time of the entry correspond to the actual time of publication.

<sup>38</sup>As part of my research on Tomasz Pułka's digital works, I analyze how his texts were conditioned by the possibilities and limitations of the respective websites and their interfaces. My examination of the dating of entries on Blogger.com is based on preliminary analyzes of the modern version of Blogger.com (January 2023). Ultimately, I intend to analyze the historical form of the website (its operation and interface between 2008 and 2012).

In the present article, I did not refer to the poet's last personal blog from 2012, titled *Estetyka poglądów* [Aesthetics of views]. *Estetyka poglądów* also relied on the autobiographical but mostly in the form of photography and not texts. Respectively, *Cichy Nabiau* was an art-blog run by Pułka together with other cyberpoets and the art collective *Rozdzielczość Chleba* [Bread Resolution].<sup>39</sup> Blogger.com was a fairly flexible writing space for cyber-creators, allowing them to experiment with mixed media and the intermedial (by playing with formatting, images, sounds, hyperlinks, videos). The interface allowed several people to write one blog together, and the entries were attributed to the respective authors. Blogging was just one form of online presence used by the collective. *Cichy Nabiau* was also active on *Nieszuflada*, but the website was primarily used to promote new blog entries.<sup>40</sup> *Cichy Nabiau* published their works in the "Poems" section only three times. The collective centered on the visuality of the text, and *Nieszuflada* was not the best platform for them.<sup>41</sup>

*Cichy Nabiau's* posts were not as strongly conditioned by the autobiographical framework as Pułka's blog entries. The blog was simply a convenient digital publication format. Respectively, Blogger.com also conceived of the blog as a content-neutral medium/format.<sup>42</sup> It was meant to be convenient, accessible (even to people with no programming experience), and, above all, free.

The blog, as part of the corpus of Pułka's texts, was used in different ways, all of which reflect the general shifts identified in the history of this genre.<sup>43</sup> From a more genre-determined "internet diary," we move towards a content-neutral medium, a convenient way of publishing, also for such a demanding group of users as cyberpoets. The last step in this process took place after Pułka's death, at the end of 2013. *Cichy Nabiau* ceased to be a blog and moved onto a social media platform.<sup>44</sup> Concurrently with this transition,

social media absorbed and dominated both the technology and practice of blogging, trans-

<sup>39</sup>The archived version of Pułka's profile on Blogger.com shows a list of users who contributed to the blog *Cichy Nabiau*: <http://www.web.archive.org/web/20100903175424/http://www.blogger.com:80/profile/17188899762195186561>, date of access 13 Jan. 2023.

<sup>40</sup>*Cichy Nabiau*, Forum threads, <http://www.nieszuflada.pl/menu.asp?rodzaj=2&idautora=11076>, date of access 13 Jan. 2023.

<sup>41</sup>This can be observed in the entry on the *Wchuonońc ynternet* [Apsorp the ynternet] blog. The work was originally a screenshot, which documented the spatial and visual composition that informs the entire text, namely the experience of being online, the experience of multi-linearity and simultaneity of digital content<sup>4</sup>. The version posted on *Nieszuflada* is conditioned by the website's interface, which introduced typographical limitations. Also, users could not preview the final version of the text before publication, and they could not edit it after it was published. On *Nieszuflada*, the layout of the entry retains some key elements, but the arrangement of words is more horizontal. The original vertical layout, which alludes to the screen, is compromised. Moreover, in order to see everything, one needs to scroll down the page. The way one interacts with the text changes, and its meaning also changes. See, respectively, PUŁKA\ [Tomasz Pułka], *WCHUONOŃC YNTERNET (wiersz wspólny)* [PUŁKA\ [Tomasz Pułka], *APSORP THE YNTERNET* (collective poem)], <http://www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2008/10/wchuono-ynترنت.html>, date of access 13 Jan. 2023; *Cichy Nabiau*, *Wchuonońc ynternet* [Apsorp the ynternet], <http://www.nieszuflada.pl/klasa.asp?idklasy=121563&idautora=11076&rodzaj=1>, date of access 14 Jan. 2023.

<sup>42</sup>Siles, "Blogs" 363.

<sup>43</sup>Ignacio Siles, "From online filter to web format: Articulating materiality and meaning in the early history of blogs", *Social Studies of Science* 41, 5 (September 2011): 737–758.

<sup>44</sup>*Cichy Nabiau*, <https://pl-pl.facebook.com/cichynabiau/>, date of access 13 Jan. 2023.

forming it into a phenomenon called microblogging,<sup>45</sup> which introduced shorter forms. Reach increased but at the cost of independence, as one had to rely on specific applications and platforms.<sup>46</sup>

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

<sup>45</sup>Ignacio Siles describes the history of blogs in the context of social media. See: Siles, "Blogs."

<sup>46</sup>I am referring to how social media monopolize the Internet – in many cases, only registered users may freely access content and the sites are constructed in a way that does not encourage people to leave the frameworks imposed by them.

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# KEYWORDS

TOMASZ PUŁKA

*blog*

**ABSTRACT:**

This article analyzes two previously unstudied blogs by the poet, prose writer, and digital creator Tomasz Pułka. Treating the blog as an autobiographical genre, the article asks how the blog challenges the generic stability of entries which may be classified as literary texts. Digital philology and genetic criticism are employed to analyze Pułka's works. Two models of blogging that were practiced by Pułka from 2008 to 2009 are discussed: the first is the notebook mode and the second is the intermedial model. The undertaken analysis gives rise to a tentative history of Pułka's creative process and highlights the connections between the poetics of the blog, conditioned by the possibilities and limitations of Blogger.com, and the poetics of poetic texts acknowledged by literary criticism.

*digital autobiography*

**digital genres**

**notebook**

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