

# Małgorzata Musierowicz's online autobiography. Towards an analysis based on entries and comments published on [www.musierowicz.com.pl](http://www.musierowicz.com.pl)

Karolina Starnawska

ORCID: 0000-0002-8276-7058

Małgorzata Musierowicz creates her official website

Małgorzata Musierowicz, born in 1945, author of children's and young adult books, most famous for the *Jeźycjada*<sup>1</sup> series (22 novels), set up her official website on 16 Jun 2008. The first version, updated until 18 Dec 2014, was archived and is no longer available on [www.musierowicz.com.pl](http://www.musierowicz.com.pl), where the first available entry dates to 31 Dec 2014, and the last – to 2 April 2024. The aim of this paper is to identify the genre of the *Aktualności* [News] section of the current version of *Oficjalna strona Małgorzaty Musierowicz* [Małgorzata Musierowicz's official website], its relationship with autobiography, or rather – autobiographical practices – and an attempt at an analysis of how Musierowicz constructs her autobiography as an author. Due to the amount of material, this is a preliminary study, an attempt at delineating further research in Musierowicz's Internet autobiography, as well as other authors who publish online. The present paper is

<sup>1</sup> The series comprises the following titles: *Szósta klepka* [Loose screw] (1977), *Kłamczucha* [Liar] (1979) *Kwiat kalafiora* [Cauliflower flower] (1981), *Ida sierpniowa* [Ida of August] (1981), *Opium w rosole* [Opium in broth] (1986), *Brulion Bebe B.* [Bebe B.'s notebook] (1990), *Noelka* (1992), *Pulpecja* (1993), *Dziecko piątku* [Friday's child] (1993), *Nutria i Nerwus* [Nutria and Nerwus] (1994), *Córka Robrojka* [Robrojek's daughter] (1996), *Imieniny* [Nameday] (1998), *Tygrys i Róża* [Tiger and Rose] (1999), *Kalamburka* (2002), *Język Trolli* [Troll's language] (2004), *Żaba* [Frog] (2005), *Czarna polewka* [Black soup] (2006), *Sprężyna* [Spring] (2008), *McDusia* (2012), *Wnuczka do orzechów* [Nutmegger's Granddaughter] (2014), *Feblik* [Weakness] (2015), *Ciotka Zgryzotka* [Aunt Worriness] (2018). Later Musierowicz's debut novel *Małomówny i rodzina* [The taciturn and his family] (1975) was included in the series, marked as volume "0" in newer editions. It is the only novel which Musierowicz edited in subsequent editions.

limited to 71 entries published between December 2014 and December 2016, which gathered 17,592 comments including 4,906 comments by Musierowicz (using the nick MałgM)<sup>2</sup>.

*Oficjalna strona Małgorzaty Musierowicz* is divided into several subpages: *O autorce* [About the author], *Książki* [Books], *Ilustracje* [Illustrations], *Aktualności* [News], *Księga gości* [Guestbook], *Teksty o MM* [Texts about MM]. It looks like a standard, static, somewhat old-fashioned website<sup>3</sup>, although the adjective “official” indicates it should not be treated as some private online space. In his 2015 *\_ sieci* Maciej Maryl describes official websites of Polish authors, but he did not include Musierowicz<sup>4</sup>. Nonetheless, the conclusions of his research can also be applied to [www.musierowicz.com.pl](http://www.musierowicz.com.pl). Maryl considers an author's website as “a website of a living author, who is in some way responsible for its contents (as evidenced by e.g. the subtitle «official website»)”<sup>5</sup>. For Maryl auto-presentation is a basic aim of such a website, understood as “curating an image and disseminating desired information”<sup>6</sup>, but he does not identify it with a marketing or self-promoting strategy<sup>7</sup> – he sees authors' online presence as an element of “a major shift in literary life”<sup>8</sup>.

In her first post<sup>9</sup> (22 Jun 2008) Musierowicz welcomes her readers and explains her reasons for setting up her own website. The first one was to keep in touch with her readers, who would send her a huge number of letters (both traditional and electronic). Since Musierowicz was no longer able to answer each one separately, she decided to do it in bulk, via her website. She also informed she was going to post meeting schedules and thank-you notes for them, as well as correct disinformation (it can be assumed she meant disinformation about herself and her work). Therefore, her website seems both a tool for keeping in touch with readers, as well as a credible source of information about the author<sup>10</sup>.

That first virtual letter to readers can be considered the first entry on Musierowicz's blog. For the purpose of this paper I assume – aware of the great number of studies on blogs – that:

<sup>2</sup> Edyta Korepta wrote *Za co kochamy Małgorzatę Musierowicz? Refleksje czytelniczki blogu autorki „Jeżycjady”*, whose aim was to “confirm M. Musierowicz's huge popularity based on an analysis of entries on her personal website”. Korepta focuses on what Musierowicz communicates to her readers in entries and comments, and what her readers communicate to her about her work in their comments. In terms of the autobiography question, Korepta confirms that “In the case of M. Musierowicz's website there is little information about her private, personal life. If there is any, it is serious and deprived of details. This also concerns her work”. I would like to verify and elaborate on this rather general statement. Edyta Korepta, “Za co kochamy Małgorzatę Musierowicz? Refleksje czytelniczki blogu autorki Jeżycjady” [What do we love Małgorzata Musierowicz for? Reflections of a reader of Musierowicz's blog], *Nowa Biblioteka* 2 (2017): 84, 97.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about home websites, see Marta Więckiewicz-Archacka, “Fatyczność internetowych praktyk autobiograficznych” [The phaticity of online autobiographical practices], *Społeczeństwo – Język – Edukacja* 16 (2022): 204. Więckiewicz-Archacka also published a study about blogs in 2012: Marta Więckiewicz-Archacka, *Blog w perspektywie genologii multimedialnej* [Blog from the perspective of multimedia genology] (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Maryl only mentions an article about a fan forum about Jeżycjada: Maciej Maryl, *\_życie literackie w sieci. Pisarze, instytucje i odbiorcy wobec przemian technologicznych* [Online literary life. Authors, institutions and recipients versus technological transformations] (Warszawa: Fundacja Akademia Humanistyczna, IBL PAN, 2015): 327.

<sup>5</sup> Maryl, 156.

<sup>6</sup> Maryl, 160.

<sup>7</sup> Maryl, 143.

<sup>8</sup> Maryl.

<sup>9</sup> This post is unavailable on [www.musierowicz.com.pl](http://www.musierowicz.com.pl), but it can still be accessed via Wayback Machine. Internet Archive, date of access 7.09.2024, <https://web.archive.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> Małgorzata Musierowicz, website archived on 22 Jun 2008 r., [musierowicz.com.pl](http://www.musierowicz.com.pl), date of access 18.09.2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080622142522/http://www.musierowicz.com.pl/glowna.html>.

They are a type of a website based on a template which facilitates navigating the website. The blog is typically defined as a frequently updated website which displays posts in a chronological order, from the most recent one [...]. The dynamics of this format, its connection to time and cyclicity is highlighted by dates of entries (and of comments), as well as indexes (usually chronological)<sup>11</sup>.

The *News* section – a subsection of *Oficjalna strona...* has all the characteristics listed above: frequently updated, entries organized from the latest, most with tens, hundreds, and even over a thousand comments<sup>12</sup> from readers<sup>13</sup>. Musierowicz managed to create a blog community<sup>14</sup>, which is interesting in itself and deserves its own study.

Musierowicz is aware that she writes a blog and she understands the specificity of this communication channel. Krystyna Heska-Kwaśniewicz asked Musierowicz in an interview why she did not want to publish her blog<sup>15</sup> (in print), observing that it is “a perfect dialogue with readers”<sup>16</sup>. Musierowicz answered:

I am not sure that this blog, with thousands of comments from all around the world, would be as successful as a book. This is a peculiar form, online contact is truly unique, and its charm lies in immediacy, elusiveness and liveliness. Fortunately, *scripta manent* also here, especially that truly anything can be archived and brought back to life again<sup>17</sup>.

Blog is a paradoxical medium – elusive, lively, and yet durable. It should be noted that Musierowicz appreciates the significance of comments; it can be assumed that interacting, com-

<sup>11</sup>Maryl, 225.

<sup>12</sup>What I mean by a “comment” in this text is an entry by a reader under an entry by the blog’s author, as well as a reply to such an entry by the author. For a survey of theoretical considerations about such messages, see a paper by Krzysztof Gajewski, in which he not only tries to define what an online comment is, but also to classify online comments: Krzysztof Gajewski. “No comment. Z poetyki komentarza elektronicznego” [From the poetics of the electronic comment], *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 2 (2013): 115–116. Maryl classifies authors’ replies to readers’ comments (i.e. comments to comments) as “a broader category of «online entries»”. Maryl, 215.

<sup>13</sup>From December 2014 to June 2020 every post was commented on. In August 2020 comments were disabled, but a moderated guest book was enabled, where any registered user could leave a comment. The latest entry from the guest book is by Musierowicz herself, from 27 Oct 2023, 22:50. Since then all comments have been disabled, effectively preventing users from any form of contact with the author. The website does not provide any official e-mail address.

<sup>14</sup>Maria Cywińska-Milonas defines a blog community as the most complex form of blogging, which “led rather than written by a given blogger, who therefore serves as the discussion moderator of his own blog. Such a moderator’s role is to write an introductory note, which initiates the discussion. [...] Blog discussions which often take the form of an asynchronous chat comprising hundreds of comments take place on the blogs of the so-called “blogging stars”, i.e. bloggers who are at the center of relatively dense sociometric networks”. Maria Cywińska-Milonas, “Blogi (ujęcie psychologiczne)” [Blogs (from a psychological perspective)], in: *Liternet. Literatura i internet*, [Liternet. Literature and the Internet] edited by Piotr Marecki (Kraków: Rabid, 2002), 100–101.

<sup>15</sup>In Heska-Kwaśniewicz’s question, the words “blog” and “official website” were placed in quotation marks, but not in Musierowicz’s answer. See “Jeźycjadę można czytać wszędzie i zawsze: w pociągu, w parku i w ciszy swego domu... Rozmowa z Małgorzatą Musierowicz” [Jeźycjada can be read anywhere, anytime: on a train, in a park, and in the quiet of your own house... An interview with Małgorzata Musierowicz], Guliwer. Kwartalnik o książce dla dziecka 1 (2016): 41.

<sup>16</sup>“Jeźycjadę można czytać wszędzie i zawsze: w pociągu, w parku i w ciszy swego domu... Rozmowa z Małgorzatą Musierowicz”, 41.

<sup>17</sup>“Jeźycjadę można czytać wszędzie i zawsze: w pociągu, w parku i w ciszy swego domu... Rozmowa z Małgorzatą Musierowicz”.

municating and conversing with her readers via her blog is the essence of blogging for her. She feels confident and safe in her blog community, and as a result every so often she allows herself to post more personal entries, whose function is not informative, phatic, expressive or even impressive. Consequently, the *News* section (333 entries), and especially the comments published there between 2014-2024, provide us with fragmentary autobiographical information dispersed across many entries of the blog – which is nonetheless recorded and therefore copiable and archivable. As observed by Karolina Jędrych:

Through her website, Musierowicz looks after her faithful fans – and her vision of the world. Musierowicz.com.pl is like an extension of *Jeżycjada*, it completes it. This is where Musierowicz demonstrates that it is possible to live the life from her books – in nature, with books. At the same time, she also educates her audience a bit, providing them with translations from English poetry, verses from the treasury of Polish poetry, and quotations from valuable prose. Her website is her virtual home, and she curates her online presence in a specific way<sup>18</sup>.

Musierowicz cares not only about what she writes – or does not write – about on her website, but also which comments are published (they are moderated). It should also be added that she has seldom appeared in the media, and she rarely gives interviews. She did not publish anything in relation to her brother's, Stanisław Barańczak's, death (even though comments with condolences from readers were published to her post from December 2014<sup>19</sup>); she has made no reference to critical publications about her books or herself. Musierowicz seems to be curating her image. She only allows being interviewed by trusted experts in her work; online, she is only active on her own, official website; she worked on her private memoirs and notes from the creative process (published in print) with her daughter, Emilia Kiereś, also an author<sup>20</sup>. Musierowicz's activity resembles organizing an archive, which (according to Lucyna Marzec) is an element of constructing an author's legend. In the process, some matters are omitted, and others are highlighted, which Marzec connects to autobiographical practices<sup>21</sup>. And although – as observed by Paul Levinson – “the sovereignty that the blogger has over his or her blog – the freedom from foreign gatekeepers (...) finds its limit (...) in the ability of anyone to copy whatever is in the blog, for saving or dissemination”<sup>22</sup>, nothing beyond what the blogger has published will be copied.

<sup>18</sup>Karolina Jędrych, “Przesunięcie centrum świata i ucieczka na wieś w Febliku i Wnuczce do orzechów Małgorzaty Musierowicz” [Recentring the world and escaping to the countryside in Feblik and Wnuczka do orzechów by Małgorzata Musierowicz], *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis: Studia Poetica* 6 (2018): 56.

<sup>19</sup>Stanisław Barańczak died on 26 Dec 2014. Małgorzata Musierowicz responded to condolences from her fans from comments to her post “Z Nowym Rokiem” [Happy New Year] twice, on Jan 2nd and 6th: “I shall keep all those personal comments and condolences for myself. I wouldn't like to sadden my guests, especially those young and very young”. Małgorzata Musierowicz's comment from 2 Jan 2015, 00:08, to the post “Z nowym rokiem”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access: 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=251#comment-34>. “Thank you! I am very grateful for so many positive thoughts and feelings. I am also getting a lot of private messages. I am moved. I am unable to answer all of them individually, so thank you to all of you, kind regards, and Happy 2015”. Małgorzata Musierowicz's comment from 6 Jan 2015, 01:39, to her post “Z nowym rokiem”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=251#comment-155>.

<sup>20</sup>Na Jowisza! Uzupełniam Jeżycjadę [By Jove! I am supplementing Jeżycjada] vols. 1 and 2.

<sup>21</sup>Lucyna Marzec, “Archiwum jako pisarski testament i depozyt legendy biograficznej” [Archive as a writer's testament and deposit of biographical legend], *Teksty Drugie* 6 (2018): 231.

<sup>22</sup>Paul Levinson, *New New Media* (London: Pearson, 2012), 84.

## Blogs and autobiography

Already in 2004, when blogs were a relatively new phenomenon in Poland, Maciej Kawka<sup>23</sup> noticed and described their relationship with autobiography, and more specifically – with the autobiographical pact as defined by Philippe Lejeune:

Autobiography (narrative recounting the life of the author) supposes that there is *identity of name* between the author (such as he figures, by his name, on the cover), the narrator of the story, and the character who is being talked about. What we have here is a very simple criterion, which defines at the same time as autobiography all the other genres of personal literature (diary, self-portrait, personal essay)<sup>24</sup>.

Agnieszka Ogonowska conducted a more detailed analysis of the relationship between blogs and autobiography; for her, the autobiographical character of such websites seemed – following Jerzy Smulski – “a specific communicative attitude of the sender and behavior of the recipient projected by this attitude”<sup>25</sup>. Ogonowska also suggests that by following the definition of the autobiographical pact we should consider whether the autobiographer is “authentic”, rather than whether they write the “truth”<sup>26</sup>. According to Ogonowska “the authenticity of testimonies of someone’s existence is based on the authority of their probability and the ability to evoke in readers specific emotional states related to the impression of reality”<sup>27</sup>.

Magdalena Szulc, author of a more recent study about blogs, also points out to their similarity to autobiography<sup>28</sup>, adding that although blogs are assumed to be non-fiction, their readers are unable to verify whether the presented events are true<sup>29</sup>. She highlights the role of trust in the relationship between bloggers and their readers, as well as the fact that the author “curates their image of a person worthy of this trust”<sup>30</sup>, and the role of autcreation. Szulc’s conclusion regarding non-fictionality, that “the autobiographical character of the genre does not need to indicate complete truthfulness of the described events or self-presentation, which does not mean that blogs contain fictional descriptions”<sup>31</sup> is interesting for considerations regarding the truth category in blogs, also in the case of Musierowicz’s website.

<sup>23</sup>Maciej Kawka, “Pakt autobiograficzny Philippe’a Lejeune’a a internetowe blogi – narodziny gatunku” [Philippe Lejeune’s autobiographical pact and Internet blogs – the birth of a genre], in: *Gatunki mowy i ich ewolucja*, t. 2: *Tekst a gatunek* [Genres of speech and their evolution, vol. 2: Text and genre], edited by Danuta Ostaszewska (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2004), 157–168.

<sup>24</sup>Philippe Lejeune, “The autobiographical pact”, translated into English by Katherine Leary, in: *On Autobiography. Theory and History of Literature*, vol. 52 (1989), 12.

<sup>25</sup>Agnieszka Ogonowska, “Blog w autobiograficznym trójkącie fikcji” [Blog in the autobiographical triangle of fiction], *Annales Academiae Paedagogicae Cracoviensis* 37, *Studia Historicolitteraria* 6 (2006): 205.

<sup>26</sup>Ogonowska, 204–205.

<sup>27</sup>Ogonowska, 208.

<sup>28</sup>The relationship between blogs and autobiography, or rather with various autobiographical genres was also indicated by Maciej Maryl: “Due to subjectivity characterizing the electronic discourse most blog entries rely on genres considered to be autobiographical or personal, such as journal, travelogue, autobiographical narrative. This is not about «expressivism» or «exhibitionism», of which blogs are often accused, but about communicating a subjective vision of the world, conceptualized through the prism of individual experience and knowledge. Maryl, 216.

<sup>29</sup>Magdalena Szulc, *Od gatunku do wizerunku. Autokreacje b(v)logerów modowych w mediach społecznościowych* [From genre to image. Autcreation of fashion b(v)loggers in social media] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2022), 105.

<sup>30</sup>Szulc, 106.

<sup>31</sup>Szulc, 107.

Szulc also considers the question of what truth and fiction are, what is authentic in social media and in what ways image can be curated through them; moreover, this question opens new fields of research into Małgorzata Musierowicz's blog, who – as has been mentioned – assures that the website is a credible source of information about her. Following Musierowicz's intention we would have to assume that what she shares there in the form of posts and comments (on the website and in the guestbook) is non-fictional; that Musierowicz does not mislead us and writes the truth. However, bearing in mind that the autobiographer is not someone who tells the truth about their life, but rather someone who claims they tell the truth<sup>32</sup>, I am aware that reading any autobiography, including blogs, is reading the narrator's story about themselves, which results from certain choices regarding what to put on display. As observed by Katarzyna Piątek, who studies the autobiographism of blogs: "apart from being a valuable source of knowledge, every autobiographical genre can contain certain deformations, distortions of events, [...] which can also be valuable information for scholars"<sup>33</sup>.

Piątek also points out to the fact that blogs can be edited – and so corrected – any time<sup>34</sup>, which would make them open to different interpretations, and deprived of a strictly defined ending; they are not set in stone. Blogs also lack temporal distance; a blogger writes here and now, currently about current events, they do not write down their memories, although of course memories may appear on a blog – which is the case with Musierowicz's website<sup>35</sup>.

Więckiewicz-Archacka introduces another term to the discussion about blogs and autobiography – autobiographical practice:

It refers to the everyday activity of presenting one's own life and personal experiences in the public-private space of the Internet [...] in the course of interacting with other Web users. [...] The term *autobiographical practice* can be applied wherever people talk about themselves or present themselves<sup>36</sup>.

Małgorzata Musierowicz, author of the series of children's and young adult novels *Jeźycjada*, who posts on her blog in the form of letters signed off as "MM", who comments there as "MałgM", presents herself in different social roles among answering questions and comments from her fans. Maryl considers such a mix of different roles as typical for websites of authors, who present themselves as professional writers, but also as regular people, artists, or hobbyists<sup>37</sup>. In the final part of this paper I shall analyze one of the roles in which Musierowicz presents herself on her blog.

<sup>32</sup>Philippe Lejeune, "Czy można zdefiniować autobiografię?" [Is it possible to define autobiography?], translated into Polish by Regina Lubas-Bartoszyńska, in: *Wariacje na temat pewnego paktu* [Variations about a certain pact], edited by Regina Lubas-Bartoszyńska (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, 2001), 2.

<sup>33</sup>Katarzyna Piątek, "Blog jako współczesna forma autobiograficzna. Analiza wybranych przykładów" [Blog as a modern autobiographical form], *Media i Społeczeństwo* 17, 2 (2022): 201, <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0016.3162>.

<sup>34</sup>Piątek, 204.

<sup>35</sup>In the analyzed material there are only two posts and one long comment which look like a typical memory. They concern Musierowicz's early adventure with cooking, a second-hand bookstore in Toruń, and catching mice in the house at Słowackiego street. In terms of genre, all three are closest to anecdote.

<sup>36</sup>Więckiewicz-Archacka, 201.

<sup>37</sup>Maryl, 160.

## Małgorzata Musierowicz as an author in the light of blog entries and comments on her official website

On several occasions – in her posts and comments – Musierowicz has declared “Every day I feel as a woman, mother, grandmother, and an author”<sup>38</sup>, “officially I am an elderly lady, but unofficially I am I am a broad, still fresh and well-oiled”<sup>39</sup>, “I am an autodidact and amateur”<sup>40</sup>. Musierowicz also presents herself as a gardening enthusiast who loves living in the country; a mother-in-law; a cook; a reading addict; a lover of poetry, classical music, secondhand bookshops, Toruń; and an elderly lady<sup>41</sup> who gets tired by traveling – even from her countryside home in Wielkopolska to Poznań. Those private roles are constantly intertwining with her professional role, i.e. a children’s and young adult fiction author. Her comments from 2014-2016 reveal her autobiography as an author, what truth about herself she was trying to communicate, and how she perceives her writing mission.

First and foremost, Musierowicz seems to be an independent, firm, consequent writer, who listens to her readers commenting on her stories with interest, skepticism, irritation, and from a distance, but she does not follow their advice, and she does not fulfil their wishes. In a post from 24 Jan 2015 she wrote:

Thank you so much for all your comments to my previous post – it is so inspiring to learn about your expectations and hopes! Naturally, I shall do it my way; or rather – I shall do as my protagonists tell me<sup>42</sup>.

Musierowicz claims that the creative process is dictated by her fictional characters, but she is joking, as suggested by subsequent comments in which she answers to her readers’ wishes regarding her protagonists’ personalities and plots. On 10 Feb 2015 MałgM wrote:

I hasten to announce that in spite of repeated pleas (coming from various people) to make my protagonists “less behaved”, my decision to write the way I please not only remains firm, but it is actually getting even firmer than ever before<sup>43</sup>.

In answer to a private message from “Marta”, a reader, who supposedly messaged Musierowicz about the above-mentioned fan wishes, on 18 Nov 2015 Musierowicz published the following comment:

When it comes to my books – I always bear in mind that they are for junior highschoolers. This is a great responsibility. And so I treat those – as you call them – “wishlist concerts” (oh, there are plenty, plenty!) *cum grano salis*. After all – my books, my responsibility. And this great responsibil-

<sup>38</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 3.03.2016., 19:42, to a post “Zima się poddaje” [Winter is giving up], musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=1012#comment-12054>.

<sup>39</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, post from 29.10.2015, “Dary jesieni!” [Gifts of fall], musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 10.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?m=201510>.

<sup>40</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 10.11.2015, 11:03, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-7186>.

<sup>41</sup>Musierowicz was born in January 1945, and so at the time when the analyzed material was published she was 69-71 years old; therefore, referring to herself as an “elderly lady” is neither exaggeration nor flirtatiousness.

<sup>42</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, post from 24.01.2015., “Okładka” [Book cover], musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=315>

<sup>43</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 10.02.2015, 19:41, to a post “Okładka”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=315#comment-1181>.

ity seems to be getting even greater<sup>44</sup>.

Musierowicz seems to be approaching her readers' wishes with skepticism, maybe even disdain, and admits she has a sense of responsibility. Therefore, Musierowicz can be considered an author who is fully aware of the significance of what she writes, and how her work can affect potential or ideal readers. As we shall see in the following examples, Musierowicz communicates to her fans that her books represent a specific genre whose rules she follows.

In a comment from 13 Nov 2015, 23:54, she responds to another private message:

[...] would you really like to read a novel about a family of alcoholics and their problems? And should it really be a book written by me?

It is good to remember what genre and conventions are. You see, a writer should choose the genre and conventions whose demands they can satisfy. And a dissatisfied reader can always buy a different book, or even write whatever they like themselves<sup>45</sup>.

Musierowicz's response is not as kind as previously. She asks rhetorical questions, scolding her reader, and refers her to other authors – the tone is not neutral, with the openly patronizing concluding sentence. A few days later, on 22 Nov, 15:14, another fan, Iwona, asks for “more action and humor, like in *Kłamczucha* and *Szósta klepka*” in the next novel<sup>46</sup>. Musierowicz responds promptly, only 14 minutes later, and once again her comment does not invite further discussion:

I am sorry, Iwona, but I shall write as I please. After all, I am an expert in writing my books. There is ample evidence.

Kind regards<sup>47</sup>.

A similar comment was published almost a year later, on 1 Sep 2016, 20:52, also in answer to a private message, this time to a fan using a nickname “Book thief”:

Book thief (DM) – apparently, we live in two different realities. I prefer mine. I also kindly remind you that I only write books for children and young adults. [...] There are so many other authors who would be happy to satisfy your needs, please turn to them<sup>48</sup>.

Musierowicz has never officially responded to critical articles by e.g. Eliza Szybowicz<sup>49</sup>, who accuses her (among others) of being conservative and outdated. However, she has shared various

<sup>44</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 18.11.2015 r., 18:35, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-7735>.

<sup>45</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 13.11.2015, 23:54, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-7427>.

<sup>46</sup>Iwona, comment from 22.11.2015, 15:14, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-8151>.

<sup>47</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 22.11.2015, 15:28, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-8157>.

<sup>48</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 13.11.2015, 23:54, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-7427>.

<sup>49</sup>See Eliza Szybowicz, “Była fanka czyta Musierowicz” [Ex-fan rereads Musierowicz], *krytykapolityczna.pl*, 11.02.2013 r., date of access 18.09.2024, <https://krytykapolityczna.pl/kultura/czytaj-dalej/byla-fanka-czyta-musierowicz/>.



wishes of her fans, and her responses to accusations from direct messages. The examples cited above represent different tones – from kindness to palpable irritation and tiredness with the topic – and may indicate that she was aware of discussions surrounding *Jeźycjada*, and decided to end them each time in the same way: by stressing that her novels represent a specific genre, and she remains faithful to it.

In a comment from 7 Nov 2015, 19.59, “monik” described one of Musierowicz’s books as a type of books which make the world a better and more interesting place<sup>50</sup>. On the same day at 20:30 MałgM responded: “Moniku, I too like reading such books. So I thought to myself: I am going to write one! The more, the merrier”<sup>51</sup>. In a few subsequent comments Musierowicz states that she writes books for children and young people, but these books are also enjoyed by adults<sup>52</sup>. On 29 Oct 2015 she described the novel she was working on as humorous and slightly romantic<sup>53</sup>.

Three comments by Musierowicz from 2016 are especially interesting from the perspective of this study. In two of them the author refers to a promise she – allegedly – had once made to her reader: not to kill off any major protagonist of *Jeźycjada*<sup>54</sup>. At the same time she added that even without that promise she would not do it, as the genre in which she writes “has its rules and demands”, and her books are supposed to make both readers and herself “laugh and feel good”<sup>55</sup>. As can be seen, Musierowicz consistently follows the rules of books for young people – although unfortunately these rules are not explicitly expressed. The third comment presents Musierowicz as an author who, being faithful to the convention, can also be faithful to what she personally believes. On 28 Mar 2016, when asked whether she actually believed “in such good fate and good, true love?”<sup>56</sup>, she confirmed, adding that even if she did not believe in it, she considered a happy ending a criterion demanded by “heartwarming books for young people”<sup>57</sup>. Musierowicz consequently constructs her image as an author for children and young adults, who writes heartwarming, humorous, romantic novels, in which she does not deal with brutal themes; she also refrains from directly commenting on politics, both in her books and on her blog.

<sup>50</sup>monik, comment from 7.11.2015, 19:59, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 10.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-7026>.

<sup>51</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 7.11.2015, 20:30, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-7029>.

<sup>52</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 4.11.2015, 22:35, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 10.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-6853>. See also: Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 18.02.2015, 19:41, to a post “Okładka”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 10.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=315#comment-1181>.

<sup>53</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 29.10.2015, 23:03, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-6657>.

<sup>54</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 25.01.2016, 22:57, to a post “Co robiłam po południu” [What I was doing in the afternoon], musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=977#comment-10793>; Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 8.02.2016, 11:25, to a post “Co robiłam po południu”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=977#comment-11308>.

<sup>55</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 8.02.2016, 11:25, to a post “Co robiłam po południu”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=977#comment-11308>.

<sup>56</sup>Agata, comment from 28.03.2016 r., 18:53, to a post “Dary jesieni”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 7.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-12900>.

<sup>57</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 28.03.2016, 19:59 to a post “Dary jesieni!”, musierowicz.com.pl, date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-12902>.

It also seems that Musierowicz wants to be perceived as a good craftswoman; she never writes about inspiration or afflatus, but she often mentions patience, self-discipline and routine, even claiming that she was “programed for writing”<sup>58</sup>. Her attitude towards her protagonists is less emotional than that of her readers, she often modifies her books, she does not get attached to her ideas, and in her case creation “mostly consists of elimination”<sup>59</sup>.

The topics presented above do not paint a full picture of what Musierowicz writes about the creative process and her role as an author, but these are mostly repetitive, and some of them – such as the question of genre awareness and the definition of “a novel for children and young adults” or Musierowicz’s attitude towards criticism of *Jeźycjada* – *deserve a separate study*.

## Summary

Małgorzata Musierowicz has been blogging for sixteen years, posting hundreds of blog entries and thousands of comments in answer to tens of thousands of comments by her fans. What was initially meant to serve as a way of keeping in touch with readers and a source of reliable information about Musierowicz has evolved into a dialogue with readers, a blog community, in which Musierowicz – due to the selected form, i.e. blog posts in the form of letters with enabled comments – facts about her, her private and professional life are revealed, directly and indirectly. Her website can be treated as an archive of an author who makes detailed plans as to what to say and how to say it, and consequently – what to leave for those interested in her life and work.

This is only an outline of Musierowicz’s online autobiography, suggesting how to approach what she publishes about herself, and more broadly, to what authors write about themselves, what image they curate online. What does it mean – in the world of autobiographical blogs and social media posts – to be a writer today? What is the relationship between contemporary online autobiographical practices and traditional printed autobiographies, and what is the impact of the medium on the character of autobiography? There is a difference in how not only authors, but all Internet users present themselves on blogs, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or X. Autobiography – traditionally, a deliberate, organized, retrospective form – transforms into fragmentary, polimedia notes written spontaneously, incorporating images, video and audio materials. Scholars analyzing those materials can try to construct a coherent narrative about an author using already established tools for analyzing and describing various media. However, the problem is that online means of expression are changing very quickly, and those which are well-known are evolving. New social media platforms are being created all the time, working out their own formats, transforming ways in which creators communicate, and in which followers consume their content. Practice is often faster than theory, and works which are complete, impossible to delete, copy or edit are hard to come by. Scholars interested in studying online activity of writers would have to constantly keep track of their social media activity.

<sup>58</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 12.11.2015, 09:50, to a post “Dary jesieni!”, [musierowicz.com.pl](https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-7313), date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=730#comment-7313>.

<sup>59</sup>Małgorzata Musierowicz, comment from 11.12.2015, 09:52, to a post “Święty Mikołaj. Niewątpliwie” [Santa Claus. Undoubtedly], [musierowicz.com.pl](https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=818#comment-9227), date of access 18.09.2024, <https://musierowicz.com.pl/mm/?p=818#comment-9227>.

Musierowicz's online existence also begs the question about the categories of "truth" and "authenticity", opening new fields of comparative research: what she says about herself on her blog, in interviews and other sources, including printed ones. The literary character of her online posts and their place in her creative work is another interesting matter. As already signaled by Maciej Maryl, all those questions deserve further research – not just in the case of [www.musierowicz.com.pl](http://www.musierowicz.com.pl), but also various online channels of communication of different authors who try to reach their audiences, present themselves in a variety of social roles, and have an impact on the shape of literary life.

translated by Paulina Zagórska

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# KEYWORDS

Małgorzata Musierowicz

BLOG

*children's and young  
adult fiction*

**ABSTRACT:**

The paper analyzes Małgorzata Musierowicz's online autobiography based on posts and comments published on her official website, [www.musierowicz.com.pl](http://www.musierowicz.com.pl), from 2014 to 2016. First, terms such as official website, blog, autobiographical pact and autobiographical practices are defined. Next, the paper analyzes how Musierowicz constructs her identity as an author, using tools typical for blogs, i.e. posts and comments. The study concludes that Musierowicz consciously uses the specificity of blog for constructing a dialogue with reader and curating her image of a hard-working, skilled author of young adult fiction. Finally, the paper points out to other questions worth considering in the context of Musierowicz's blog, as well as blog and social media activity of other authors.

# autobiography

comments

OFFICIAL WEBSITE

**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Karolina Starnawska (ur. 1984) – PhD, assistant professor at the Institute of Polish Philology, University of Silesia. Author of *Portret dziewczynki, dziewczyny i kobiety w powieściach Marii Krüger* [Portrait of a little girl, girl and woman in books by Maria Krüger]. Her research interests are focused on children's literature and young adult fiction, as well as works on Małgorzata Musierowicz's books and literature about ecology and climate. Since 2008 she has had her own blog, [www.lekcjepolskiego.pl](http://www.lekcjepolskiego.pl).