

### Summary:

#### The main objectives of the book and the review of chapters

This book was created from two inspirations and two areas of interest: cultural everyday life in its various varieties (speaking styles, public manifestations, discourses around cultural events such as Olga Tokarczuk's Nobel Prize) and the everyday life of my own research interests, which seemed to me worth a deeper study: the theory of intersemiotic translation and Antoni Kępiński's works. I discuss these issues in detail in the subsequent chapters of the book. I explore the theory of translating one type of signs into another in the chapter *The Intersemiotic Translation: The Case of a Linguistic Sign, Ekphrasis and Film Adaptation*, where I start with Roman Jakobson's classification to finally make a few statements about the essence of the sign in the case of a film adaptation. I write about the concept of man inscribed in the work of Kępiński, an outstanding Polish psychiatrist, in the chapter *Kępiński's Narrative About Man*. This book is not a monograph of the subject in the strict sense, and if we look at the texts published below in the monographic terms, they are rather a monograph of the author's interests than an exhaustive description and interpretation of cultural events of one type, which may be worth taking care of.

Either way, the book was created out of interest in cultural everyday life or everyday life of Polish culture. It was inspired primarily by Roch Sulima's anthropology of everyday life, but also by Juri Lotman's various works on everyday life of the Decembrists, on playing chess, related to this researcher's belief that culture, especially the distant one, will be understood when you learn about the ordinary life of its participants, the behaviour, statements and actions which have symbolic or sign value, or such values can be assigned to them. We should also mention the sociology of colloquiality by Piotr Sztompka and other researchers who look at culture from such a perspective. I include traces of these inspirations in the bibliography. It is obvious or truistic that one man will not create culture as it is a social fact, a symbolic practice, a reality of significant practices, beyond which we cannot exist. Cultural everyday life is what we experience, what we interpret in different ways, what we forget and what we keep silent about. It is what creates our colloquiality. I chose literary phenomena, events, statements further described and interpreted in a rather arbitrary way, seeing them as intriguing from my

perspective, new in relation to what is well established in the standard of contemporary culture, worth understanding and explaining, such as Polish Women's Strikes in 2022, understood as a cultural phenomenon and a new form of manifesting social discontent. I write about it in the chapter *Women's Strike Slogans and Vernacular Culture*. I discuss the postulate of creating a "fourth-person narrator", known from the Nobel speech of Olga Tokarczuk, in the chapter *Olga Tokarczuk's Tender Narrator from a Theoretical and Literary Perspective*. The formula used by Tokarczuk refers primarily to the duties of contemporary literature. Therefore, the book includes two types of cultural everyday life: mine, derived from interests that may seem insubstantial, irrelevant from a different research perspective, and cultural everyday life of the specific time and place, visible widely or noticeable only environmentally. Cultural everyday life in its different dimensions is a space where culturally diverse styles of speaking and behaviour appear, persist and disappear. I write about them in the chapters *Everyday Life Processed by Signs*, where I explore the poetics of internet memes, or in the chapter on hate – *Hate as a Genre of Expression and Cultural Practice*. As it is known, how we speak and what we do, organises our social identity and belonging. Hate as a genre of expression, treated as hate speech, despite many legal findings, still functions in social communication, mainly online, but I have not heard anybody openly supporting the existence of this genre of expression in public space. There is, admittedly, a stereotypical belief that hate speech and hate is always used by "others", whereas "we" maintain high cultural standards when communicating. Culture as a whole is certainly a social practice with various, sometimes contradictory points of view, preteritions and lies written in its current order. In the chapter *Gender Speech*, I write about feminatives increasingly used in many areas of Polish and about non-binary entities; I discuss them from the perspective of political correctness as a category that models today's language styles.

Contrary to emerging beliefs about the existence of genetic carriers of the cultural order, I believe in the rather old claim that culture articulates itself primarily through various semiotic systems. Its carrier are therefore various types of signs, objects, events, situations, texts to which we assign characters, either in a manner consistent with the concepts of scientific description of what. from a certain research perspective, is entitled to this type of qualification, or from the perspective of colloquial beliefs, sometimes called a "naive" image of the world, which

creates various, non-identical images of reality. I begin my reflections on selected cultural issues of Polish contemporary times by recalling the different concepts of meaning and sign. I am convinced that its dominant understanding is still dependent on Saussure's thought, both from a „scholar” perspective, as well as from a common-sense, colloquial one. I discuss these issues in detail in the chapter *Ferdinand De Saussure, Sign and Semiotics*. The property of being a carrier of meaning is commonly assigned to the category of sign; a sign means that there is something beyond it that refers to some reality, existing or imagined. According to Juri Lotman, we live in a changing semiosphere, which we create ourselves. Perceiving the world in sign terms is therefore a property of being and orientation in existing reality. Denotation is very often related to assigning values. There is a certain social practice that can be placed in the historical sphere of *praxis*, as Zygmunt Bauman put it. Therefore, it has to change to persist, to be functional communicatively and informatively, to organise or contribute to perceiving what is beyond us as a certain regularity, order.

Cultural everyday life, to which I stubbornly return, changes all the time. An attempt to describe it as one of many cultural orders may only concern a specific time interval and at best function as a synecdoche of a larger whole. I am convinced that this cultural everyday life, which for some time becomes the main dimension of everyday life, creates the most important dimensions of the culture of a specific place and time, just like the colloquial style of language marks its stylish center, which Jerzy Bartmiński proved years ago in relation to Polish language. I treat a sign approach to cultural research as a certain cultural variety of anthropology, for a sign organizes the awareness and visibility of what is. Or, in other words, gives meaning to reality. In cultural social practice we are, in fact, dealing with a multiplicity of constellations, the inconsistency of cultural assignments of values, depending on the meanings attributed to events, statements and facts by its participants. If we accept the validity of this point of view, we have to say that culture is always plural and constantly combined with choice and interpretation of what has been seen. It is temporary and non-systemic. This is how the matter can be described from the point of view of its participants, everyday life; from the perspective of research practices culture is perceived hierarchically as a collection of works, texts to which a more or less longer existence is attributed. Everyday life is one of many orders that can be indicated.

Everyday life and colloquiality, which form cultural “now”, become “the past” almost immediately. We can think about everyday life as a figure of thought and an axiological category. We can look at it as a manifestation of customs or treat it as a carrier of signs inscribed in culture at a specific place and time. Variability, fluidity, discontinuity of the experienced reality, the world as it appears to us, is associated with understanding and perceiving time in everyday experience. It is possible to venture a paradoxical statement that time from the perspective of everyday experience appears as something virtually non-existent, imperceptible. The chronotope of everyday life obviously exists, but it seems that the spatial aspect is primarily related to it. We are “somewhere”, secondarily “now”. Time appears and reveals its action as soon as it is clearly marked, for instance, in political discourse, which creates completely separate concepts of reality using speech. The coalition currently ruling Poland defines the beginning of its power as “the 15th October Coalition”, whereas the opposition in its public statements consistently uses the term “the 13th December Coalition”, which must evoke obvious associations with the date of introduction of the martial law in Poland by General Wojciech Jaruzelski’s government (13th December 1981). These types of temporal markings have a semiological value that differentiates the varieties of historical discourse. The time of colloquiality simply flows, disappears, appears, is replaced by current events and their definitions. What remains in the canon of culture or what creates its current features is durable. Culture is a constant movement of elements in the space of memory and forgetting and therefore changes in the cultural awareness of its participants. Only what is marked permanently or at least temporarily exists. Forgetting is an important cultural practice. Forgotten can be restored, and I attempted to do it in the article on narrative in Antoni Kępiński’s works. He was an eminent Polish psychiatrist, a co-creator of the so-called humanistic psychiatry, widely read in the 1970s, today outside the canon of therapeutical practices. There are, however, such everyday events which last more than their time interval, especially when they are social or political in nature. Everyday life at home takes place in the rhythm of repetition, everyday politics is socially visible and changeable (at least for some time). Polish Women’s Strikes, treated as a cultural phenomenon, modified the traditional canon of expressing social dissatisfaction (mainly through the type of slogans, markings of public space, and the use of foul language), even though the emblems and slogans associated

with them are no longer displayed in the city space. In the culture of everyday experience, what lasts longer is only what is often recalled (anniversaries, political events, disasters), or what is mainly perceived by few or so-called experts as a reference to what has been. Federico Fellini certainly has a lasting place in the history of cinema, but only a certain category of film art recipients see references to his work in Alice Rohrwacher's *La Chimera*.

Today's culture does not create a common, uniform and orderly system, just as the individual consciousness of most of its participants does not create it either. It consists of separate, sometimes interlocking collections of semiotic practices and artifacts, events, discourses, repeated formulas. It is, above all, a kind of social practice and action. It involves marking reality from the perspective of a specific "I", a spectator, a participant of events, treated and commented as relevant, important – or negative, subject to criticism, worth eliminating. Apart from the chapter on the creation of a linguistic norm in the case of feminatives, I write about public speaking in two more chapters: the first one concerns the rhetoric of political leaders' speeches in various periods of contemporary history (*The Rhetoric of the Chieftdom. A Few Comments About Certain Cases of Leadership Statements*), the second explores "hate speech", analysed as a communication and semiotic practice (*Hate Speech. The Communication and Semiotic Aspect*). Therefore, cultural everyday life does not create a uniform system of values, it is plural, based on repetition, tends to verbally criticize and comment on everything. The multitude of its varieties is dominated by various self-descriptions of what is considered culturally important, treated as valuable or, on the contrary, worth eliminating. It is not a new phenomenon. It also functioned on a smaller scale in earlier periods, when the so-called culture was strictly separated from plebeian culture or folklore in its various forms. Nowadays, these orders are rather complementary, sometimes overlapping and textually drawing on each other. Today, mutual exchanges between the levels of culture are largely a derivative of accessibility to information, its quantity and ease of dissemination. Cultural colloquiality builds everyday cultural experience. Everyday life is based on individual experience, which I tried to show in the chapter on metaphor in Andrzej Stasiuk's prose (*Andrzej Stasiuk: Textual Figures of Experience*). Everyday life becomes a way of cultural existence: I read, go to the cinema or to see a match, I reflect on the variability of fashion and language. Cultural everyday

life cannot be described in a permanent way as the object of this description constantly changes. A researcher in everyday life is doomed to describe and interpret various types of discourses accompanying social, political and artistic events in the broad sense of the word, as well as to try to understand what, why and how something is said. The subject of such interests are the varieties of language that describe the world, here and now. And how word meanings evolve. I write about this using examples of understanding the lexeme “friendship” in several European languages (chapter *De amicitia*). In fact, it is also an essay about different ways of understanding friendship. It can be therefore said that cultural everyday life is immersed in subjectivity, opinions, ideas, commentaries, discourses, behaviours and actions.