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A Story of Fluctuating Institutional Incentives: Publishing Humanities Research in English from a Polish Perspective

Abstract: The key problem identified in this essay is connected with many Polish researchers' ambivalent attitude to submitting their research to academic journals published in English. This is particularly true of humanities researchers but a similar ambivalence has also affected social sciences in Poland. Simultaneously, through recourse to its author's own experience and empirical observations, this essay demonstrates a range of strategies that may be utilized to overcome reluctance to reach international readerships. Adopting a more relaxed style, structures and vocabulary, associated, in Polish universities, with lack of sophistication and pandering to non-academic audiences, is opposed, as a strategy, to translating Polish texts into English. In the context of academic writing, communication skills prove to be language and culture specific. Therefore, for those who do not speak English as their L1, the best way to acquire those skills is by extensive reading in English, including literary works and other

academic writings, preferably by Anglophone researchers. Imitation of successful communication strategies (i.e. templates and logic unique to academic argumentation) is highly recommended. Furthermore, Polish researchers who want to be published in English must bear in mind that academic English is “writer-responsible” as opposed to academic Polish, which puts on the reader the onus of responsibility for the comprehension of each text.

Key words: research publication, academic culture, writing skills in L2, emulation, translation, intellectual xenophobia

Introduction - writing autobiographically

Right from the very first sentence, you can think of this essay as an attempt to cross certain conventional borders between academic writing and literary composition, with an indefatigable insistence, on my part, on the value of direct communication by means of first-person and second-person narrative strategies. Following the clue provided by the editors of the current issue of *Discourses on Culture*, I am going to indulge in what some researchers have identified, over the last two or three decades, as “criticism as autobiography” (Shields, 2009, p. 150; see also Murray, 1991, pp. 66–74 and Gorra, 1995, pp. 143–153). I feel justified in using my own career to develop an argument about the rambling itineraries of Polish academics acquiring and then exercising their writing skills in English, largely because there are so many precedents concerning argumentation based on one’s own personal experience. Simultaneously, it is crucial to bear in mind, throughout this essay, that my experiences are not representative of the entire discipline of literary studies, and even less so of the humanities at large, because of my professional background as a teacher of English. Many Polish humanities researchers publish in English without actually writing in English: they submit their Polish articles to be, then, translated into English. This practice is best illustrated

by English-language issues of one of the most prestigious Polish humanities journals, *Teksty Drugie* [*Secondary Texts*], which has never reached a wider international status despite including publications in English (mostly by Polish academics). One of the crucial points that emerge from my discussion below is that, without immersing oneself in international discussions and reading primary texts in the original to hone their own writing skills in English, Polish researchers are not likely to produce communicative and resonant contributions to the development of their disciplines beyond a local context. Aspects of writing that are exceedingly difficult to translate into English include style, mannerisms and culture-dependent twists and turns of thought (e.g. choice of transitions), characteristic of academic argumentation in Polish.

As an alternative, I will argue, following Wallwork (2011, pp. 15–16), that it is useful to develop, largely from scratch, an independent set of skills for writing in English. I open with one notable example of academic communication to illustrate my own development as an academic writer. It is a text by Gerald Graff, who will reappear in this essay as a crucial influence on my current style and writing strategies. I have often used one of Graff's essays as the first assigned reading in my *Introduction to literary theory and criticism* course. His essay is called *Disliking Books at an Early Age* and what Graff does there is perhaps even more interesting than the claims he makes. Namely, the essay opens with his childhood reminiscences; the author, a famous professor of literature, revisits his own neighborhood in Chicago right after the conclusion of WWII to tell us a few words about his early years (Graff, 1999, pp. 41–48). This strategy is a well-trodden path by now, and there is nothing ground-breaking about using a personal anecdote to breach a general issue, but the main body of Graff's essay indicates that his personal experiences are meant to accompany his critical discussion of argument and literature throughout.

In Graff's view, there is no clash between writing about oneself and making a generalizable claim of academic value. In fact, alienation of much academic writing from the concerns of everyday life, and the communication skills of its target readers, is the most deplorable quality of our academic culture. By 'our' culture here I mean primarily American culture but the point holds true for Polish academics and their communication strategies as well. In his provocatively titled book, *Clueless in Academe: How Schooling Obscures the Life of the Mind*, Graff states that much criticism of academic writing is justified because not infrequently "academic writing – the writing professors publish – tends to mean bad writing – turgid, pretentious, jargon-ridden, and humorless, stuff nobody would write or read who wasn't trying to get tenure" (2003, p. 115). Apparently, there is a self-serving quality to it as well: we produce tons of pages of 'Academic speak' (Graff, 2003, p. 276) to meet our criteria for promotion within academic institutions. Meanwhile we often forget that, out there, someone might be trying to make sense of our publications.

Anecdote, narrative and the use of second-person voice in academic writing are some of the strategies that I had learned from Gerald Graff and from his writings, even before I met him in person. Although the obtrusiveness of "you" in academic publications is anathema to many teachers of academic writing (see, e.g., "Avoid Second-Person Point of View" and "Point of view in academic writing"), it is my contention that in some cases it enhances the reader's immersion and facilitates communication in explanatory writing by promoting interaction between writer and reader (Lehman, 2018, p. 83). Further on, I address this issue in the context of literary communication as well. To come back to Gerald Graff, my students usually read his essay and then I tell them that, when I was a Visiting Fulbright Scholar in Chicago, Professor Graff helped me enormously with the first draft of my book on New Pragmatism and gave me a lot of useful advice about

writing in English. They are incredulous, as they should be, because it is not often the case that a Polish academic gets an opportunity to spend some quality time with academic celebrities like Gerald Graff, Stanley Fish or Walter Benn Michaels. Still, more importantly, I succeed in getting their attention. And anecdote is a rhetorical strategy that works equally effectively in speech and in writing. By adopting the idiom of conversation to academic writing (all credit due to Kenneth Burke), then, I want to follow in the footsteps of several important figures whose rhetoric has kept inspiring me in my career. At this stage, if I were to offer a terse and off-hand response to the question: “So, how did you learn to write (academic texts) in English?” I would probably say: “By emulating those that I have always admired as academic actors and writers”. That is why now I am going to enlarge on the value of emulation.

Emulation without plagiarism

In most cases, I suppose, the very idea that you might want to produce sophisticated, fascinating, thought-provoking passages in English emerges from your first encounter with good – I mean: enviably good – writing by your favorite professors and other scholars. There is a twist to that point in the case of students of English in countries like Poland. To visualize the twist you have to go way back in time: it is the early 1990s in Poland, and you are bombarded with alien ideas garbed in alien words because it is not just the contents of literary and critical writings that you are struggling with as a student of English and a prospective teacher of English. It is the very language that constitutes a major obstacle to communication. At this stage many young people assume that, if English is not their L1, all they have to do is get a fairly good idea of its rules (grammar, structures, registers, etc.) and then, possibly, translate what they read into their native language or, when they are expressing themselves in writing, translate their own ideas

(qua words in their native language) into a text in English (L2). I suppose that in this respect Polish students, and then Polish academics writing in English, do not differ substantially from Chinese learners of English or English speakers who learn French and whose writing strategies have been studied by Knutson (2006, pp. 88–109) and Wang and Wen (2002, pp. 225–246), respectively. It takes a while to realize that you will never be a good writer in English unless you virtually abandon your first language as a springboard for your writing and start thinking in English (as your L2) to begin with. That is also because models of style and argumentation in Polish will not help but, rather, hamper and constrain: English requires different codes and stylistic strategies. The underlying assumptions about (academic) communication are markedly different. A recent study by Tavakoli, Ghadiri and Zabihi (2014, pp. 69–70) has shown a negative effect of translation on learners' writing ability in L2. To translate their conclusions into an academic context: it will not work if you translate your beautifully and elaborately written piece from Polish into English, with the expectation that English-speaking editors and publishers will jump at it.

At the beginning of this essay I mentioned a highly reputable Polish humanities journal, *Teksty drugie*, which has sought to elevate its international standing by publishing, every now and then, translations of Polish essays into English. This in itself is a commendable strategy, as it is much more likely that international readers (i.e. English-speaking readers who are not speakers of Polish as L1) will get interested in research findings and ideas developed by Polish humanities researchers if those ideas are communicated in English. Still, particularly in the humanities, the problem is that, to paraphrase McLuhan, the medium is largely responsible for the quality (and relevance) of the message. Fascinating ideas developed in Polish, and mostly in the context of Polish culture and history, will not resonate with English speaking aliens (I use this term on purpose, to imply considerable cultural and linguistic

distance), even when they are offered excellent English translations. In no way is this meant as a criticism of the research quality to be shared with an international audience. Some of those Polish essays translated into English are brilliant and yet, of necessity, they seem academically claustrophobic. To illustrate, a recent discussion of Witold Gombrowicz's writings by Błażej Warkocki (2017, pp. 185–201) is emblematic of this problem. It is not just that the general theme of Warkocki's essay is unrelated to academic conversations in Anglophone literary studies; the point is that it largely steers clear of what is going on outside Polish academia. Fair enough, in some footnotes there are English or French sources mentioned (e.g. works by Freud, Kosofsky Sedgwick, Barthes and Deleuze) but even in their case Polish translations are commonly adduced instead of English originals or available English translations. Moreover, the bulk of the references and sources are Polish, which sends a clear message to English-speaking readers: this essay may be available in English but its connection with larger intellectual debates beyond Polish borders is limited. The relevance of most of the references and the wider context of exclusively Polish debates over Gombrowicz's writings are not likely to be appreciated by anyone else than Polish researchers.

Is that testimony to poor research skills or inadequate communication strategies by the author of the essay? Neither, I guess. It is worth bearing in mind that the essay was written in Polish, with a Polish audience in mind, and, in this sense, it is simply a misunderstanding to assume that its translation will automatically resonate with English-speaking readerships. To communicate effectively with international audiences, Warkocki would have to read almost exclusively English books and articles for the purpose of an essay like that. Only then would it be possible to contribute meaningfully to international debates concerned with literary studies. To make Gombrowicz accessible and relevant to English-speaking (academic) readers, it seems necessary

to relate his writings to what those readers have been preoccupied with. Paraphrasing Kenneth Burke's famous notion of research as an unending conversation (1941, pp. 110–111), a critical contribution is never a one-way street; in the academy, to give something meaningful to others, you have to absorb a lot first.

Crucially, a writer's readings give them not only a grasp of the language that they desire to master (a naive metaphor, if you ask me, because it is much more often the case that L2 is your master, and you are at its mercy) but also an intellectual and stylistic framework, a cultural decorum of sorts, that may prove indispensable in communicating effectively with Anglophone readers. I am not alone in assuming the importance of reading well-written English before you yourself embark on the task of writing (academically). As a matter of fact, reading and writing are considered inseparable by those very same writers (and readers) whom I will emulate most readily. Stanley Fish, a self-declared member of "the tribe of sentence watchers" (2011, p. 3), whose writing strategies I have always striven to imitate, says that "these skills are sometimes thought of as having only an oblique relationship to one another, but they are ... acquired in tandem" (Fish, 2011, p. 8). Reading skills are the foundation rock of your writing skills, especially when your aim is to produce fluent, communicative and convincing prose in English.

Fish mentions the skill of imitation (2011, p. 10) among the prerequisites for good writing. Emulation and imitation should be carefully and sharply distinguished from plagiarism and mimicry, though. The problem is that if you are not a native speaker of English, further alienated (like I was) from Anglophone cultures by your upbringing and education under a rather claustrophobic and xenophobic regime called communism, you want to make sure that the words, phrases and entire sentences you lift from your readings are applied exactly the way they should be. Especially at first it is safer, though not necessarily very

creative, to copy and paste as much as possible and legally admissible, while still seeking to make your own points. That is because in English stylistic creativity is not a desirable commodity; instead, you want to get your structures and idioms right. Accordingly, emulation of the best writing in your field is the most effective strategy for making sure that your own writing is of good quality and flawless. As a safeguard against merely reproducing the original writing, I suggest viewing sentences as semantic blanks, sheer exercises in form: what could be emulated is a syntactic pattern or a particular logic of argumentation (Amgoud, Besnard, & Hunter, 2018, p. 1). Even though Michele Root-Bernstein's construal of emulation as reproducing "purposes or goals, though the behavioral strategies that lead to that result may differ" (2017, p. 24) is slightly different from mine (with my focus on form and structure, rather than the content of what is to be emulated), it does preserve a clear distinction between emulation and plagiarism. Moreover, I am reassured by Iga Lehman's insistence that, although academic writing is always socially constructed and situated, "each piece of writing, whether literary or academic, is an act of authorial creation into which authors weave their unique life histories shaped by their socio-cultural, institutional and linguistic experiences" (2018, p. 52). Ultimately, what matters is that your approach to writing steer clear of stealing someone else's ideas and of copying what is protected by copyright.

Naturally, I would never encourage plagiarism as a shortcut to good writing in English. Neither would I recommend it for any other purposes, come to think of it. I am far from recommending a 'copy and paste' method for using someone else's ideas without a proper acknowledgement of the sources, and yet it is worth bearing in mind that you will never acquire any confidence as an academic writer unless you follow Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's advice and memorize, or keep close at hand, a number of fixed expressions, structures and

ready-made templates that they tender in their oft-quoted and frequently utilized book *I Say/They Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. It is a standard reading for many high school students in the United States and I am not ashamed to admit I have often consulted it over the course of my academic career, too. So have my students, because they need the same kind of confidence in writing, based on solid samples of communicative English. Birkenstein and Graff describe those templates as linguistic formulas that “structure and even generate your own writing” (2014, pp. 1–2). Essentially, they identify chunks of language that are iterable in academic writing, constituting patterns of thinking about controversial issues. They claim that “the best academic writing has one underlying feature: it is deeply engaged in some way with other people’s views” (Birkenstein, & Graff, 2014, p. 3). Interestingly, much in the same vein, Wayne C. Booth defines listening rhetoric as “the whole range of communicative arts for reducing misunderstanding by paying full attention to opposing views” (Booth, 2004, p. 10). I am happy to admit that I have benefited enormously from a checklist (called “A Checklist for Understanding Your Readers”) included in his and his colleagues’ manual for research writers, *The Craft of Research* (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2008, pp. 26–27), although it took me many years of my career to understand and appreciate the significance of effectively joining a genuine conversation within the international research community.

Academic writing as bilateral communication

One of the fundamental lessons in comparative stylistics is connected with differing strategies of addressing your readers across the spectrum of various languages. To illustrate, when I started producing what I hoped would be publishable material, I transferred to my writing in English assumptions from Polish academic writing and did my best to adopt

a pose of authorial neutrality and self-effacement. Even those pieces of critical analysis that invited a more personal take had no clearly defined voice of my own and failed to participate in any kind of academic conversation. The discovery of the second-person narrative as a mode of academic communication came to me rather late, and literary works proved immensely helpful in this respect. I studied *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne, *Ripley Bogle* by Robert McLiam Wilson or *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid to realize what power and freedom of expression reside in direct forms of address, when you can create an illusion of being in the same room with your readers, and your message – whether academic or literary – involves bilateral communication. Eventually, influenced by contemporary construals of rhetoric, which “deals with effects of texts, persuasive and tropological” (Mailloux, 2006, p. 40), I could focus not only on stylistic nuances but also on the pragmatics of academic communication.

The shift from a detached and quasi-scientific tenor of an omniscient, non-participant narrator to a more personal tone, in which the use of the first-person singular is no longer a crime, coincided with my growing interest in campus fiction. Novels by David Lodge (especially the famous trilogy including *Changing Places*, *Small World* and *Nice Work*) opened my eyes to those dimensions of academic culture that were carefully hidden from sight in Poland. Acquiring a taste for the inside jokes and the internal politics of academic institutions in English-speaking countries came at a price: it entailed a degree of disenchantment, a decline in my belief that the ivory tower is immune to criticism, ridicule or satire. But that awareness also reformed my writing in English by encouraging me to adopt a more relaxed, idiosyncratic style, affected, no doubt, by my enthusiastic response to Friedrich Nietzsche’s notion of perspectivism or perspectival seeing (1996, p. 98), which contemporary philosophers, sociologists, and sociolinguists

often describe in terms of the inescapable sociocultural situatedness or placedness of every writer and reader (Fish, 2001, pp. 1–15; Malpas, 2018, p. 28; Frank, 2008, pp. 1–20). Some academics delude themselves into believing that they can dodge the bullet and rise above their own situatedness; I chose to embrace it. At a certain point, by the time I had completed my second monograph, I came to terms with the fact that I write in English from within the context of Polish academia.

Campus fiction, and academic writing about it, brought me some of the most unexpected professional rewards. Back in 2011 I had a chapter published in a book about selected British campus novels (Drong, 2011, pp. 137–150). And yet it was not until later, when I put this chapter up on my Academia.edu website, that I received some unusual and inspiring feedback. In my chapter I discuss a series of books by an anonymous writer, who disguises himself within one of his novels as a character by the name of Felix Glass (also a writer within the fictional universe created to mock British universities). To my utter surprise, I soon got a letter and a drawing signed by ‘Felix Glass’, in which a fictional character thanked me for my “excellent article about metafiction” in contemporary campus novels. As a Polish academic, trying to explore the world of British academia by means of the only available sources (i.e. works of fiction), I had an incredible opportunity to cross the ontological borders that many literary scholars in Poland spend lifetimes conceptualizing. Boy, was I on cloud nine!

Polish reluctance to publish in English?

At the same time I realized that my assumptions about academic writing were different, in so many respects, from the format and style of writing by prominent American and British critics and literary historians. Having read some Polish essays and books on literature and literary studies,

I got the impression that the less accessible they are, the better. When I was a student and then an aspiring academic, intellectual sophistication was tantamount to being difficult to understand. I would admire Michel Foucault's serpentine sentences (in English translation) because I had been taught to value opacity over clarity. Rather than peruse American and British critics, whose writing style, unlike Foucault's, Derrida's and many Polish essayists', met all the criteria for successful academic communication and then some, I read what did not really resonate with me. I did not feel to be part of any conversation; instead, I felt like an impostor, an intruder or a gatecrasher at an academic party for the intellectual elite. It never crossed my mind that perhaps I was exposed to works by geniuses and yet their alleged genius manifested itself in poor-quality academic writing (or in inadequate translations).

Much later, reading Elaine Showalter's *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and its Discontents*, I admired her intellectual independence and the skill of setting the tone for many academic conversations about campus fiction. My writing, meanwhile, was constrained – has always been constrained up to a point – by the decorums of academic publishing in my own country and the necessity to meet strenuous criteria originating from Polish conceptions and ideas about the humanities. My career in Polish academia has been dependent, at every stage of applying for tenure, on submitting research mostly in the shape of monographs. 25 years into this career I can still barely afford to write with a general reader in mind because the standards of research evaluation in my country will not recognize such efforts as professional. Over the last decade officials responsible for Research and Higher Education in Poland have kept developing an intricate system of carrots and sticks connected with points awarded for particular publications, depending on the publisher, their prestige and the language of publication. While the current system in Polish

academia seems to put a premium on articles and monographs in English, and possibly of an interdisciplinary sort, the actual assessment regime – an equivalent of the British REF – prioritizes single, clearly demarcated disciplines and does not discriminate whatsoever between the majority of academic and quasi-academic publishers in Poland and many prestigious international publishers of academic journals and books. For example, if you want to submit your research, in the form of a monograph, to Palgrave Macmillan, you should think twice because you can score the same number of points (i.e. 100) by getting it published in Polish with “Instytut Kultury Regionalnej i Badań Literackich im. Franciszka Karpińskiego” [Franciszek Karpiński Institute of Regional Culture and Literary Study] in Siedlce. Seriously, have you never heard of them? How about Palgrave Macmillan?

I would not be misunderstood as saying that in every country, no matter what official language(s) they have, the system should reward only publications in English, possibly edited and circulated all over the world by prestigious and well-known publishers like Palgrave Macmillan or Springer (Incidentally, in Poland, Springer also happens to be on a par with minor Polish publishers of no international stature whatsoever – see *Wykaz wydawnictw...*, 2020). There are areas of research, and numerous disciplines like e.g. Polish literature, history and cultural studies, that make sense mostly when their publications are available in local languages, consistent with the literature, culture or society that fall under their purview. Still, there is a substantial difference between the quality of research that is required to get an essay published with *Critical Inquiry* or *New Literary History* and a piece of writing in Polish submitted to a low-key regional journal edited by a group of your colleagues from the same university. The institutional rewards and incentives in Poland do not reflect the full scope of that difference and that is why for the last several years, despite official protestations to the contrary, central

research politics in Poland has not actively promoted publications in foreign languages and, prospectively, of an international standing. As a result, compared with other non-English speaking European countries, Polish humanities scholars score very poorly when it comes to the number of publications (articles and monographs) in English (see Zdziebłowski, 2018). Poland's 17,2 per cent against Finland's 68,3 or even Slovakia's 45,9 per cent, over the 2011–2014 time span, means that, unlike many other researchers in the EU, the Polish humanities have developed a xenophobic attitude to the rest of the world. You may want to blame Polish political and cultural alienation on the long and difficult period of communism (and the prevalence of academic publications in Russian till 1989 – see Kulczycki et al., 2018, pp. 481–482) but the truth is that it ended more than 30 years ago and most of the currently employed academics have had ample opportunities to acquire English and other foreign languages and develop international ties, leading also to joint projects and publications. Part of the blame rests with the institutions responsible for research incentives, especially with the consecutive Ministers for Research and Higher Education, as well as general government policy and the legislature. In fact, over the last few years, Polish researchers (especially in the humanities) have been discouraged from developing and maintaining close links with international research communities.

Why should specifically the Polish humanities suffer so much from those xenophobic attitudes? Two reasons: centralized political control over many aspects of Polish academia (including what I call intellectual and axiomatic 'occidentophobia', a variant of linguistic and ethnic nationalism) and international language standards for publications in English. The first one is relatively recent and comes down to institutional pressures to insulate Polish research communities from a demoralizing influence of 'Western' ideas. This is particularly true of research in history, cultural studies (political injunctions

against gender studies) and some social sciences as well (e.g. political studies, sociology, law). The second reason is more complex and has to do with inadequate command of English among Polish researchers. While it may not be a major problem with publications in physics or economics, once you submit an essay in literary studies or anthropology to an international publisher, the style and register of writing, as well as the quality of argumentation (often affected by poor translation or misguided attempts at being unnecessarily sophisticated), will usually disqualify the submission right from the outset. Careful proof-reading and better quality of translations from Polish into English would probably remedy the situation but Polish academics can hardly afford those extra expenses on their own. To put it quite bluntly, they are poorly remunerated compared to researchers in other EU countries. This is especially true of the adjuncts (freshly minted PhD holders), rather than tenured professors: they get about 13.000 EUR before tax when they begin their careers (Wąsacz, 2018). Therefore, it is the universities and other institutions of higher education that should carry the financial burdens of those international publications. Yet first they must be motivated to see long-term benefits of such expenditure.

Conclusion

All of the above has affected, in varying degrees, my own attitudes to getting published in English. As a kind of compromise, for a long time I would often choose a safe option of submitting my English-language research concerned with literary theory, rhetoric or Irish studies to a Polish journal or a Polish publisher willing to bring out a collection of similar submissions, mostly edited and expanded proceedings of a conference I had attended. I was not motivated to send my research to prestigious journals in the UK or the United States simply because that would not have furthered,

in any direct manner, my career in Poland. Besides, I was not hoping for international recognition; I assumed that my submissions would be rejected (several actually were) on the grounds of insufficient relevance, incomplete research (Polish libraries are notorious for lacking in current sources in English) or simply because of the enormous competition in the research market in my area. Crucially, what discouraged me from submitting my research for publication with internationally recognized journals was the ever-changing evaluation system in Poland which has kept redefining the value of research in English. I would get 12 points (under the previous assessment regime) for a minor essay in a local journal, with no impact whatsoever, whereas my article published with one of the most respectable and oft-quoted journals specializing in Irish studies (see Drong, 2017, pp. 39–49) would fetch me 5 points at best. At the beginning of 2019 the evaluation regime in Poland was radically redesigned, in mid-stream, retrogressively affecting the assessment of publications for 2017 and 2018, so that the same international journal that published my article in 2017 now (in 2020) scores 100 points for each contribution, an equivalent of the most prestigious Polish journal in my discipline. Needless to say, the journal itself has not undergone any transformations in the meantime. For quite a while now it has been indexed in ERIH PLUS, Web of Science and Scopus while its submission and publication protocols have also stayed the same. Maybe my own article raised its prestige so much in the eyes of the Polish experts and officials responsible for evaluation criteria that they decided to elevate its ranking accordingly?

By privileging, for a long time, the local over the international (even in the case of publications originally produced in English), the research evaluation regime in Poland has bred a research culture conducive to what I describe earlier on as intellectual xenophobia, especially in the humanities. The most recent developments in terms of assessment criteria in Poland seem to recognize this problem and

attempt to remedy some of its symptoms. But it is quite likely that only younger, less experienced researchers will be able to modify their research and publication strategies and develop a new research culture, more open to the possibilities offered by international journals and open access publications in English, possibly available on the internet. Many humanities professors, who are responsible for the key decisions concerning the future of their disciplines, will probably stick to their guns and keep doing what they have been doing for decades. After all, it is extremely difficult to teach an old dog new tricks.

What the Polish centralized system of academic carrots and sticks has also, perhaps deliberately, failed to promote is developing an independent set of criteria for acknowledging the fundamental differences and interconnections between fields of knowledge. There are no incentives to do interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary work, either. In the humanities, the language issue (i.e. the exaltation of English) should not be lauded as the king of the academic hill, thereby disregarding the function of local or regional channels, concerned specifically with e.g. minority languages and cultures or local history. Research outputs vary considerably: some crucial publications may miss their point if they are made available to Anglophone readers WITHOUT trying to affect local communities in countries like Poland. National research assessments, in Poland and elsewhere, should recognize varieties of local research agendas and priorities. Also, those assessments should make more room for, and pay more heed to, academic communication with a general public. What comes to my mind at this juncture is an example of Stanley Fish's writing addressed to a wide readership, and meant to explain and teach the fundamentals of literary studies and rhetoric. Encouraging the production and publication of such books as *Winning Arguments* or *How to Write a Sentence* (Fish, 2017) is part and parcel of the mission of any public university, not only in the United States. Willingness (and

the attendant skills!) to bridge the gap between research communities and general readers should be defined as a *sine qua non* for a successful career in the humanities. It is the only way to truly share your expertise with those who need it badly. It is also an excellent opportunity to have your argumentative skills verified and possibly even censured (again, Stanley Fish's weekly columns in the *New York Times*, collected in his book *Think Again*, are a case in point). Whether you produce informative, illuminating, possibly inspiring and communicative research output in your local language or in English should be of secondary importance because what matters most is your target audiences and your skills to write in a manner (and by means of adequate channels and strategies) that will resonate with them. It is not by accident that academic writing in English is defined as "writer-responsible" (Englander, 2014, p. 58), as opposed to a tendency to shift the responsibility for successful communication onto the reader, like in some other languages and academic traditions. In many humanities departments, in our everyday pursuit of formally identified excellence, we tend to forget that we do what we do NOT for the government officials poring over their tables and figures, but for audiences that can truly appreciate the stakes of our academic debates and the claims we make.

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