

# Between Writing and Existence: On Self-reflexivity of Gombrowicz's Fiction

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## Abstract

This paper sets out to track down metafictional and self-reflexive facets lying dormant in Witold Gombrowicz's texts and posits that the writer's text is calculated to sabotage its own cut-and-dried fictional edifice it purports to have constructed. Manifold conceptualisations of metafiction in the first part will pave the way for the following argumentation line taking as its focus imputed self-reflexivity of Gombrowicz's fiction. Tentative conceptual conclusions ensuing from the theoretical sketch will be further tested in the close-reading of selected works by Gombrowicz. With the purpose of corroborating the arguments posited as well as establishing theoretical backbone, poststructuralist theories and criticisms shall lend themselves for close textual analysis of Gombrowicz's texts. Seen via such optics, Gombrowicz's fiction evinces its inherent self-reflexive mechanisms which casts radically alternative light on the conventional interpretations of the writer's text. This diagnosis can scarcely be confirmed without an analysis of the characters' construction, and the resultant existentialist reverberations. Hence, the present author will venture to collapse existentialist and textualist stances in an attempt to offer a revision of Gombrowicz's alleged existentialism as well as probe problematic liminal non-space between writing and existence as articulated in Gombrowicz's prose or what it sets out to conceal.

**Keywords:** Gombrowicz, existentialism, metafiction, self-reflexivity, liminality, otherness, writing

**Abstrakt**

Celem artykułu jest zlokalizowanie metafikcyjnych i samoświadomych elementów w tekstach Witolda Gombrowicza jak również postawienie tezy, że dzieła pisarza celowo sabotują swoją fikcyjną konstrukcję. Współczesne konceptualizacje zagadnienia metafikcji rozpoczną wywód o samoświadomości dzieł Gombrowicza. Wstępne hipotezy zostaną zbadane podczas analizy wybranych dzieł Gombrowicza. W celu postawienia powyższych tez oraz ustanowienia fundamentów teoretycznych, przy analizie tekstów użyte zostaną teorie poststrukturalistyczne. Widziana w takiej optyce, twórczość Gombrowicza ujawnia mechanizmy samoświadomego tekstu rzucającego nowe światło na interpretacje twórczości oraz filozofii pisarza. Diagnoza ta nie może być jednak postawiona bez wnikliwej analizy konstrukcji wewnętrznej bohaterów i jej egzystencjalnego rezonansu. Zamierzam zatem połączyć egzystencjalistyczne i tekstualistyczne teorie w celu rewizji rzekomego egzystencjalizmu Gombrowicza, jak również zbadania liminalnego nie-miejsca pomiędzy pisaniem a egzystencją, ukazanego, bądź ukrytego, w prozie Gombrowicza.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Gombrowicz, egzystencjalizm, metafikcja, samoświadomość, liminalność, inność, pisanie

Narrative self-referentiality, self-reflexivity, self-consciousness, metanarration, are all confusingly lodged under the umbrella term of metafiction, which became grist to the post-war critical mill. Although voluminously expanded upon and conceptualised manifold by occidental literary criticism, the term remains as typologically puzzling as ever. Metafiction emerges as a concept thought up to make terms with the postmodernist literary drift in which fiction is to display the workings of its own fictional construction: "Metafictional writers thus operate and function with a freedom of exposing illusion for what it is – a device used to mask narrative as a construct and a figment of one's imagination" (Vieira 584). In the bulk of her study on metafiction, Patricia Waugh (14) defines the term as "a fiction that self-consciously reflects upon its own structure as language." With its tectonic foundations laid bare via narrative – be it implicitly or otherwise – fiction can no longer parade its realist verisimilitude and play down its linguistic, as opposed to illusively ontological, existence. Quite the reverse, it is the very edifice of text that turns into its semantic epicentre around which all other fictional (realist, existential-

ist, humanistic) constellations revolve. Fiction is thus distanced from the *real* world it has long usurped to approximate.

Although largely associated with literary postmodernism, which boosted critical awareness of the practice, metafiction not only refuses to fully encapsulate itself in the (or in fact any single) literary period, but also – mainly by dint of its dual references set out to sabotage realist literary contract – in a standardised literary terminology. With an eye to unknot the elusiveness tangled up in the categorical considerations of narrative self-reflexivity, a quick flick through the literary-critical history of the term shall ensue.

Back in 1952, as an immediate response to the post-war and soon-to-come postmodernist sensibilities, Wayne C. Booth's idea of 'self-conscious narrator' sparks off critical attention to metafiction, which, however, would not have been termed as such up until the 1970s when Robert Scholes and William Gass coin and conceptualise the term in their essays. Linda Hutcheon distinguishes 'overt' and 'covert' metafictional discourses, with the former being unequivocally thematised accounts of diegetic or linguistic fictional identities, and the latter was to implicitly bring in those identities by means of the narrative modes, other than fictionalised assertions. As put by the critic, "this process is internalized, actualized; such a text is self-reflective but not necessarily self-conscious" (7).

Later studies take pains to separate the narrative wheat from the chaff by multiplying its further divisions and subdivisions of metafiction. Hence, Ansgar Nunning, Monika Fludernik, Werner Wolf, among others, busy themselves with conceptually atomising metafiction by sketching provisional typological paradigms with the aim to respond to its complexity. As a result, metanarration, metafiction, narrative self-reflexivity, meta-reference are told apart against the formal, structural, fictional backdrops that seek to categorically dichotomise the apparently indissoluble metatextual homologies.

But does such discursive sectioning off indeed help inform the *raison d'être* of metafiction? Is this exorcism of the meta- of fiction and narrative by means of yet another meta-narrative (of theory) truly the way to conceptualise it? Perhaps "theory is indispensably the precondition of enlightened modern thinking, strive as it may to recapture the innocence of communal narrative forms" (Norris 14). Following the lines, does it really matter if the *first-order language* (to use Barthes' coinage) fabricates this peculiar self-image of intangible meta-sphere, at once detached from and attached to itself through language, whose recognition only the 'enlightened', theoretically predisposed mind can fathom?

Self-consciousness of text must be then a natural response to the dissociation of meaning that postmodernism waxes rhapsodic about. Having announced the death

of metanarratives (meaning Lyotard's *grand récit*), a postmodern mind must brace itself against the contingency of meaning by actualising self-aware language first-hand. Since postmodern identity has to come to grips with the fact that its existence is at roots linguistic, the very amalgamation of language and existence, ardently lionised by textualists (and otherwise separated by realists) heralds self-referentiality as postmodern existential condition. Yet again, the border between language and existence set against the facet of metafiction, constitutes its most pertinent quandary and must be taken as the subject of examination.<sup>1</sup>

A paradox within this theoretical ambit has been opined by Herzberger:

It appears, then, that we wish to have it both ways: on the one hand, we evoke the self-referentiality of the text and affirm the purely linguistic material of which characters are made, while on the other, we attribute to these characters the same body of traits and dilemmas generally associated with the characters of realistic tradition. We identify the technical process of metafiction through which narrative invents itself as something other than the real world, but then proceed to perceive characters as if they embody life in its full range of existential possibilities (423).

On the face of it, Herzberger gets to the heart of the matter by exposing this natural paradox. But how else is fiction to manifest itself as fiction than through self-thematising itself? Language that narrates its own construction must 'have it both ways' in a sense that narration is structurally fictional at its core, which in turn cannot eschew its existential proximity. If metafiction is hardly anything else than the language's *story* of its own construction in progress (with *story*, structured like narration, being inherently existential) it seems that the homology of dual energies between language and being naturally circumscribes discursive formulae and cannot be merely detached through binary oppositions. Radical adherence to linguistic self-consciousness is in fact as reductive as realist insistence on the transparency of language, as it closes the text's possibilities for

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<sup>1</sup> Poulet goes against the thrust of the argument postulating that it is language that makes the absolute communication between the text and the reader possible. Assumed to communicate the meaning of the text, language is actually a 'being' in itself and communicates nothing but itself. What is read is language which cannot pretend to be literature and paradoxically literature cannot transcend language. Blanchot, hence, pinpoints the notion of 'lack' whereby the juxtapositions of self-other or reader-text, immanence-transcendence will never attain absolute communion and will always harbingers interpretative aporias (Jędrzejko 41).

meaning, given that the language-reality tension is univocally resolved. Metafiction as a concept accedes thus to the mutual displacement of metaphysics of ontological existence and linguistic pertinence.

Here, Gombrowicz's approach to fiction can score a run in the argument. His existentialist insistence on 'becoming' prefigures writing caught in the act of auto-creation reflected in language constructedness. The existential innocence-experience trajectory has earmarks of a parallel process of the character construction in fiction, as both typify the structural processuality of creation as event, as opposed to realist verisimilitude that only utilises language to staunchly reproduce existence, in keeping with the mimetic tradition. Accordingly, mindful of its linguistic and narrative tectonics, fiction produces characters dramatising their narrative – other than worldly – identity as being essentially a literary creation.

In pursuance of the line of reasoning, let us provisionally call up Hutcheon's above typology: that is *overt* and *covert* metafictional discourses, for self-reflexivity of Gombrowicz's fiction comes to pass in both explicit fictionalised metanarrative assertions of characters/narrators and internalised self-conscious narrative embedded in the structuredness of language. The narrator may thus talk the reader through the intricacies of plot, implied philosophy of the work through metafictional discursive explication (*Diary, Ferdydurke*), or confusingly paratextual commentary (Prefaces to *Filidor, Filibert, The Marriage*).<sup>2</sup> Overt metafictional dictum was to familiarise the reader with the process of writing step-by-step.

Please excuse the clumsiness of these metaphors. It is not easy for me to discuss them (and one day I shall have to explain why I put the words *boy* and *girl* in parentheses...) (Pornografia 30).

Gombrowicz seemed to have a good reason to have the reader participate in the making of his fiction close-up. Obsessed with the idea of being misunderstood, flagrantly articulated in *Diary*, the autofictional elements are to forestall any rash interpretative stances on the reader's part and ensure the author's monopoly on textual meaning.<sup>3</sup> And that

<sup>2</sup> Prefaces to *Filidor* and *Filibert* in *Ferdydurke* problematise their status as prefaces, bringing about a peculiar overlapping of para and meta discourses, given their placement in the middle of the novel. The prefatory material self-negates itself as paratextual in this instance, for it acts as the narrator's metafictional commentary on the process of writing.

<sup>3</sup> "And I will prove that my construction is in no way inferior, as far as precision and logic are concerned, to even the most precise and logical constructions" (*Ferdydurke* 69).

would be flat, had it not been for the fact that such totalising discursive closures comprise only a simulacrum of clandestine metafictional infrastructure of the novels. Such auto-fictional simulacra are to bewail the fact that fiction can be all but itself and fictionality of fiction leads to the textual fissures from which fiction disseminates. As such, these spaces are not the ones of simulacrum per se, but of what it sets out to cover up.

A quick flick through Gombrowicz's literature will do to spot the writer's systematic use of explanatory narrative, as if in a futile attempt to stand outside fiction. Such a detour from rhetoric to philosophising constitutes a promise. Philosophy, detached from the waywardness of rhetoric, has deceived itself into believing that it, by way of detailed methods and patent theory, can present us with truth as well as give final answers to substantial questions (as Plato would have it). Gombrowicz, however, lays bare the fact that such explanatory discourse is nothing but rhetoric wearing the hat of philosophy. By exposing the constructedness of fiction, overt autofiction only exposes its own constructedness in turn. But the text the reader is confronted with is not founded on what metacommentary speaks of, as the constructedness of fiction is entrenched in its linguistic material as event. These blatant metafictional comments just divert the reader's attention from (and simultaneously get at) the fact that self-reflexivity in full bloom can be captured beyond the discourse of commentary. Failure of explicit metanarration to epitomise the mechanisms it waxes lyrical about subversively leads to internalised narrative markers of the text's autocrecreation.

This metafictional dissonance of Gombrowicz's fiction can be partly answered for when set beside his problematic definition of form. Jarzębski understands form as medium between reality and consciousness, which surfaces via construction of descriptive discourses largely for the purposes of self-discovery. Writing, subject to standardised linguistic conventions, comprises a process of dynamic autocrecreation; the acknowledgement of the self through form:

we do not possess form as such, but once we wish to learn or express our own personality, we must, somehow, construct ourselves from outside, that is impose form on ourselves the way we impose it on others (Jarzębski 342, my translation).

Dual agencies of form, translated into the fictional discourse, entail peculiar structural narrative bifurcation. Hence, one comes across the double-edged language – communicated in existential tropes – as an articulation of reduced assertion of narrative, which opens up interpretative space and engenders indeterminacy. The non-affirmative char-

acter of Gombrowicz's narrative is inspired by the awareness of totalising form. Form (or descriptive metafictional discourse for that matter), as noted by Goddard, is "a map of reality, rather than reality itself, and therefore explanatory systems should be understood in a profound relation to their outside" (135). This effect, bolstered by provisional encapsulation of indeterminacy, ending up with liquidity of form in turn, is an accurate account of Gombrowicz's narrative dualities. Discursive explication imposes certain contextual 'plan' only to dissolve in the chaos of language. Discourse in fiction as a manifestation of language's 'outside' returns to its borderless inside through the failure of approximation of what it ventures to relate; be it life or reality.

There is surely a deep-laid consistency to the manner via which Gombrowicz endows his narrative with meta and autofictional qualities. This he achieves by problematising interpersonal relation between the narrator – usually a playful artificer of narrative events – and other characters. Since Gombrowicz never lets his reader forget about his very self, as he often slyly impersonates narrators by dubbing them Witold or even Witold Gombrowicz, the reader cannot but be haunted by the belief that self-referentiality of Gombrowicz as writer entails writing as essentially self-conscious process. The author Witold Gombrowicz is translated into Witold (often Gombrowicz) who participates in a fictional episode and becomes a commentator and a judge of an event so as to impose his fixed interpretative framework and render it directly to the reader. He attempts to recapture the surrounding world, putting aside accepted norms, ethical values or social standards. Gombrowicz-narrator is thus a double-edged figure, who – by arranging and upsetting his fictional reality, hence 'writing' it, much like a real-life author does – renders plot every so often a metaphor of writing. Is Gombrowicz a failed artist then? Yet another character who cannot make art out of life, and so attempts instead to make his life into art?

This self-conscious act of exposing plot as essentially literary construct unfolding in the process of its creation and approximating the artist-work relation manifests itself on the narrator-reality as well as narrator-characters (mostly female) axes. Herein, it could be reasonably argued that Gombrowicz's oeuvre should be put in the literary tradition of Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, or Nabokov's *Lolita*, to name just a few, as all constitute a tragicomic illustration of the fruitless existential project of grafting fictionally-constructed worlds on to the extratextual reality. Gombrowicz's characters neurotically endeavour to project form and meaning on to the arbitrariness of existence, just like a writer who weaves her/his fictional yarn. However, unlike writers who foist a sense of finiteness (arguably illusive)

upon the text they construct (mind the physical scope of the book as an accumulation of words, its assumed beginning and ending) and control fictional events, an individual, fictional or otherwise, chucked into the muddled and overwhelming world of chaos, is confronted with Sisyphean drudge of organising the world logically, making sense out of absurd. This existential aporia, emerging from a liminal space between fiction and reality manifested in the fictional unsettling narrator-world relations, imprints itself on other dimensions so as to fashion equally upsetting reader-text dialogic.

Much in tune with the Nabokovian project of rendering a female character an autofictional metaphor, almost every novel and all plays appear to deliver their own 'Lolita', epitomising (in the present author's reading of it) a failed attempt of a writer to totalise his/her work of art: e.g. Lena (*Cosmos*), Zuta (*Ferdydurke*), Henia (and Karol) (*Pornografia*), the eponymous Yvonne, Princess of Burgundy, Albertine (*Operetta*), to a smaller degree Molly (*The Marriage*), Alicia (*Bacacay*).

Zuta, bearing the most striking resemblance to the Nabokovian 'nymphet' out of all other Gombrowicz's heroines, opens up the autofictional space the moment Joey desperately falls for her, defenceless against her power to 'put the screws to [his] mug', or else, to overpower him (*Ferdydurke* 137).

I sat there for her, for her I sat, I sat there for her alone, and I couldn't miss a single second of sitting for her, I was within her, she enclosed me within herself (ibid.).

If Zuta acts as an allegory of *objet d'art*, it could be argued that writing comes to being as the writer's token of disentanglement from form. A writer, literally 'sitting' down writing, left to his/her fate against the yawning chasm of language, must transform the essence of life into language, but is 'enclosed' in its totality. Defencelessness is here given away by the narrator's apprehensive stutter of the word 'sit', which marks Gombrowicz's stylistic tic of reducing fictional events to the level of linguistic material.

This postulate could be seconded by another metafictional episode set in the opening of the novel, where the narrator's plan of writing his new novel (with the first being Gombrowicz's debut *Memoirs of a Time of Immaturity* – yet another autobiographical reference) is thwarted by the intrusion of 'overpowering' Pimko. Form is thus a point of departure from which writing evinces itself as an existential undertaking. Writing in this sense is more than an act of pure production of a literary artefact, as it constitutes a revolutionary gesture of prioritising the becoming of the self. Zuta embodies a self-contained enclosure, whose immanence ensures radical inaccessibility to its meaning. Immanent



to itself, she also resonates with the writer's inability to pour existence into paper. From now, the narrator-artificer knuckles down to his customary deconstructive homework: he will use symbol (by placing a wingless fly in her shoe), embarrass the girl by unexpectedly planting ambiguous words (uttering absurd minutiae "Mommy"), "dabbles in his fruit compote" (144), evokes Zuta's running nose as a result of his peeping through the keyhole; all this to "pull her into the orbit of [his] activity" (148). Having deployed linguistic playfulness and heterogeneity to break immanence of his artwork, he manages to wriggle out of form by gaily concluding: "it had extricated me from the schoolgirl. I could finally touch her!" (143).

Such an urge to penetrate the seemingly imponderable immanence of the other is even more conspicuously paraded in *Cosmos*, where the reality the narrator attempts to assemble is not predicated on any standardised cultural presuppositions. Bartoszyński notices that reality in the novel is contingent on the narrator's "creative gestures" (159, my translation). The logic of Gombrowicz's fictional reality, far from being determined by a mimetic order, is rooted in the constructedness of the work. Hence, preposterous – nearly law to themselves – narrator's inferences carry credibility only if they resonate with the deconstructive process of the becoming of reality or writing of text, bereft of metaphysical delusion of continuity.

Much like Zuta, Lena implodes metafictional space in that she not only constitutes a missing nexus in the mystery, but actually functions as the backdrop against which the plot unfolds. The obsession to hang Lena, although outlandish in terms of objective sequential order of events, for some inexplicable reason presents itself in the eyes of the narrator as perfectly 'natural'.

Of course I might not hang her as I had hanged the cat, but what a let-down, what a fiasco, that would be. Was I to disturb a natural order of things? After all that striving and scheming hanging had been plainly revealed to me and I had connected it with 'mouth'. Was I to give up and become a renegade now? (*Cosmos* 161 – 162).

Having completed his intricately woven story, the narrator as author must, as you would expect from the literary convention, finalise his story, thus ascribing metaphysical quality of comfortable finiteness to his composition. To write is to be prepared to accept that author must at some point call it quits and put the final dot. As befits detective genre, the narrator took pains to rationally unpick facts ("connect it with 'mouth'") and have all fictional systems go. To have the literary canons collapse would be to run the risk

of a 'fiasco', a failure to meet his authorial obligation. Hence, Lena, as the object of art personified, must be annihilated for reasons purely metafictional; that is to bestow the meaning upon the book. The fact that she is not ultimately hanged and he can only return to the "problems, difficulties, and complications" (166) of his life in Warsaw, negates such metaphysical assumptions and only corroborates the thesis that homology between real life and literature can only be approximated in the unfolding of the text's composition, collapsed against the fluidity of heterogeneous energies of text and language.

Perhaps the most blatant instance of the way the narrator 'writes' his characters in the act simulating artistic production is portrayed in *Pornografia*, where Witold and Frederic, with the latter being a theatre director, attempt to draw a young couple, Henia and Karol, into the limbo of their perverse imagination through a series of theatrical acts and stratagems.

There was this common sin: a sin which was almost created to join in illegal matrimony the flowering of the young couple to somebody – somebody not so attractive... In virtue they were hermetically sealed to us. But once in sin, they could wallow in it with us. And I could almost see him [Frederic]... searching for the sin that would penetrate them (*Pornografia* 74).

The fact that Frederic is a director, also of the chimerical sexual attraction between Karol and Henia, places the narrator in a complicated narrative position. Since this time, unlike in other novels and plays, the project is overtly perverse, Gombrowicz might have arranged to employ the nefarious Frederic as a usurper of the underhand artifice so as to acquit his namesake Witold, the narrator, from the burden of guilty sexual fancies. Either way, such an episode sails close to other Gombrowiczian metafictional ventures, not least on account of Frederic as a director, openly calling to mind writer's business, but for the most part the way the 'actors' are 'stage-managed' through mobilisation of hypodermic existential and psychological ploys (sin), as opposed to discursive directorial commands; much like an author who 'writes' his existential baggage into and the fibre of narration unsupplied with any explanatory discourse.

What remains striking is the way in which the narrator's interpretation of the world evinces its performative qualities and affects existential experience of the characters. Once he identifies the disquieting hermetic qualities of the other, he without more ado embarks on the deconstruction of immanent totality; to 'penetrate them', to make them fit into his narcissistic interpretation. The couple may be virtuous as they stand, yet see-

ing as his one-sided take on the couple remains bemired in prurient fantasies, he sets off on artificially coercing them into erotic exploits in order to uphold his version of reality. He breaks the immanence of the characters, who materialise as his own solipsistically conditioned constructs. Little does it matter that the narrator hobbles along on the crutches of his autistic visions, having nothing to do with the real world, if he is himself a god-like creator of their new-fangled meaning. He is thus a writer, whose truth exists nowhere outside of the linguistic material via which he breathes existence into his protagonists, whose only existential legitimacy is his artwork unfolding in its own becoming.<sup>4</sup>

Second to none when it comes to Gombrowiczian autofictional blueprints – germane to his singular account of existence – is *The Marriage*. The play can be situated in the big league with *Cosmos* in this respect, since it portrays the liminal vision of reality inextricably enmeshed between the objective world and language.

Henry: ... I don't want to be solemn! But how can I help  
Not being solemn when my voice sounds solemn? (110).

This fictional reality, in a typically structuralist manner, demonstrates existentialist aporia, whereby a unified identity must self-contradict itself against the performative agency of language. Human being is thus presented as a linguistic animal, incapable of constituting him/herself in the face of the lacuna between what s/he means and what this meaning is constrained to mean in language. In this respect, 'speaking speaks us', as voiced by the protagonist of *The Marriage*, but in its limited constructedness language cannot fully articulate existence.

Far from being bottled up in the structuralist dogma, the play reconnoitres disturbing extratextual spaces. Events unfurl in the oneiric indeterminate space; it remains unresolved whether the narrator is dreaming or merely mixes the real up with his distorted autistic visions, or – in the metafictional reading of it – the real with the fictional world. This lends itself as a parable of the process in which fictional reality attempting to simulate the real unfolds, empty of the rules that it seeks to simulate. Literature might mimic the world, but the mechanisms that govern its production eschew metaphysics

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<sup>4</sup> For reasons no different, the narrator-detective of "A Premeditated Crime" persuades Ignacy's son to strangle his already deceased father. Far from seeking truth, he is obsessed with the completion of his case (object of art), whose disturbing unfathomability must have been attuned to the detective's imagination.

of simulation that cave in against autocreative potential of writing. Just like dreams, which, *pace* Freud, do not need conjunctions to put together their subconscious, also linguistic logic, literature works against the standardised linguistic formulas and perverts objective ‘truth’, whilst bequeathing existence with its linguistic shape. Like dreamers, writers formulate fictional reality *along with* the fluidity of writing, as opposed to kow-towing to fixed formulae.

Henry: ... No, it’s just my imagination ... I know it’s idiotic and yet  
I have to say it .... And saying it  
I declare it (*The Marriage* 160–161).

Artistic imagination, be it preposterous, is answerable to the inhibitions of the real, but since “every truth is structured like fiction, as it must be filtered through the net of language” (Markowski 130, my translation) it must accept its structural fictionality by yielding to the rigour of language. Fictional reality, formed through language, can thus only tell lies legitimated by the process of its dynamic autocreation. The very act of legitimation comes to fruition through the self-explanatory becoming (‘saying’ or writing) of an event, which only then can ‘declare’ itself as event. Similarly, writing fiction is largely all about coming up with events through words, multiplying themselves through the contagious driving force of language. Accordingly, *The Marriage* is, more than anything else, cut from the same cloth as *Cosmos* as regards autofictional sensibilities of text, and departs altogether from structuralist creed, which can only to a degree do justice to the complexity of the play.

To cap it all, Gombrowicz’s oeuvre displays systematic awareness of the textuality of existence. Conflicting forces of structuredness of language and liquidity of existence generate blindspots of indeterminacy resulting from non-dialectic qualities of fundamentally self-reflexive text. Such text, far from attempting to explicate discursively its own story, exposes the cracks of its own creation, which downplay the pertinence of plot; becoming the text’s truer reality on their own merit. Gombrowicz’s self-reflexive text does just that: never lets itself be read via fictional film it enwraps itself with, but rather via the inner metafictional mechanisms that upset the linear certainties of literature and its conceptions. Mapped out as such, Gombrowicz’s text is always prepared to tell the reader more than the programmatic manipulations of its author would have it. Such text asserts nothing except that its *eventness* renders it always the other of fiction; the other of itself.

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