
“Powerlessness, Impotence, Astonishment, and the Need for an Immediate Lie”

The Byproducts of Lopez Mausere

Xawery Stańczyk

Abstract: The article focuses on the question of national, gender, and religious identity in the poetry and other writings of Wojciech Stamm, also known as Lopez Mausere and Gertruda Jarząbek. Mausere's affiliation with the Polish Failures Club (Club der Polnischen Versager) in Berlin and the relationships between his biography and literature are examined as well. The author contends that Mausere's concept of poetry as a genre similar to a joke, anecdote, mistake or deliberate deception, as well as his use of low, slang or colloquial registers of language, reflect Stamm's belief that the carnivalized upside-down world is more real than the illusion produced by social roles, norms, statuses, hierarchies, and identities. Thus, failure to perform one's role or normative identity might ultimately prove more creative and meaningful than the proper observance of prevalent social mores.

Keywords: identity; failure; queer negativity; laughter; poetry; upside-down world

In 1988, Totart, an alternative arts collective established two years prior and up to that point known primarily for a handful of scandals and provocative performances, whose efforts typically combined a variety of media and techniques, published *Higiena. Przegląd Archeologiczny Metafizyki Społecznej* [Hygiene: An Archeological Review of Social Metaphysics] – a guide to the alternative culture circles of the 1980s and their emanations, including Praffdata, the Orange Alternative (Pomarańczowa Alternatywa), the Alternative Society Movement (Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego), and Totart itself. The guide also featured a note on the “Złali mi się do środka” [They Peed Inside Me] Poetry Group, which made up the poetry-oriented portion of the “transitory formation”, the name Totart members gave their community to emphasize its shifting and ambiguous nature. The group's description includes a mention of poet Gertruda Jarząbek:

Here is another one, a star this time; a somewhat masculine type, yet feminine and lyrical, it's the still unforgotten poet Gertruda Jarząbek, renowned for her poetry/concert performances on trains and in train stations; an audience darling, the sheer power of her message is entralling. Many, many poems (100 per month), all of very high quality and they gain further when presented by the author (Sajnog, 1988).

Published six years later, a selection of poetry from the “Zlali mi się do środka” Poetry Group featured a nearly identical description but attached to a different name, that of Lopez Mausere. The note also said that:

Recently, in pursuance of creative inspiration, he evolved to the Ruhr to create poems and essays (e.g. *Nędza postawy pruskiej i obrona tejże* [The Poverty of Prussian Attitudes and Defense Thereof]) critically and insightfully examining the Teutonic culture (Konnak & Saynoog, 1994, p. 6).

The biographical notes included at the end of the book explicitly declare, however, that Lopez Mausere, Gertruda Jarząbek, and Wojciech Stamm are the same person, born December 15, 1965, in Gdańsk. The note explains further:

As any “swell fella” and countryman should, our poet weighs in at 100 kilos and plans to push the numbers up a notch. Authored three volumes of poetry he has (*AIDS – szwedzki obóz koncentracyjny, falowce na Oruni albo in flagranti w domu Laskowskiego lepiąc domek/bombę* [AIDS – Swedish Concentration Camp, Wavelike Plattenbaus in Orunia, or In Flagranti at Laskowski’s Home Putting Together a House/Bomb], *Kwietniem maj zmanierowany* [A May Affected with April], *The Beatles – pastisz poety tkniętego szaleństwem i niemocą wprost wyrażony adekwatny, niedokładny, jednokładny* [The Beatles – a Pastiche Penned by a Poet Touched by Madness and Impotence, Expressed Adequately, Imperfectly, Homothetically]) and an ample collection of diasporic works (including the essay “*Nędza postawy Pruskiej i obrona tejże*”, the poem “*Wojciech Stamm czyli prawdziwe nazwisko Lopeza Mausere, imię nuży*” [Wojciech Stamm or the Real Name of Lopez Mausere, First Name Is Tiresome], and assorted German and Polish expat poems) (Konnak & Saynoog, 1994, p. 69)

Set against one another, the three biographical notes reveal the tendency of Wojciech Stamm to juggle identities and adopt a rather detached attitude toward specific and fixed self-identification: when “first name is tiresome”, a “swell fella” of a “somewhat masculine type” can be “feminine and lyrical”.

According to Paweł “Końjo” Konnak, Stamm first appeared in Totart circles in March of 1987, about a year after the group was founded and began performing. “At the time, he was making his third heroic attempt to pass high school finals. His high school episodes triggered a remarkable eruption of lyrical talent, prompting him to write over 100 fabulously ‘zlew’-y poems [the adjective is a reference to the *Księgozbiór Zlew Polski*, the Polish Basin Book Collection, see below – ed. note]”, Konnak recounted, adding that the “Zlali mi się do środka” Poetry Group was formally established soon after Stamm joined the ranks (Konnak, 2010, p. 86). Lopez Mausere earned some notoriety in the group with his performances as Mr. Fish, clad in a fish costume that Totart pilfered from the wardrobes of the Palace of Youth in Gdańsk. Already in 1987, Konnak published Stamm’s poetry collection *AIDS szwedzki obóz koncentracyjny falowce na Orunii albo in flagranti w domu Laskowskiego lepiąc domek (bombę)*, using the book to launch the *Księgozbiór Zlew Polski*, an alt-alt-publishing house that was founded after mainstream literary press failed to take any interest in the group’s work. In 1994, the Brulion Foundation picked a handful of poems from the collection and republished them under the

abridged title *AIDS albo szwedzki obóz koncentracyjny* [AIDS or a Swedish Concentration Camp]. However, his debut in the *Księgozbiór* coincided with the poet's dissociation from Totart – consequently, these same poems were featured in subsequent publications from the “transitory formation”, such as the aforementioned *Higiena*, under the pen name Gertruda Jarząbek.

The changes in Lopez Mausere's name followed the trials and tribulations in his private life. A 1993 issue of *Bundesstrasse 1*, subtitled *Almanach literacki polonijnych środowisk twórczych* [Literary Almanach of Polish Expatriate Arts Circles], included texts signed with Stamm's *nom de plume* Lopez Mausere, as did the aforementioned re-edition of his debut poetry collection; in both cases, however, information about the author's real name had already surfaced prior to publication. The 2000 book *Dramatyczne pomysły Lopeza Mausere* [Lopez Mausere's Dramatic Ideas], as well as his 2008 novel *Czarna Matka* [Black Mother] and the 2014 collection *Pieśni i dramaty patriotyczne i osobiste* [Patriotic and Personal Hymns and Dramas], were all published under Wojciech Stamm's real name.¹ An aversion toward fixed identities, however, seems to permeate Stamm's work, from his earliest publications in 1987 all the way up to his modern writings.

* * *

Identity does not have to be defined essentially and traditionally, as belonging to a given nation, church, or gender, acquired at birth and persisting, unaffected by either the twists and turns of life or future attempts at self-definition, until death. Conceived in such a manner, identity is an illusion produced by our attempts to view the past, uncertain and rife with randomness, with a rationalizing and homogenizing gaze. Sociologist Harrison C. White argued that almost anything that is a source of action and that can be assigned meaning can function as identity: be it an individual, a company, a crowd, or even a chance meeting on the street. “Identity is produced by the contingency to which it is a response, an intervention in the processes to come, at whatever level and in whatever realm” (White, 2008, p. 9). Identities spring up from efforts at control, understood here not as a relationship of domination, but as an organizing principle, a bulwark against relentless contingencies and instability. They can converge and diverge, they seek new footings, competing with one another they prompt and preclude action, and this fluctuation is reflected in the tension between creativity and conformity. The trigger here is the effort at control, a search for certainty in the face of the chaos of life. Thus, identity is relational, mutable, and historical, and a single individual may combine a variety of identities, bound to specific cultural domains and social net-

1 This list of the author's works is neither exhaustive nor even representative of his output, and contains only a few examples of his writings.

works that he or she is a part of, as well as disciplines and regimes he or she is subject to. Every person is a bundle or an amalgam of identities, as a “person” as such is a social construct historically associated with the modern era. The social “order” – although “disorder” might be a better fit here – and all its attendant structures, dependencies, and stratifications, are ultimately a byproduct of the processes of establishing control by mutually bound identities, processes cumulated and reproduced at ever higher levels of complexity.

Identity is not just produced by efforts at control, but is also a trigger for further such efforts. In individuals, this is often framed as “common sense”, a socially agreed upon pattern of dispositions that facilitate communication with other individuals by means of a shared “correct” perception of reality, one which replicates that established “order”. White asserts that this “common sense”, which he believes is essential to everyday communication and action, “obscures the social processes that lie behind us and our everyday perceptions” (White, 2008, p. 1), meaning our own historical conditioning. “Normality”, therefore, turns out to be nothing more than a normativizing illusion:

Thus, social contexts assert normality that is at odds with the improvisations and stumblings in direct experience. Perceived normality is a gloss on the reality of turbulent efforts at control by identities as they seek footings. Smooth social stories intrude into common sense. (White, 2008, p. 1)

The stories in Wojciech Stamm’s works deny common sense, evoking and multiplying images of “improvisations and stumblings”. Attempts by their subject to embrace a single, unambiguous identity, define oneself, or adopt a specific role usually end in failure, misunderstanding, and confusion. The subject’s myriad identities reveal themselves as contingent, tangled, and antagonized, and consequently providing little actual, enduring footing. In the poem *Za moje upodlenie* [For My Debasement], the subject first brings up “working as a child / in an English mine”, only to follow it up with “a bus slapped with the word Poland / at the intersection, the Polish vehicle / specked my face that white-and-red bastard” (Jarząbek, 1988a). To chronicle issues with identity, particularly prevalent in the ethnic and cultural borderlands, Stamm used made-up characters, like Father Cybula for example:

Father Cybula
is a child
of German
refugees (1945)
taken in
by a Kashubian family
They called him cybula²
because he
cried so much
(Mausere, 1994f, p. 45).

2 Deliberate misspelling of “cebula”, or “onion” – ed. note.

The narrator in another poem turns out to be none other than Gertruda Jarząbek:

I was no underground Artist
I made love, I let them all fuck me
SS-men, Home Army soldiers
Jews and Jews' wives
only later did they put up a memorial
(they recast me
as the Warsaw mermaid)
(Mausere, 1994d, p. 8).

First and foremost, however, Stamm uses his own life and the lives of his family members to demonstrate how taking ethnic identification seriously may ultimately lead to absurd accumulations of prejudice and fixations. This might be a good point to bring up the poem *Wojciech Stamm czyli prawdziwe nazwisko Lopeza Mausere* [Wojciech Stamm or the Real Name of Lopez Mausere] in its entirety:

I have two citizenships
German and Polish
I am a Pole and I am
a German
Does that mean that my
name is Polish
and my last name German
should my first name
fight against my last, and
the last fight the first
Does that also mean
that inside me live
two souls, one
orderly and the other slovenly
one builds
the other does nothing
the other ruins
what it has itself built
the other despairs
over what
it has never done
and what the other
the constructive one
has utterly
fucked up
Or maybe the two
have swapped
material, meaning
that the German in me
is lazy, and
the Pole practical
and beating the German down
while the German
has hygiene issues
and is ridden with lice
maybe they both

have lice and beat down the German
and the Pole, too, right in the back
of the head, or maybe there is inside me
a hidden Russian, an NKVD man
to make three
yeah, looks like there's a few
of us
Because my papers
say I'm Catholic
but I believe myself a Buddhist
Although I sometimes think
like a Catholic (I love the landed nobles
from sea to
shining sea)
We'd beat Poles and Germans alike
beat German and Polish Catholic women
Buddhist women, Buddhist men, and
Catholics (German Catholics)
(Buddhist Poles)
there was also a Russian, a Jew of
NKVD descent
and all of them refused to bathe
and had lice
then
Two women fought, a Pole and a German
named Wojciech Stamm
fought Lopez Mausere
The victims were a Pole and a German
alongside the incidental Gertruda
then Jarzabek
came in and said
"Well, our family never
did anything like that"
after which Machora came in
everyone fought everyone without
apologies and no blood was spared
no one left clean
everyone was covered
in lice as big
as bees
at the trial my uncle
demanded that Józef
be exhumed from his
spot between grandma and grandpa
Józef is the father of uncle's brother-in-law
and my father
and is not a part of the family
this poem is called
wojciech stamm or
the real name of
Lopez Mausere
(Mausere, 1994e, pp. 16–18)

In the poem's closing lines, the name "wojciech stamm" is written in all lowercase; this degradation of the author's own identity prompts the degradation of the cultural hierarchy of specific taxonomies of identity. Furthermore, a *Supplement* to the poem has been published in which the ever increasingly tangled fates of the Stamm, Lopez, and Jarząbek families unfold across several pages, the families turning out to be, simultaneously or alternately, Poles, Germans, Russians, communists, NKVD or Okhrana operatives, regardless of sex. All of them continue denouncing, exposing, and murdering each other. Mausere portrays himself as a representative of a Creolized, decomposed world, someone who sees himself holding multiple conflicting and competing identities: ethnic most of all, but also religious and sexual.

The reality of East-Central Europe is "transitory", disordered, precluding any attempt at precise self-definition – efforts like these sooner or later end in failure, when the chosen identity (that of a Buddhist, for example) collides with the assigned identity (of a Catholic, for instance) or when a closer reading of the family history brings a surge of taxonomical issues rather than the expected confirmation of the purity of one's blood. East-Central Europe as a realm of "small homelands", of neighborly relations between smaller countries crammed between powerful, ravenous empires, is exposed as a sentimental fantasy that has little to do with reality, destined to fail (and bring failure to anyone who believes in it) in the face of the twisted knot of human lives, dreams, ambitions, aspirations, needs, and expectations. And the more identities are caught up in the tangle, the less flexible their norms are, the smaller the arena of their competition, and the more incidentally situated opportunities and barriers – the greater the eventual failure of the vision of peaceful coexistence between Central and Eastern European nations and the greater the misfortune of those seeking to reconcile the contradictory imperatives of internalized identifications.

A similar multitude of identities, alongside an outpour of meanings assigned them, appears in Gertruda Jarząbek's *Zqb Mahlkego* [Mahlke's Tooth]:

in the hills of Oliwa
the bones of the soldiers are
in the pits, rifle butt to the head
hands bounds with wire, jaws
often broken and I don't want to
keep repeating myself, but I'm afraid
that they had mothers, wives
children and that they were killers, too
the soldiers are German, Russian
Iranian, Iraqi, Vietnamese, American
(Jarząbek, 1988b)

The conflicts stemming from naturalized national identity inevitably lead to suffering – regardless of whether it's in Kashubia, Iraq, or Vietnam. The misery of mothers, wives, and children of soldiers dying for national causes is easily consigned to oblivion,

while the dead leave behind nothing aside from their physical remains. Like Marcin Świetlicki, in whose 1991 poem *Przed wyborami* [Before the Election] elements of everyday reality come together into the figure of a “concentration garden” (Świetlicki, 1992, p. 191), Mausere sees the vestiges and the *longue durée* of war and the Shoah in seemingly neutral incidents that surround us. The verse “I like being alive,” opening another of Mausere’s poems, later unfolds into a rather disturbing assertion: “I like wearing / the hat from France / the German one / with German / thoughts churning / inside it”, which eventually culminates in: “I like thinking / that nothing will remain / of us / not even / the stench / or shoes / or an envelope / stuffed with our work. / NOTHING” (Mausere, 1992a). While horrible and merciless, death contains a trace of transgression against the many games played within societies (games like art, literature, politics, and the economy), as it eludes the rules of classification that underpin them, rules whose naked arbitrariness, lacking any justification aside from their historical origins, is wholly absurd. The awareness of death as the final and irrevocable end is ultimately liberating; it frees us from those ethnic taxonomies that organize our collective imaginations and attribute certain characters, styles, and mentalities to individual nationalities (German, French, or Polish). The work of distancing oneself from reality, including from one’s own failed attempts at self-identification, allows us to simultaneously like life and ponder its inevitable end without resentment: these attitudes are consistent, not contradictory. The affirmation of life, and its material, somatic manifestations, is possible precisely as the affirmation of contingency and ephemerality, meshed with its own negation rather than antithetical to it. It was exactly this ambiguous – and thus vital – attitude toward social reality that Mikhail Bakhtin saw in popular, carnivalesque laughter. Contrary to Immanuel Kant, who saw the origin of laughter in the transformation of expectation into nothingness, Bakhtin stressed the transgressive, inextricable bond between negation and affirmation that underpins the moment of laughter:

That “nothingness” which discredits expectation or effort is perceived and valued thanks to laughter as something cheery, positive, gleeful, thus stripping the expected of dreary import and status, divesting it of gravity and meaning (as everything turned out to be little more than preposterous tomfoolery). The negative pole (moment) of laughter stands opposite hopes and efforts, which it turns into official, pompous absurdity. By exposing their seriousness, laughter brings joyful liberation. (Bakhtin, 2009, p. 374)

* * *

In spite of its embrace of liberating laughter, Stamm’s work is pretty removed from the Bakhtinesque utopia of the medieval carnival, in which the celebrating people becomes one body, confidently and joyfully looking to the future, ridiculing all hierarchy, and speaking truth to power. Mausere obsessively circles back to the idea of his own death, a notion best evinced by his poem *Never Ending Story*, which is sure to send

laughter catching in our throats. The agony itself is what never ends, dying not toward the twilight of days but already in life's earliest days: at dawn rather than at dusk. The trancelike rhythm of the poem is driven by its redundant structure. The lyrical subject keeps repeating: "this morning, I woke up and died", complementing this recurring mantra with ever new sensations and thoughts. Only the circumstances change: one time, death takes him as he brushes his teeth in the morning, the demise brought on by illness; another time the narrator becomes a fruit fly drowned in a cup of tea, while still another – he dies after a piece of plaster detaches from a cathedral ceiling and smashes his head in. The protagonist dies, eats breakfast, dies again, thinking that he didn't have time to wash properly and now would be buried like that, then remembers that he was supposed to go West and that he still hasn't passed his high school finals – dying every single time. Death emerges as the common denominator reaching across generations and species, and a liberator from the many afflictions of life: "I woke up and died / good thing I did not go blind / good thing I am not a leper / but merely dead" (Mausere, 1994c, p. 32). The subject asks who is writing those verses if he himself has died, and then calls on himself to stop writing and to die "once and for all", sees his own death as amusing, and finally demands explanation about the process itself. To quote the final lines of the poem:

this morning

I woke up
and died
of alcoholism
of lung cancer
of the plague
of AIDS
of syphilis
from a bullet

hit by a bus
cleaved in half by a saw

this morning

I woke up
and died
of pleasure
and terror

this evening

I fell asleep and died
until the next morning

this morning I woke up

and fell asleep and died
and came back to life
jumped a little talked a little
wrote a little
buzzed a little
and died

this morning regardless
 of anything I woke
 up and irrevocably
 unconditionally died
 this morning I began
 writing this morning
 I woke up
 and died
 and thanks to that
 I'm still alive, but
 unfortunately I'm dead
 this morning
 I woke up
 and died

 Production production and
 production
 this morning I woke up
 and died
 (Mausere, 1994c, pp. 33–35)

Framed like this, dying is a permanent part of the human – and not just human – condition. It continues to surprise, amuse, and intrigue, but its bleak, purely mechanical character leaves little room for the utopia of the carnivalesque inversion of the universal order. Smiles dissolve, faces harden. This seemingly endless production of dead bodies raises obvious connotations with the Holocaust and extermination camps perceived as death factories.

The Holocaust long remained a key focus for Totart, as the group sought to use jest, parody, and similar devices to remediate life in the shadow of the Shoah, fully cognizant of the senseless enormity of the crime that swept through the continent barely forty years before (Sajnóg, 1992, p. 8; Stamm & Tymański, 1996, pp. 155–156). In the 1980s, particularly in the wake of Claude Lanzmann's 1985 film *Shoah* and Jan Błoński's 1987 essay *Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto*, the Holocaust became a part of the broader public discourse; it was touched upon by punk bands (the track *Ogolone kobiety* [Shavenheaded Women] off the 1984 T.Love Alternative LP *Nasz Babelon* [Our Babylon] was one of the first attempts to tackle the subject) and by emerging art trends, the Gruppa collective being a prime example. As the subject became more widespread, it inevitably grew banal: scores of aspiring artists keenly embraced the moral indignation over crimes of decades past and strove to express their sympathies for the victims. Against the grain of this sedative empathizing with the murdered innocents and attempts to swaddle the thorny relations between the Poles and Jews in the insulating gauze of exaltation and pensiveness, Stamm consistently derided all tales of martyrdom:

near Wawer
 Germans killed

Poles
near the Wawel
the dragon devoured Poles, too
(Mausere, 1994g, p. 47)

and pinpointed similarities between himself and oppressors, like in *Adi*:

Intractable
impassioned, he failed
his finals he liked history
wanted to be an artist
but became a chancellor
Oh God he is so much
like me
(Mausere, 1994a, p. 15)

The realization of how similar a young poet from the Tricity can be to the erstwhile Führer not only voids facile psychologizations, ostensibly explaining the “sadistic” and “bestial” proclivities, but also reveals the fundamental randomness of the roles assigned to individuals by history itself. Thus, Mausere approaches what Judith Halberstam has, in her book *The Queer Art of Failure*, called “queer negativity” and stands clearly against efforts to reclaim the memory of homosexual historical figures and recasting them as victims oppressed by regimes hostile to their identity, as heroes standing up to persecution. Halberstam uses queer negativity to interrogate the question of the membership of homosexuals in the Nazi party and other fascist organizations in the Third Reich, as well as the relationship between masculinity, homosexuality, and Nazism, thus problematizing the very desire to differentiate between eros and politics, between the homosexual fascination with the image of the SS man and the historical presence of gay men and lesbian women among the oppressed (Halberstam, 2011, p. 162). This critical lens can be used to scrutinize not only repression, but also the manufacturing of minority identities, as well as the function they play within regimes of power hostile to them. In conclusion, Halberstam declares that viewed through its historical and phantasmagorical connections to Nazism, homosexuality is not so much an identity stretched across time as a shifting set of relations between politics, eros, and power. To examine these complex relations, it is helpful to draw on notions such as stupidity, forgetfulness, betrayal, and failure as a way of life (Halberstam, 2011, p. 171).

In Stamm’s work, incorrect and risky self-identifications, as well as the consistent ridicule and subversion of roles pre-assigned in the theatre of history, inevitably recast history as a theatre of the absurd – and again, it is the incompetent performance of roles in this theatre, rather than the ability to enter them, that brings hope for the salvation of humanity. Mausere takes the side of the weak, the failed, the other, the reject-

ed, and it is from here that he mercilessly mocks cultural homogeneity, such as any and all efforts to merge national languages:

It's all Luther's fault
had he not created
one language then
there would never be
one leader

(Mausere, 1994h, p. 47)

In much of Stamm's work, laughter commands the ability to subvert entrenched patterns and resurrect life in the face of the inexorable march of death; at times, laughter plays a purely defensive function: it provides shelter from fear and despair. The poet notes that his life "and the life of everyone else was and is either violent or boring and that is our lot" (Mausere, 1992b). At its core, writing poetry is as boring and mundane a part of life as any other. In the dreary monotony of it all, laughter offers a brief moment of respite; it breathes life back into death's shadow. It is precisely in this capacity that laughter appears in those of Mausere's poems that touch upon the Holocaust, like *Martwiłem się* [I've Been Worried]:

Mom said
be happy you're not in
a gas chamber.
My mom knows how to
inspire me.
And dad said
unless it's a
chamber full of
laughing gas.
I believe my parents
have influenced my work
quite a bit

(Mausere, 1994b, p. 42)

Stamm's laughter is that of a jester, permeated with the cheery atmosphere of the town square and the dancing parade, carnivalesque and carnivalizing. It is a laughter that voids all heroism and pathos, desacralizes and familiarizes because it operates according to the logic of degradation which, Bakhtin argued, was typical of medieval grotesque realism. Although the vision of brutal, mechanized, and irrevocable destruction that permeates Mausere's work hews closer to the poetics of Romantic or modernist grotesque, it still echoes peals of restorative laughter accompanying the very act of degradation. The meaning of the latter was explained by Bakhtin as follows:

Degradation [...] means coming down to earth, the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better. [...] Degradation digs a bodily

grave for a new birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect, but also a regenerating one. To degrade an object does not imply merely hurling it into the void of nonexistence, into absolute destruction, but to hurl it down the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and a new birth take place. Grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving. (Bakhtin, 1984b, pp. 21)

In our conversation, Stamm saw the traditions of carnival masquerades as proof of how illusory social roles ultimately were: “What all these carnivals and playing dress-up actually say is that none of this is real” (personal interview, May 9, 2015). Hurlled down into the material-slash-carnal stratum, national differences, the interests of governments and armies, genders, beliefs, professions, and social standing are all stripped of their hieratic power and reduced to mere trivialities, amusing anecdotes to tell on a train from Warsaw to Gdańsk, or from Poland to Germany, where the poet moved in 1989, only to travel between the two countries for over a decade, with a brief, four-month interlude in Norway.³ Laughter restores a human dimension to things, subdues hostile discourses, and reduces interpersonal distance.

In a short story about a child found in the desert “looking like a monkey” (Mausere, 1993b, p. 78), laughter is a defensive reaction to senseless cruelty. In the custody of researchers, the child learned to speak, converted to Christianity, “sang psalms, and became a respectable citizen”. The care they extended to the child, however, was not entirely selfless: they ultimately decided to launch it into space on an experimental mission. There, the child was found by Martians, who taught it their own language and sent on another space mission. Consequently, it once again finds itself in the desert, where it’s once again found by the researchers, convinced that it is “some sort of freak, a Tarzan type, a wildling, a little white Negro boy who forgot human language, essentially a monkey”. The situation is then repeated a handful of times, and each time earthly and Martian researchers find the child, take it for a freak, teach it their language – which the child forgets on account of the trauma of spaceflight – and send it back into space to meet alien civilizations. None of the missions, naturally, has any chance of success because of the inhuman treatment that the child goes through every time. Finally, after the capsule lands not in the desert but in a small town, the locals simply kill the visitor – and “fortunately so”, says the narrator, because otherwise the child would perish from exhaustion of being incessantly launched into space. Death is the only salvation from death; however, this somber conclusion ultimately grows amusing, as the triumph of death proves futile rather than staggering. Everyone fails, no one character in the story emerges unbeaten. The story about the monkey-like child journeying between Earth and Mars can easily be read as a metaphor for the life of the author himself, who spent the early 1990s living abroad in Germany and regularly visiting his native Poland.

³ As an expat, Stamm earned his living doing odd jobs, including gardening, radio journalism, used car sales, interior painting, and translation.

Lopez Mauseire laid out his conceptual framework in the essay *Poezja jako produkt uboczny* [Poetry as a Byproduct], printed likely for the first time in the *Bundesstrasse 1* almanac, collecting the work of five Polish emigre authors, published in no small part owing to Mauseire's efforts. Mauseire stressed the similarities between poetry and sense of humor, both of which he believed to be a byproduct of a "feeling, or so-called feeling, of powerlessness, but merged with observation" (Mauseire, 1993a, p. 66). Stamm also argued that both poetry and sense of humor emerged from a "sense of powerlessness in the face of powers we find ourselves at the mercy of" (Mauseire, 1993a, p. 66). Even if poetry is not the same as sense of humor, it seems impossible without it:

Is not a sense of humor needed to translate erotic sensation into a language of metaphors, oxymorons, explanations of synecdoches, regardless of whether in Polish, Sami, German, or Japanese.

Indeed! every one of these example "languages" is amusing, about as much as the fact that the math teacher has sex after a day of teaching trigonometry.

And besides, how can you not entertain jests and jokes in light of how unevenly valuable our experience of the world is, take farting and Haydn's music for example; forgive me the crudeness of the illustration, but how would we react if, at a party, our father first let out a fart and then sat down at a harpsichord and began playing Haydn. (Mauseire, 1993a, p. 66)

The logic of degradation, reducing farting and playing Haydn to a common denominator, enables us to notice the conventionality of these behaviors and the contexts that society typically assigns to them, outside which they would most likely elicit awkwardness or discomfort. Poetry feeds on the comical effect produced by this unease, on the relativity of social mores, and the contingency of events that History throws us against. Thus, the hieratic, inspired interpretation of poetry is itself ridiculous, detached from the essence of life, abstract, and arbitrary – Stamm juxtaposes it with the poetry of jest, situational comedy, travesty, persiflage, and other carnivalesque genres. "If it was the poet's ambition to maintain a measure of gravity, proud aesthetic norms, or fostering moral values – then the renouncement of thus defined ambition does not have to be in any way disagreeable", argued Andrzej Skrendo, who situated Lopez Mauseire within the long tradition of literary provocation, employed, for one example, by the Dadaists (Skrendo also disputed Jerzy Sosnowski and Jarosław Klejnocki's labeling of Mauseire as a nihilist, disagreed with Izolda Kiec and Rafał Grupiński, who refused to classify Mauseire's work as poetry, and finally with Marian Stala, who outright ignored the poet) (Skrendo, 2005, p. 52). It is not a coincidence that Stamm chose those genres that use previously uttered words, leeching on them, reconfiguring their meanings, turning them whatever which way, developing their semantic thrust. Language, conceived after Bakhtin as a procession of voices in which past voices echo, resurface, and are reshaped, becomes a reality, and one that can serve as a cornerstone (Bakhtin, 1984a, pp. 251–266). Here, Bakhtin's concept of the dialogism of the word, of dialogism conceived as the multitude of arguing voices present within a single utterance of a literary character

(in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel, for example), corresponds with Harrison C. White's proposition that a person is a construct always made up of multiple identities and their attendant styles, domains, and communities.

According to White, the mistakes, misunderstandings, mismatches, and failures stemming from the multitude of roles, domains, social networks, and challenges that every single human is involved in and faces, and the noise that accompanies them, inspire in identity a sort of creative thrust, release energies that drive new actions and stories, "generate and [...] call forth artworks along with narrative creativity" (White, 2008, p. 11). White stresses, however, that this creativity does not necessarily translate into literary utopias, which, when they assign a variety of roles to their characters, meticulously demarcate them to create the image of a perfect world, far removed from reality. Stamm's work seems to occupy the opposite side of the divide: rather than picture an idealized reality, it describes an upside-down world, chaotic, meaningless, and ever-shifting, in which a conscientious performance of the assigned role leads only to despair and misery. The author of *Poezja jako produkt uboczy* explained this obstinate subversion and ridicule of "normality" as follows:

But let us go back to that sense of powerlessness, "to" the "deja-wu" (or however you spell it), to the collapse of defensive walls, the shot, the surprise, the shock, the walls of immediate consciousness (conscious immediacy), to this moment in which we realize that someone has pulled the chair out from under our ass and the floor along with it.

Powerlessness, impotence, astonishment, and the need for an immediate lie, return to the metaphor (Poetry is the lie told to reveal the truth).

The truth – horrible, beautiful truth – one can hardly exist without windiness (lies). There's nothing to hold on to, we have all already "died", but for some reason we still have feelings, back aches, and livers pains. We "died", what else is there to hold on to? – well – there's language. (Mausere, 1993a, p. 66)

Language is precisely that something to hold on to: that something which may be a cornerstone for a creative identity. Linguistic creation enables literary fiction, it's a lie that is necessary "to reveal the truth", that is to speak of reality as fiction, a falsehood masquerading as "normality" in which "we have all already 'died'" and it is only "common sense" that compels us to believe in the importance of the stakes we are playing for. Andrzej Skrendo noticed here "the incredible ambition of the author," manifesting itself in attempts to formulate an "aesthetic principle":

In its developed form, it goes as follows: the one who misleads is more just than the one who does not, and the one who allows himself to be misled is wiser than the one who does not. That idea was not formulated by Lopez Mausere, but by Gorgias of Leontinoi, a Greek sophist, almost a contemporary of Socrates, who was rather vilified by Plato (and Schopenhauer, too). Already in the first couple of sentences does Mausere imply to the watchful reader that he intends to reach, in a Heideggerian manner, all the way back to pre-Socratic thought, which can be accessed only by way of rejecting Platonic ontotheological traditions and the metaphysics of mimesis. Mausere here seems to argue that instead of embracing mimetism, we ought to be drawing on Gorgias' concept of *apate*, deceitful and illusory art. (Skrendo, 2005, p. 53)

The clearest expression of the concept can be found in *Berlin*, the “cinematic novel-la” opening *Dramatyczne pomysły Lopeza Mause-re* [The Dramatic Ideas of Lopez Mause-re]. Much of the piece, made up of 157 dynamically and contrastingly arranged scenes, takes place in West Berlin following the arrival of three Polish women: Elka, Żanetka, and Iwona, all three strangers to one another. Adrift and without any money, they desperately look for a roof over their heads and a source of income. They finally find a measure of stability thanks to their wits, dissimulation, smalltime fraud and theft, as well as their hard work and the mutual help they extend one another after their fates intersected for the second time – which is when they finally meet, first Elka and Żanetka, and then both of them and Iwona. Elka finds a job with an alt-scene bar, a watering hole for bohemian artist circles and sexual and ethnic minorities, owned and managed by a ten-person collective: “walpurgas, knights errant, gnomes, witches, dreadlocked SS-men, and a transvestite Black man” (Stamm, 2000, p. 11). The colorful band of the bar’s patrons includes: “an umbrella maker, a milliner with a plastic fork in the rim of his hat, a roadside brigand serving as the bouncer, a bald impotent, a matt-haired freak, a lesbian couple, a gay Sorb, an emancipated Turkish woman, boys looking to score some hash, and a girl in a drug-fueled frenzy” (Stamm, 2000, p. 26). Iwona initially spends her nights in a “Polish flophouse”, living off dumpster-diving for bottles and leftover pizza. After an Italian man named Adriano catches her mid-dive, she moves in with him and begins working in his second-hand clothing store. Żanetka makes call after call in her desperate quest for a job, but is finally forced to stay with a friend from Poland, a tattoo artist, who abuses her and ends up forcefully tattooing her groin. “Clients come and go, ever changing, there are rockers, queens, all sorts of strange maidens, whores, technoheads” (Stamm, 2000, p. 9). Later on, Żanetka works as a phone sex operator and babysitter, and, after becoming friends with Elka, she finds herself living in a squat. Although stage to numerous fights and scuffles, the alternative community, made up of immigrants, gays, transvestites, artists, freaks, and drug addicts, still proves much more open-minded and friendly than the host of German officials and civil servants and expat Poles living in Berlin.

This relative support that the characters find in each other and their alternative community, in their inner strength and wits, helps them finally experience some joy, but does not mean that their situation has fundamentally moved toward comfort. The women are still tormented by traumatic memories: Żanetka sees the faces of the men who abused her, while Iwona, after hours of sorting garments at work, has visions of the heaps of clothes collected in the Stutthof concentration camp which she visited as a child. Other problems appear as well: Żanetka falls seriously ill and, grievously worried, takes an HIV test (luckily receiving a negative result), while Elka starts falling for a man she married to legalize her stay in Germany, despite having a boyfriend back in Poland. A quarrel back at the alt-scene bar turns into a shootout, leading to the death of a bartender; at the same time, a car carrying the main characters crashes near a bar-

becue party held for the upper ranks of the local police, who quickly arrive at the scene and have the drunken foreigners arrested. Before the accident, however, a momentous event occurred – Żanetka underwent a sex reassignment surgery. Everyone in the car was inebriated because they had spent the night drinking to celebrate Żanetka's transformation into Krystian.

Not long afterward, Krystian is deported from Germany and returns to his native Częstochowa, where his "father, a boor and a moron, and his mother, a nice woman but emotionally detached from Żanetka" (Stamm, 2000, p. 62), refuse to accept their daughter's transition. Elka returns to Poland as well, only to learn that her father had committed suicide, while her boyfriend had abandoned his life to join a strange sect led by a fanatical "guru" somewhere near Lublin. Back in Berlin, Iwona gets pregnant, which leads to Adriano throwing her out of the apartment they shared. The protagonists' fragile, tenuous stability falls apart like a house of cards, and their *Gastarbeit* plans end in failure. Elka, however, quickly regains the initiative and leaves for Częstochowa to find Krystian, now a newly-minted salesman pushing cosmetics and vacuums cleaners. From there, the two of them take a car to Gdańsk, the hometown of Elka and her boyfriend; as they drive back to Berlin, they fall for each other passionately. Back in Berlin, they find Iwona, now a mother to triplets; feigning a stroll, they pull her out of her apartment. The imagery turns dreamlike: the subway car the three characters climb into stops underwater, and outside they see dolphins swimming alongside their friends from Berlin. The novella is bookended by a suggestive scene, set in 1960s Poland and showing children, their dress implying their impoverished backgrounds, burying their "secrets" at a residential construction site.

Suddenly, a girl in a red kerchief climbs a heap of sand and yells: "Rainbow!"

The kids spring to their feet and leap over puddles and rebar. Construction workers nearby bellow: "Stop! There's a bulldozer working there!"

The kids stop.

The face of the girl in the red kerchief is a mask of anger and disappointment.

The workers ridicule the kids. Wind blows some papers by. It's a picture only a child could see. (Stamm, 2000, p. 4)

The same scenery returns in the final scene of the novella:

Iwona, Krystian, and Elka step off the train. We see residential high-rises, a heap of sand, concrete, concrete mixers, a construction site, puddles, mud. Clouds are reflected in the windows, framed in red and golden light. Everything seems to take place inside a rainbow. (Stamm, 2000, p. 73)

The appearance of a rainbow in the opening and closing scenes could be interpreted beyond the obvious connotation of its role as an emblem of LGBTQ movements. The rainbow that the kids run across the construction site toward represents the hope for a happier, more colorful, more diverse world, a hope that finally becomes true after

years of sacrifice, humiliation, hardship, and suffering, even if it does so only in their imaginations. “Poetry is the lie told to reveal the truth”, Stamm wrote, seeking to explain “the need for an immediate lie, [the] return to the metaphor”. When reality fails and all attempts at extending control over our own existence end in failure, there is always fantasy, we can always lie to communicate something true. “All roles are nothing but a grand hypocrisy. [...] Only breaking away from the concept allows us to see things for what they really are”, the poet tried to convince me (personal interview, May 9, 2015). Skrendo notes that Mausere “hides his Nietzschean-Foucauldian moralizing (it is the soul that is the prison of the body, rather than the other way around) behind a mask of irony, directed outward and inward, and encapsulates his entire worldview in his attitude toward language” (Skrendo, 2005, p. 53). In the poetry penned by the author of *Dramatyczne pomysły Lopeza Mausere*, the same critic believed he recognized a hidden tragedy stemming from the sophist conviction that truth (understood as *aletheia*) does not exist, only popular opinions (*doxa*) do, which means that any given thing can be judged both favorably and unfavorably. And indeed, Stamm continues to incessantly expose the ambiguity of human judgment, axioms, and tastes, but the process is not always tragic: often enough, it is this particular premise that underpins the ability to create, to act, and to change.

A more practical elaboration of the attitude manifesting itself in *Berlin* may be found in the subsequent fates of its author, who ended up leaving Poland for Germany in 1989: after first settling in the Ruhr, he moved to Berlin in 1993, where he spent two years and then, following a brief return to Poland, nearly a decade (over the period between 1997 and 2008). It was in Berlin that Stamm co-founded, with Piotr Mordel and Leszek Oświęcimski, the Polish Failures Association (*Bund der Polnischen Versager*). In 1995, the three men launched their literary magazine *Kolano* [Knee], which drew young Polish expat authors living in Germany (but also published the works of writers still living in Poland, such as Krzysztof Jaworski, Grzegorz Wróblewski, and Jacek Podsiadło). Not long afterward, Mordel founded Mordellus Press, and began publishing poets associated with *Kolano*, while Stamm launched his own theatre, popular primarily on account of the *Babcia Zosia, Ciocia Leosia* [Grandma Zosia, Aunt Leosia] diptych. The Polish Failures Association was a natural next step, and itself was soon followed by the foundation of the Polish Failures Club (Club der Polnischen Versager), located at 66 Torstraße in Berlin. Nestled in the German capital, Polish losers became quite the sensation, and a bona fide cultural attraction, drawing the interest of critics and audiences alike. Krzysztof Niewrzęda argued that the club had more visitors over a single weekend than the Polish Institute had in a year. The failures’ “success” was ostensibly the result of a carefully planned provocation, because:

in Germany, passing oneself off as a failure was a dangerous undertaking. The German word *Versager* was much more powerful than its Polish counterpart. Where *nieudacznik* [Polish for “failure” – ed. note] carries a trace of leniency or pity, tenderness even, *Versager* implies unambiguous disgrace, almost an accusation. And small wonder, as the word is dangerously

similar to *Verräter* or “traitor”. [...] Calling oneself a “failure” anywhere between the Oder and the Rhine, therefore, required a considerable deal of courage. And the club went even further than that, adding the adjective “Polish” to the label and turning it into a trademark. (Niewrzęda, 2005, p. 150)

The failures struck a number of birds with one stone. They successfully challenged both the culturally conditioned pursuit of success (driven by the Protestant work ethic described by Max Weber) and the stereotypical image of Poles. They instilled certain hallmarks of authenticity in their work by drawing on their own experiences – little or no knowledge of the language and local customs, working a job far beneath one’s qualifications, money problems, broken families and deteriorating social ties – but simultaneously questioned the very principle of authenticity, by exaggerating particular failures they lived through (“We told each other our stories and tried to outdo each other in terms of who was the bigger idiot”; “Alfabet Hermana” [Herman’s Alphabet], 2005, p. 130). With their mocking albeit fundamentally serious affirmation of incompetence, mistrust, and weakness, they struck at the very heart of the Romantic tradition of pompously celebrating national failures, so entrenched in Polish culture. Finally, with their embrace of “low” subjects and “immature” forms, they ridiculed hegemonic aesthetic hierarchies and their attendant critique criteria.

Interpreted in such a context, *Berlin* is more than just a satire mocking German love of order and Poland’s post-1989 transformation, just as it is far from a refreshing tonic about merry emancipation, the power of love and friendship. By situating the happy ending outside reality, Stamm implied that without transcending the framework of “common sense”, and the normative perception and interpretation of reality, it would be impossible to reject its rules. Thus his decision to put his novella together from refuse, collected on the fringes of culture, low linguistic registers, symbols of otherness and strangeness, the lower material-slash-carnal stratum. Immersing ourselves in this upside-down world, as well as interrogating and accepting its contingencies and stochasticity, enables us to rise above the patterns and norms imposed by the prevailing order, or rather disorder (the novella’s background plot involves the disintegration of the historical order, symbolized by the collapse of the Berlin Wall). Without the childlike pursuit of the rainbow, it will never be possible to find ourselves inside it (Winkler, 2015).

Translated by Jan Szelągiewicz

References

Alfabet Hermana. (2005). In J. Eysymont, P. Krupiński, & K. Niewrzęda (Eds.), *Piastów 75: Almanach literacko-artystyczny* (pp. 129–130). Wydawnictwo 13 Muz.

Bachtin, M. (2009). Z problemów teorii powieści: Z problemów teorii śmiechu: “O Majakowskim” (T. Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, Trans.). In D. Ulicka (Ed.), *Ja – Inny: Wokół Bachtina* (Vol. 1, pp. 373–386). Universitas.

- Bakhtin, M.** (1984a). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (C. Emerson, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.
- Bakhtin, M.** (1984b). *Rabelais and his world* (H. Iswolsky, Trans.). Indiana University Press.
- Halberstam, J.** (2011). *The queer art of failure*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822394358>
- Jarząbek, G.** (1988a). Za moje upodlenie. *Higiena: Przegląd Archeologiczny Metafizyki Społecznej*, 1988.
- Jarząbek, G.** (1988b). Ząb Mahlkego. *Higiena: Przegląd Archeologiczny Metafizyki Społecznej*, 1988.
- Konnak, P.** [„Końjo”]. (2010). Tranzytoryjna Formacja Totart w drodze do Nieśmiertelności i Wolności. In K. Skiba, J. Janiszewski, & P. “Końjo” Konnak, *Artyści, wariaci, anarchiści* (pp. 9–206). Narodowe Centrum Kultury.
- Konnak, P., & Saynoog, Z.** (1994). Grupa Poetycka “Złali mi się do środka”. In Z. Sajnog & P. Konnak (Eds.), *Grupa Poetycka “Złali mi się do środka”* (pp. 5–8). Wydawnictwo Man-Gala Press.
- Mausere, L.** (1992a). *** [Lubię żyć...]. In P. Konnak (Ed.), *Gdańskie Dni Niezależnych*. Księgozbiór Zlew Polski.
- Mausere, L.** (1992b). *** [W kwietniu napisałem 50 wierszy]. In P. Konnak (Ed.), *Gdańskie Dni Niezależnych*. Księgozbiór Zlew Polski.
- Mausere, L.** (1993a). Poezja jako produkt uboczny. *Bundesstrasse 1*, 1, 66.
- Mausere, L.** (1993b). *** [Znaleziono dziecko na pustyni...]. *Bundesstrasse 1*, 1, 78.
- Mausere, L.** (1994a). Adi. In L. Mausere, *AIDS albo szwedzki obóz koncentracyjny* (p. 15). Fundacja “Brulionu”.
- Mausere, L.** (1994b). Martwiłem się. In Z. Sajnog & P. Konnak (Eds.), *Grupa Poetycka “Złali mi się do środka”* (p. 42). Wydawnictwo Man-Gala Press.
- Mausere, L.** (1994c). Never Ending Story. In L. Mausere, *AIDS albo szwedzki obóz koncentracyjny* (pp. 26–35). Fundacja “Brulionu”.
- Mausere, L.** (1994d). Pani Gertruda Jarząbek wspomina. In L. Mausere, *AIDS albo szwedzki obóz koncentracyjny* (p. 8). Fundacja “Brulionu”.
- Mausere, L.** (1994e). Wojciech Stamm czyli prawdziwe nazwisko Lopeza Mausere. In L. Mausere, *AIDS albo szwedzki obóz koncentracyjny* (pp. 16–22). Fundacja “Brulionu”.
- Mausere, L.** (1994f). *** [Książdz Cybula...]. In Z. Sajnog & P. Konnak (Eds.), *Grupa Poetycka “Złali mi się do środka”* (p. 45). Wydawnictwo Man-Gala Press.
- Mausere, L.** (1994g). *** [pod Wawrem...]. In L. Mausere, *AIDS albo szwedzki obóz koncentracyjny* (p. 47). Fundacja “Brulionu”.
- Mausere, L.** (1994h). *** [To wszystko przez Lutra...]. In Z. Sajnog & P. Konnak (Eds.), *Grupa Poetycka “Złali mi się do środka”* (p. 47). Wydawnictwo Man-Gala Press.
- Niewręda, K.** (2005). Nieudacznicy. In J. Eysymont, P. Krupiński, & K. Niewręda (Eds.), *Piastów 75: Almanach literacko-artystyczny* (pp. 150–152). Wydawnictwo 13 Muz.
- Sajnog, Z.** (1988). Grupa Poetycka “Złali mi się do środka”. *Higiena: Przegląd Archeologiczny Metafizyki Społecznej*, 1988.
- Sajnog, Z.** (1992). Rozległy i amorficzny esej o totarcie w kierunku prądu. *Metafizyka Społeczna*, 1992(1), 8.
- Skrendo, A.** (2005). Krótka recenzja z dopiskami. In J. Eysymont, P. Krupiński, & K. Niewręda (Eds.), *Piastów 75: Almanach literacko-artystyczny* (pp. 52–54). Wydawnictwo 13 Muz.
- Stamm, W.** (2000). Berlin. In W. Stamm, *Dramatyczne pomysły Lopeza Mausere* (pp. 3–73). Lampa i Iskra Boża.
- Stamm, W., & Tymański, R.** (1996). Sprostowanie p.t. “Polowanie na czarownice, czyli szatańskie wersety Zenka”. *Brulion*, 1996(28), 155–157.
- Świetlicki, M.** (1992). Przed wyborami. *Brulion*, 1992(19B), 191.
- White, H. C.** (2011). *Identity and control: How social formations emerge*. Princeton University Press.
- Winkler, A.** (2015). Cofnąć kulturę, cofnąć wychowanie. *Glissando*, 2015(27), 47–51.

**„Bezradność, niemożność, zdziwienie i konieczność natychmiastowego kłamstwa”.
Produkty uboczne Lopeza Mausere**

Abstrakt: Artykuł koncentruje się na kwestiach tożsamości narodowej, płciowej i religijnej w poezji i innych tekstach Wojciecha Stamma, znanego też jako Lopez Mausere i Gertruda Jarząbek. Przedmiotem badania jest także uczestnictwo Mausere w Klubie Polskich Nieudaczników (Club der Polnischen Versager) w Berlinie oraz inne powiązania pomiędzy jego biografią a literaturą. Autor artykułu twierdzi, że zarówno koncepcja poezji Mausere’a, zestawiająca twórczość poetycką z następującymi gatunkami: dowcip, anegdota, pomyłka lub celowe wprowadzenie w błąd, jak i wykorzystanie niskich, żargonowych czy potocznych rejestrów języka, odzwierciedlają przekonanie pisarza, że skarnawalizowany świat na opak bywa bardziej rzeczywisty niż iluzja stwarzana przez role społeczne, normy, statusy, hierarchie i tożsamości. Stąd porażka w odgrywaniu czyjejś roli albo normatywnej tożsamości może okazać się bardziej twórcza i znacząca niż prawidłowe dostosowanie się do zestawu reguł obowiązujących w przestrzeni społecznej.

Wyrażenia kluczowe: tożsamość; porażka; queerowa negatywność; śmiech; poezja; świat na opak



Article No. 2271

DOI: 10.11649/slh.2271

Citation: Stańczyk, X. (2020). "Powerlessness, impotence, astonishment, and the need for an immediate lie": The byproducts of Lopez Mausere. *Studia Litteraria et Historica*, 2020(9), Article 2271. <https://doi.org/10.11649/slh.2271>

This is a translation of the original article "Bezradność, niemożność, zdziwienie i konieczność natychmiastowego kłamstwa": *Produkty uboczne Lopeza Mausere*, published in *Studia Litteraria et Historica*, 2020(9).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 PL License, which permits redistribution, commercial and non-commercial, provided that the article is properly cited. <http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/pl>

© The Author(s) 2020

© to the English translation: Jan Szelągiewicz, 2020

Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

Author: Xawery Stańczyk, Statistics Poland, Warsaw, Poland

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0042-0016>

Correspondence: xawery.stanczyk@gmail.com

The preparation of this work was self-financed by the author.

Competing interests: The author is a member of the Editorial Team of the journal and the editor-in-charge of this issue.