THE WORLD OF GEORGE GROSZ'S PICTURES
AND THE WORLD DEPICTED IN THE NOVEL *POKORA*
BY SZCZEPAN TWARDOCH

Barbara Gawrońska Pettersson

ORCID: 0000-0001-6233-8996

University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway
barbara.gawronska@uia.no

Abstract

"My drawings expressed my despair, hate and disillusionment […] I drew soldiers without noses; war cripples with crustacean-like steel arms" – so stated George Grosz in a reflection on his art. This quotation expresses the essence of "The New Objectivity" (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) – a movement in German art in the time of Weimar Republic. The cover of Szczepan Twardoch's novel *Pokora* (2020) is designed on the basis of Grosz's painting *Panorama. Down with Liebknecht* (1919). The aim of the article is to explore how the literary text relates to its paratext and epitext, and which verbal pictures in the novel share motifs with Grosz's visual art. This case study, conducted in the framework of Gérard Genette's transtextuality theory and later research on intertextuality, shows that associations to Grosz's pictures and even the artist's biography are clearly present in Twardoch's story of a young man from Silesia who is pending between German, Polish, and Silesian identity as well as between social classes, political views, and erotic orientations.

Key words: intertextuality, paratext, epitext, Neue Sachlichkeit, New Objectivity

1. Introduction

During the last decades, in several areas of humanities research, there has been an increased interest in relations between text and image, between verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal elements of the message, as well as in different aspects of intertextuality or, using Gerard Genette's term, "transtextuality" [Genette 1997a, 1997b]. These issues have been investigated within semiotics, literature and art theory [Andrist et al. 2018; Bartolini 2017; Bertram et al. 2021, just to mention a few examples], media studies [Hobbs 1917; Rodríguez-Ferrándiz 2017], translation science [Batchelor 2018; Luo, Zhang 2017; Pellat 2013], and even within research on videogame design [Consalvo 2017; Švelch 2020].

The current article is a case study of relations between the text of *Pokora (Humble)*[1], a novel by the Polish author Szczepan Twardoch [2020], and the central element of its paratext: the cover image, a reproduction of the German artist George Grosz's picture *Panorama. Down with Liebknecht* (1919). The text is organized as follows: in the next section, the notion of paratextuality, its types and aspects is presented; sections 3 and 4 are devoted to an outline of the research objects: the novel by Twardoch and the work of George Grosz, while in section 5 the connections between the text and the paratext (in the broad sense) are analysed with respect to both form and content; the analysis is followed by conclusions in section 6.

2. Intertextuality, transtextuality, and paratextuality

The term "intertextuality" has since its introduction by Julia Kristeva [1969/1980, 1969/1989] and Roland Barthes [1968] undergone some revisions and refinements [for surveys of these, see Andrist et al. 2018; Consalvo 2017; Mirenayat, Soofastaei 2015; Švelch 2020]. In this paper, the model and the definitions introduced and developed by Gerard Genette [1997a, 1997b, 1991] will be employed.

Genette uses the term "intertextuality" is a more restricted sense than Kristeva. He reserves it for explicit or implicit, cover or overt presence of elements of one text in another text (quotation, allusion, plagiarism). Defined in this way, intertextuality is a subcategory of a broader notion, called "transtextuality", covering a wide range of relations between a given text and verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal phenomena. Apart from the abovementioned "intertextuality proper", Genette's notion of transtextuality comprises:

- *Architextuality*: relations between a text and other texts belonging to the same genre;
- *Hypertextuality*: the relation between a text and a preceding "hypertext", i.e. a text or genre on which it is based but which it transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends (e.g. parody, sequel, translation);
- *Metatextuality*: explicit or implicit critical commentary on one text in another text;
- *Paratextuality*: the relation between a text and its "paratext" – verbal, paraverbal and/or nonverbal elements which surround or are connected to the main body of the text.

Paratextuality is further divided into two subtypes: *peritextuality* and *epitextuality*. Peritext is defined as elements "which one can situate around the text, in the space of the same volume, like the title or the preface, and sometimes inserted into the interstices of the text, like the titles of chapters or certain notes", while epitext comprises messages that are situated "[a]round the text again, but at a more respectful (or more prudent) distance" – interviews, correspondences, private journals and

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[1]   At the time of writing this paper, English translation of the novel was not available. The proposed translation of the title into English has been found in a review by K. Cieślik [2021], translated by D. French, published on https://booksfrompoland.pl/books/humbel (4.09.2021). All quotations from Twardoch's book in this paper are translated by B. Gawrońska Pettersson.

the like [Genette 1991: 263–264]. Thus, paratexts may be texts themselves (titles, headings, prefaces, epigraphs, dedications, acknowledgements, footnotes), but they may also

> …belong to other types of expression: iconic (the illustrations), material […], or purely factual. I call *factual* that paratext which consists, not in an explicit message (verbal or other), but in a fact whose mere existence, if it known to the public, makes some commentary on the text and bears on its reception. [Genette 1991: 265]

Paratextual elements may differ not only with respect to the means of expression and spatial relations to the main text, but also with respect to:
- Temporal dimension (Were they created at the same time as the text or later?);
- Communication situation (Who are the addresser and the addressee? Are the paratextual elements authorial or editorial/allographic?);
- Illocutionary force (Are the elements of the paratext purely informative, like e.g. the name of the author, or are they aimed at some contribution to the interpretation of the main text?);
- Function.

According to Genette, the functional aspects of paratexts are the most essential and at the same time, the most intricate ones.

> [T]he functions of the paratext constitute a very empirical and very diverse object, which must be derived in a inductive way, genre by genre and often species by species. […] As for the effects […] which result from the composition, around a text, of the whole of its paratext […] they can only be derived from individual analysis (and synthesis), work by work… [Genette 1991: 269–270]

Thus, a case study seems to be the most adequate method for establishing a picture of paratextual relations. In the following section, the study object will be presented.

3. The object of the case study: the novel *Pokora* by Szczepan Twardoch

3.1. The main character and the outline of the story

Pokora is the second epic Silesian novel by Szczepan Twardoch, after *Drach* [2014]. The title character, Alois Pokora, whose name is identical with the Polish noun meaning 'humility', is born in the end of the nineteenth century in a family of a poor Silesian miner, and receives education thank to the support of a local priest. From his young years, his life is marked with identity conflicts: the Silesian-speaking boy struggles with his Slavic accent when attending a German high school, he is mocked and mobbed because of his poverty and his origin. During his university studies, he temporarily becomes close to the Polish independency movement, but does feel really at home among students identifying themselves as Poles. After some time, he takes a step in the opposite direction and choses a career in the German army – one of the few ways towards respect and acceptance in the German society that stood open for young men of his provenience.

The dream of achieving a respected position is crushed by the traumatic experiences on the battlefields, and by Germany's defeat in the Great War. Seriously wounded, the young lieutenant is transported to a Berlin hospital. After having recovered he finds himself totally abandoned, deprived of any support, and reduced to a beggar lost in the chaos of the post-war German capital.

In his struggle for survival and for finding a place in the new reality, Pokora becomes drawn into the world of criminals and half-criminals, he frequents pubs and cabarets where aristocrats and former high officers fraternize with profiteers, gamblers, and prostitutes of various genders… Without really willing it, he becomes engaged in radical communist circles, takes part in the Spartacus rebellion of 1919 and is close to sharing the fate of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, but is saved by his former school friend, now a devoted German nationalist…

While Pokora's former search for belonging was mainly concerned with the issues of language and nationality, now it becomes an opaque tangle of political, erotic, and emotional identity questions, additionally complicated by his platonic first love that haunts him since his school years.

3.2. The cover design

The choice of George Grosz's 1919 picture *Panorama. Down with Liebknecht* as the main motif on the cover of *Pokora* was made by the publishing house and the author, and the graphical shape was designed by Rafał Kucharczuk [2020]. Hence, in accordance with Genette's classification, the final paratext is at the same time authorial, editorial, and allographic.

According to Kucharczuk's [2020] description of his work on the cover project, it was crucial that Grosz's picture should be presented in a complete, undisturbed form. Some practical factors were also involved:

> It [Grosz's painting] should remain as it is, as large as possible and on top of that print should not eat up a lot of funds. It should be cheap and easy to print, this means no wrappers, dustcovers, overlays or other special print effects were possible. [Kucharczuk 2020]

Thus, a difficult issue to solve was where and how to place the informative part of the paratext: the title, the author's name, the publisher's logo, and the bar code. After several sketches, a rather unconventional solution was found: the above mentioned elements were placed on the spine of the book, printed in fonts inspired by advertising posters from the period after the First World War.

Figure 1 shows the design of the cover. The final cover project accepted by the author and the publisher indicates that keeping Grosz's picture intact was considered very important for the reception of the book. Hence, the life and work of George Grosz deserve some closer attention if the relations between the main text of the novel and the paratext should be understood.

Figure 1. The design of the cover of *Pokora*

Source: R. Kucharczuk [2020].

4. George Grosz and "New Objectivity"

4.1. Biography outline

The artist known as George Grosz was born 1893 in Berlin as Georg Groß. Most of his childhood and early youth (1898–1900, 1902–1909) he spent in the Pomeranian town Stolp (now Słupsk, Poland). Already during his school years, he made his first attempts at drawing and painting. They were mainly caricatures and cartoons, inspired by pop-art of these times, especially by paintings produced at local fairies [Grosz 1946/1983]. Expelled from high school after a violent confrontation with a teacher, young Georg moved 1909 to Dresden, where he studied at the local Academy of Fine Arts. He also spent some time in Paris ad Berlin. His education and beginning artistic career were interrupted by the outbreak of World War I.

Georg volunteered for military service, but his romanticising attitude to war soon became crushed by the horrible reality of battlefields and trenches, of which both his writings and his wartime drawings bear witness. In his autobiography, *A Small Yes and a Big No*, he writes:

> I drew soldiers without noses; war cripples with crab-like limbs of steel; two medical orderlies tying a violent infantryman up in a horse blanket; a one-armed soldier using his good hand to salute a heavily bemedalled lady who had just passed him a biscuit; a colonel, his fly wide open, embracing a nurse; a hospital orderly emptying a bucket full of pieces of human flesh down a pit. [Grosz 1983: 30]

> Whenever I had a moment to spare I would vent my spleen in sketches of everything
> about me that I hated, either in my notebook or on sheets of writing paper; the brutal faces
> of my comrades, badly mutilated war cripples, arrogant officers, lascivious nurses. [Grosz
> 1983: 86]

The artist's hatred against German militarism made him to "internationalize" the
spelling of his name. Since 1916, he called himself George Grosz. 1n 1917, Grosz was
found unfit for further military service.

In the early post-war years, Grosz joined the communist movement and took part
in the 1919 Spartacus rebellion, but quite soon he distanced himself from the com-
munists, recognizing (especially during his trip to Russia in 1922) that the seeming-
ly democratic revolutionists were heading towards totalitarian power, something the
artist deeply despised [Grosz 1946/1983; Schneede 1979; Ocwieja 2014]. For the
same reason, he had left Germany for the United States in 1932, before Hitler came
to power.

Grosz became a naturalized citizen of the U.S. and continued his work as painter,
although he took distance from his early style. He also worked on his autobiography
and taught at Art Students League of New York. In spring 1955 he returned to Berlin,
where, only after a couple of weeks, he died in an accident.

For the purpose of the current analysis, Grosz's life and work during the war and
early post-war years are most relevant because of the parallels between the artist's
and the fictional Pokor's biography as well as between the poetics of Grosz's pictures
and the style of Twardoch's descriptions of post-war Germany. This will be further
discussed in section 5.

4.2. *Neue Sachlichkeit* – "New Objectivity"

Grosz's early works were influenced by the main avant-garde trends of the begin-
ning of the twentieth century: expressionism, futurism and dadaism (he was one of the
founders of the Berlin DADA-group). However, during his most active Berlin-period
he became to be regarded as one of the most prominent representatives of a direction
in art called *Neue Sachlichkeit* [Bürger 2006; Makela 2002; Michalski 1995; Ryb-
kowska 2015; Wendel 2019].

The term *Neue Sachlichkeit* was coined in 1923 by G.H. Hartlaub, the director of
the Mannheim Art Gallery, in connection to a planned exhibition of contemporary
painters. In a circular letter concerning the exhibition, Hartlaub wrote:

> I wish in the autumn to arrange a medium-sized exhibition of paintings and prints,
> which could be given the designation "Die neue Sachlichkeit." I am interested in bring-
> ing together representative works of those artists who in the last ten years have been
> neither impressionistically relaxed nor expressionistically abstract […]. I wish to ex-
> hibit those artists who have remained unswervingly faithful to positive palpable reality,
> or who have become faithful to it once more. […] Both the "right wing" (the Neo-Clas-
> sicists, if one cares so to describe them), as exemplified by certain things of Picasso,
> Kay H. Nebel, etc., and the "veristic" left wing, to which Beckmann, Grosz, Dix, Drex-

el, Scholz, etc., can be assigned, fall within the scope of my intention. [Hartlaub 1923, cited Schmalenbach 1940: 161]

Neue Sachlichkeit became an established notion after the exhibition, since it started to appear in newspaper reviews and academic lectures [Schmalenbach 1940; Wendel 2019]. It shall be mentioned that the English translation of the term, 'New Objectivity', does not render all the semantic shades of the original name. As Schmalenbach [1940: 162] points out, the German noun *Sache* should, in this context, be read rather as 'task' or 'theme' than as referring to an objective viewpoint in rendering tangible objects. *Neue Sachlichkeit* artists, especially those belonging to the 'left wing', distanced themselves from earlier avant-garde movements, but their opposition concerned rather attitudes to art and reality than means of expression [Rybkowska 2015]. Schmalenbach describes the ideological difference between *Neue Sachlichkeit* and expressionism in the following way:

> It was a new disillusionment, a sobriety after the self-abandonment, the unrestrained inflationary frenzy of expressionism's post-war phase […] It was a matter of getting firm ground again after limitless extravagances, on realities after an attitude in which programs and utopias had become ends in themselves. [Schmalenbach 1940: 163]

A similar characteristic of the relation of *Neue Sachlichkeit* painters to expressionism is to be found in Kotula and Krakowski [1972]:

> …while in expressionism, the artists wanted to move the receiver into the sphere of fantasy, symbolism, and certain timeless generalizations by means of through exoticism, eroticism or frequent religious themes, the New Objectivity brought the receiver back to earth, although it never completely gave up expressionist emotionality. [Kotula, Krakowski 1972: 226, cited Rybkowska 2015: 95–96]

The most prominent features of the 'New Objectivity' style may be summarized as follows [Makela 2002; Rybkowska 2015; Wendel 2019]:
* Expressionist deformation combined with realistic attention to detail;
* Turpistic and satirical elements, often resulting in "typecasting" (stereotypes of soldiers, generals, bourgeois, dandies, prostitutes);
* Onirism, closeness to magical realism;
* Deliberately chaotic compositions.

These elements combined with the prevalent theme: the brutality of war and the post-war chaos in Weimar Republic, constitute a poetics that Rybkowska [2015: 97] calls by a very apt term: "iconography of downfall" (*ikonografia upadku*). The iconography of downfall is present in almost all war and post-war works by George Grosz, including *Panorama. Down with Liebknecht*.

5. The relations between the text and the paratext in *Pokora*

Genette [1991] places book covers in the category 'editorial peritexts'; however, both Genette himself and several other authors admit that a book cover, especially

the cover of a work of fiction, is a phenomenon on the verge of peritext and epitext. The iconic, material form of the cover may trigger an association network connecting the peritext to immaterial, factual epitexts, "whose mere existence […] makes some commentary on the text and bears on its reception" [Genette 1991: 265]. Hence, in the following, the more general term "paratext" will be used.

As mentioned in section 2, Genette proposes that paratexts should be analyzed with respect to the following aspects:
• Temporal dimension;
• Communication situation;
• Illocutionary force;
• Function.

The temporal dimensions in the case of *Pokora* are of a double nature: the design of the material cover of course took place posterior to the creation of the text, but the author and the publisher deliberately decided that the cover should be dominated by a work of art from almost exactly a century ago and wished for the message of *Panorama. Down with Liebknecht* to remain complete. The designer adhered to this requirement and was consistent to it in keeping the associations to the years after First World War by choosing the font of the spine print (see section 3.2).

Thus, with respect to the communication situation, there exists along the voices of contemporary addressors (the author in the first place, but also the publisher and the cover designer) a distinct message sent by the German artist hundred years ago. The illocution is quite clear: the paratext is aimed at contributing to the reception of the book as a whole.

The functional aspects of a paratext are, as stated by Genette, the most complex ones. In the following, I intend to argue for that the cover of *Pokora* works as a link connecting Szczepan Twardoch's nowel to the life and work of George Grosz as well as to the poetics of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. These associations can be found on the levels of both content and style.

5.1. The content level

Parallels between Grosz's life and the fate of the fictional Alois Pokora are numerous. Both spent their early years in regions where the German and the Slavic cultural influences crossed and overlapped (Pomerania and Silesia), both encountered conflict situations during their school and study times, and both volunteered for military service at the beginning of the Great War, driven by youthful enthusiasm. Further common points are the war trauma, the disillusionment and following hatred against the German army, and later – the desperate search for a place and an identity in the chaos of Weimar Republic. Both Grosz and Pokora enter the radical communist circles for some time, participate in the 1919 rebellion and, deluded again, leave the communist movement. It is worth noting that in description of the Spartacus revolt in the novel, there occur explicit allusions to the title of Grosz's picture: *Nieder mit…* ('Down with…', highlighted in the quotations below):

Śmieją się. Żartują. **Nieder mit Liebknecht**. Precz z bolszewikami. Precz z rewolucją.

They are laughing. They are joking. **Nieder mit Liebknecht**. Down with the Bolshe-viks. Down with the revolution. [Twardoch 2020: 293]

Salamakis podnosi lewą pięść, krzyczy: „**Nieder mit**…", ale nie kończy, bo oficer też jej strzela w głowę i Alois Pokora nie wie, z czym albo z kim precz chciała światu obwieścić.

Salamakis raises her left fist, shouts: "**Nieder mit**…", but does not finish, because the officer shoots her in the head and Alois Pokora does not know down with what or with whom she wanted to announce to the world. [Twardoch 2020: 296]

In both Grosz's and Pokora's case, we encounter a symbolic sign for an identity crisis: the change of name. It is, however, triggered by different reasons. "Lojzik" Pokora becomes Alois – he stops using his Silesian pet name to be perceived as a German, while Georg Groß starts calling himself George Grosz in order to dis-tance himself from Germany.

What has been said above does not in any way implicate that the story of Alois Pokora was modelled after Grosz's biography. Rather, it demonstrates that the choice of a painting by Grosz as a paratext activates associations between the fictional hero of Twardoch's novel and the life of the artist, as well as the life of numerous young German or 'quasi-German' men belonging to the same generation. It even evokes connections to other works that have been regarded as realizations of *Neue Sachli-chkeit* in literature, like E.M. Remarque's *All Quiet on The Westen Front* [1929] and *The Road Back* [1931], or Joseph Roth's *Das Spinnennetz* [*The Spider's Web*, 1923].

5.2. The stylistic level

In section 4.2, the central elements of the "iconography of downfall" [Rybkowska 2015] were mentioned: deliberately chaotic compositions, expressionistic deforma-tions, turpistic and oniristic elements, typecasting combined with carefulness about details. In his analysis of Grosz's painting *The Funeral*, Ocwieja [2014] writes:

> The chaotic nature of the painting is solidified by the contrast of dark tones with stark reds and oranges that give the entire scene a battlefield-like ambiance. At first glance, there appears simply to be a cacophony of imagery present in the painting which defies meaning. Yet, upon closer inspection several themes become apparent. The first would be the dehumanization… [Ocwieja 2014: 3]

Most parts of this description may apply to *Panorama* and to several other paint-ings by Grosz, like *Metropolis*, *The City*, *Berlin Street*… Chaotic movements on crowded streets, where people with ugly, deformed faces run in all directions, houses leaning against each other like in nightmare – yet, in all the seemingly incoherent tangle, one can see details of clothes, ornaments of the house facades, everything dominated by dark reddish and purple nuances [Figure 2].

Figure 2. G. Grosz *Metropolis*

Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/george-grosz/the-city-1917. Public domain.

The pictures of post-war Berlin streets in the text of *Pokora* share many stylistic features with these paintings:

> Ludzie zaś idą, idą i mijają mnie, jedni za drugimi i kolejni […]
>
> Bluzy nowego wzoru […] wymieszane z częściami dawnych kawaleryjskich mundurów, tu ułańska kurtka, tam buty do jazdy konnej, huzarskie lampasy, resztki tego, co okopy z dnia na dzień uczyniły przestarzałym, śmiesznym wspomnieniem minionych czasów.

And people go, they go and pass me, one after another and one after another […]
Blouses of a new design […] mixed with parts of old cavalry uniforms, here an Uhlan jacket, horse riding boots there, hussar stripes, remnants of what the trenches made overnight into an obsolete, funny memory of bygone times. [Twardoch 2020: 184–185]

Rady żołnierskie i robotnicze sobie, Ebert sobie […], Hindenburg sobie, armia sobie, rewolucja sobie, miasto wrze, buzuje, ludzie szepczą, ludzie na wiecach krzyczą […]. Przez miasto przewalają się ciężarówki pod czerwonymi flagami, pełne wąsatych żołnierzy, robotników i matrosów z czerwonej Volksmarinedivision…

Here the soldiers' and workers' councils, here Ebert […], there Hindenburg, here the army, there the revolution, the city is boiling, crackling, people are whispering, people are shouting at rallies […]. Red flagged trucks tumble through the city, full of moustached soldiers, workers and guys from the Red Volksmarinedivision… [Twardoch 2020: 185]

The lexical, phraseological, and syntactic means employed by Twardoch have close counterparts in the graphical construction of Grosz's Berlin pictures. The effect of uncontrolled dynamics and chaotic movements in different directions is achieved by the use of present tense, frequent repetition of antonymous location/direction adverbs (*here-there*), the choice of verbs referring to intensive, uncontrolled processes (*boil, crackle, shout, tumble*), and by syntactic and lexical parallelisms (e. g. "…people go, they go and pass me, one after another and one after another") that resemble the repeated appearance of typified figures in Grosz's paintings. Though, as in the *Neue Sachlichkeit* picturess, in all the chaos, details still can be seen ("old cavalry uniforms, here an Uhlan jacket, horse riding boots there, hussar stripes"). Another significant detail is the fact that the only colour-denoting adjective in the quotation above is red (*Red flagged trucks*, *Red Volksmarinedivision*). Red is the colour dominating many of Grosz's paintings from the war and post-war years [see Figures 1–4].

In most of Grosz's pictures from this period, we encounter crippled, disfigured soldiers or pauperized middle-class men, contrasted with fat, outraging silhouettes of nouveau riche profiteers and vulgarly made-up women, shown, as Wendel [2019] formulated it, as both offers and predators. The background is mostly constituted by shabby pubs, cafés, and other entertainment places [Figure 3 and 4].

In *Pokora*, similar pictures, realized by verbal means, can be found:

W knajpie dziś raczej tłoczno, zwykła publiczność […] są panowie Stauber i Galuschka, jest paru urzędników niższego szczebla […], łokcie marynarek wytarte, kolana spodni wypchane i wyświecone.

Jest kilka kobiet, zwykłych, z ludu, żadnych dam oczywiście nie ma…

The pub is rather crowded today, ordinary audience […] there are Mr. Stauber and Mr. Galuschka, there are some lower-ranking officials […], worn elbows, trousers knees stuffed and shiny.

There are a few ordinary women, of the common people, of course there are no ladies… [Twardoch 2020: 191–192]

Wracają ci bez nóg, rąk i twarzy i wracają ci niedraśnięci […] płaczący ze strachu, gdy słyszą łomoczący po szynach tramwaj […] ale wraca też życie. W cyrku Buscha na zmianę z zebraniami rad delegatów program cyrkowy…

There come back those without legs, arms, and faces, and there come back those who are whole […], but they cry with fear when they hear a tram pounding on the rails […] However, life also returns. In Busch's circus, the program alternates with meetings of councils of delegates… [Twardoch 2020: 187–188]

Figure 3. G. Grosz *Twilight*
Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/george-grosz/twilight-1922. Public domain.

Figure 4. G. Grosz *Beauty, Thee I Praize*
Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/george-grosz/beauty-thee-i-praise-1919. Public domain.

The impression of being lost, dehumanized, and humiliated is expressed in *Panorama. Down with Liebknecht* (and many other pictures by Grosz) by an abundance of similar, deformed figures, connected by a network of crossing lines, running in urge and panic between tilting buildings. The crippled, scared figures overlap with those showing their teeth in cruel, cynical smiles. In Twardoch's descriptions of the post-war Berlin, a corresponding effect is achieved by frequent repetition of phrases built around verbs referring to disorientation, shame, fear, humiliation, crying, begging for one's life, and by contrasting them with phrases containing the verb *śmiać się* ('laugh'). The use of vulgarisms (e. g. *shat*) in those contexts is congruent with the deliberate breaking conventional aesthetic norms in Grosz's work. Both in Grosz's graphic pictures and in Twardoch's verbal ones there is nothing heroic or sacred in the act of dying. Death is acompanied by humiliation, vulgarities, and sneering laughter. The relevant words and phrases in the quotations below are highlighted.

Stauber **wyje ze strachu**, ja nie jestem żadnym bolszewikiem, panowie, […] błagam […] **Zesrał się**, normalnie **się zesrał**, **śmieją się** żołnierze, oficer strzela mu w czoło…

Stauber is **screaming with fear**, I'm not a Bolshevik, gentlemen, […] I am **begging** you […] He **shat** all **over himself**, he simply **shat over himself**, the soldiers **laugh**, the officer shoots him in the forehead …

Niech mnie pan nie zabija, **błaga** Alois Pokora […] Alois Pokora dziwi się tym słowom i **wstydzi się** za nie, ale **boi się** bardziej, niż **się wstydzi**. Niech minie pan nie zabija, **błaga**,

płacząc, bo ze mną zginie cały świat. Oberleutnant się śmieje. Alois Pokora **klęka**, najpierw na jedno kolano, potem na drugie, **proszę, błagam**, niech mnie pan nie zabija […], **płacze** Alois Pokora.

Don't kill me, sir, **begs** Alois Pokora […] Alois Pokora is surprised and **ashamed** of these words, but he is more **afraid** than **ashamed**. Don't kill me, sir, he **begs**, **crying**, because with me the whole world will perish. The Oberleutnant **laughs**. Alois Pokora **kneels**, first on one knee, then on the other, **please**, I **beg** you, sir, don't kill me […], **cries** Alois Pokora. [Twardoch 2020: 296–297]

Although the work of Grosz is dominated by chaos, fear, and brutality, it is not devoted of lyricism, the most known example being *The Lovesick Man* [2016], showing a lonely, crippled dandy marked by scars and tattoos, bearing a red heart and a pistol on his jacket, surrounded by an oneiric café, over which symbols of death and decay are scattered [Figure 5].
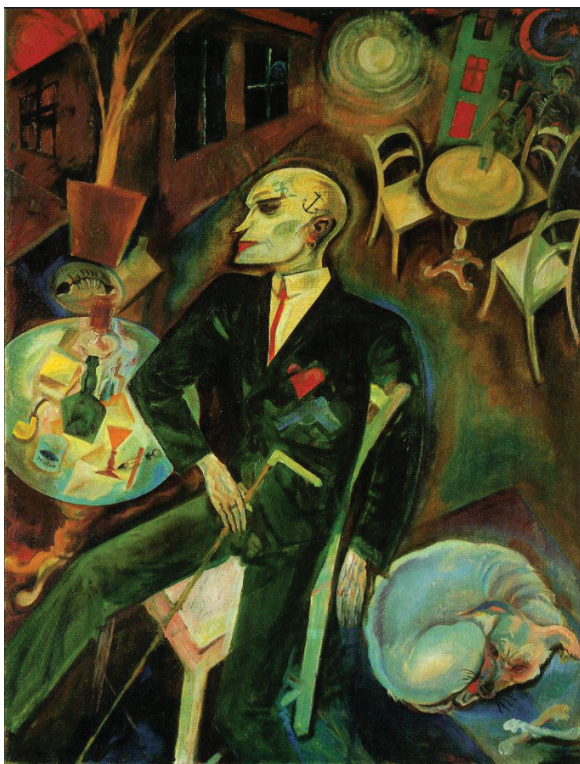

Figure 5. G. Grosz *The Lovesick Man*

Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/george-grosz/the-lovesick-man-1916. Public domain.

A dreamlike way through brutal memories towards love is also present in the thoughts of Twardoch's hero:

Zasypiam znowu i jestem w okopach, prowadzę swój cug labiryntem wrogich okopów, francuskich i angielskich jednocześnie […] Labirynt okopów okazuje się amfiladą twojego gliwickiego mieszkania, Agnes…

I fall asleep again and I am in the trenches, I lead my men through a labyrinth of hostile trenches, French and English at the same time […] The maze of trenches turns out to be the enfilade of rooms in your apartment in Gleiwitz, Agnes… [Twardoch 2020: 203]

The rows of windows and the circle of light in the background of *The Lovesick Man seem* to correspond to Alois Pokora's dream of the enfilade of rooms leading to his beloved.

Conclusions

The considerations above are based on the text of novel and the main elements of the paratext, and on background literature regarded as relevant. They do not include any interviews with the author nor with the readers of *Pokora*. Hence, it is not possible to state which connections between the text and the paratext were consciously employed and intended by Szczepan Twardoch, apart from the fact that the cover picture was chosen by him in cooperation with the publisher, and that both the author and the publisher wished the reproduction of *Panorama. Down with Liebknecht* to be presented for the receivers in a form as complete as technically possible [Kucharczuk 2020]. This concern allows one to suppose that the author was not unfamiliar with Grosz's life and work, and that his intention was to place his text in a close relation to the work of the German artist who lived in the same time period as the hero of the novel, and who shared experiences of the fictional Alois Pokora. This assumption is confirmed by explicit allusions to the title of the painting in the text of the novel (quoted in section 5.1).

The question how well in this case the illocution (the intention of the sender) matches the perlocution (the reaction of the receiver) is a matter that cannot be resolved within the scope of the current paper. The answer would require a reception study. It is possible that for many readers, unfamiliar with the artist Georg Grosz, the cover picture would appear as a "cacophony of imagery" [Ocwieja 2014: 3], perhaps even a vulgar and tasteless one.

It cannot be expected that every potential reader will know all nuances connected to the paratext; however, as Genette [1991: 261, 266] put it: "…we are dealing […] with a threshold, […] a "vestibule" which offers to anyone and everyone the possibility either of entering or turning back. […] I do not say that one must know it [the paratext function]. I only say that those who do not know it do not read in the same way as those who do not".

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