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NARRATION IN IGNACY KRASICKI'S
HISTORIA (HISTORY)

I. The Narrator

Ignacy Krasicki's *History* is undoubtedly a unique novel in its *oeuvre*. Seemingly, it does not differ from Krasicki's other novels—a fictitious first person narrator describes his own experiences, moralistic and didactic character, and generic similarities with memoirs (a life story). However, it is enough to look a bit more closely at the depiction of space, the attitude to the reader, the ways of speaking about the world, to notice that everything is new—the addressee of this novel is different, and the author treats this addressee very differently, requires different things from him; the reality is also not the same. It is less 'tangible' and native than in *Pan Podstoli (Mr. Pantler)*, less important than in *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki (The Adventures of Mr. Nicholas Wisdom)*. The world of the gentry (szlachta) disappears, replaced by an abyss of history, a plethora of people and events. Literature and truth again are intermingled. In order to cope with the task of an analysis of the narrator's figure, we will look, one by one, at different layers of the structure of *History*.

1. The Publisher

The first 'sender's level' which the reader comes across is the author of *Preface*, that is a short note at the beginning, two remarks and one footnote, in which he describes himself as *the manuscript's editor*—it is the only auto-thematic information he gives. Several

of the clearest features of his personality can be extracted on the basis of his utterances:

Between Biłgoraj and Tarnogród there is an inn in the forest; when I stopped there for my rest I saw a Cossack in the entrance, who, when his pipe got extinguished, went to the stable, and having taken from there a rolled piece of paper, lit it at the end and relit his pipe, threw the paper on the ground, mounted his horse and rode away. As the rest of the paper did not burn, I picked it up, and I read the words written on a tiny piece which was left: "So when we were crossing the river, Lech turned to his..." as I wanted to know what happened next, I ran to the place where the Cossack had been and there in hay under a manger I found this story.¹

These are features characteristic for a competent and reliable researcher: inquisitiveness and accuracy. In this short preface he lists in detail everything which is connected with his find: given, perhaps, somewhat not very precisely, but clearly locating the plot in extra-literary reality, and in this way confirming the authentic existence of the found manuscript; circumstances not extraordinary at all, and in this way also creating an illusion of truth; he even mentions the fact about his presence there and puts down the first words (as Waław Walecki noticed, not very precisely because he skipped the pronoun "tę" (this)).² This all is the result of the convention, popular in the eighteenth century, of giving novels the appearances of real documents.³ Truth and concurrence with historical reality

¹ I. Krasicki, *Historia*, ed. by M. Klimowicz, PIW, Warszawa 1956. The biographical details about the quotations from this novel will be given in square brackets. (Roman numerals for the number of volume, P—Preface)

² Cf., W. Walecki, *Wieczny człowiek. „Historyja” Ignacego Krasickiego i jej konteksty kulturowe oraz literackie*, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 1999, s.46-47.

³ Such a tool was used, for example, by De Laclos in *Dangerous Liaisons*. Another example of giving an appearance of authenticity to literary fiction was the form of letters written to a real addressee, which Diderot applied in *The Nun* (more on this see M. Jasińska, *Autentyzm i literackość a wiedza powieściowego narratora*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1963, (1)).

is so important for the editor that when these words appear: [...] our prince Popiel the Second was eaten by mice" [III, 162], he cannot refrain from the confirmation of authenticity of the manuscript and at the same time of warning the credulous reader: "One poet described this horrible brawl. I have read it, but because it is full of fairy tales, I warn that he should not be believed" [III, 7, 162].⁴ You can instantly recognize a true man of the Enlightenment here, totally unsusceptible to fairy tales and superstition, judging the world according to the criteria of reason, with the use of scientific instruments, carefully checking and marking the sources. This is undoubtedly the first example (and model) in literature for editors and publishers of today, particularly of older texts. While we are dealing with time, it should be mentioned that this theme is not dealt with at all, so we should assume that the year of the publication of *History* is reliable as the moment slightly after the find. The fact that there was no name of Krasicki on the cover of the first story also strengthened the aura of authenticity. We will later answer the question about the role of the Editor of the Manuscript and how he helped the whole text.

2. The Peony Flower

The second narrator, or rather, the narrator proper, and at the same time the protagonist of the story he tells, is less troublesome. He speaks about himself in a straightforward manner: he comes from the land of Lugnagians, he was born in the town of Gangnapp and is called Grumdrypp (which can be translated as 'peony flower'), he is one of the few immortals. For many years he had led a normal life. Later, after the loss of his beloved wife, he became lonely and could not communicate with new generations or with the ones similar to him. He went to the mountains to remove himself from the world. There he found a small tree, the resin of which has the unusual power of giving back youth. From the moment of finding about it he has been roaming the world, accepting new names, observing, and learning

⁴ This is an obvious allusion to *Myszeida*.

about civilizations, cultures and people. That is as much for him as a literary figure.

As a story teller he does not hide his function. On the contrary, from the very beginning he stresses the fact of creation:

I am of this kind, who have decided to write about what has happened to me [I, 1, 43].

The relationship sender-receiver is built also for this purpose; it is underlined by direct addresses to readers:

My readers will not mind that I am quoting my friend's thoughts [I, 17, 93]:
If readers are not willing to believe my reliable novel, let them look into Tacitus's annals. [II, 1, 119]

What is more, he can be seen in the authorial role of influencing the shape of the text:

At this point, let me, dear reader, think for a moment about the recklessness and impudence of chroniclers; [I, 2, 50]:
I skip miracles which preceded the hero's birth. [I, 4, 54]

The narrative situation is not clearly defined. There is no information explaining the circumstances in which Grumdrypp started his task. However, the time when it must have happened can be established. The latest event mentioned in the manuscript is the publication of the book by Józef Andrzej Załuski, *Programma literarium ad bibliophilos* in 1732; so, if we were to take the *Preface* seriously, the story of the immortal must have been written between 1732 and 1779. So, many centuries have passed since the start of the described event. He often uses this wide horizon, freely moving not only between the story time and the time of the narrative:

Having crossed the Herculean Straights we arrived at the port of Gades, *which is now known as Cadiz*. (All emphases mine) [...]
After travelling for several days I came to the mountains *which then were called Orospeđa and now Sierra Morena*. [I, 9, 66].

but also through retrospections (the story of Neokles [II, 5]) and through different means of anticipation of the future (obviously the future from the perspective of the story time and the past from the level of the narrative). And through anachronisms:

[...] and it turned out to the good for me that I was not in a capital city, because as I learnt soon from newspapers, our prince Popiel the Second was eaten by mice. [III, 7, 162]

Secondly, through revealing of his future plans:

He knew the key to hieroglyphs and he explained to me many of the old inscriptions. I put them down diligently and I still have the whole description of this journey with me. I will publish it in due time. [I, 6, 59-60]

Thirdly, through jumping to the near and more distant future from the events presented:

In later times, the first of the Europeans, Marcus Paulus from Venice, having gotten there, when he lived in Beijing, found my manuscript [...] I learnt about all these circumstances from the very same Marco Polo, when I saw him after his return from China to Europe.

It is impossible to locate the 'place' of writing, and the circumstances in which the manuscript happened to be, between Biłgoraj and Tarnogród, are never explained (although undoubtedly this is not the result of coincidence). However, there is no doubt about the aim of the narrative:

[...] I, as an obvious witness of this history, feel that it is my duty to lead readers out of error, if possible, by telling them frankly what, how and when the things happened. [I, 2, 48-49].

It is very safe to believe in what he has seen and has heard. [I, 4, 54]

On many occasions and in different ways the subject stresses his role as an eye witness; one whose task it is to perpetuate and preserve the cultural heritage. One of the ways of making reliable his presence

during the most important events he describes is giving such details which could be known only by an eye witness:

Attal was not similar to Alexander. He was taller, pock-marked, he had a wart on his nose which strongly disfigured him, [I, 2, 50]

The diligence in presenting the truth with details,⁵ very similar to the one which was characteristic for the editor; confirms his status as a direct observer and a participant in the events:

Curcius wrote that Porus's army consisted of 30 000, while there was only 22 000 of us, 85 elephants, in fact there were only 32. [I, 2, 49]

He also refers to numerous documents which have become the sources of knowledge for the narrator, although they have not survived to the present times.

Ptolemy wrote the chronicle of Alexander's life, but as it was honest it did not see the world. After his death I got a copy, and that is how I acquired most information, and I have learnt more about Alexander than if I had seen him alive.

This reservation explains the knowledge about facts preceding the meeting of Grumdrypp with Alexander, to which he refers many times, for example the ones connected with his education and youth. One more 'document' comes from the archives of Ptolemy, which the narrator not only refers to, but also quotes:

Among the documents of the royal chancellery I found [...] a letter, which brought Aristotle to the court of Philip. It read: "I inform you on the king's behalf that you are made a teacher of the young dauphin. Your pay will be two talents. You will live and eat at the court and will enjoy all amenities. [...] Stay in good health. [I, 4, 55]

It is the only case of quoting verbatim the false document. The reason for this was a debate with one of the legends connected with

⁵ Another example of the narrator's fastidiousness is the precise dating of all transformations.

Aristotle, according to which Philip was happier because of the fact that his son had been born during Aristotle's life than from the very fact of having a son. The 'authentic' letter in an obvious way tries to undermine the truth of this story. It is worth mentioning, while we are dealing with documents, that once in the novel the truthfulness of Grumdrypp's words is confirmed by a real document:

If readers of my reliable novel did not want to believe it, let them have a look in the annals of Tacytus, chapter 32, volume 13, which he put into the mouth of Suilius, who was inspired by Seneca" "Nec Suilius quaestu [...], etc." [II, 1, 119].

And finally, diligent marking of his own 'traces' in history is to confirm the real existence in it of the narrator, and usually these traces are quite impressive—preservation for posterity of Cicero's letters [I, 21, 108], information about plants' properties, parts of which had already been given to scientists who lived then [II, 10], and some more, which we will consider later. The narrator's credit for Polish onomastics should also be mentioned:

[...] it was there that I became a cavalry captain, and for my service I was given a settlement which I called Konin (in Polish 'koń' means 'horse') because of good hay and extensive meadows. This town still exists and is a regional centre. [III, 6, 158-159]

It might seem that all these means are used to create an illusion of reality, as was the case in other novels of Krasicki. But in fact, it is the other way round. The narrator as an eye witness is unreliable, and it is not against the authorial intentions. The means listed above—diligence, precision, quarrelling with chroniclers over details—become a parody of the scientific method and of truthfulness to the historical truth. And while many of these arguments remain valid, some of them are only a literary game, a ploy to create a comical effect (it is difficult to treat a wart as a serious proof of the chronicler's lack of correctness). However, Grumdrypp's authority as a conveyor of the one and only historical truth is destroyed much earlier, even before he himself is allowed to speak. It is so because the *Preface* also

does not perform its function, or performs it in a rather perverse way. Krasicki uses the ploy which makes the work of literature look authentic as a ploy, as overused convention which points only to the literary character of a text. The first words of his novel refer to Jonathan Swift for a reason; Swift used a similar ploy in *Gulliver's Travels* for similar reasons. What is more, Krasicki uses to the very end all the possibilities which this convention opens. The publisher, in his precision and diligence, similarly to the narrator of the novel, ridicules himself, and while he tries to prove the authenticity of his manuscript he stresses its fictional character. While his precision with sources becomes a pretext for a literary game and for constructing inter-textual relations. The very way in which he ends his *Preface* should cause doubts in his readers because in the words:

Who would expect such a treasure between Biłgoraj and Tarnogród?
[P, 41]

there is an unexpectedly strong tone of irony.

The origins of the narrator also do not create the impression of reliability. Their roots go to other literary fiction, similar in the manner in which the depicted world also claimed to be real so that no one had any doubts that it is not so. So the Prince Bishop Krasicki continues the game started by the deacon of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Grumdrypp refers to it as to a historical source, so it can be stated that both texts simultaneously confirm and unmask themselves. The fairy tale motif of a 'magical' plant thanks to which the protagonist becomes young again also points to a distance a reader should have towards it, mostly because the discrepancy between such a non-serious motivation and serious assumptions of the novel (after all the protagonist's wanderings are not for entertainment; the goal of this text is absolutely serious). The fact that some balsam from a tree has an effect only on the protagonist also places him beyond reality. The author on purpose makes no effort to make him feasible. Which does not mean that he is unreliable in all aspects.

Let us now return to the 'traces' left by the protagonist in history and recall the two most important events, which are also most

characteristic of his nature—of course I have in mind the words on the gravestone in Bologna and the chronicle of Nakors Warmish. The narrator claims that he authored both of them. What is more, he explains all their mysteries, meanings and history:

[...] wanting to preserve memory or rather *aenigma* of my extraordinary situation for posterity, using the alias of Aelia , a matron, I put the gravestone for myself. In order to satiate the curiosity of sages, and at the same time to induce them to research on more needed information, I put this circumstance of my life on purpose. [II, 3, 124-125].

In this way he writes about the gravestone, at the same time criticizing hollow curiosity, directed at things which are not utilitarian.

Because he [Józef Andrzej Załuski] could not have been informed so well as myself about all circumstances, and that is why I correct some of his mistakes [...] If provincial governors ordered the burning of this book, Wojnar Walkoszyn could not have placed it in a pillar when he was putting his son Zublin into a grave near Gniezno. I have ordered it to be put there myself, for reasons I am going to present [...] The date of its finding, 1574, is correct. [III 6, 160-161].

These explanations concern the chronicle of Nakors. Both these 'traces' left by the protagonist are, as can be seen, forgeries, which is underlined by the fact that their authorship is ascribed to a false witness of history. And conversely, fictitiousness, invention, apparent value of things are characteristic for their creator. They allow us to recognize him as a being equally unreliable as themselves. And in this way they discredit themselves reciprocally, at the same time making fun of those who believe in their truthfulness and historical value.

While we try to characterize the figure of the narrator, we should deal with one more issue. The researchers who have analysed *History* have characterized Grumdrup in the following way:

[...] according to the author, he is an epitome of Enlightenment sense and disinterestedness. He does not belong to any nation, he is not kin to anyone, he holds no high office [...] his likes and dislikes are of a philosophical nature, they concern issues beyond that of individual people. He is immune to the charms of women [...] Krasicki gave him all the attributes to induce the objective historical criticism postulated by the Enlightenment.⁶

Besides, he is never ill. In his judgements he is dispassionate and impartial.⁷ Both these opinions ascribe super human features to the protagonist; they are in agreement with his extraordinary status—of a fictitious participant in real events, who has the advantage of immortality over ‘ordinary people’. This advantage is the result of his discovery of the way to go back to youth: had he stayed in the world of Swift, he would not be so privileged. Such a picture, although possible, is, however, not fully in agreement with the one presented in the text, it seems that the exquisite researchers allowed themselves to be seduced by the protagonist and saw him in the way he would have liked to be been.⁸ However, let us look closely at those moments when he seems to be candid.

First of all, Grumdrypp is not absolutely objective. He is undoubtedly tolerant towards different cultures, languages and customs, but his ‘ordinary’ first life must have influenced and shaped him. That is why he, for example, is so reluctant to join the military profession, which he describes ironically:

⁶ M. Klimowicz, *Wstęp* in I. Krasicki, *Historia*, PIW, Warszawa 1956, 13.

⁷ W. Walecki, *op. cit.*, 117.

⁸ The conclusion that Grumdrypp creates his own picture is drawn by me on the basis, stressed many times by the narrator, of the authority an eye witness should enjoy and the mentioned merits he has already accomplished and he is going to accomplish in the sphere of literature and science. Probably, this was the cause of the construction of this particular vision of a story teller. However, the reader should not assume that the protagonist, while telling his story, is not honest, because if this was the case, his real character, ways of thinking and perceiving the world could not be revealed.

I was given a bow, arrows, a spear, one bigger, one smaller; and as I could not handle weapons, a centurion used his stick on me so much that within several days I became a knight, well trained and proficient in his profession. In our country this type of education was not used, but there were no knights there, either. [I, 2, 48]

And which, to a large extent, is the result of his education and upbringing. A natural consequence of such an attitude is that he values more non expansive countries than ones which thrive on conquest, and he favours mild rulers over ambitious ones.

He makes just one exception—Hannibal. He does not criticize what was after all an invasion on Rome, seeing it in terms of political necessity. However, it does not alter the fact that as an objective and disinterested observer, he should have condemned this war rather than write:

We should not be surprised that fortunate features of Hannibal turned out negatively; we should be surprised that we could have these features: with so few soldiers from different nations and customs, so little support, in an unknown country, among hostile and treacherous people. [I, 12, 73-74]

Alexander was on many occasions in similar situations, but his conquests were not assessed so positively. This is the result of the conviction about Cartagena's superiority over Rome as a mercantile nation, from the positive attitude to Hannibal as a good politician, caring for his country, and finally from antipathy towards Rome; the subject's attitude to the latter will change only later. And here he shows a further lack of coherence. The Roman republic was perceived by him as abhorrent because of its expansiveness. However, he wrote this about the time in which Caesar was coming to power:

The worse the outlook for Rome was [...] [I, 20, 102] .
Every ten years August put his jurisdiction into the hands of the people and the Senate, as if they were holding supreme power. The people and the Senate knew what this courtesy meant; and as if it was not enough to be slaves, they also had to ask to remain in bondage [I, 21, 105].

This lack of consequence is not, despite appearances, accidental. Let us have a look at one more example of the narrator's 'prejudices':

[...] and when it was finished I was told to kneel in front of this box, and just as the others did hit the ground ten times with my forehead. I felt an aversion to this meanness; but because I had earlier decided to live in the manner of the people of the country I currently stayed in, I knelt in front of this box and hit the ground ten times with my forehead. [II, 6, 138-139]

Simply, Grumdrypp has firm ideas about many things: he abhors violence, particularly if it is grounded only in greed and ambition. For him, freedom is valuable always and regardless of circumstances, and that is why he talks about August's deeds so sharply, even though he regarded August as a good ruler. He defends human dignity and opposes absolutism. Cartagena is for him the epitome of an ideal (a reader should not be thinking here about historical Cartagena, but about the vision presented by Krasicki), and that is why the war he carries on is, according to Krasicki, defensive; it defends valuable things, and therefore should not be condemned. In order to give moral guidance, one must first define a system of values according to which the reality will be estimated. The criterion of gain which he relied on in his two other novels was not enough—Alexander's expedition and the rule of August brought gains, yet they were not assessed positively. Hence, a vision of the world which Grumdrypp has 'embedded' in himself and which makes it impossible for him to be objective in the absolute sense.

Of course, it happens at times that the protagonist learns first, and only then assesses. In such instances it is common sense which becomes the criterion, while the main argument is the balance of gains and losses.

I decided to look for sounder support in various sciences, and particularly in philosophy. So I started philosophising [...], having run away from the town ragged and barefoot, in the first cottage [...] I took off my philosophical rags, cursing not so much the people

who slighted me, but rather the profession, which has brought much shame and pain onto me. [I, 16, 85-87]

In this way Grumdrypp learns about and assesses what is new and what he has not come across before. Then, he really becomes objective, although he begins with certain convictions. For example, in the quoted fragment it is the conviction about the moral support and superiority philosophy brings. It should be admitted though that the protagonist has not jumped from one extreme to another, and has surveyed philosophical trends before assessing them as a whole. He gets rid of some of the stereotypes in a similar manner:

Tacitus later wrote of the people elevated by an office of birth, that they seem to be better when looked at from a distance. That was my opinion about Amilkar. [I, 10, 68]

And again, it is the closer acquaintance with Hannibal's father which allows him to test the validity of this opinion. Grumdrypp is driven by curiosity and the will to learn about the world, and that is why he does not stick stubbornly to one particular conviction. In his case, only the basic values remain unchanged.

The narrator-protagonist is not so 'non-human/inhuman' as might be assumed. However, longevity has not erased some weaknesses in him, while the multitude of emotions has not turned him into an indifferent person who is not subjected to emotions. Let us start, however, with pinpointing some of the protagonist's weaknesses. In the first place it is the fact of being driven by emotions:

[...] because I was too angered by people's depravities [...] I became a cynic, and in the first of my heroic rashness I threw into the sea the rest of the money. [I, 16, 86]

And the predilection for alcohol:

[...] I was drunk many times, and as a result I developed quarantine fever; I could have paid for my drives with hallucinations if it had not been for a good doctor whom we had in the house. [I, 3, 53]

And even that he is sometimes scared:

[...] fire in a manner of lightning suddenly soared up [...] I shivered looking at this unexpected spectacle, then, when some dozens of similar lightnings soared up with a bang, I almost lost consciousness, and started to shriek and run away. [II, 6, 139]

Of course, all these accusations should not be taken too seriously, yet they are not meaningless. First of all, because they are a part of a debate with the utopia of immortality. The possibility of eternal life, which seems to be desired, in the satirical work of Swift becomes calamity because of the loss of strength connected with the loss of youth. Grumdrypp deals with it with the help of a mysterious tree, so it may seem that he achieves full bliss, the desired state, which allows him to exist without fear of death, accumulate wealth and knowledge, and enjoy life. The truth, however, turns out to be different.

The experiences he has gathered do not free from human weaknesses, which can be illustrated by the examples above. What is more, his unusual condition creates new tribulations. At first they are connected with the possibility of the balsam losing its properties. In such a case his fate is going to be worse than death, which the protagonist earlier earnestly desired. With the flow of time, when he stops doubting in the permanent validity of the balsam, it turns out that there is one more price to be paid for immortality:

If anything made my bliss smaller, it was something most peculiar [...] something which I had considered my privilege: my extraordinary durability. The idea that I am going to outlive my beloved has sometimes filled my blissful days with bitterness. [I, 14, 81]

These words are still filled with the charm of 'blissful days' and with the hope that the power of the balsam will allow him to lengthen the life of his friends. It is ironic that after their death, after which remorse led him to the decision of 'rejuvenation', it turned out that happiness is transient:

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[...] As fast as I could I was moving away from the town in which I once lived such a happy life. Fresh experiences have taught me how little we can rely on the gifts of Fortune, and even less on people. [I, 16, 85]

Anyway, it was not so easy for him to come to terms with all of his losses:

[...] I was extremely grieved to learn that my son, after a short illness, died in Tyr, where he went on trading business. This loss was a great shock to me [...] I took with me quite a lot of money and went to Tyr. [II, 5, 136]

Every time that the protagonist decides to start a 'new' life, his choice is like a substitute for death; an attempt of escape after his relatives' departure. And yet these are not his only problems. He must ceaselessly hide his longevity, use different tricks, mind his words, look after his balsam. And ultimately loneliness and alienation catch him; he cannot be frank, even with friends:

It seemed to me at this time that I was transgressing against the duties of friendship, withholding from them the secret of my balsam. On the other hand, I was afraid that such a coming out would create jealousy, which is so typical of human nature. [I, 14, 81].

Longevity presented in such a way, devoid of attractions, becomes Krasicki's voice on the theme of the utopia of immortality, his pondering on human nature and human fate. This pessimistic conclusion is one more proof that true happiness comes from moderation and staying within the frames created by nature.⁹ While for the narration itself, what matters is a 'human' creation of the narrator because of the position he assumes in relation to the reader. Instead of becoming one more sage, whose opinions cannot be questioned, he becomes something closer—a participant in events, whose words are to be gauged according to reason, but in whose tone there is no condescending didactics; a partner in dealing with history and man.

⁹ The problem of anthropological traits in *History*, which is barely mentioned here and which requires research, was pointed out to me by Prof. Teresa Kostkiewicz.

Such a construction of this character is totally in agreement with Krasicki's starting assumptions. Grumdrypp in some respects is equally unreliable as other chroniclers, while the reader is to learn how to think, search for truth and draw conclusions for himself.

II. The Recipient

1. Prince Bishop Krasicki throws down a challenge

The issue of the novel's recipients is the one which distinguishes *History* from other Krasicki's novels. Let us try to recreate the point of view of the eighteenth-century reader, because it is the only way to perceive the uniqueness of *History* and to understand its lack of popularity with the readers of this period, which was in contrast with Krasicki's other novels: *The Adventures of Michael Wisdom* and *Mr. Pantler*. A contemporary reader, for whom the way of Michael Wisdom is as exotic as the world of Grumdrypp, and who is used to fantastic and intertextual elements, will not clearly perceive this difference, so crucial for the construction of an implied reader.

Above all, in contrast to the two other novels of Krasicki, the story presented in *History* goes not only a long way beyond the frames of everyday experience, but frequently also beyond the range of knowledge about the world of an 'average' recipient. It is the same with the narrator. He not only is not a member of a landowning class, but his background is totally foreign, impossible to check, and it is not possible to apply any stereotypes towards him. As if it was not enough that he comes from the past (ancient periods, after all, were commonly perceived as the source of models and archetypes, and thus were not totally alien to readers from the landowning class), his roots are fantastic, fairy-tale like. So there are two reasons for confusion: about the described world and about the protagonist who presents it, and who cannot be identified with, who is other.

The question arises as to why this otherness of the narrator is so crucial. Above all because the narrator sets new demands on the reader. The story teller does not help readers to get rooted in the world described, but becomes a partner inviting co-operation

and play.¹⁰ The factor which decides about the agreement between the author and his readers is not social class but erudition and general knowledge.¹¹ Let us now deal with the tasks which those who accept such an invitation will be confronted with.

A virtual recipient of the novel is above all very well versed in ancient history and the early history of Poland, and knows sources about them so well that the storyteller can, without losing time on superfluous explanations, comment on certain facts or present anecdotes, for example:

His daughter Wenda, or Wanda, did not reject Rytygier, because he did not live in the world. She did not jump from a bridge into the Vistula, because people were carried in boats across the river near Kraków. It is true that she drowned, but it was not her fault. The ferryman was drunk. [III, 6, 157]

The polemics with the legend of Wanda are carried out in such a way that a recipient not proficient in Polish legends does not notice their sharpness. The narrator, however, does not introduce basic facts; he even does not mention them; he assumes that they are very well known to his recipients. This is good if the reader rises to the challenge. If not, the authorial intentions, his vision of history, of the people of ancient times and people of today, remain hidden from him; and his irony is just incomprehensible.

However, it so happens, particularly in the case of debates with ancient chroniclers, that the narrator as a presumed author (the role he is given in the *Preface* and which is consistently kept by the footnotes) in an attempt to be precise, truthful and relying on sources, as becomes

¹⁰ *History* in terms of a play with convention was described by W. Walecki, op. cit.

¹¹ One would like to treat in the categories of 'fortunate' and 'unfortunate' message, while it is the act of reception not of sending which is crucial. It was the unfortunate reception which resulted in minute popularity of *History* with the contemporaries of Krasicki, and, as a result, also of today's reception. One must admit that Krasicki was challenging to his readers.

a work with revisionist ambitions, makes cross-references to the text, and in a footnote quotes a fragment with which he enters into a debate:

“In ulteriori cuius ripa [Hydaspis] Porus consederat, transitu prohibiturus hostem LXXXV elephantos obiecerat, eximo corporum, robore, ultraque eos currus CCC et peditum XXX fere milia” [footnote, I, 2, 49].

The fact that the quotation is in Latin should not surprise those readers who knew Krasicki’s ideas.¹² Quoting old texts in the original expresses implicitly the views of the real author on the grounding of culture and establishes a circle of ‘the initiated’, reduces the number of readers of the novel, although in the novel itself he explains and paraphrases the opinions of chroniclers with whom he carries on debates. Knowledge of history and belonging to a group of people for whom Latin is a ‘living’ language, who are proficient—these are two conditions he sets for his readers.

As we are dealing with ‘authorial’ footnotes now, let us observe in some detail how they are used to set up contact with readers. They are not only confirmations of the storyteller’s words through referring to a quotation from an ancient author, but they also contain commentaries referring to them directly. There are not very many instances of such a convention, and that is why it is even more worthy of attention. We can use the commentary on Seneca [II, 1, 119] as an example, which is to confirm the truth of Grumdrypp’s words, through referring to other real authors holding similar opinions. What happens later is also interesting:

Qua sapientia, quibus philosophorum praeceptis, intra quadriennium regiae amicitiae ter millies sestertium paravisset (Ter milies sestertium is fifty nine million of Polish zlotys.) [II, 1, 119];

¹² They are expressed *expressis verbis* in *Mr. Pantler*: “If, on the agreement of nations, one language was chosen for sciences, advantages would be numerous. I am not particularly attached to any of them, but Latin should be restored to its former role. Now, I hear, it is becoming common; so much for the worse.” [I, 1, 5, 19]. Quoted in J. Krasicki, *Pan Podstoli*, ed. by K. Stasiewicz, Olsztyn 1994.

Above all, because the conversion into Polish currency shows the addressee of the novel. Apart from the alleged place in which the manuscript was found, which could have been accidental, and the language in which it was written, this is the clearest authorial hint defining the recipient. The trans-national and trans-temporal content of Krasicki's novel is one more step on the way to transformation of the way of thinking, not of numerous members of the gentry any more, but of enlightened people—citizens of the Polish Commonwealth.

The footnote which follows has a slightly different function than the one which has been dealt with, and that is why we are going to look at it closely:

The correspondence between Alexander and Aristotle, in this Kadłubek is expressed in a very interesting way. We can learn from it how the capital city of Lechici was called Catanthas: as Alexander wrote such a letter to them: "Si sapitis? valebitis; sin autem, non." There were more than two hundred letters like this. It is a great pity that they are lost. [III, 6, 158]

This time the narrator uses sharp irony, which is already heralded by these words: "in this Kadłubek", which creates an intellectual distance between the storyteller and Kadłubek, the medieval chronicler, and by the ellipsis "The correspondence [...] in this Kadłubek is expressed in a very interesting way". The exclamation at the end, unusual with this quite composed narrator, strengthens this effect, and by addressing the Highest Instance it gives the loss of these alleged letters a dimension of a horrible disaster. The shape of the parallel sentences which summarize the content of the lost correspondence is also worth noting. They are similar in structure to another invented story from a different novel:

[...] how Julie had been locked up in a cloister's garden, how she had greatly mourned the loss of the man who loved her, how once while walking in the cloister's garden she had been forcibly abducted by

unknown persons, how she had been seized by other unknown persons in some faraway wilderness [...]¹³

It seems that the supposed author of the manuscript wanted to doubt the authenticity of the letters and the information contained in them through such a structure. Anyway, what are the reasons for such sharp criticism? Maybe Krasicki could afford to create in his own history personal models taken from the legendary history of other nations, but he was taken aback by the lack of moderation in praising one's own country and he may have been worried about its consequences.

Another feature of a virtual reader is, as we have already mentioned, erudition. An ideal recipient should know the mentioned ancient texts even without footnotes. He also should have known contemporary texts if he had wanted to decipher all the meanings included in the novel. We have already mentioned the exact quotation from Swift, while Grumdrypp refers also to Pindar's odes, Horace's songs and Ovid's threnodies and other texts all the way from ancient times to *Telemak*—a comparative text used in the description of Spai—and the already mentioned *Programma literarium*. An erudite recipient will also notice the motif of self-reliant life taken from *Robinson Crusoe* [II, 10], although it is presented differently: in the manner of Rousseau's return to nature. Things which were challenges and a fight for survival in the case of the English castaway are means of a happy life for the narrator of *History*. The life away from the world's iniquities, human treachery and fear (by the way: this is an attitude so different from the one Grumdrypp presented at the very beginning [I, 2], when the return to life with people fulfilled his desires).

2. In the World of Texts

One more novel comes to mind when we compare *History* with other literary texts: Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. The similarity is based on the way in which the narration is constructed—it permanently

¹³ Ignacy Krasicki, *The Adventures of Mr. Nicholas Wisdom*, transl. by Thomas H. Holsington, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1992, 140.

engages and surprises the reader, using different tricks and conventions to get in contact with him, forces him to be active and to co-operate. The difference can be found in the fact that in Sterne's novel the understanding with the recipient is achieved at the level of structure and is connected with the creation of the text, the author's creative possibilities, and the ways of presenting the world. While Krasicki starts a dialogue on the level of ideas, ways of understanding, representing and assessing a man and his world. But, in order for a dialogue to be possible, the following are required: a common range of knowledge and experiences, and a common cultural code. That is why *History* is so challenging for the reader.

The erudition of the ideal recipient allows him not only to get all the allusions, recognize the sources of intertextual references, and stay in permanent contact with the narrator, to keep up with his breakneck speed of presenting the world, culture and art, but also to comprehend what may be called the literary map on which *History* is located. We have already dealt with Swift and the ways in which the narrator takes up his games, treating *Gulliver's Travels* as if it was the letter which precedes the text, that is as a real document, and we also mentioned the fact of the narrator supporting his own existence with Gulliver's notes. And also about the ways in which the real author of the novel deals with the issues of man's immortality. But this is not all, as the novel, in the manner of Sterne, is entangled in other intertextual relations, that is in the space of Krasicki's own writings. And it is here where there exists room to create and destroy illusions and literariness, to demystify and adopt masks. In "Podróż z Warszawy ("A Journey from Warsaw"), one of Krasicki's poems in prose, he confided to his readers:

However, I was stopped by curiosity near this inn,
between Biłgoraj and Tarnogród, where, as they say, a Cossack found
some old book.
I asked the innkeeper for the source of this news.
He said, swearing that he was speaking the truth, "I do not know
the book, nor this Cossack".

So I wanted to look for the rest and when I scolded the Jew,
I found, but not the one I was looking for.¹⁴

In this way, he simultaneously denies the existence of the manuscript and all the conventions used in the *Preface*, which were to make him reliable, and denies that he is its author. He puts on a mask not so much of a reader, but someone who has barely heard about the ‘famous’ manuscript and is interested in it as a local curio. Besides, in this way he ‘pays back’ the manuscript’s editor, who in the footnote to Grumdrypp’s work has treated him so badly, calling him ‘some poet’ and accusing him of falsehood. Krasicki’s self-irony goes very deep, especially when he puts himself together with unreliable chroniclers with whom he enters into polemics throughout the entire novel. His views on truthfulness towards historical truth and goals of history as science can already be found in the letter “To Prince Adam Naruszewicz”. This is not the only self-ironic commentary of Krasicki.¹⁵ So, in Krasicki’s novel we have reality, literature and the interplay between them.

III. Structure

1. Foundations

The time has come to concentrate on the ways in which the story-line and the depicted world are presented. We can distinguish two levels of the story-line in *History*: the first one is the level of the protagonist and his ‘private history’, that is all those moments in which Grumdrypp concentrates on himself as an individual:

This teacher came to me twice every day, and after few weeks I could understand them talking, and with time I learnt to speak quite well myself. After four months of learning I was taken to the governor [I, 2, 47]

¹⁴ I. Krasicki, *Podróż z Warszawy. Do księcia Stanisława Poniatowskiego* in Idem, *Pisma wybrane*, vol. 2, ed. By Z. Goliński, M. Klimowicz, R. Wołoszyński, T. Mikulski, PIW, Warszawa 1954, 181-182.

¹⁵ Another one, about his profession, can be found in the third part [III, 9 167].

The distance of the narrator to the presented events can be called 'memoir type'—longer periods of time are described ("a few weeks", "after four months"), a clear tendency to sum things up appears "and with time I learnt to speak quite well myself", although at times it gets shortened:

After waking up I felt some change and inner revolution and I could barely believe myself that, whereas I could hardly walk without the help of a stick, I briskly stood up. [I, 1, 45]

Then the attention of the narrator gets concentrated on the events which happen within a short span of time. He recalls them one by one and pays attention to his emotions. Such situations, however, are relatively rare and are connected either with crucial moments in the protagonist's life (like the moment described above, or his escape from prison [I, 16]), or have a didactic goal, and the example here is the storyteller himself (Grumdrypp's behaviour on the steps of the temple after he has lost everything [I, 7], or a firework display in China [II, 6]).

The second level is the level of history, in which the protagonist is only a part of a bigger whole:

The dauphin of the dynasty was called Lin-ti, and was even worse and wickeder than the last one. This one did not call me to the court. However, I kept receiving everything punctually. [...] In the end Tongtcho, the supreme commander started a rebellion. [...] I lost everything in this commotion. [II, 9, 146]

Real historical events—changes of emperors, rebellions—have their consequences in the narrator's life. The distance in such instance is even greater. It can be described as the 'chronicle type'. The storyteller presents the key facts from general history, at times mentioning his participation in them. This participation, however, as Walecki¹⁶ noticed, is mostly passive.

¹⁶ See W. Walecki, *op. cit.*, 97.

Let us now turn from the story-line to the world presented. The most important indicators of it are descriptions, and to be more precise, their shape. They are relatively rare in this novel, and they are far removed from the sensual, detailed pictures from *Mr. Pantler*, and even from the short and focused descriptions on central aspects from *Nicholas Wisdom*. The aim of most of the descriptions is to give characteristic features rather than to highlight space.

Just beyond the town I had a beautiful vineyard, and close to it a cottage, dainty but quite small. [...] Next to the town palace I set up a beautiful and extensive garden. [I, 14, 79]

The most frequently used adjective, ‘beautiful’, is not used for presentation but for assessment. The elements of space mentioned here seem to be like theatrical props: a cottage, dainty, quite small, a garden—extensive, beautiful, a vineyard—beautiful and so on. All of them, with the adjuncts defining them, are to suggest wealth, order, taste, and not to evoke how things really look. They can be treated as conventional signs: the protagonist lives happily and in moderation, the period of peace continues. In this way a description also becomes a profile of a wider context, in which Grumdrypp is always placed: Efez, in which he lives, is an affluent town. It is not at war, it enjoys peace, thanks to which it can develop, which is also advantageous to its citizens. In this way it stands in contrast to all places drawn into wars. And what about the conclusions which the reader can draw from it? It is not wars which make nations happy. This is not, by any means, an over-interpretation—and if we take into consideration the work’s goal and the way in which Krasicki understood history, it is identical with the author’s intentions. However, let us return to descriptions. The most ‘vivid’ and imaginative is the first of them—the presentation of the place in which the narrator’s first transformation took place:

[...] where between rocks the beautiful valley was divided by a rapid spring, going down over stones. The shade of old cedars alleviated the heat, and in the nearby rock caves, as if made by human skills, stood there offering places for good rest. [...] [I, 1, s. 45];

And for comparison, a description of a town:

The town was ornate, tidy and populous. Houses, although built differently than ours, were handsome and comfortable. [I, 2, 47]

We deal with the intellectual, not sensuous perception of the world, with a predilection for drawing conclusions from experiences. "The town ornate, tidy and populous" could, after all, be introduced through descriptions of architecture, crowds on the streets and other characteristic elements.

We should also pay attention to 'Chinese' descriptions, above all, because they are surprisingly numerous and they concentrate not only on places, but also on people and things:

He was a solemn old man, wearing a long robe with sleeves all the way to the ground. The robe was violet, made of silk. He had a board on his chest with an embroidered dragon with no claws, because such a distinction can be used by an emperor alone. [II, 7, 141]

In this fragment we should focus on the ending: "such a distinction can be used by an emperor alone". It includes information about the culture of China, which will always be strange and different for an European. It could even be suggested that such descriptions appear in order to, as Klimowicz argued in the introduction, present the country's exoticism, while the notes at the end are there not so much to teach the reader about the world he does not know, but exactly in order to focus on this exoticism. Then, it would only be an extension with new elements of earlier descriptions, and the 'Chinese' descriptions in a likewise manner would not make impressions, and would be a kind of theatrical props.

Another type of presentation in *History*, or rather characteristic features of the space, are two fragments devoted to presentations of two countries. It is not an accident that the first one of them is China [II, 8, 145] and the other one is Spain [I, 9, 66-67]. They are more than ordinary 'pictures' and are more similar to the reports of travellers, and similar to the story of Mikołaj from Nip, they are centred around the key issues in the fields of culture, history and

customs. The description of China is limited to features of mentality—the ways of thinking about history and science. In the margin it should be noted how skilful and tactful Krasicki was in this respect: he was attacking Chinese chroniclers for exactly the same things for which he was attacking European chroniclers: a tendency to inventions and legend uplifting one's own nation through mythical origins. The reader can in no way feel offended, and he will certainly remember this lesson. The description of Spain goes even further, because it is not even a traveller's report, but a picture of ideal relationships, a utopia. So, once again, the reader is moved beyond concrete spaces to abstract ones, to the signs and symbols of culture, to the heritage of thought.

While analysing the structure of the novel, its internal division should also be dealt with. The border between the first and the second parts is almost imperceptible when one reads the novel. Neither time nor space change in a clear way. The plot development is preserved, and it might seem that the division is fully accidental. It is different between Books Two and Three; Book Three is preceded by a note of the diligent publisher:

These several dozens of pages have been freshly torn from the manuscript. Although I have searched for them as hard as I could, I have not found them. So I am dutifully quoting what was written on the first page after the missing ones. [II, 10, 151]

This time the authorial goals are clear. This hiatus is the result of wanting to save oneself and the reader from having to wait for the really interesting issue: the beginnings of the Polish nation. Therefore, the publisher turns out to be useful. He successfully explains, using external reasons, the huge jump in time and space which is accomplished between Book Two and Book Three. Krasicki should be praised here for his diligence with details. Despite the initial confusion the reader quickly regains orientation and the conviction that it is the same text which he is reading. Even though some of it is missing, it is preserved by the structuring of the narration in such a way which suggests the text's unity.

I have mentioned earlier where Lech came from, and also the reasons and circumstances of it, and also the family from which he came. So, now I should present what he did after settling down in this country. [III, 6, 154]

Of course, the recipient of the text has no idea where Lech came from, or what were the reasons and circumstances of the whole situation and about his family tree. However, the manuscript preserves continuity. It is stressed once again by one more comment of the narrator:

I have mentioned above how I happened to be in Lech's company. [III, 6, 158]

And when the key issues of contention (because Book Three, particularly the fragments dealing with Poland, is almost exclusively polemics with the earlier chronicles) are exhausted, the publisher once again shows that he is useful, and laconically ends the whole work with these words:

There is no more. [III, 10, 169]

There is one conclusion which can be drawn for the 'positive' reception: the narrator's goal, and therefore the goal of the real author of the novel, is not the presentation of the world depicted (we might suppose so taking into the account the scarcity of means), or the fate of the protagonist (as the attention of the storyteller is not focused on his internal life or on his individual experiences). In order to reveal what is the goal of Grundrypp and Krasicki we should therefore analyse other literary means and ways of diversifying the plot.

2. "Digressions"

What is the carrier of the key meanings in *History*, as it is not a plot like in *Nicholas Wisdom* or a depicted world like in *Mr. Pantler*? When we analyse this novel we notice that it is 'digressive' in structure. The main plot is over and over again suspended by various tricks of the narrator, which are the result of the reported events, and simultaneously they extend the horizon of knowledge, opening new

contexts for these events. Various literary conventions are used to deal with it.

The first one which we will list is reflections; these are surprisingly rare in this novel. They differ in structure and origin. In some of them the reader is addressed directly, but they are in the minority; other reflections begin ‘without a warning’, with an indicative statement, and only their general character allows us to figure out that they are not parts of the plot:

Those well versed in military matters judge commanders not exclusively on battles won [...],, managing a whole campaign, providing an army with food, proper marches, positions well-chosen [...] bring valour to commanders. [I, 12, 74]

Anyway, their endings are always open to the further development of events presented by the narrator and are directly connected with the events and protagonists:

[...] and it was in this aspect that Hannibal was better than others so much that when in a conversation with Scipio he presented him as better than himself, it was more modesty or politics than real truth. [I, 12, 74]

The sources from which reflections of the storyteller come are also very diverse. Most of them are connected with extra-literary reality, and they are based on the author’s observations. The quotation above about military art may serve as an example, but perhaps the following quotation is more representative:

Just chroniclers used to be concerned about the ways in which they rendered their descriptions of good people, their characters, ways of acting and thinking. A reader, enlightened in this way, learns a lot about the person whose history he reads about, learns about his or her secret emotions, and following on this starts to think about causes for actions. That is why history is considered the science of customs. [I. 4. 54]

This is the opinion of Krasicki, which he, by the way, shared with other prominent minds of the Enlightenment, and which is also known to his readers from his other works. The narrator does not voice it because of his earlier experiences, but gives it as an *a priori* statement, the basis of his actions and an incentive to start relating his life. This 'outside' direction is characteristic of the whole cognitive content of *History*—the depicted world is composed only of silhouettes, the plot is based at most on what is at best science fiction (and at worst a fairy tale), and all the presented judgements and conclusions move beyond the comic and playful and should be treated really seriously. Because they refer to extra-literary reality not through the presented world and its similarities with the real world, but directly. It can be stated that they start from this world and they have their goal in it, while the fictitious, fantastic story is only a medium. And it seems that it is this lack of reality which guarantees that the recipient will be looking for something more. His goal is to go beyond the external outfit, towards the message, the proper goal, which is only barely hidden by this outfit. There is no point in identifying with or even of taking the invented plot seriously. Krasicki used different means to de-mystify the plot to convince the recipient that the very plot is unimportant. Similarly to fairy tales, the content that matters is located beneath the invented fiction.

Let us return, however, to the second type of reflections, the source of which is the existence of the narrator, in other words to reflections which are motivated by events in the world presented:

The station of merchants is quite happy, but in my opinion, it cannot be equalled with farming. Constant worries are fuelled by imagination, fears of loss make one restless. Every time I was sending my ships away, although I tried to make precautions against unexpected incidents, I kept being worried even though I did not want to. [II, 3, 127-128]

This quoted example, similarly to the other ones, is the result of the reflections on the narrator-protagonist's present situation ('present' in this case means the situation which is discussed at the moment, because the distance remains almost all the time at

the memoir-chronicle level) and is supported by the events and the story presented in the plot.

Another way of stopping the plot in order to extend ‘the depicted world’—or perhaps in the case of this novel we should use the term ‘the thoughtful world’, because in this world it is the conclusions which are really important—is the characterisation of the protagonists. In contrast to the protagonist of other Krasicki novels (*History* ‘shines’ particularly when compared to Krasicki’s earlier novels) these are not shallow, short characterisations. On the contrary, they are restricted exclusively to internal features and they are directed at exhaustive, convincing and holistic presentation of the protagonists.¹⁷ This is, after all, in agreement with the statement of the storyteller quoted above about history as the science of past events. The figures which Grumpdrypp presents can be divided according to two sets of criteria: either into real and fictitious or into positive, ambivalent and negative. The fictitious characters, presented meticulously, always serve as models. Anyway, there are just two such characterisations: of Hannon, the merchant, and of Leontius. The first of them is described mostly through his deeds:

[...] when we stopped in Cartagena, I had all the necessary amenities in his house. [I, 8, 64]

They are the picture of real friendship, and that is how the narrator perceives them. However, he does not leave without comment:

Modelus, the just one, not only gave, but also knew how to give [...] this righteous and estimable gentleman could so well use all the circumstances of his life that he became useful for his country, family, esteemed by his friends and co-citizens. [I, 8, 64-65]

¹⁷ Waław Walecki, in the book which has already been quoted here, remarked that these descriptions are usually not concerned with the life of presented people. Krasicki focused on portraits of personalities, not on personal careers. (W. Walecki, op. cit., 121).

The second of the positive protagonists is presented through his history, which is also used to focus on certain features of his personality:

He joined the merchant [...] and after a few years of faithful service he achieved the level at which he started trading himself. Different adventures did not lead him straight to the situation he desired. However, without losing heart, he gained so much through deliberation and patience that he ended up a wealthy man. And because he was not driven by greed [...] he ended up with the trade and settled down in Roda. There he found a woman who did not have a big dowry and was not beautiful but was well-behaved, and he took her for his wife. You could recognize great erudition from his discourses and he had an extraordinary memory. [I, 17, 90-91]

And through his statement in which he defines his principles:

I put as my foundation the Being omniscient, unlimited, full of goodness [...] This principle of morality is the most important for me: to be useful [...] I watch my lips as far as possible [...] Nothing excuses lying in my eyes [...] I avoid peculiarities [...] It would be too flattering to give the following definition of my thinking if I added that I do what I have written I should do. I am a man. Therefore, I am imperfect. [I, 17, 92-93].

Also, the way in which this statement is structured—we have a clear hierarchy of features starting with the most crucial ones, with short explanations which follow clear and precise language—is part of this model constructed by the author and introduced by the storyteller.

As far as real characters are concerned, as we have already mentioned, they can be divided into three categories. The first one: the characterisations which idealize. There are more of them than could be expected. Krasicki presents in exemplary fashion the following figures: Ptolemy, Amilcar, Hannibal, Lucullus, Attic, Virgil and many more. He writes most extensively about Hannibal and Lucullus. They present two different models of man. Let us look briefly at the first of them.

The narrator, in the manner of a chronicler, presents his history. He is less concerned with the time in Hannibal's life when he was conquering Rome and walking into the Eternal City. This event is just an opportunity to enter into a debate with ancient chroniclers. He focuses on Hannibal after his defeat:

[...] he would have longer defended his position if it had not been for the repeated orders to return to his country [...] In this office he displayed great perfection. The laws which he established were beneficial and proper in this situation. [I, 12, 74-75].

According to Grumdrypp, the following things deserved respect and acclaim: his ceaseless fight with the Romans, now not on battlefields, but at the courts of the kings, where he lived as a fugitive, and finally his death, which was forced by his persistent opponents—so he challenged all historical sources which had presented Hannibal:

[...] and because it was Romans who mostly told posterity about Hannibal, they paid homage to truth, when it was obvious, but whenever they could present him in black colours, they did so willingly. [...] [I, 13, 78].

The narrator presents him mostly as a model of a 'politician'—a law giver involved in the development of his country, spending all his efforts on its defence, using all means to make it prosperous and safe (one of these means was an offensive war, which was not condemned by the storyteller). Hannibal and his father become bearers of such features, which Krasicki's readers should also develop in themselves, even if their efforts were also to end in disaster. This was an allusion to the situation in Poland:

The laws which he established were beneficial and proper in this situation.[I, 12, 74]

was clear enough, and the need for enlightened people who could give laws "beneficial and proper in this situation" was obvious. That is why we have the model of a commander and law giver in *History*, even though such a model was not close to the narrator and the author.

The situation with Lucullus is very different. He is a model of a private man, not involved in politics, an intellectual living a quiet life, devoted to arts and science, supporting culture:

His court was big and majestic, but the choice of people was the master's greatest honour. All skilled craftsmen volunteered to work for him, and all were perfecting themselves under his observant and prudent eye. [I, 19, 97-98]

And, again, the narrator's attention is drawn to the later, seemingly less attractive period of the protagonist's life. His public service is summarized in just one not very detailed fragment. However, unlike Hannibal, Lucullus is not characterized through polemics. Grumdrypp, while introducing the protagonist's way of life, shows his deeds in a positive light and his figure as the model to follow ("under his observant and prudent eyes", "skilled", "majestic").

Of course, there are also negative protagonists introduced through the same method— through telling about their lives, deeds, polemics with historical sources, presenting them in a different, often idealized manner, and finally, through quoting them. It is Alexander who, out of all the figures ultimately assessed negatively, represents this model most fully. However, it should be stressed that Grumdrypp never concentrates on belittling their achievement, nor on trying to prove that they had not done what they really had done. The only thing which gets transformed is the way of interpretation of these facts.

Here Krasicki relies mostly on indirect characterisation. The narrator does not list the concrete features of these figures, but they are suggested. On the other hand, we also have many direct characterisations in *History*, of condensed "pictures", summing up the storyteller's knowledge about a given person. They are mostly ambivalent or negative in character. The best and the clearest example here is a 'gallery' of August's guests and Lucullus's friends.

Shortly after our arrival he was visited by Cicero. When I was presented to him I instantly recognized that his strongest passion was vain glory [...] Cato, not as persuasive and not as loquacious as

Cicero, when he wanted to give up for a moment his solemn ways, was nice [...], a sharp censor and critic, he criticized everything which he did not like and he did not like everything which he had not authored. [...] Pompeii was taciturn and solemn, he spoke not much, but wisely. Caesar, nice, gentle, sociable, he was a good orator, and he seemed to enjoy what was coming from his mouth. [I, 19, 98-100]

Great people, who were often referred to in the times of the Enlightenment, were presented in this way. It is worth noting that the narrator always presents the way of behaviour in a society, behaviour towards other people. An important thing he wanted to transfer to his recipients was an assessing method and relying on common sense, which tells us that even the best people have their weaknesses. Krasicki's predilection for demythologization will have yet another opportunity to be revealed. However, this model of characterisation is used mostly for the figures assessed ambivalently, as if Krasicki had thought that the difference between good and evil is revealed only through deeds and words.

Another tool used by the narrator in order to stop the plot development and draw the attention of his readers to some new issue is the shortening of distance. We mentioned this while dealing with the distance of the storyteller to the story told. It should be remembered that this is also the way of introducing new ideas and moral lessons. Apart from the situation when the shortening of the distance is used to analyse the experiences of a protagonist connected with some situation crucial for him, it is used mostly to construct a short scene which the reader should learn from.

Filip the doctor who cured him [Alexander] after this bathing in Cydna, one day entered the banqueting room and started converting Alexander to moderation. Alexander, with a glass of very good wine in hand, started to convert Filip. It ended in both of them, the king and the doctor, being carried away from the table; on the next day they were both in bed. The doctor, who was not accustomed to it, was unconscious in bed for two days, Alexander, having recovered a little, started to drink so avidly that he was carried back to bed and never woke up. [I, 3, 53-54]

This story requires a punch line: drunkenness is harmful, moderation is the most important thing. There are not many stories like this one in the novel. They embellish it, creating a contrast with the narration, which is usually dry and cursory. Some of them resemble sketches for fables, others look like anecdotes; but they are all didactic, introduce positive and negative attitudes, and they are connected with the values presented by the storyteller.

And finally the last, the most frequent and misunderstood way of stopping the plot: the polemics with the existing books on history. The starting point is always an event from a wider, historical plain, which had already been presented by one of chroniclers:

A few years before his death [Lucullus] ran away from the city [...] That is why Plutarch, a faithful teller of public stories, extensively describes the last part of Lucullus's life [...] saying that one of his lovers, wanting to keep him bound to herself through extraordinary means, gave him *filtrum* in a drink, which later became the cause of his madness. [I, 20, 102];

After quoting reports about such events, he argues against what he considers to be false and invented reports, using arguments based on common sense:

It is strange that a reasonable man, and a distinguished writer, and a philosopher on top of everything, writes such nonsense. An old man of seventy does not think about lovers, and if he had them, then his exquisite taste would make him choose women who would not have to use magic to make him like them. [I, 20, 102].

The narrator is usually driven by one goal—historical truth. However, when we consider the authorial will, we find three reasons for which he enters into debates with the earlier historical books and chronicles. The first one, which is exemplified above, is an attempt to refute accusations against figures he wants to present as models. He uses similar technique in the case of Hannibal. It also happens that he defends such historical figures for whom he has little fellow feeling, for example Nero, against accusations that he burnt Rome

for the whim of rebuilding it as a more beautiful city. It could be said that in such cases he really cares for historical truth.

The other reason for his polemics is 'revisionism', that is of presenting the narrator he has constructed as a real witness of historical events; hence the disputes about the number of elephants, horses, infantry, which (otherwise exquisite) Paul Cazin treated too seriously.¹⁸ There are very few such games, and their purpose is a literary game in the probability of the improbable; at the same time they have to, according to the will of the narrator, make it more real, and according to the author, undermine the function of Grumdrypp as an eye witness.

And the final reason for the debates with the chroniclers is refuting all their inventions and falsifications which go against common sense.

The battle of Arbella is described differently than in Curcius and Plutarch [...] According to their story, Darius was sitting on a golden cart. There stood statues made of precious metals in the country, where such representations were banned by the religion of magi. The prophet who was in the back-up force saw an eagle above Alexander. Alexander was not pious. The prophets of those centuries, as is usual with all clergymen, were not brave. Those who have witnessed battles know very well that in the dust and disarray one cannot see not only a single eagle but even a flock of them. Birds are scared by the noise and tumult of battles. An eagle, although it is called the birds' king, flies away like a crow. All these circumstances put together go against this fairy tale, which is, let us admit it, quite funny, but badly invented. [I, 5, 52-53].

Through the use of jokes and irony, as well as indulgence and through appeals to rational premises, Krasieński makes fun of legends connected with the key heroes in antiquity and the beginnings of the Polish state:

¹⁸ "Our 'eye witness' refutes the claims of Quinte-Curce about the number of elephants, local customs, Brahmans and many other things. He performs similar criticism over centuries, in different countries, up till the time of the reign of Bolesław Chrobry (Quoted in: P. Cazin, *Książę biskup warmiński Ignacy Krasieński 1735-1801*, transl. by M. Mroziński, ed. by Z. Goliński, Wydawnictwo Pojezierze, Olsztyn 1986, 196).

[...] Lech, having turned towards his own people [...] encouraged them to courage and patience, promising fertile land and ample spoils [...] And so forward went with enthusiasm, not the army itself, but the varied crowd with wives, children and cattle [...] and if tents and brushwood shacks may be called a town, then let me say, after Kadłubek and Długosz, that he founded a town. [III, 5, 153]

This is the cause of numerous misunderstandings of readers of *History*, both then and now. While analysing the reasons for which Krasicki enters into these polemics, it is usually historical revisionism which is pointed to. However, it seems that this is not quite the case, particularly because of the narrator's character. The revision could have been made either by a real witness, and Grumdrypp is not one. On the contrary, Krasicki undertakes constant attempts to make him unreliable. Or, alternatively, a revision could be undertaken by a researcher working on real documents, while the majority of documents referred to by the protagonist are fictitious. We have already mentioned that the reader's role is to strike a critical attitude to the source, to think rationally, and to be cautious with reports which are always subjective. We might assume that Krasicki had one more goal, and that the majority of the third book, which is devoted to Poland, is the polemics with the historical authorities. Krasicki was not driven by the reluctance to fairy tales so typical of the enlightened age. However he saw in it a threat to the reforms proposed by the reformers led by the King. The legends about Poland's beginnings reflected the social situation in the eighteenth century. The gentry considered themselves descended from Rome, the ruler of the civilized world which put this class in a superior position both in Polish society and in confrontation with other nations. This mythical lineage could have been treated as one of the obstacles in the process of changes in the state's structures, such as giving more rights to townspeople and peasants. For a Sarmatian nobleman the unquestioned models were: Alexander on the battlefields and Cicero on the lecterns. Krasicki, through demythologization of the past, was fighting for the future. He was against prejudices, believing that the sole value both of an individual and a state was the result of the values driving them.

And finally, one more tool should be mentioned—the statements of the protagonists. There are not many of them in the novel. There are very few dialogues, while monologues are only changes of the speaking subjects, because their content is not against the general meaning. Which is not surprising, as the protagonists, who belong to the presented world, are of interest to the narrator only as embodiments of certain ideas, features, or ways of behaviour. As we have already stressed, *History* is based on ideological, not mimetic content. These statements have various functions in the novel. They are used for characterisation, as the quoted set of Leontius's rules [I, 17], function as short scenes, as Ptolemus's story about Dioenes [I, 4], and even as polemics [II, 4], and, finally, they are used to characterize the protagonist (the statements of Hanibal, Lucullus and others) or they convey some important idea, as is the case of the story of the downfall of Galia told to the narrator by Astiorynks, a druid [II, 4, 132]. Reported by a participant in this tragedy, it must have made a stronger impact on readers than if the story had been by a cosmopolitan Grumdrypp, and maybe that is why he is only a listener here. Krasicki's intentions are very clear here. He points almost directly to the necessity of a change in the ways of thinking and ruling in his own country, in his own age.

All these tools are used to create a proper platform on which the proper 'plot' of the novel is set—a discussion about crucial issues, about values which should be used in life, not only in order to be happy, but also to fulfil one's duties in respect to other people and one's own country. Anyway, *History* is not as trans-national as it is generally presented. On the contrary, the Polish case is presented there in multiple ways: constant allusions to the present, an attempt to 'construct' a good citizen now and through discussions, rather than through his education as is the case in Krasicki's other novels, fighting with myths spreading conservatism and xenophobia—all these are typical of the reformative activities of Krasicki. Unlike the two earlier novels of Krasicki, *History* goes beyond class boundaries. It is addressed not only to landowners, but to all educated, intelligent and thinking people.