
Evergreen Bystron

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We are very pleased to present you the first issue of our new journal: *Studia Litteraria et Historica*, which is inspired by the ideas of the ethnographer Jan Stanisław Bystron, the author of *The Nation's Megalomania* (pol. "Megalomania narodowa"). We hope that the journal will soon become a forum of exchange of ideas, attracting important and strong contributions, which often cannot find their place in the ever shrinking public space. What the public space lacks the most is mutual communication between diverse fields of inquiry. There is not enough dialogue between ethnography, sociology, literature studies, and philosophy on the one hand and history on the other. What is more, the links between the theory and its exemplifications in society rarely attract the attention they deserve. The processes mentioned above have contributed to the deterioration of the quality of public debate in Poland, rendering it superficial and isolating from the rest of the world. Our journal aims to compensate for the present state.

We chose *False Openings. False Conclusions* to be the topic of the journal's first issue. The guiding idea was to conclude and comment on some works of science, literature and film which we find important because they seem to approach issues previously unmentioned in the public sphere in Poland. We are interested in whether they indeed extend the boundaries of the public discourse, and if they do, how does one take part in that discourse?

Papers published in the present issue analyse these aspects of culture that have been overlooked by the scientific media as well as the other actors in the public sphere of discourse. Hence, this issue contains a series of critical reviews on Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands*, a book which was generally received as a breakthrough in the research on World War II in Poland, whereas in Germany it was met with reserved response. Every issue henceforth will contain interviews with the leading researchers in Poland, where in every interview we will ask questions "impossible" for Polish scientists working in humanities and social sciences, which is again inspired by the ideas of Jan Stanisław Bystron.¹ We begin the section with interviews with Irena Grudzińska-Gross and Jerzy Jedlicki. Another section which will also find a permanent place in our journal will be *The Spoken History*, opened by the moving story of Krystyna Badurko. Moreover, *The Spoken History* will provide an insight into the techniques of ethnosociological research, since the interviews to be published subsequently have not yet progressed past the stage of barely edited transcripts. Loïc Wacquant's article will open the collection of papers on

1 "[W]hen it comes to good advice, I ceased listening to it; ... if I remember well, there has been no subject matter that I have not been talked out of undertaking" [Bystron 1993: 5; translated from Polish]

Pierre Bourdieu's theory and its most up-to-date developments. The next article, namely the discussion between Piotr Sztompka and Michael Burawoy is reprinted here courtesy of *Contemporary Sociology*. We regard the discussion to be an example of a significant division inside the modern paradigm of social sciences as well as the influence of the geopolitical situation on how sociological research is performed.

We hope that, owing to its interdisciplinary character, our journal will become an important voice in the discussion on the condition of Polish humanities and social sciences. The reason we decided to publish the journal exclusively in an electronic form is the fact that it will render it widely available, and thus reduce the barriers to communication that we regard as highly dangerous. One of the barriers is the lack of funding, due to which we were compelled to abandon the idea of making the journal entirely bilingual. Yet another barrier is built by the people who remain within their isolated intellectual bubbles. An example of such a barrier is the mutual aggression displayed by scholars coming from different disciplines and scientific paradigms. This prevents people from seeking the unification of scientific jargon and drawing upon the work of others. The situation is further aggravated by the fact that the most controversial statements in reviews are rendered confidential and thus eliminated from the discourse. In order to prevent such situations, some American journals, e.g. *Current Anthropology*, introduced a policy stipulating that all reviews would be published as long as they conformed to the formal standards established by the journal. When we were preparing our yearly for reactivation² we hoped that our reviews could become public again. Unfortunately, due to the policy of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, we were unable to introduce such a solution. Nevertheless, we will endeavor to do so in the future.

References

Bystron, J. S. 1993 [1939]. *Komizm*. Warsaw, Poland.

² *Studia Litteraria et Historica* is a creative continuation of the journal *Studia Litteraria Polono-Slavica* publish by the Institute for Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in the years 1993–2008.