

theory by various authors, poets, theoreticians, and, if the readers are to take his word, by Facebook users (most language comes from Thalia Field's poetry collection from 2000, *Point and Line*). Tardi presents a collage, with "prompts" from Thalia's poems, which really look like prompts, separated by square brackets, and asking for an input from the reader. Other prompts are taken from a Facebook survey. Tardi's essay neatly corresponds to Tadeusz Ślawek's discussion of theory as deliberate erosion of meaning, and exploration of unpredictable sweet nothings. The final essay, by Kacper Bartczak, describes a poet's reading of literary theory, with various possibilities, as source of language and imagery, as framework, or as source of "useful experimental inspirations." This argument is developed in the subsequent series of interviews with Polish poets, about their reception of literary theory. The poets are Julia Fiedorczuk, Maciej Melecki, Joanna Mueller, and Krzysztof Siwczyk.

The book presents a state of a certain idea of theory, which went beyond literary criticism, beyond rhetorics, beyond philosophy, and which, with the post-modern and post-structuralist turn, reached unprecedented, glittering peaks of reflection on language, thought, and writing. These peaks, as many essays suggest, seem now to be receding into the past. Many essays talk self-consciously about theory's demise; theory seems to be in quest for a rationale not for itself, but for its continuing demise. More optimistic versions also seem to be quite desperate by implicitly proclaiming that anything goes. There is also a pronounced note of fear, in some essays, that students, and subsequent generations of critics and teachers, will simply forget the whole thing, or an important segment of it. Which brings me to the most disturbing theoretical question for me—the question of teaching. By numbers, it can be assumed that most people who read theory today are undergraduate students; they are usually forced to read it, and they often hate it. Testing and failing undergraduate students on this is an ugly and dirty sin that many theoreticians commit, daily and about everywhere. Teaching is to theory what upbringing is to family; apart from family bliss, there are cases of family violence, implicit threats, dependency disorders, miseducation, and failing parents. Students are theory's children. No author mentions this huge captive audience that theory has, year after year, at universities and colleges.

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