A people's history of literature. "Peasants" by Władysław Reymont as a performative

Krzysztof Gajewski
Institute of Literary Research
Polish Academy of Science

Granada, 2-4 June 2025

Table of Contents

Methodological introduction

People's history

Postcolonial studies

- Edward Said, Orientalism (1978)

Postcolonial studies

- Edward Said, Orientalism (1978)
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Can sublatern speak?, 1988

Postcolonial studies

- Edward Said, Orientalism (1978)
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Can sublatern speak?, 1988
- Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1851)— small-holding peasants: "They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented."

Postcolonial studies

- Edward Said, Orientalism (1978)
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Can sublatern speak?, 1988
- Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1851)— small-holding peasants: "They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented."
- epistemic violence, colonizing episteme

People's History

Howard Zinn, A People's History of the United States, 1980

> *"My point is not to grieve for the victims and denounce the executioners. Those tears, that anger, cast into the past, deplete our moral energy for the present. And the lines are not always clear. In the long run, the oppressor is also a victim."*

People's History

Adam Leszczyński, The People's History of Poland. A History of Exploitation and Resistance. The Mythology of Domination, 2020

> *"The dismantling of the system of forced labor (. . .) It was taken apart step by step, piece by piece, largely by the hands of the partitioning powers, and in the face of persistent and determined resistance from much of the Polish landed gentry, who used every means — legal and illegal — to prevent it"*

Performative utterance

Performative utterance

- J. L. Austin: statements, performatives

Performative utterance

- J. L. Austin: statements, performatives
- J. Buttler: gender as performative

The Author, Reception and the State of Art

Władysław Reymont

Władysław Reymont (1867-1925) — a triple portrait, 1905

Władysław Reymont

- 1867: born as Stanisław Władysław Rejment, a son of a village organist in Kobiele Wielkie, near Łódź

Władysław Reymont

- 1867: born as Stanisław Władysław Rejment, a son of a village organist in Kobiele Wielkie, near Łódź
- 1868-1880: growing up as and Tuszyn, near Łódź

Władysław Reymont

- 1867: born as Stanisław Władysław Rejment, a son of a village organist in Kobiele Wielkie, near Łódź
- 1868-1880: growing up as and Tuszyn, near Łódź
- 1881-1884: learns tailoring in Warsaw

Władysław Reymont

- 1867: born as Stanisław Władysław Rejment, a son of a village organist in Kobiele Wielkie, near Łódź
- 1868-1880: growing up as and Tuszyn, near Łódź
- 1881-1884: learns tailoring in Warsaw
- 1885-1888: works with a traveling theatre troupe

Władysław Reymont

- 1867: born as Stanisław Władysław Rejment, a son of a village organist in Kobiele Wielkie, near Łódź
- 1868-1880: growing up as and Tuszyn, near Łódź
- 1881-1884: learns tailoring in Warsaw
- 1885-1888: works with a traveling theatre troupe
- 1893: changes his name to Reymont

Władysław Reymont. Novels

- Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry (A Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, 1895)

Władysław Reymont. Novels

- Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry (A Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, 1895)
- Komediantka (The Deceiver, 1896)

Władysław Reymont. Novels

- Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry (A Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, 1895)
- Komediantka (The Deceiver, 1896)
- Fermenty (Ferments, 1897)

Władysław Reymont. Novels

- Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry (A Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, 1895)
- Komediantka (The Deceiver, 1896)
- Fermenty (Ferments, 1897)
- Ziemia obiecana (The Promised Land, 1898)

Władysław Reymont. Novels

- Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry (A Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, 1895)
- Komediantka (The Deceiver, 1896)
- Fermenty (Ferments, 1897)
- Ziemia obiecana (The Promised Land, 1898)
- Chłopi (The Peasants, 1904–1909)

Władysław Reymont. Novels

- Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry (A Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, 1895)
- Komediantka (The Deceiver, 1896)
- Fermenty (Ferments, 1897)
- Ziemia obiecana (The Promised Land, 1898)
- Chłopi (The Peasants, 1904–1909)
- Rok 1794 (1794, 1914–1919)

Władysław Reymont. Novels

- Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry (A Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, 1895)
- Komediantka (The Deceiver, 1896)
- Fermenty (Ferments, 1897)
- Ziemia obiecana (The Promised Land, 1898)
- Chłopi (The Peasants, 1904–1909)
- Rok 1794 (1794, 1914–1919)
- Wampir (The Vampire, 1911)

Władysław Reymont. Novels

- Pielgrzymka do Jasnej Góry (A Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra, 1895)
- Komediantka (The Deceiver, 1896)
- Fermenty (Ferments, 1897)
- Ziemia obiecana (The Promised Land, 1898)
- Chłopi (The Peasants, 1904–1909)
- Rok 1794 (1794, 1914–1919)
- Wampir (The Vampire, 1911)
- Bunt (The Revolt, 1924)

„The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times”

- Creation: 1899–1908

„The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times”

- Creation: 1899–1908
- First publication: 1902–1908

„The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times”

- Creation: 1899–1908
- First publication: 1902–1908
- Book edition: 1904–1909

„The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times”

- Creation: 1899–1908
- First publication: 1902–1908
- Book edition: 1904–1909
- Nobel Prize: 1924

„The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times”

- Creation: 1899–1908
- First publication: 1902–1908
- Book edition: 1904–1909
- Nobel Prize: 1924
- English translation by Michael H. Dziewicki, Reader of English Literature at the University of Cracow

„The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times”

- Creation: 1899–1908
- First publication: 1902–1908
- Book edition: 1904–1909
- Nobel Prize: 1924
- English translation by Michael H. Dziewicki, Reader of English Literature at the University of Cracow
- in the US: 11 printings between 1924-1942

A Question of Genre

Genre

- Reymont: „Chłopi. Powieść współczesna” (lit. ”The Peasants. A Contemporary Novel”; „The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times”)

[1] Per Hallström, Presentation, 1924

Genre

- Reymont: „Chłopi. Powieść współczesna” (lit. ”The Peasants. A Contemporary Novel”; „The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times”)
- Critics: epic rather than novel

[1] Per Hallström, Presentation, 1924

Genre

- Reymont: „Chłopi. Powieść współczesna" (lit. "The Peasants. A Contemporary Novel"; „The Peasants. A Tale of Our Own Times")
- Critics: epic rather than novel

> *"Nevertheless Chlopi, rather than turning out to be a naturalistic* **novel**, *has taken on epic proportions – certainly* **naturalistic** *in method but* **epic** *in scope."*[1]

[1] Per Hallström, Presentation, 1924

Genre Classification

Fredrik Böök, 1925 — Reymont as Homer:

> *"Boryna rules like an Achaean prince, Lipce has its heroes and war expeditions, Jagna is the beautiful Helen, and the genealogies of peasant families resemble the catalogues of ships."*

Genre Classification

Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki, 1967 — between fairy tale and epic:

> *"the heroes of his novel belonged to the tribe of giants, somewhere in their genealogy they are related to Waligóra and Wyrwidąb. They struggle with the external world and inner obstacles no less valiantly than Hector battles Achilles."*

Genre Classification

Stefan Lichański, 1982 — socio-professional novel:

> *"an almost encyclopedic and cinematic portrayal (...) of the farmer's professional work."*

Narration and Verism

Narration

Jan August Kisielewski, 1907: Performativity of the novel:

> *"This is an* **eternal peasant novel**, *a tale of the life of the Polish peasant. As long as the Polish peasant exists, he will remain just as Reymont portrayed him."*

Represented World: Characters and Their Psychology

Jan August Kisielewski, 1907: peasant identity as national identity

> *"The typical Pole is, above all, a villager (...) in this work we meet the Pole in his original state — our entire psychology and character expressed in their simplest and most essential forms. Reymont's 'peasant' indeed possesses all the traits, all the flaws, and all the virtues of our national character."*

Narration. Point of View

Fredrik Böök, 1925: point of view

> *"With extraordinary energy, the novel presents a description* **from the Polish peasant's perspective**, *something, quite naturally, that could only be achieved by an artist who himself grew up and was raised among peasants (...) an insight into the true life of the people."*

Narration. Verism

Kazimierz Czachowski, 1934

- ”An understanding of the peasant soul”

Narration. Verism

Maria Rzeuska, 1950:

- "He constructs a concept of the essence of the peasant and village life that **the peasant himself can no longer perceive or comprehend**"

Narration. Verism

Maria Rzeuska, 1950:

- "He constructs a concept of the essence of the peasant and village life that **the peasant himself can no longer perceive or comprehend**"
- "The storyteller transforms into **a myth-maker**"

Narration. Verism

Maria Rzeuska, 1950:

- "He constructs a concept of the essence of the peasant and village life that **the peasant himself can no longer perceive or comprehend**"
- "The storyteller transforms into **a myth-maker**"
- "He creates not a peasant vision, but his own; a novel about the peasant, **not for the peasant**"

Narration

Maria Rzeuska, 1950 – two narrative styles:

1. peasant-realist — the characters' dialogues
2. poetic-intellectual — descriptive passages

Narration

Kazimierz Wyka, 1968 – three narrative structures:

1. Young Poland-style stylizer
2. rustic storyteller (gawęda style)
3. realist observer (realist prose – in the style of Sienkiewicz)

Narration

Stefan Lichański, 1982 – three components of Reymont's epic stance:

1. deep familiarity with the portrayed environment
2. ability to present a comprehensive whole
3. objectivity and impartiality in artistic representation

Narration. Point of View

Stefan Lichański, 1982: the peasant perspective

- "A tendency to view the world and its affairs **from the standpoint of a value system shaped by folk culture**, which provides the village inhabitant with a set of binding norms for action"

Narration. Point of View

Stefan Lichański, 1982: the peasant perspective

- "A tendency to view the world and its affairs **from the standpoint of a value system shaped by folk culture**, which provides the village inhabitant with a set of binding norms for action"
- "Reymont deeply and comprehensively internalized the cultural consciousness of the community he portrayed; he became, in a way, an instrument through which **that consciousness is objectified in the forms of artistic expression** of particular facts, yet he proves capable of a realistic grasp of the totality of rural existence"

Narration

Stefan Lichański, 1982:

- The truth about the peasant

Narration

Stefan Lichański, 1982:

- The truth about the peasant

  "With sober objectivity and strict realism, he conveyed to us the entire truth about the Polish peasant, a truth gained through personal experience"

Narration

Stefan Lichański, 1982:

- The truth about the peasant

  "With sober objectivity and strict realism, he conveyed to us the entire truth about the Polish peasant, a truth gained through personal experience"

- Life written down

Narration

Stefan Lichański, 1982:

- The truth about the peasant

  "With sober objectivity and strict realism, he conveyed to us the entire truth about the Polish peasant, a truth gained through personal experience"

- Life written down

  "«The Peasants» evoke a sense of overwhelming authenticity, a rare certainty that comes from reading only a very few books — the certainty that this is not literature, no matter how technically perfect, but life itself written down"

Narration

Stefan Lichański, 1982:

- The truth about the peasant

  "With sober objectivity and strict realism, he conveyed to us the entire truth about the Polish peasant, a truth gained through personal experience"

- Life written down

  "«The Peasants» evoke a sense of overwhelming authenticity, a rare certainty that comes from reading only a very few books — the certainty that this is not literature, no matter how technically perfect, but life itself written down"

- "The Peasants" as a document

Narration

Stefan Lichański, 1982:

- The truth about the peasant

  "With sober objectivity and strict realism, he conveyed to us the entire truth about the Polish peasant, a truth gained through personal experience"

- Life written down

  "«The Peasants» evoke a sense of overwhelming authenticity, a rare certainty that comes from reading only a very few books — the certainty that this is not literature, no matter how technically perfect, but life itself written down"

- "The Peasants" as a document

  "«The Peasants» is not only a great work of art. It is also a valuable document offering substantial real knowledge about the Polish countryside at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries"

The world presented

Characters and their psychology

Per Hallström[2], Nobel Prize in Literature 1924. Presentation:

- "Passion bounces in men's wills like a storm in the reeds, and they bend before every breath of wind, and a spark sets everything ablaze.

[2] Chairman of the Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy

Characters and their psychology

Per Hallström[2], Nobel Prize in Literature 1924. Presentation:

- "Passion bounces in men's wills like a storm in the reeds, and they bend before every breath of wind, and a spark sets everything ablaze.
- The sense of honesty is uncertain, perhaps chiefly because it has not had free air to grow in. From time immemorial this people has had to protect itself against oppression by those who owned the soil – all they had to subsist on. And when the soil at last became theirs, the gift came from foreign masters"

[2] Chairman of the Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy

Characters and their psychology

Per Hallström, Nobel Prize in Literature 1924. Presentation:

> "**The passivity, fatalism, and naive good humour**, *which under similar circumstances were developed in their Slavonic brethren to the east, held no power in the Polish temperament.* **Here we meet instead a peculiar nervousness** *which is not elsewhere a characteristic of the peasant, and which readily expresses itself in anger and violent deeds.*"

Characters and their psychology

Per Hallström, Nobel Prize in Literature 1924. Presentation:

> *"All their ill-treatment has not sufficed to crush their pride, but that pride is abundantly mixed with vanity; it is touchy, lacking in balance, and gives no trustworthy support to human dignity.* **Their virtues have as little root as those of children.**"

Characters and their psychology

Fredrik Böök, 1925: Peasants are

> *"passionate, hot-tempered people, often wild and hard, almost always envious. But one can also find in their character many a noble and chivalrous trait, some admirable sublimity, sometimes a heroic fortitude of soul"*

Characters and their psychology. Jagna

Per Hallström, 1924: Jagna, ” as much a symbol as a type”

- ”poetry of the Polish soil and the Polish peasant woman”

Characters and their psychology. Jagna

Per Hallström, 1924: Jagna, " as much a symbol as a type"

- "poetry of the Polish soil and the Polish peasant woman"
- "all the natural magic, the blind working of natural impulses, the pliancy and imaginativeness, the hunger for beauty, and the absence of responsibility,"

Characters and their psychology. Jagna

Per Hallström, 1924: Jagna, " as much a symbol as a type"

- "poetry of the Polish soil and the Polish peasant woman"
- "all the natural magic, the blind working of natural impulses, the pliancy and imaginativeness, the hunger for beauty, and the absence of responsibility,"
- "the embodiment of all the flaws that Reymont has revealed in his people, despite his love for them; yet she also represents all those qualities which are rich and splendid in human nature."

Jagna

Jagna, 1973 (Emilia Krakowska)

Jagna

Jagna, 2023 (Kamila Urzędowska)

Characters and Their Psychology: Direct Judgements

Kazimierz Czachowski, 1934: the peasant is not a man like us

> *"The peasant boy is like a wild, unbridled colt, a force of springtime nature. The grown man — he is summer, a physical giant, hard as earth scorched by the July sun, gray like his fallow fields and pastures, slow like the ripening of grain... (...)* **he is not a man like us**, *he has not broken away from the soil and bears all its unaltered traits, shaped by the land in its own image."*

Characters and Their Psychology: Direct Judgements

Kazimierz Wyka, 1968: The peasant can formulate only the simplest thoughts

> *"However, when we look at these so-called quotations, it becomes immediately apparent that only a few of them could be considered even remotely authentic. That is to say,* **a very simple person** *might express their experience of death in such terms: 1, 10, 11 (?), 12 (?), 13 (?), 15 (?). The question marks indicate that such verbal formulation is not impossible, though rather unlikely. The vast majority, however, do not fall within this authentic norm: 2—9, 14."*[3]

[3] Wyka, 1968

Social Inequality

Stefan Lichański, 1982

- ”The burden of age-old cultural tradition”

Social Inequality

Stefan Lichański, 1982

- "The burden of age-old cultural tradition"
- "The phenomenon of the economic dominance of the rich over the poor and their exploitation"

Social Inequality

Stefan Lichański, 1982

- "The burden of age-old cultural tradition"
- "The phenomenon of the economic dominance of the rich over the poor and their exploitation"
- Analogy to feudalism: "a continuation of medieval political forms, specifically adapted by the rural community"

Social Inequality

Stefan Lichański, 1982

- "The burden of age-old cultural tradition"
- "The phenomenon of the economic dominance of the rich over the poor and their exploitation"
- Analogy to feudalism: "a continuation of medieval political forms, specifically adapted by the rural community"
- "Social stratification and the constant economic exploitation of the poorest"

Social Inequality

Stefan Lichański, 1982

- "The burden of age-old cultural tradition"
- "The phenomenon of the economic dominance of the rich over the poor and their exploitation"
- Analogy to feudalism: "a continuation of medieval political forms, specifically adapted by the rural community"
- "Social stratification and the constant economic exploitation of the poorest"
- Yet the word "serfdom" (pańszczyzna) is never mentioned

The Peasants according to Reymont

Religiosity

Religiosity

- incipit: "Praised be Jesus Christ!" (Agatha, ch. I, 1)

Religiosity

- incipit: "Praised be Jesus Christ!" (Agatha, ch. I, 1)
- end: "Dear folk, may God be with you evermore." (Dziad, ch. IV, 13)

Religiosity

- incipit: "Praised be Jesus Christ!" (Agatha, ch. I, 1)
- end: "Dear folk, may God be with you evermore." (Dziad, ch. IV, 13)
- Kuba "prayed for a long time" early morning (ch. I, 2)

Religiosity

- incipit: "Praised be Jesus Christ!" (Agatha, ch. I, 1)
- end: "Dear folk, may God be with you evermore." (Dziad, ch. IV, 13)
- Kuba "prayed for a long time" early morning (ch. I, 2)
- Kuba "teaching Vitek his prayers" (ch. I, 4)

Religiosity

Detailed descriptions of church ceremonies

> *"The nation prayed in deep silence, some with a book, some with a rosary, and some with only that sincere word and heartfelt sigh, praising God. The solemn sounds of the organ poured out a tinkling, prayerful prayer, and sometimes singing burst from the altar, sometimes the bells clattered, and sometimes the organist's thick voice boomed, and then long moments dragged on, as if dumbfounded by the heat, and the smoke of incense flowed through the open church doors, wrapping the bowed heads of those kneeling in a bluish and fragrant mist."*

Social reality of the XIX/XX century Mazovia

W czasie powstania "Chłopów" Reymonta na terenach Mazowsze ile przypadało średnio wsi na jeden kościół?

W czasie, gdy **Władysław Reymont pisał "Chłopów"** (czyli przełom XIX i XX wieku), dokładne statystyki dotyczące liczby wsi przypadających na jeden kościół na Mazowszu nie są łatwo dostępne, ale można to oszacować na podstawie historycznych danych demograficznych i kościelnych.

Szacunkowe dane:

- **Liczba wsi na Mazowszu (ok. 1900 r.):** szacunkowo ok. **5–6 tysięcy wsi** (Mazowsze było bardzo silnie zurbanizowane rolniczo).
- **Liczba parafii rzymskokatolickich na Mazowszu (w diecezjach obejmujących Mazowsze, np. płockiej, warszawskiej, łowickiej):** ok. **700–800 parafii** (parafia zazwyczaj miała 1 kościół, czasem więcej, ale rzadko).

Obliczenie:

$$\frac{6000 \text{ wsi}}{750 \text{ kościołów}} \approx 8 \text{ wsi na jeden kościół}$$

Odpowiedź:

Na przełomie XIX i XX wieku na terenach Mazowsza przypadało średnio **około 7–9 wsi na jeden kościół**.

1 church for 8 villages (13%)

Religiosity. Attitude towards the priest

The return of the peasants from prison — the authority of the priest above all

> *"—And ours! ours! — burst from the pile and a dozen or so rushed forward.*
>
> — **Halt! Service first** — *the priest ordered sharply."*

Religiosity. Attitude towards the priest

Before greeting their wives the freed men first greet the priest:

„— May he be praised! How are you, dear people!

"Indeed, they cried out in unison, pressing toward him like sheep to their shepherd, **kissing his hands and clutching at his feet**, *and he, for his part, embraced each one to his heart,* **kissed them on their heads, stroked their weary faces**, *asked tenderly about their troubles, and sent them off with kind words, until at last, worn out, he sat down beneath the cross, wiping his sweat and those honest tears."*

Religiosity

Respect for traditional culture

> *"— Pious, supposedly, yet such a sorceress, just like Dominikowa! — the village mayor laughed.*
>
> *— Prayer helps, but a little incantation won't hurt either, you know! — Płoszkowa whispered."*

Censoring Traditional Culture

Kupala Night — it's raining

> *"Gulbasiaks were rallying the girls and boys to run beyond the village, up on the high ground, to light the Kupala bonfires, since it was the eve of St. John's Day, but because it was dark and pouring rain, hardly anyone let themselves be persuaded — just here and there, somewhere by the forest, a faint little fire flickered."*

Alcoholism

Alcoholism

Alcoholic religiosity

"After dinner they would continue hearing confessions, as a great many people were still waiting. After a quick and brief meal, only **generously washed down with vodka**, *for Jambroż complained pitifully that the liquor was too weak for such over-salted herring, they got back to work."*

Alcoholism

Alcoholic religiosity

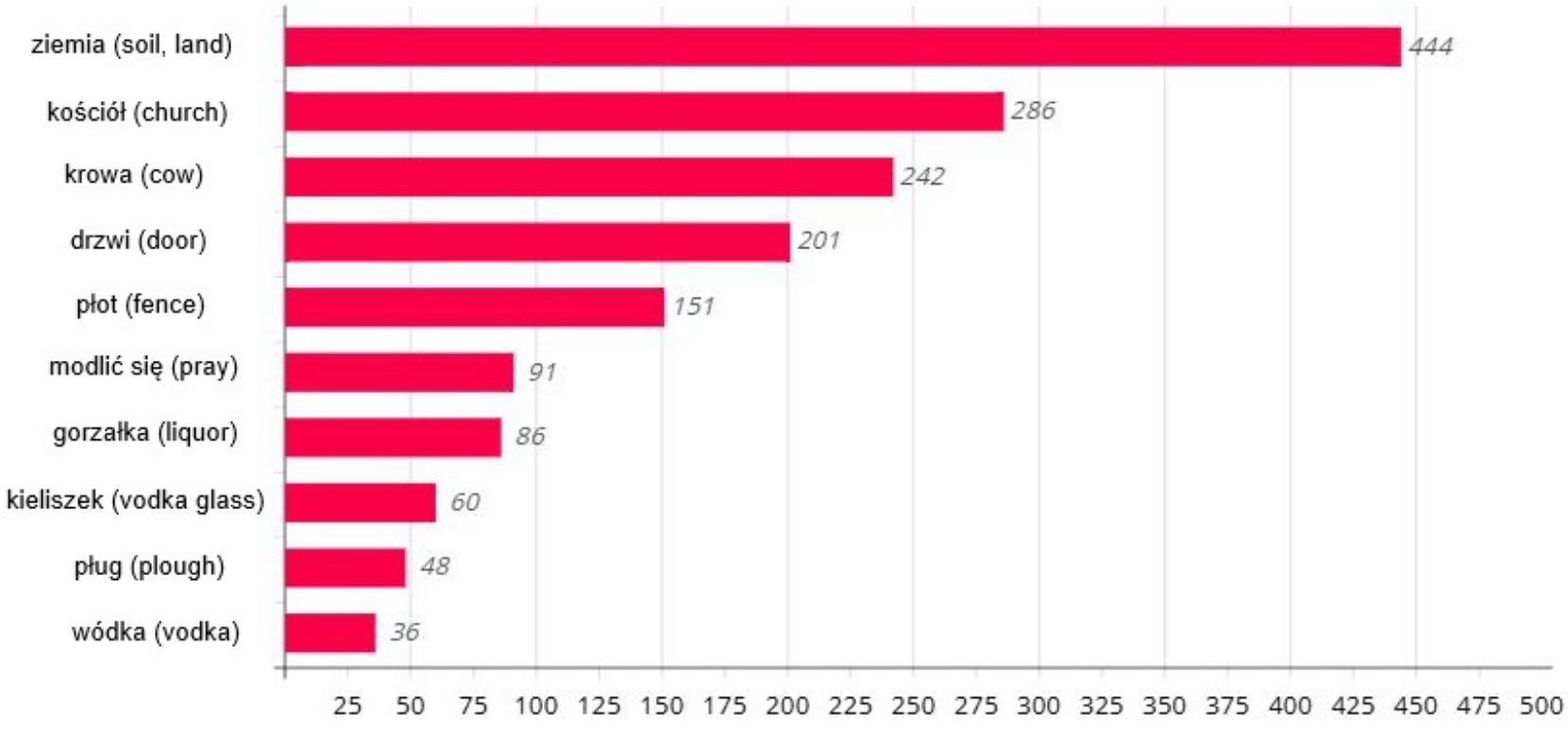
> *"They drank solemnly, in quiet and dignity, ate a little, and the organist began to read suitable prayers from a book, and then they sang a litany for the dead; they joined in eagerly and warmly, interrupting only when the blacksmith let the bottle go for another round, and Jagustynka passed out the bread."*

Alcoholism

Vodka and the deal-making

> *"They set benches out in front of the cottages, hurriedly serving breakfasts and offering vodka to speed up the deal-making"*

The Lexical Image of the World



Frequency of Key Words ($\approx$)

Mutual distrust and lack of empathy

Mutual distrust

"no one truted the other, not even a fingernail deep — they knew each other as well as those bald horses and they saw right through each other, as if through glass"

Lack of empathy

On Christmas Eve, they don't want to let a guest in

> *"They hadn't finished yet when someone knocked on the window.*
>
> *— Don't let them in and don't even look — it's bad luck, they'll force their way in and stay for the whole year! — shouted Dominikowa."*

An outsider restores moral order

> *"— Don't talk nonsense, it's someone in need; on this day, no one should go hungry or be left without a roof — said Roch, rising to open the door."*

Lack of empathy

Altruism and empathy — concepts unknown, introduced with Polishness and Christianity

> *"— It just seems strange to me that they want to work like that for nothing, without pay, just for a 'God bless you'... that's never happened before...*
>
> *— And for a 'God bless you' they'll come to help, as true Poles and Christians should!"*

Lack of empathy

Hanka forces her sick father to work

"She looked in on her father from the other side (...)

— Father, what's wrong with you? (...)

— Nothing, my girl, nothing, just the fever's shaking me and there's a terrible pain in my gut...

— It's just the cold and damp, like outside. Get up and come over to our place — you'll watch the children, 'cause we're slaughtering the pig."

Lack of empathy

Magda, with her newborn child, is cast out into the frost

"You know, Magda from the organist's gave birth during the night, right there in the church porch.

— You're telling tall tales! — If only they were tales, but it's the God's honest truth! Jambroży was going to ring the bell and stepped right on her...

— My Jesus! And she didn't freeze to death?

— She didn't, thank God, but the child froze to death!"

Lack of empathy

The Return of Jagata

- Jagustynka to Jagata: ”And they said you'd already kicked the bucket somewhere in warm lands... But that easy Jesus bread didn't do you much good, 'cause you're looking at the priest's barn like something's off..."she said, glancing at her mockingly.”

Lack of empathy

The Return of Jagata

- Jagustynka to Jagata: ”And they said you'd already kicked the bucket somewhere in warm lands... But that easy Jesus bread didn't do you much good, 'cause you're looking at the priest's barn like something's off..."she said, glancing at her mockingly.”
- Kłębowa to Jagata: ”People said you died back at Christmas, no one even knew where — my husband was about to go to the office to inquire.”

Lack of empathy

The Return of Jagata

- Jagustynka to Jagata: "And they said you'd already kicked the bucket somewhere in warm lands... But that easy Jesus bread didn't do you much good, 'cause you're looking at the priest's barn like something's off..."she said, glancing at her mockingly."
- Kłębowa to Jagata: "People said you died back at Christmas, no one even knew where — my husband was about to go to the office to inquire."
- Kłębowa doesn't offer food, but work: "Good that you've come back to the cottage... there's so much work, you don't even know where to sink your claws first."

Lack of empathy

The Return of Jagata

- Jagustynka to Jagata: "And they said you'd already kicked the bucket somewhere in warm lands... But that easy Jesus bread didn't do you much good, 'cause you're looking at the priest's barn like something's off..."she said, glancing at her mockingly."
- Kłębowa to Jagata: "People said you died back at Christmas, no one even knew where — my husband was about to go to the office to inquire."
- Kłębowa doesn't offer food, but work: "Good that you've come back to the cottage... there's so much work, you don't even know where to sink your claws first."
- They took Jagata's quilt: "— Oh! I nearly forgot to tell you — we took your quilt from the chest."

Xenophobia

Xenophobia

- ”— But may God’s hand protect us from German neighbors!”

Xenophobia

- ”— But may God’s hand protect us from German neighbors!”
- ”The Germans will feast, and you, man, will be left swallowing your spit!”

Xenophobia

- ”— But may God’s hand protect us from German neighbors!”
- ”The Germans will feast, and you, man, will be left swallowing your spit!”
- ”— Because if the Germans buy in and settle right across the boundary, it’ll be like in Górki: there won’t be any air left to breathe in Lipce, and we’ll end up on the streets or off to America.”

Religiosity, xenophobia, aggression

Moral hypocrisy — moments after Holy Mass, they hurl insults at the departing Germans

"You scumbags!
— Sons of mares!
— Pig tails!
— Dogspawn!
The insults flew like stones.
— So, who got the better of it, eh, Germans? — Mateusz shouted at them."

Religiosity, xenophobia, aggression

A German didn't respond to 'Praised be Jesus Christ'

> *"Mateusz nudged one of them, who didn't answer 'Praised be', and he was instantly covered in blood — nearly lost his soul then and there."*

End

Thank you for your attention!

Bibliography

1. Fredrik Böök, w: W. Reymont, Chłopi, t. II, PIW: Warszawa 1982.
2. Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki, Wł. St. Reymont, w: W. Reymont, Chłopi, op. cit.
3. Per Hallström, Nobel Prize in Literature 1924. Presentation, 1924, `https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1924/press-release/`
4. Stefan Lichański, Człowiek i artysta, w: W. Reymont, Chłopi, op. cit.
5. Władysław Reymont, Chłopi, PIW: Warszawa 1982.
6. Maria Rzeuska, Struktura całości, w: W. Reymont, Chłopi, op. cit.
7. Kazimierz Wyka, Próba nowego odczytania „Chłopów" Reymonta, "Pamiętnik Literacki : czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce literatury polskiej"1968, z. 59/2