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**“I am aware of the difficulties and I do not get disheartened”:*
Wanda Dynowska’s Papers about India Collected
in Tadeusz Pobożniak’s Archive****

SUMMARY: The aim of the present paper is to discuss the process of self-creation discernible in hitherto unpublished letters written by Wanda Dynowska-Umadevi to Tadeusz Szukiewicz, her literary representative in Poland, acting on her behalf in 1938–1939. Besides discussing the documentary value of the letters, which, for instance, shed some light on Dynowska’s relationship with Tadeusz Pobożniak and her other eminent contemporaries, or contextualize the origin of selected volumes published afterwards with Biblioteka Polsko-Indyjska (Polish-Indian Library), I also try to show that the manner of Dynowska’s self-creation in the personal documents that predominantly concern the efforts to publish her articles intended to popularize India in Poland could have been shaped by the particular addressee of her letters, and thus culminated in Dynowska projecting herself in her own writings.

KEYWORDS: Wanda Dynowska-Umadevi, Poles in India, Tadeusz Pobożniak, letters, personal papers, self-creation, Biblioteka Polsko-Indyjska, Indo-Polish Library

Introduction

In 1948, thirteen years after her arrival in India, Wanda Dynowska-Umadevi (1888–1971), a Polish theosophist, poet, writer and social worker, published a small and poorly edited volume entitled

* Dynowska’s letter to Tadeusz Szukiewicz, 18/05/1938, Bangalore (“Znam trudności i nie zniechęcam się”). Throughout the present article, whenever I quote from the letters or other personal accounts written in Polish, the original language version is given in the footnotes. Translations are adjusted to the norms of modern English.

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Razem pod wiatr: wiersze indyjskie; Pożegnanie Polski; Z rozmów ze sobą [*Together against the Wind: Indian Poems; Farewell to Poland; From Conversations with the Self*].¹ Constituting one of the first publications issued with Biblioteka Polsko-Indyjska (Polish-Indian Library)²—the editorial body founded in 1944 by Dynowska and Maurycy Frydman³ (1901–1977) “to show India to Poland and Poland to India”, as reads the motto at the end of its first publication, authored by Dynowska herself⁴—the booklet offers an insight into some of Dynowska’s personal reflections, including the clarification of the goals she intended to pursue having settled in India. In the Foreword, the author declares:

To show the soul of Poland to India, even to a small handful of living and open-minded people—as Gandhi was; to show the soul of India to Poles, even to a few, versatile and devoid of racial or religious prejudices, who love Man regardless of which part of the world he lives in, who respect and value creative human thought regardless of the forms and symbols in which it expresses itself—this is one of the main aims of my long-term stay in India.⁵

¹ The booklet was reissued in 1962 in an abridged form, with the same publisher.

² The project comprised two branches: books concerning Indian culture and literatures were published in Polish under the auspices of Biblioteka Polsko-Indyjska, and those concerning Poland were published in English as part of the Indo-Polish Library. Henceforth, in the former case, I will use the Polish name, abbreviated to BPI, in the latter: IPL.

³ A Polish-Jewish engineer who reached India a couple of years earlier. Until Dynowska’s death, they remained close friends and co-workers, sharing the same spiritual and ideological interests.

⁴ The booklet was titled *Z pielgrzymką hinduską w głąb Himalajów* [*With a Hindu Pilgrimage into the Himalayas*]. As follows from Dynowska’s letters to Szukiewicz, initially she endeavored to publish the text as an article in Polish press (the original text is preserved in uncatalogued Pobożniak’s archive kept in the Institute of Oriental Studies, Jagiellonian University). In 1959 it was reprinted with BPI in an extended version, with the addition of an essay on Kashmir, and thus entitled *Pielgrzymka Hinduska w głąb Himalajów oraz Kaszmir* [*Hindu Pilgrimage into the Himalayas, and Kashmir*].

⁵ “Pokazać duszę Polski Indiom, choćby małej garstce ludzi żywych i otwartych—takim tył (sic!) Gandhi; pokazać duszę Indii Polakom, choćby

As Izabela Trzcińska notes in her recent articles on Dynowska's theosophical background and fascinations (Trzcińska 2015; 2016), although the author—today remembered in the domain of literature as a translator and a poet rather than a tireless propagator of Indian culture through her early essays in Polish—was very prolific, she hardly ever disclosed details of her personal life. Likewise, in the preserved correspondence or in contacts with her closest friends, she was very self-restrained. Some reminiscences of Dynowska's life appear in the above-mentioned volume comprising her poetry written before WWII and selected fragments of a diary she kept before leaving Poland. In another booklet, *O przyrodzie i sztuce* [*On Nature and Art*], co-authored with C. Jijnarajadasa (BPI, 1961), Dynowska enclosed selected recollections from her youth. Scant pieces of autobiographical information can be found also on the margins, in the footnotes or annotations to her translations published with the BPI (Trzcińska 2016: 186).

It seems that for Dynowska the most convenient medium for intimate confessions was her poetry (Trzcińska 2016: 184, 186). The poems collected in *Razem pod wiatr...* fall into two phases: those written in her youth in Poland and the Indian ones from the late 1930s, revealing a break in composing poetry caused by her engagement in theosophy. The Indian poems reflect Dynowska's love for "Indian soil", the inspiration and theme of her works. In her own words, "no one has ever known it and loved so much as to be able to strike roots in it—at least some—and to derive living juices of sentiments and experiences from it, directly feeding creative work".⁶ Dynowska's poems are often composed in the form of a prayer or spiritual reflection that

nielicznym, szerokim a pozbawionym rasowych i religijnych przesądów, którzy kochają Człowieka, bez względu na to jaką część świata zamieszkuje; którzy szanują i cenią twórczą myśl ludzką, bez względu na formy i symbole w jakich się wyraża – oto jeden z głównych celów mego wieloletniego przebywania w Indii" (Dynowska 1948: i–ii, cf. Trzcińska 2016: 185).

⁶ "[...] nikt jej dotąd tak nie znał i nie kochał, aby móc w nią wrosnąć – choćby paru korzeniami – i czerpać z niej żywe soki wzruszeń i przeżyć, zasilające bezpośrednio twórczość" (Dynowska 1948: i).

might be interpreted as illustrating the process of becoming the self, yet the boundary between a *licentia poetica* of the lyrical subject and the intimate confessions of the poet is blurred (Trzcińska 2016: 184). As Trzcińska aptly concludes, Dynowska's way of presenting personal reflections appears to be designed to prove the cohesion of the path she chose in her life and hence none of her published books, composed in the emphatic style typical for the Young Poland period, can be treated as a conventional memoir. Although some of her poetic works written in India seem to display a wide span of sensations she would experience at that time, "from euphoric fascinations to dilemma and inner sadness", to be remedied with "a new dimension of religiosity" she found in her new surrounding (Trzcińska 2016: 190), this is a manifesto and an artistic mask rather than a portrayal of Dynowska's true feelings (Trzcińska 2015: 165–166).

The unwillingness to share her intimate space, sometimes overcome by uncovering a certain, imagined version of herself, resulted in various ambiguities concerning Dynowska's impressive biography and, as a consequence, her heroization and idealization by posterity, e.g. by Kazimierz Tokarski, to whom we owe the biographical article (Tokarski 1994) that became the basis for subsequent (if sparse) publications about this author. These works, for instance, echo Tokarski's sentimental treatment of Dynowska's love life; as a result of attributing to her only one, and what is more, unhappily ended relationship with Szczęsny Brzostowski, it has been interpreted as influencing her future, chiefly in regard to her decision to live a single woman's life (Trzcińska 2016: 116). In addition, whereas the available studies usually revolve either around Dynowska's youthful involvement in theosophy or her voluntary work with Polish and, later on, Tibetan refugees in India starting in the 1940s, the initial period of her stay in India remains obscure (Trzcińska 2015: 165–166). However, her numerous publications prove that although in the beginning her mind and literary work were occupied with esoteric traditions—and indeed they influenced the way in which she perceived and interpreted the world through her entire life—with time they were ousted by her deep love for India (Trzcińska 2015: 165).

Apart from her poetry, the initial phase of Dynowska's enchantment with India is evidenced by various personal documents and her early articles written in Polish—in and about India—with a view to familiarizing Poles with Indian culture. The point of departure for the present paper is a handful of first-person-accounts produced between 1938 and 1939: the unpublished collection of formal yet friendly letters to Tadeusz Szukiewicz, a literary agent representing her and her writings to Polish literary magazines and newspapers, as well as a sprinkling of her articles—usually taking the form of personal accounts—Szukiewicz was supposed to get published. The materials I aim to discuss here have been collected in the folder titled "Sprawy artykułów Wandy Dynowskiej o Indiach" ["The matters of Wanda Dynowska's articles about India"], kept uncatalogued at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, as part of Tadeusz Pobożniak's (1910–1991) archive.⁷

As Trzcińska remarks, producing poetic testimonies that undoubtedly contributed to the process of shaping Dynowska's myth ceased in 1939, with the outbreak of WWII, when she engaged in social work and successively developed the BPI/IPL. "Wanda disappears but there emerges Umadevi, who no longer needs a story; she simply makes her history herself" (Trzcińska 2016: 195). All writings contained in the Pobożniak folder, constituting in fact only a tiny portion of Dynowska's vast legacy, cover the years of 1938 and 1939, when, in her own words, "obviously the imminent war can hinder" the work.⁸

⁷ I am aware that another part of Dynowska's legacy collected by Pobożniak is kept in the Archive of Science PAN&PAU in Krakow, reference number K III-180, yet at this stage of my research I decided to popularize the unknown documents kept at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Jagiellonian University.

⁸ As we can judge from its content, this particular letter was sent no earlier than late May 1939: Dynowska asks Szukiewicz to send her the article of prof. Helena Willman-Grabowska, published with a weekly literary magazine *Prosto z Mostu* (no. 20, 12/05/1939) in answer to the previously printed article titled "Tajemnica Mahatmy" ["Mahatma's Secret?"] by Adolf Nowaczyński (no. 12, 19/03/1939). Henceforth I will refer to this letter as:

Although in this period Dynowska still composes poetry, the articles aimed at promoting India in Poland which she started to write after reaching the Indian subcontinent seem to mark the next step in her literary development, culminating in the decision to initiate a publishing enterprise a few years later. The idea behind juxtaposing in the present article the letters Dynowska wrote to her literary representative and, to a lesser extent, her articles that he was supposed to make known to Polish people in the late 1930s is twofold. While they undoubtedly offer glimpses into Dynowska's unique perception of India, which, with its theosophical perspective, is rather remote from an Indologist's approach (cf. Gerlach 1971: 434), they also might be read, much like her other works, as mirroring the multilayered process of self-creation, mostly in regard to the role of the bearer of Indian culture to Poland, which Dynowska obsessively attributed to herself already before the launching of the BPI/IPL project she is chiefly associated with in this respect.

In my analysis of Dynowska's letters to Szukiewicz, I will consider them (to a varying degree) from four points of view: as documents, texts, discourse and a performative means (Diaz 2002: 49–62). In practice, as Elżbieta Rybicka observes, a letter comprises all these aspects. Letters as documents provide us with an insight into the historical, social, political or literary realities as seen from the level of the sender's beliefs and convictions; they are often analyzed as recording microhistories. Imbued with a greater or lesser esthetic value, nowadays letters are basically regarded as literary pieces. The methods of analyzing the discursive aspect of letters perhaps present the most dynamic picture. Whereas from a traditional perspective a letter reflects a conversation between an absent sender and an absent addressee, currently the relation between a letter and a conversation can either be reduced, in accordance with the assumption that letters are written not

Letter to Szukiewicz, undated, ca. 2nd half of 1939. The beginning of WWII—an event which had an enormous impact on Dynowska's life—was most probably the reason why her collaboration with Szukiewicz came to an end.

to the other but to oneself, or quite conversely—and most appropriately in our case—the shift from auto-communication to communication is emphasized, since the epistolary ‘I’ cannot exist without the ‘other’/addressee. The performative aspect of letters means that they are, or at least the author believes them to be, a means of performing/acting from a distance (Rybicka 2004: 43–44).

The present essay seeks to demonstrate that apart from their documentary value, it is the discursive and performative aspects of correspondence that predominantly transpire through the letters written by Dynowska to Szukiewicz, determining the method of their critical examination. We can posit that due to the ‘business’ character of this particular portion of Dynowska’s correspondence, her letters to the literary agent exhibit a particular form and content, adjusted to, or rather imposed by, the expectations of the addressee, who, as Maria Janion observes, influences the sender’s manner of self-presentation (Janion 1969: 210–211). Intended actually as a medium of exchanging professional information, the letters to Szukiewicz abound in updates referring to the process of writing on India, in which Dynowska was absorbed and with which she identified herself. They are also full of inquiries and requests about the developments in publishing matters in Poland, leaving actually no place for personal affairs, but significantly contributing to the creation of the image of an inexhaustible, accomplished and single author, who, concerned as she is with high goals of popularizing India, does not have, or does not need, a private life at all. Dynowska’s letters could be also viewed permeated with the author’s faith in the creative power of the word (an issue even more visible in the case of the authorized letters, which Szukiewicz used to negotiate on her behalf) that brings into existence analogies between the two outwardly distant countries. This particular approach to written communication is often associated with liminal situations and experiences of the sender, such as isolation, madness, imprisonment (Rybicka 2004: 45). This is clearly applicable also in the case of Dynowska, who, irrespective of declaring India her “second homeland”, was an immigrant. Her life, as Trzcińska remarks, was in fact

“a constant state of being in-between—religions, cultures and epochs” (Trzcińska 2016: 185). Separation from her family and friends must have been a factor which contributed to the abundance of correspondence produced by Dynowska within the span of years. However, the profusion of written communication as such can be also interpreted as arising from perceiving the letter as the most convenient domain for inventing the sender’s self (Janion 1969: 210). Therefore, I will also argue that although this part of Dynowska’s legacy is almost devoid of intimate confessions or accounts of her everyday life, it can be examined as autobiographical writing that nonetheless unveils various methods of self-creation. What is important here is that being essentially inscribed into the epistolary poetics, the author’s fabrications should not be viewed as transgressing moral rules. The same principle applies to the process of creating the self—it reflects the way an individual perceives and experiences the cultural values s/he is immersed in (Cysewski 1997: 104–105).

Glimpses of Wanda Dynowska’s life

Wanda Dynowska was born on 30/06/1888 in St. Petersburg, as the only child of Eustachy and Helena neé Sokołowska. She spent her early years in Istalsno, Latvia. Due to health issues Wanda was tutored at home. Despite her claims that she undertook Romance studies at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow, to prepare for literary work, and agricultural studies in Lausanne to take care of the homestead in Istalsno, no document proving that she completed any university-level education has survived. However, since her childhood she was exposed to Polish artistic and literary circles, as her mother invited renowned contemporary thinkers and artists to Istalsno. Wanda’s private teacher was Tadeusz Miciński (1873–1918), an influential writer of the Young Poland movement and a member of the Warsaw Theosophical Society. Helena Dynowska, herself an exceptional mixture of an individual seeing the spirits of nature (Dynowska 1948: 161) and a devoted Roman Catholic, let her daughter freely choose the life-path she wanted to follow. It was possibly also to her own mother that Wanda

owed the model of an emancipated, single woman, as Helena separated from her husband and lived with her only daughter in her family estate (Trzcińska 2015: 166–167, cf. Tokarski 1994).

In the 1920s Wanda got acquainted with religious literature representing various traditions—the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Quran* and the *Bible*. In 1917 she had begun translating *U stóp mistrza* [*At the Feet of the Master*], attributed to Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986), an Indian philosopher who studied under the guidance of Annie Besant (1847–1933), the then leader of Theosophical Society. His writings would later become the priority of Dynowska’s publishing activities. The book was first published in 1923 with Polskie Towarzystwo Teozoficzne (Polish Theosophical Society). Dynowska’s formal involvement in the activities of Polish Theosophists had commenced in 1919, when she moved to Warsaw and established the Polish Theosophical Society. In 1921 she became the general secretary of the new organization. In the following years, she co-initiated the Mixed Masonery and actively participated in the development of the Polish theosophical community, frequently travelling abroad, as well as editing and translating relevant books. In line with the conventional esoteric self-presentation, years later Dynowska stated that she developed an interest in esotericism at the age of eighteen out of her own meditations and “recollections from previous lives” that were triggered by the first book on the esoteric philosophy of India she read, and enriched by the works of Polish philosophers and Romanticists (Trzcińska 2015: 170–175).

In the autumn of 1935, Dynowska left for India to attend the Congress of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, planning to stay there for three months (Dynowska 1948: 161). However, the journey proved to constitute a turning point in her life, which was reflected in her assuming an Indian name—Umadevi⁹—and obtaining an Indian passport¹⁰

⁹ It is said that the name was given to Dynowska by Gandhi, who, as follows from their correspondence, addressed her thus already in 1937. See <http://gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL072.PDF>.

¹⁰ A later report of the Council of the Society of Polish-Indian Friendship, covering the period of 30/05/1967–31/03/1971 and kept in the Pobożniak

(Trzcińska 2016: 185). Dynowska spent her first years on the subcontinent in southern India,¹¹ living for some time in Bangalore, where Frydman—already then an ardent follower of Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950)—was employed at the Mysore State Government Electrical Factory as the managing director. Later, she temporarily moved to Mahatma Gandhi’s headquarters in Maganvadi-Wardha.¹² The poems composed at that time¹³ attest to the paths and people she followed: “Tęsknota odwieczna” [“Everlasting Longing”], dedicated to Sri Ramana Maharshi, written at Tiruvannamalai in January 1936; “Awichi”, written at Maganvadi-Wardha in December 1936; “Gdzie jesteś” [“Where are you?”] dedicated to Swami Lakshman Joo (1907–1991),¹⁴ written in Mysore in December 1936; or “Noc Śiwy” [“The Night of Shiva”] dedicated to Frydman, written in Bangalore in July 1937 (cf. Tokarski 1994: 96–97).

Having learnt about the outbreak of WWII, Dynowska attempted to return to Poland, even though thanks to her collaboration with Gandhi she was to be employed at the Folk Museum in Maganvadi (Pobożniak 1969: 332, 334). Managing to get only as far as the Romanian border, she returned to India and offered her services at the Polish Consulate in Bombay, headed by Dr. Eugeniusz Banasiński

archive, mentions Wanda Dynowska-Umadevi as one of the Indian guests who visited the Society (“a citizen of India of Polish descent, a writer and translator from Indian literature” (copy–85/72 No 110 A4 A–23).

¹¹ According to Tokarski, Dynowska’s correspondence suggests that she suffered from homesickness and attempted to come back to Poland several times (Tokarski 1994: 100).

¹² For instance, in a letter to Szukiewicz (received on 14/04/1939) Dynowska writes that she has already left Bangalore and her permanent residential address will be Umadevi go. Bh. Kumarappa Maganvadi WARDHA—C. P. India.

¹³ All these pieces are collected in Dynowska 1948.

¹⁴ For more on Swami Lakshman Joo and his place in the Kashmirian Shaivism tradition, see for instance Sanderson 2007.

(1886–1964),¹⁵ with whom she had already exchanged letters before.¹⁶ She spent the next years working in the Consulate's press and cultural section. Wearing sandals and clad in khadi sari, with a *bindu* on her forehead, vegetarian, following the teachings of Gandhi and living "from hartal to hartal" (Hradyska 1971), Dynowska fit neither the political atmosphere of British India nor that of the after-war communist Poland. Her 'reactionary' attitude was reported by officials both in regard to her work at the Polish Consulate and to her visits at the Polish refugee camp at Valivade, where she helped the Poles who left the Soviet Union. The report of the former Polish Ambassador in China, Count Alfred Poniński, who visited Bombay in February 1943, mentions that her behavior, mostly her public demonstration of warm feelings towards the Indian National Congress, might create problems for the Polish Consulate (Glazer T. et al. 2009: 46–47). A couple of years later, Ms. Burakiewicz, a representative of the Polish Legation in Cairo, who came to Valivade Camp in November 1946 to supervise the repatriation of volunteers, described Dynowska as "the person who does us most damage on the Indian subcontinent" (ibid.: 490–491). According to the recollections of Irena Hradyska, who was her secretary in 1946–1948, although in some circles Dynowska's controversial activities were indeed perceived as anti-British, her relations with the Indian elites were so precious for the Consulate that despite all the troubles she caused and conflicts she fuelled, her dismissal was out of the question (Hradyska 1971). Nonetheless, the consul's wife, Kira Banasińska wrote in one of her letters (1/02/1944) that Dynowska was "good help" to her husband (Banasińska 1997, chapter XX). In his farewell speech

¹⁵ In 1939 the Staff of the Polish Consulate comprised thirteen members. Three of them were in charge of Polish-Indian relations: Dynowska (public relations), Dr. Maryla Falk (1906–1980) (working at the Polish Department of Calcutta University, responsible for academic matters) and Harishchandra Bhatt (1901–1951), the only Indian employee, responsible for local matters (Glazer T. et al. 2009: 46).

¹⁶ In her letters preserved in the folder Dynowska refers to the Consul and his wife several times, for instance on 18/05/1938, 10/09/1938, 20/09/1938.

on leaving the Consulate, Banasiński thanked Dynowska for her long-time friendship, her help at the consular mission and her work for the sake of Poland.¹⁷

During her employment at the Polish Consulate, Dynowska launched the Bombay branch of the Polish-Indian Society.¹⁸

¹⁷ Beldowski et al. 2002: 42–43. As the content of the Polish and English version of the book is not identical, whenever I refer to the Polish version, I do so deliberately.

¹⁸ Dynowska discusses the history of the Polish-Indian Society in the letter to Pobożniak dated 31/01/1959, with the intention of clarifying the alleged role of Helena Willman-Grabowska in its establishment, with which Pobożniak credited her in the obituary he wrote for *Przegląd Powszechny* (Dynowska must have meant the text “Helena Willman-Grabowska”, published in *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1958 no. 10): “I knew Ms. Helena quite well and had always respected, or even admired, her knowledge and character. Yet, there is one merit you ascribed to her totally erroneously and I would appreciate it if you corrected this piece of information in one of the issues of the journal. Now, Dr. W[illman] Gr[abowska] spent a short time in India and did not think about any societies; she knew only her own circle, professors and university spheres, particularly Sanskritists. Thus, at that time there was no talk about establishing the Polish-Indian Society”. (“Znałam dość dobrze panią Helenę, i byłam zawsze z całym szacunkiem a nawet zachwytem dla jej wiedzy i charakteru. Jednak jedną zasługę jej Pan zupełnie błędnie przypisał i byłabym wdzięczna za sprostowanie tej informacji w którymś z numerów tegoż pisma. Oto Dr. W[illman] Gr[abowska] bawiła w Indiach krótko, i o żadnych stowarzyszeniach nie myślała, znała tylko swoje kółko, profesorów i sfery uniwersyteckie zwłaszcza Sanskrytologów. Więc nigdy nawet mowy niebyło wówczas o zakładaniu Stowarzyszenia Polsko Indyjskiego”).

Willman-Grabowska visited India and Ceylon during a research trip in 1936–1937. As she mentions in her report (20/04/1937), she managed to establish the Indian Association for Polish Studies in Bombay (name given by her in English). Nonetheless, in Polish, she refers to it as “Koło Przyjaciół Polski” [Poland’s Friends Association] which might be confusing. For the content of Willman-Grabowska’s report see Czekańska, Kuczkiewicz-Fraś 2014: 31–38. Unluckily, I was unable to find the report in Willman-Grabowska’s personal file kept in the Jagiellonian University Archives,

The Society shared the same ideology as its Bengal counterpart, established soon after the outbreak of WWII, on 5/10/1939 in Calcutta by Dr. Maryla Falk, with Rabindranath Tagore as its honorary president. The latter organisation functioned for ca. five years and ceased its activities after Falk's departure.¹⁹ In the case of the Bombay Society—the two bodies were not structurally connected—the chairman was elected annually out of the Indian elites. The Society organized cultural events and meetings, published books and organized lectures on Indian culture in Polish refugee camps. Its activity subsided when the Polish refugees left the subcontinent and Dynowska moved back to southern India.

The opportunity of working at the Polish consular mission must have facilitated Dynowska's literary passion, becoming a vent for her writing and publishing ambitions. Her activity in this field expanded significantly: she began to collaborate with Harishchandra Bhatt, who translated Polish literature into Hindi, published articles on Poland's situation in Indian newspapers (Tokarski 1994: 97), and for a short

which Czekalska and Kuczkiewicz-Fraś refer to, as most probably it has been moved somewhere else. Anyway, in her *curriculum vitae* submitted in March 1956, kept in the same personal file, Willman-Grabowska mentions the same piece of information that during her visit to India, in Bombay, she established "Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Polski" [Poland's Friends Association] for local students. She admits that for the time being she does not know its activities.

¹⁹ Dynowska's short reference to Dr. Maryla Falk adds some details to the scholar's biography. According to Dynowska, Falk, a Sanskritist, for several years successfully taught Polish at the University of Calcutta (Dynowska estimates the number of her students for a couple dozen yet mentions that she personally knew ca. eighteen of them). Dynowska writes that Falk knew not only Sanskrit, but also Bengali, and that together with her students she translated many excerpts from Polish literature into the latter language (some of them were in Dynowska's possession at that time). In 1944 Falk published a booklet entitled *Król Himalajów* [*King of the Himalayas*] with the BPI. For more on Falk, see Mejer 2011.

time edited *The Polish News*, an official publication of the Federation of Poles in Bombay. The Federation comprised the first group of refugees from Poland, including many Polish Jews, who reached India in late 1940 and, with the support from the Polish Consulate, managed to set up a temporal home there, mostly in Bombay.²⁰ With the arrival of the next wave of Polish refugees to India (1942), Dynowska wholeheartedly committed herself to social voluntary work: apart from organizing financial support, she set out to make Indian culture closer to Poles living at the refugee camp at Valivade, her plans being often called inconceivable.

In March 1944, supported by the Polish Consulate, in collaboration with Frydman and, what is usually ignored, with the help of some other Poles (J. Grochocka, J. Rejman),²¹ Dynowska began her unusual life-project: the already mentioned publishing enterprise aimed at propagating Indian literature among Poles and Polish literature in India, translated into Polish and English respectively. According to Krzysztof

²⁰ Glazer T. et al. 2009: 51. Among them was the Sternbach family from Krakow. Ludwik (1909–1981), the son of Edward, an attorney, studied law (1927–1931) and Indian philology under Prof. Willman-Grabowska (from 1929) at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Between 1936–1937 he gave lectures on Indian law dedicated to the students of law and Indian philology at the same university. Having reached Bombay in 1940 (after a short stay in Lvov, where he intensively studied Sanskrit and co-worked with Prof. Stefan Stasiak (1884–1962)), he was employed in the military office of mail censorship under the British authority. It was in India where he developed his scientific activities concerning Sanskrit literature. Sternbach actively participated in the activities of Poles in India; he co-edited the *Polak w Indiach* [*Pole in India*] journal. He left India in 1946 (for more on Ludwik Sternbach see Mejer 2004–2005a: 475–478).

²¹ According to Tokarski, Dynowska covered some expenses, for example the cost of Polish printing types, from her regular salary received from the Polish Consulate (Tokarski 1994: 97). Eugenia Maersch, in turn, recalls that the Polish Consulate granted the BPI a budget of 200 Rupees, and additional money was earned or borrowed (Glazer T. et al. 2009: 72).

Drygas, the idea of establishing a publishing house which would issue Indian literature in Polish was in fact born in the first years of WWII, along with the inflow of Polish refugees to India. It had its predecessor in the form of Instytut Polsko-Indyjski (the Polish-Indian Institute) founded by Frydman in 1939 in Bombay, whose modest means proved insufficient in the new reality. However, the extension of publishing activities faced difficulties caused i.a. by suspicions of the British authorities due to pro-Indian inclinations of both Dynowska and Frydman; hence it took ca. two years to publish the first book (Drygas 1961: 174).

While Dynowska dealt with editorial issues, Frydman basically took care of technical matters. When the Polish Consulate was closed down in October 1945, Dynowska independently continued carrying out her responsibilities of rectifying the communist propaganda regarding Poland through her English-language socio-political journalism in India (Hradyska 1971). Besides, deprived of a formal connection with any Polish institution, she had to search for other, mostly Hindu, benefactors, who would cover the costs of maintaining the BPI/IPL. As the places of publication of consecutive volumes suggest, the publishing body began a journey along with its founders: in short, from Bombay it moved for a couple of years to Bangalore, then to Adyar and Madras, and finally, after Dynowska's death, it returned to Bombay again, this time with Frydman, to whom she handed it over in 1969 due to her deteriorating health. Dynowska conducted most of her research in the premises of the Theosophical Society in Adyar. The project of editing *Antologia Indyjska* [*The Indian Anthology*], comprising six volumes of selected translations into Polish from different Indian literary traditions (Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil),²² received financial support from the Indian Ministry of Education.

²² The *Anthology* was supposed to include two more volumes, one dedicated to poetry in Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada, the other comprising Sufi poetry of Punjab and Sindh (Drygas 1963: 175).

In other cases, Dynowska constantly faced financial problems and had to procure funding by herself (Tokarski 1994: 100).²³

The year 1960 constituted another turning point in Dynowska's life. It was then that she started charity work with Tibetan refugees who found shelter in India after the Chinese Invasion; her focus was on finding possibilities for the education for Tibetan children and youth. The encounter with Buddhist tradition influenced her view of life, as well as the matters she raised in her continuous writing and publishing activity (Tokarski 1993: 101–102). Dynowska's shift towards Buddhism could have been caused by her disappointment with Indian reality after the country won independence, particularly with the atrocities of the Partition, in which both Muslims and Hindus took part and which culminated in the assassination of Gandhi by a member of the Hindu nationalist party.²⁴

²³ In *Razem pod wiatr...* Dynowska shed some light on the conditions of her publishing work: “The booklet was set by a professor of Sanskrit who in his free time made money from typesetting; it was copied on a small manual printing press hundreds of miles away from where I stayed, without any possibility of final proofs. The Polish types, old and worn down, were inherited from Polish voluntary organizations leaving India; Biblioteka Polsko-Indyjska could not afford new ones back then, and the author's resources were so ridiculously limited that she either had to forgo publishing this volume altogether or... to yield to circumstances and throw herself on the mercy of the Sanskrit professor's good will but poor skills. I chose the latter, believing that maybe in a few years friends would publish the book properly”. (“Książeczka była składana przez profesora Sanskrytu, który w wolnych chwilach zarabiał zecerstwem; odbijana na małej ręcznej maszynie o setki mil od miejsca mego pobytu, bez możliwości ostatniej korekty. Czcionki polskie, stare i wytarte, były odziedziczone po polskich organizacjach społecznych opuszczających Indie; na nowe nie stać było wówczas Biblioteki Polsko-Indyjskiej, a środki autorki były tak śmiesznie małe, że musiała albo zrezygnować w ogóle z wydania tego tomiku, albo... poddać się okolicznościom i zdać się na łaskę i niełaskę dobrej woli, a słabej umiejętności profesora Sanskrytu. Wybrałam to ostatnie, wierząc że może za parę lat przyjaciele wydadzą tę książeczkę odpowiednio”) (Dynowska 1948: iii).

²⁴ In this context Irena Hradyska recalls that “Umadevi lost her heart to the Hindus; suddenly she began to see various flaws in them; from

Before her death, Dynowska visited Poland twice: in 1960 and 1969. Trzeńska remarks that only her social activities drew the attention of Polish journalists, as though other elements of her astonishing biography were impossible to comprehend by common Poles (Trzcinska 2015: 177).

Having received the sacrament of anointing from Father Marian Batogowski, Dynowska passed away on 20/03/1971, in a Roman Catholic convent in Mysore, where she moved in Autumn of 1970. Her funeral rites were conducted according to the Tibetan order in Bylakuppe, a Tibetan refugee camp. The BPI/IPL reduced its activity, with several more reprints issued by Frydman before he died in 1976. Including reprints, throughout its history the BPI/IPL issued a total of over 130 volumes.²⁵

Wanda Dynowska's papers about India collected by Tadeusz Pobożniak

Having at my disposal only the letters addressed to Szukiewicz, my attempt was to reconstruct the dialogue between Dynowska and her agent on the basis of her answers. In this respect, I also took into account references to her writing activity found in other personal documents and textual sources, in particular Szukiewicz's note on the expenses he bore while working for Dynowska and his formal letters dispatched to various Polish publishers on her behalf. In addition, I selectively referred to some articles by Dynowska, either to the version kept in the folder or the published one, and two messages Helena Dynowska wrote to Szukiewicz.

Not much has been hitherto said about the context of Dynowska's collaboration with her literary representative in the late 1930s.

uncritical admiration she shifted to acerbic suspiciousness (...). She had lived to see the moment when a new generation that grew up in India could not tell who Gandhi was, what he fought for and with what method. It must have been particularly unpleasant to her" (Hradyska 1971).

²⁵ For the list of the volumes issued with BPI/IPL see Glazer T. et al. 2009: 591–596.

The fragment of a “Charbin”-related article of his authorship on the back of which he put down the captions of Dynowska’s photographs sent to *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, as well as a reference to China in Dynowska’s letter to him (18/05/38), suggest that he must have been the Tadeusz Szukiewicz who due to the war turmoil spent six years in the 1920s in Harbin, a town in Manchuria of considerable Polish population. He was born in Galicia and educated as a lawyer. Remembered as one of Harbin’s leading Polish activists, in 1926, that is one year after his return to Warsaw, Szukiewicz was selected to represent the local Polish colony at the 1st Meeting of Poles from Abroad. While in Poland, he co-established the Polish-Chinese Society in Warsaw, closely associated with the Eastern Institute (Instytut Wschodni). The aims of the Society included preparing the ground for the expansion of Polish economy into Eastern markets with the help of Poles in Manchuria. For this sake, the rather impassive Polish colony had to be motivated to learn more about local cultures. Holding the position of the Society’s secretary, Szukiewicz focused on stimulating Polish circles in Manchuria and strengthening their connection with the homeland (Yong-Deog 2010: 131–132, 139; cf. Grochowski 1928: 2–4; Kałuski 2001: 109, 132). It is possible that if Dynowska had not met Szukiewicz in Poland before her departure to India, she made his acquaintance through Eugeniusz Banasiński, Polish consul in Bombay, and his wife Kira, a couple with whom she established a warm relationship during her first years in India.²⁶ The Banasińskis met in Harbin in the 1920s: Eugeniusz earned his living there as a teacher at the Polish school in 1920–1923, and the much younger Kira lived in Harbin with her mother. Obviously, Szukiewicz and Dynowska

²⁶ We may suspect that in late 1930s Szukiewicz stayed in contact with the Banasińskis; from the postcard he received from Helena Dynowska (7/07/1939) it follows that he was supposed to inform her whether Ms. Banasińska was going to deliver her daughter to England through Warsaw. Yet, one has to take into consideration that as in the case of other correspondence, at that time contacting Szukiewicz could have been simply the fastest way to learn about this.

shared similar experiences, shaped by a long time spent in the East. In addition, besides displaying literary inclinations,²⁷ they both propagated principles that were not very common for their milieu, starting with the necessity of gaining knowledge about the far and exotic country they settled in and disseminating this knowledge in Poland.

Dynowska dispatched her letters to the agent by various methods and wrote them very often, sometimes every week, apparently not counting on receiving a reply on time. The letters vary in length; in a few cases these are rather short notes, attached to a more substantial message. All are handwritten on very delicate tissue paper. Several undated letters make the chronology of communication, which anyway contains gaps, slightly unclear. They are rather difficult to follow due to Dynowska's use of many abbreviations, as well as short, condensed sentences formulated as a series of requests or references to the persons or pieces of information familiar to Szukiewicz—however, this does not preclude their literary value. While only a part of this correspondence was sent by air or sea mail directly to Szukiewicz's address in Warsaw, other letters were either carried to Poland by Dynowska's acquaintances and then handed over to Szukiewicz, or first delivered along with other correspondence to her mother or friends in Poland by post, usually in bigger batches (hence possibly the lack of date on individual letters). Their routes, as follows from the content of the postcard sent by Wanda's mother to Szukiewicz on 7/07/1939, led for instance through Switzerland or France. The only carriers mentioned by name are Ms. Brunton,²⁸ through whom Dynowska sent her photographs via

²⁷ In Harbin, Szukiewicz held the position of a teacher and engaged himself in the development of an amateur Polish theatre. Besides, he published articles concerning the cultural life of Poles in Harbin with local Polish newspapers, reprinted in: Grochowski 1928: 54–61.

²⁸ Possibly the ex-wife of Paul Brunton (actually Raphael Hurst, 1898–1981) whose book *A Search in Secret India* (1934) in Dynowska's translation into Polish (*Ścieżkami jogów*) was published with Atlas-Książnica in 1939. Brunton, a renowned British theosophist, is credited with introducing Ramana Maharshi and his teachings to the West.

Paris (10/09/1938), and Aleksander Janta-Pończyński (1908–1974), a Polish traveler and journalist, who in 1939 visited India and was provided by Dynowska with her three articles on his departure back to the country.²⁹ In one of her letters to Szukiewicz, Dynowska explains that the reason for such a strategy was to save time. However, it caused unintentional chaos in her works: posted to various persons, passed over from hand to hand to eventually reach the agent, they sometimes got defragmented or simply perished. Dynowska either had to reconstruct whole articles based on manuscripts or supplement them once again with explanatory footnotes, which sometimes disappeared on the way. Vulnerable to damage and loss were also the priceless photographs she attached; this was for instance the case with the collection of pictures she sent through Ms. Brunton.³⁰

Some of the enclosed articles are preserved in variants, with traces of numerous corrections. Apart from the original version of the review of Hanna Skarbek-Pertjatkowicz's (1892-1968) book, which is preserved in a version apparently by Szukiewicz (with revisions and cuts marked in red), all the articles and translations are typescripts. Dynowska's handwriting can be unintelligible, which, as we may suppose based on her repeated promises to rewrite the articles or requests to have it done in Poland, was also an issue for Szukiewicz and potential publishers. The problem was solved when she got access to a mould with Polish types at the end of 1938.³¹ The other reason why Dynowska's papers had to be revised was her continued application of the old rules of Polish orthography despite their modification as a result of the reform implemented in Poland in 1936.³²

All articles are signed with Dynowska's surname, although the letter dated 29/11/1938 suggests that she considered using one of the pen-names under which she had published in Poland before.

²⁹ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated, ca. 2nd half of 1939.

³⁰ Letter to Szukiewicz dated 10/09/1938.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Letter to Szukiewicz, received 14/04/1939.

However, because of the limited number of Polish women living in India, she seems to have given up this idea, presuming unavoidable exposure. This issue was raised once again in an undated letter in the context of her review of Brunton's book, which Dynowska hoped to publish soon. Intending to reuse its introductory part, which was rejected by the publisher "under the pretext of my delay", she requested Szukiewicz to sign the review with her pseudonym Marta Roszanówna. To conceal her identity, all hints pointing to the fact that the author stayed in India were to be removed. Perhaps, such a tactic, if applied in more cases, might have contributed to the scant amount of personal allusions in her writings from this period in general.³³

From the documents gathered in Pobożniak's archive it follows that Dynowska began her cooperation with Szukiewicz in the first half of 1938. A note listing all costs borne by Szukiewicz to negotiate on her behalf with the editorial boards of "daily, weekly and monthly literary magazines", including the expenses of dispatching letters, making necessary calls and delivering the copies of selected Polish magazines to Dynowska, opens with a record dated 1/05/1938 and ends on 28/08/1939. The earliest preserved letter seems to be the one dated 18/05/1938, sent from Bangalore.³⁴ Here, Dynowska acknowledges

³³ It is, however, interesting that while in the allegedly original version of the article "Z pielgrzymką hinduską w głąb Himalajów", that is in the version kept in the folder, Dynowska does not conceal her identity – she presents the first-person-account of her trip to the Himalayas in the company of Pascaline Mallet – the real names of them both are erased from the same essay published in 1944 and 1959, Wanda becomes Marta and Pascaline becomes Paula (yet the first-person narration is maintained). In his letter to *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* (9/05/1938), Szukiewicz briefly explains that Mallet is a French woman who gave a lecture "on the soul, religion and customs of India" at the Polish-French Society in Warsaw on 7/04/1938. Dynowska, in turn, refers to her Warsaw lecture in the letter to Szukiewicz dated 29/11/1938. The women became friends much earlier; in 1924 Dynowska went to Paris and stayed with the Paris Theosophical Society at Mallet's invitation (Tokarski 1994: 94).

³⁴ The issue of authorization letters certified by the local authorities, which Dynowska was supposed to send to Szukiewicz, is mentioned in her

that she and Szukiewicz share the same values—seen through the lense of Polish patriotic traditions of the struggle for independence—and concerns about the current political situation, intoxicated with Nazi ideology. Additionally, she asserts her aims, as if to verify the agent's determination to cooperate: her declaration is formulated much more concisely than the one published in 1948, when she had already initiated the BPI/IPB, but it is essentially similar: to reach millions with the news about the perfection of the East, despite all inevitable obstacles:

Dear Sir! Thank you for your letter. I am glad that you have the same things at heart that I do. I do not know China but I support their struggle for independence with all my heart—this is so m[uch] in the spirit of essential Polish traditions. I believe that the present period will soon pass. This intoxication with amoral dwarfs and physical muscles cannot take long. What we can say about the life and immortal ideals of the East, about the great Revival which is seen nowadays, if heard Today by a few, Tomorrow will reach millions. It is in the name of this faith that I work. I am aware of the difficulties and I do not get disheartened. I trust that you too, Sir, shall have patience. Of course, I am sincerely grateful for your cooperation.³⁵

I have not established the circumstances under which the above-mentioned collection of personal documents came into the possession of Tadeusz Pobożniak. This was probably related to his activities in the Polish-Indian Society in Krakow, which he headed for nearly

letter to Szukiewicz from 20/09/1939. Having gone down with a flu, she dispatched them much later (letter to Szukiewicz 29/11/1938).

³⁵ Letter to Szukiewicz, 18/05/1938: “Szanowny Panie! Dziękuję za list. Cieszę się, że Panu to samo leży na sercu co i mnie. Chin nie znam, ale jestem całym sercem z ich walką o niezależność swego kraju – jest to tak b[ardzo] w duchu istotnych polskich tradycji. Wierzę że okres dzisiejszy minie szybko. To uopojenie fiz[ycznymi] mięśniami i amoralnemi karłami nie może trwać długo. To, co możemy mówić o życiu i ideałach nieśmiertelnych Wschodu, o wspaniałem Odrodzeniu obecnem, jakie się widzi, jeśli Dziś będzie usłyszane przez niewielu – Jutro dotrze do milionów. W imię tej wiary pracuję. Znam trudności i nie zniechęcam się. Ufam, że i Pan będzie miał cierpliwość. Oczywiście szczerze jestem wdzięczna za współpracę”.

thirty years. Pobożniak, an Indologist and Indo-European linguist, pursued his studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow under Prof. Helena Willman-Grabowska; he became her assistant after obtaining a master's degree in 1938 (*Coniunctivus w Atharwawedzie* [*Coniunctiv in Atharvaveda*]). A decade later, he defended his doctoral dissertation (*Instrumentalis w Gatha* [*Instrumental in Gatha*]). Pobożniak's research covered a vast area: Iranian languages, Sanskrit, Hindi and Lovari, to name but a few of his interests (Piekarski 2000).

Although Pobożniak had a chance to meet Dynowska during her visits to Poland, their correspondence must have begun earlier, perhaps thanks to Prof. Willman-Grabowska who knew Dynowska personally. It was deprived of any theosophical dimension with which Dynowska is usually associated (Trzcińska 2015: 176). The three letters kept in Pobożniak's archive suggest that his rather formal relationship with Dynowska was based solely on his interest in Indian culture. Pobożniak appreciated Gandhi, practiced hatha-yoga and was vegetarian (Piekarski 2000: 671). Similarly to Dynowska, he considered promoting India in Poland an important issue, and hence delivered innumerable lectures on various aspects of Indian culture.³⁶ Przemysław Piekarski, who studied Indology under his guidance in the 1970s,

³⁶ For instance, on 31/10/1958 Pobożniak wrote to Dynowska: "In the meantime, the Krakow branch of the Society for Polish-Indian Friendship, of which I am the chairman, has developed quite a robust activity. Last May I had a lecture (with slides) on the monuments of Indian culture, in June a talk on Pandit Nehru, in September a lecture on Ajanta frescoes, on the occasion of their exhibition in Krakow. Now there is the UNESCO week dedicated to the contacts between East and West: I gave a lecture about Buddhism at the Oriental Institute on 23rd Oct., and on 25th Oct. in Rabka (near Zakopane) a lecture about Indian culture". ("W międzyczasie Koło Krakowskie Towarzystwa Przyjaźni Polsko-Indyjskiej, któremu przewodnicze, rozwinęło dosyć żywą działalność. W maju b.r. miałem odczyt (z przeźrocami) o pomnikach kultury indyjskiej, w czerwcu prelekcję o Pandit Nehru, we wrześniu z okazji wystawy fresków Adżanta w Krakowie, wykład o tych zabytkach. Teraz jest tydzień UNESCO o kontaktach Wschodu z Zachodem; miałem

reminiscences that Pobożniak was available in the office of the Krakow branch of the Society of Polish-Indian Friendship at Garbarska street every week, and once a month he attended or gave a talk organized within the framework of its activity (Piekarski 2000: 671).

From Pobożniak's letter to Dynowska dated 31/10/1958 it follows that at that time he intended to lecture on her life and literary work at the meetings of the Society, although her name had been already widely known among Polish Indophiles. "The booklets of yours enjoy a great popularity with readers here", he wrote. "The translation of *Ścieżkami Jogów* [*A Search in Secret India* by Brunton—EDB] is an extreme rarity now and a new edition would be of great use".³⁷ Basically, his main concern as a scholar was the lack of sources he could rely on while conducting his research.³⁸

In our information work concerning India the members of our Society (the Krakow branch has ca. 100 members) always encounter your name; I would like to dedicate one lecture for them to your writings and Indological works. Thus, I would like to ask you to send me your bibliography and resume, as our knowledge here in Krakow exhibits numerous gaps. Of course we would prefer to see you in Krakow, rather than just hearing from you. Are you not planning to visit Poland these days? I believe this would not be too difficult now, given that the cultural relations with India have begun to develop more vigorously. And it would make us really glad. I am still interested in the language problem in India and the reception of Hindi as the all-Indian language. I am preparing an informational article on this subject. I would be very grateful for current news on this problem, and possibly some materials or contacts through which they could be

w Instytucie Orientalistycznym odczyt o buddyzmie 23.X, a 25.X w Rabce (k. Zakopanego) odczyt o Kulturze indyjskiej").

³⁷ "Tomiki Pani cieszą się tu wielką poczytnością. Tłumaczenie książki «Ścieżkami jogów» jest obecnie białym krukiem i bardzo przydałoby się nowe wydanie".

³⁸ At that time, as Pobożniak wrote in the same letter, he conducted an elective elementary course in Sanskrit (in comparison with Hindi) for a few students, and a more advanced course in readings from the *Atharvaveda*. Besides, he lectured at the departments of Iranian studies and comparative linguistics.

obtained, since what I have at my disposal here gives a highly incomplete picture of the problem.³⁹

The level of Dynowska's knowledge of Indian languages (as well as European ones)⁴⁰ remains a mystery (cf. Gerlach 1971: 433) which appears to feed her myth to this day. Whether intentionally or following a convention, she credited herself with translations of excerpts from various Indian literary traditions published with the BPI, thus creating a convenient device to shape her image as a woman endowed with all-embracing skills and abilities. The picture of a self-sufficient Dynowska whose powers were unlimited was transmitted for instance by Tokarski, who claims that Dynowska herself translated and proof-read the works, as well as dealt with the printing, packing and shipping of the books to Poland, other European countries

³⁹ "W naszej pracy informacyjnej o Indiach członkowie naszego Towarzystwa (koło krakowskie liczy około 100 członków) napotykają zawsze nazwisko Pani; chciałbym poświęcić jedną prelekcję dla nich właśnie twórczości i pracom indianistycznym Pani. Bardzo bym więc Panią prosił o przesłanie mi Swjej bibliografii prac oraz życiorysu, gdyż wiadomości nasze tu w Krakowie wykazują wiele luk. Oczywiście, wolelibyśmy widzieć Panią w Krakowie, zamiast tylko słyszeć. Czy nie zamierza Pani w obecnych czasach Polski odwiedzić? Sądzę, że nie nastęczałoby to teraz, skoro stosunki kulturalne z Indiami zaczynają się żywiej rozwijać, większych trudności. A dużo radości by nam sprawiło. Ja interesuję się dalej problemem językowym w Indiach i recepcją języka hindi jako języka ogólnindyjskiego. Z dziedziny tej przygotowuję artykuł informacyjny. Byłbym wdzięczny bardzo za wiadomości aktualne o tym problemie oraz ewentualne materiały, względnie adresy, gdzie możnaby je otrzymać, gdyż to, czym tu rozporządzam, daje bardzo niepełny obraz problemu".

⁴⁰ Whereas secondary literature usually mentions that she spoke English, French, Russian, Latvian, Italian and Spanish (Tokarski 1994: 90), Dynowska herself enigmatically wrote in the article "Hinduska bhakti" ["Hindu bhakti"] (published with BPI as part of the volume dedicated to Sanskrit in 1959) that she knew eight European languages. This information must have aroused Pobożniak's curiosity as he put it down (with question marks) in his handwritten note concerning the volume.

and the United States (Tokarski 1994: 97–98). From her writings it follows that she communicated in Hindi.⁴¹ She might have studied some Sanskrit as well.⁴² Tamil works she certainly translated through English renderings: quite exceptionally, she explicitly admitted this in the note attached to translations of Subrahmanya Bharati’s poems kept in the folder, but not in the volume on Tamil literary tradition published with the BPI in 1951 (repr. 1958), in which they were included. Still, the degree of Dynowska’s acquaintance with Indological matters, despite her lack of formal education in this field, is quite astonishing. Her witty, linguistically-oriented observations on rendering and applying Sanskrit terms into Polish convincingly brought Pobożniak up to date with the state of various social and political transformations taking place in India in the 1950s, in front of her eyes:

What about your campaign of changing the name of India in the Polish language [Polish uses a plural form, *Indie*, as opposed to singular feminine, which would be *India*—EDB] I am very keen to hear about it, because, following your and my own conviction, I adopted the singular, feminine form, and since then I have stuck to it in my works. Have you not also pointed out to Polish writers that the term ‘braminizm’ (Brahminism) for the Hindu religion has gone completely out of use today, and the Hindus do not like it at all, as it seems to underline the superiority of the Brahmin caste (even though it comes from Brahman not Brahmin), whereas in all other languages the term HINDUISM is used to refer to the religion, but never to the nationality, which is called Indian, i.e. Indian and Hindu, *Indien* and *Hindou* in French. Confusing these words leads to an extraordinary nonsense, such as a Hindu cardinal, namely of the Hindu religion, or a Muslim of the Hindu religion. It litters the Polish language and causes a confusion of concepts. Should this not be pointed out? And who else is

⁴¹ For example, in the article “W mieście-Obozie Kongresu Narodowego Indii w Vitalnagar” [“In the Town-Headquarter of Indian National Congress in Vitalnagar”] Dynowska mentions that she managed to communicate with local people with the help of a mixture of Hindi and hand-gestures. A copy is preserved in the folder.

⁴² According to Janina Gołduń Sułkowska, Dynowska learnt Sanskrit from her friends: M. Massani (Minocher Rustom “Minoo” Masani), Harishchandra Bhatt and Ludwik Sternbach (Beldowski et al. 2002: 72).

more authorized and competent in this regard but you? One more thing: the word-name Ganga; after all, she is a goddess of the feminine gender, why should one ape in Polish the incorrect English word and change both gender and name [Polish uses the Ganges form—EDB]? Could this not be explained and changed, too? Benares, which nowadays bears its age-old, ancient name—Varanasi,⁴³ we will have to change as well, because soon no Indian will use it, so why not introduce the Ganga, too?⁴⁴

A detailed handwritten note in which Pobożniak put down a number of flaws he detected in the initial chapter of the volume dedicated to Sanskrit published with BPI in 1959—from corrections regarding Dynowska's knowledge of Sanskrit and Indian literature to the norms of Polish grammar and style—shows that he was by no means uncritical towards her work. However, a decade later, in 1969, in his paper on Gandhi's connections to Poland, he drew from Dynowska's lectures

⁴³ The name was changed to Varanasi on 19/05/1956, with an effect from 24/05/1957.

⁴⁴ Letter to Pobożniak, 31/01/1959, Madras: "Co słyhać z Pana akcją zmiany imienia Indii po polsku? Interesuje mnie to bardzo, gdyż sama przyjąłem wedle Pana i swojego przekonania liczbę pojedynczą rodzaj żeński, i odtąd tego się trzymam w swoich wydawnictwach. Czy nie zwrócił Pan także uwagi polskich pisarzy, że słowo braminizm dla religii hinduskiej, wyszło całkowicie z użycia, i hindusi bardzo go nie lubią, bo zdaje się podkreślać przewagę kasty bramińskiej (choć pochodzi od Brahmana a nie bramina); natomiast we wszystkich językach używa się słowa HINDUIZM jako religia, ale nigdy jako narodowość, którą się mieni indyjska, induska tj. Indian, i Hindu, Indien i Hindou po franc. Pomieszenie tych słów daje niebywałe nonsensy jak: kardynał hinduski, czyli wyznania Hinduizmu, lub mużulmanin wyznawca religii Hinduizmu. Zaśmieca to polski język i wprowadza zamieszanie pojęć. Czy nie należałoby zwrócić na to uwagę? A któż więcej jest do tego upoważniony i kompetentny jak Pan? Jeszcze słowo-imię: Ganga, wszak jest 'boginią' rodzaju żeńskiego, dlaczego się ma – 'małpować' w polskim języku słowo nieodpowiednie, angielskie, zmieniać i rodzaj i nazwę? Czy nie dałoby się to również wyjaśnić i zmienić? Benares który teraz nosi swą dawną, starożytną nazwę – Varanasi, będziemy musieli także zmienić bo wkrótce nikt z Indusów – dawnego nie będzie używał, czemuż więc i Gangi nie wprowadzić".

delivered during her visit to Poland in 1961, and referred to information on Gandhi which she gathered in another volume, the *Indian Anthology*, dedicated to Gujarati literature (Pobożniak 1969). This suggests that although solid Indological and linguistic training did not allow Pobożniak to unconditionally accept Dynowska's works whenever she transgressed her expertise in the field ascribed to specialists, he did not underestimate her contribution in matters concerning modern India, which she had the advantage of directly observing and experiencing. Another Orientalist working at that time at the Jagiellonian University, Prof. Franciszek Machalski (1904–1979), in his review of *Indian Anthology* calls Dynowska “a tireless worker in the field of cultural rapprochement between India and Poland” (Machalski 1960: 862). While he appreciates her intentions, her approach to Indian culture and her poetic skills, he remarks that in the case of languages other than Sanskrit, Dynowska provides the reader with a free translation, for which she is indebted to Indian specialists. By no means detracting from Dynowska's merit, Machalski also points to some shortcomings regarding her interpretation of selected terms and notions, as well as to her predilection for the Young Poland style (Machalski 1960: 864).

Pobożniak was not the only prominent Polish Indologist Dynowska knew personally during her lifespan, or, at least, did not hesitate to approach whenever she searched for support in her struggle to promote and defend India among Poles, the topic which prevails in her correspondence with Szukiewicz. In the letters to her literary representative not only does she allude to the already mentioned Prof. Helena Willman-Grabowska and Dr. Maryla Falk, but also to Prof. Stanisław Schayer (University of Warsaw) (1899–1941) and Prof. Stefan Stasiak (Lvov University), all of whom were acclaimed Indologists in the 1930s. In addition, Willman-Grabowska and Stasiak spent several months in India while conducting their research.⁴⁵ This

⁴⁵ Stasiak visited the subcontinent one year earlier than Willman-Grabowska did (see note 18); he left for India in September 1935 and came back to Poland in April 1936. He conducted his research mostly in the area

brings to light a complicated attitude Dynowska displayed at that time towards Sanskrit scholars and their academic approach to India's culture: on the one hand, she respected them, on the other—she seemed to show a certain disregard and treat them somewhat instrumentally. The reason for such a self-contradictory attitude is articulated in an undated letter to Szukiewicz, where she denies the learned professors the ability of capturing the essence of "living" India, that is the truth about India which should be spread among common Poles. Between the lines, one can read that this was an accomplishment she only ascribed to herself:

Ms. Willman Grabowska's book does not please me particularly. The learned professors know Sanskrit and something about the life of ancient India, but they know nothing about contemporary India; if anything, [it is] about Universities and Indian science,⁴⁶ which constitutes 50% of the living life nowadays. Besides, I know for a fact that my dear and respected acquaintance, Prof. Willman Grabowska, has not come into contact with the most essential thing either. Probably, her book will not be accessible to the general public, and this is precisely where the truth about India should be sown, among the "ordinary men".⁴⁷

of Bombay and on various occasions gave lectures in India on archeology, Indian religious and Oriental studies in Poland and Europe. His doings were reported by both Indian and Polish press. Stasiak personally knew Gandhi and Tagore (which might have drawn Dynowska's attention to him). For more on Stasiak see Mejer 2004–2005: 504–506.

⁴⁶ Perhaps Dynowska alludes to Stasiak, who, after his arrival from India, in 1937, published with "Nauka Polska", vol. 22 a review of P. Seshadri's book *The Universities of India* and the paper "Nieco o nauce indyjskiej dawniej i dziś" ["Somewhat about Indian Science Earlier and Today"] (Mejer 2004–2005: 506).

⁴⁷ "Książka Pani Will[man] Grab[owskiej] Nie cieszy mnie specjalnie. Uczeń prof. znają sanskryt i coś z życia dawnych Indii, ale nie wiedzą nic o dzisiejszych, a przynajmniej tylko o Uniwers[ytetach] i nauce Ind[ii], co stanowi 50% żywego życia dziś. Wiem zresztą że z najistotniejszym też nie zetknęła się sama moja miła znajoma a szanowna prof[esor] W[illman] Grab[owska] Książka jej nie będzie zapewne dostępna dla ogółu, a tam właśnie trzeba siać prawdę o Indjach, wśród 'szarych ludzi'".

Reproaching Sanskritists for their ignorance of contemporary India comes out in Dynowska's letters to Szukiewicz a couple of times. "Those 'knowers of India' like prof[essors] actually hardly know her. Sanskrit and ancient books are not quite yet India—I do not care about their opinion", she once wrote.⁴⁸ In light of the theory that the addressee can shape the sender's style of communication (Janion 1969), we can assume that it is Szukiewicz, Dynowska's representative, who determines the line of her self-presentation, which usually comes down to claims about topping the hierarchy of those who aspire to know India. However, India is contextualized here within circumstances the meaning of which only Dynowska has been privileged to learn, and therefore only she is entitled to write about it so that the Polish common reader could grasp its essence.

Nor does Dynowska spare Indian youth; in this case, she sees the crucial problem in their insufficient involvement in the matters of their motherland. As has been already discussed, Dynowska's perception of India as analogous to Poland was mainly affected by the patriotic, anti-Russian sentiments which she acquired at a young age at her family home (Tokarski 1994), and by her admiration for Romanticist ideas, from the perspective of which she interpreted the universal sense of suffering (Trzecińska 2015: 175). In India, Dynowska's support for the struggle for freedom was channeled in her open sympathy for the Indian independence movement. Using the concept of an "autobiographical site"—understood as a site which retains its geographical connection, yet is chiefly shaped through literature—Dynowska's India could be thus called a "shifted site", that is a site which has been accepted and included in a given author's writings, yet is still quite often interpreted through the knowledge and emotions pertaining to the places which had been familiar before, usually connected to his or her childhood and adolescence (Czermińska 2014: 58, 69). Dynowska's self-portrayal as a person partaking in the culture of both countries, and

⁴⁸ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated: "Owi 'znawcy' Indji jak prof[esorowie] właściwie też mało je znają. Sanskryt i stare księgi to jeszcze nie Indie – nie dbam o ich zdanie".

hence often referring to India as the "second motherland", might be seen as the result of such a process. Whereas in Dynowska's published works it is predominantly nature or people's features that she sees through the prism of Polish reality,⁴⁹ her private conversation with Szukiewicz usually drifts towards the political contexts and the ordeal suffered by Poland and India as a consequence of their denationalization, experienced from the Russian or British domination, respectively. She writes to Szukiewicz:

As for Indian youth, it is indeed the product of English upbringing, uprooted from the soil of India; they are the most difficult element nowadays, like Russified Poles in our country. Their materialist[ic] nationalism alone is against the culture and spirit of India. Therefore, one need not care what they say.⁵⁰

It should not be surprising that for Dynowska "what is most profound and most interesting in India is religion, realism and new revival movements with moral foundations".⁵¹ Or, as she mentions in another letter, "the life, the new young revived life of India is what concerns and enchants me most".⁵²

⁴⁹ For instance the beauty of the Himalayas described in the article "Z pielgrzymką hinduską w głąb Himalajów": the forests Dynowska crosses smell of resin exactly like in the Tatras, the town of Phalagam resembles Zakopane. Dynowska similarly explains more abstract notions, for example her (idealistic) view of the unity of India's culture: just as a Tatra highlander belongs to the same Polish nation as a Poleshuk, even though they differ in terms of the dialects they speak or the clothes they wear, the inhabitants of India constitute one "culture of thoughts, feeling, longing, religion: the rhythm of the whole life".

⁵⁰ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated: "Co do młodzieży Induskiej jest ona właśnie produktem ang[ielskiego] wychowania, z korzeniem wyrwana z gleby Indji, najtrudniejszy to dziś element, jak u nas zrusyfikowani Polacy. Sam ich materjalist[yczny] nacjonalizm jest wbrew kulturze i duchowi Indji. Węc tym co oni mówią można się nie przejmować".

⁵¹ Letter to Szukiewicz, 29/11/1938: "To co w Indiach najgłębsze i najciekawsze to religia, realizm i nowe ruchy odrodzeniowe o moralnych podstawach".

⁵² Letter to Szukiewicz, 10/9/1938: "[...] mnie życie, nowe młode odrodzone życie Indyj najbardziej obchodzi i zachwyca".

The condemnation of both scholars and the Indian young generation needs to be situated within the particular discourse which obsessively recurs in Dynowska's communication with Szukiewicz. This is also the case with a book *Indje bez retuszu* [*India Unretouched*] published in Poland in 1936 by Instytut Wydawniczy "Biblioteka Polska" by Hanna Skarbak-Peretjatkowicz, a Polish journalist and traveler who visited India in 1935. Appalled and shocked by its "biased" and "shallow" content, Dynowska attempted to impede its revised second edition, announced as addressed to young readers in Poland (published in fact in 1938 by the same publishing house as *Indie wczoraj i dziś: przeszłość i teraźniejszość, kraj i ludzie Półwyspu Hindostańskiego: książka dla młodzieży* [*India Yesterday and Today: the Past and Present, Land and People of Hindustan Peninsula: Book for Youngsters*]). This was not Dynowska's first encounter with Skarbak-Peretjatkowicz's work; she refers to it at the end of her earliest letter to Szukiewicz preserved in the folder (18/05/1938). Discussing the possibilities of publishing her own writings with *Polska Zbrojna*, the organ of the Polish Ministry of National Defense, that had been printing Peretjakowicz's accounts from India, Dynowska picked the journalist's articles to pieces, also accusing her of a lack of Polish patriotism. She described Peretjakowicz's articles as "disgusting [...] ignorant, stupid and so ill-disposed that I blushed for shame", and exhibiting a "non-Polish attitude"⁵³. The first, exceptionally emotional letter from the collection that broadly discusses the danger posed by Peretjatkowicz's book is dated 10/09/1938. Dynowska does not mince her words: as she explains, the book does not deserve any attention since it was written from the perspective of an ignorant tourist who was based in the English circles:

However, I was extremely grieved by the news from Ms. Karaś, that Ms. Skarbak-Peretjatkowicz, the author of *INDJE BEZ RETUSZU* [*India Unretouched*], a shallow, ignorant book, biased in its negative

⁵³ "[...] wstrętne [...] ignoranckie, głupie i tak niezyczliwe że rumieniłam się. To jest nastawienie nie-polskie."

attitude and simply harmful, is going to be reissued very soon in an adapted version for young readers. Horrendum! And I entreat you to see whether it would be possible to prevent it. Would a piece of very harsh but fair criticism not influence the publisher? Maybe you could write it, or perhaps Mr. Janta? I wrote about it to the Consul, asking his advice. After all, at one point he himself wanted to intervene at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but he felt bound by the sweet words of this lady's hymns of praise at the end of the book. So perhaps you could intervene in this matter through the Polish-Indian Society, prof. Schayer, the Bengali physician or a fierce critique? I am blushing for shame seeing such books about India in Poland. This woman did not even know English well; she came for three months to visit her sister, the wife of an English officer—it was from her and her brother-in-law (!) that she gathered these pieces of information, and from rail-couch and street impressions. The book is rubbish and a lie.⁵⁴

Looking for help to stop such shameful "Polish voices" (20/09/1938), Dynowska, either personally or through Szukiewicz, strived to contact a whole range of potential allies, among them the already mentioned distinguished Indologists of the time [Stanisław Schayer (10/09/1938), Stefan Stasiak, Helena Willman-Grabowska (20/09/1938)]; the pianist and politician Ignacy Paderewski (10/09/1938); a lecturer

⁵⁴ Letter to Szukiewicz, 10/09/1938: "Natomiast niepomernie się zmartwiłam wieścią od p. Kar[as], że p. Skarbek-Peretiatkowicz, autorka 'INDJE BEZ RETUSZU', książki płytkiej, ignoranckiej, tendencyjnej w negatywnym stosunku i wręcz szkodliwej ma być b[ardzo] szybko wydana na nowo w przeróbce dla młodzieży. Horrendum! I chcę bardzo, bardzo Pana prosić o rozejrzenie się, czy nie dałoby się temu zapobiec. Czy bardzo cięta a uczciwa krytyka nie wpłynęłaby na wydawcę. Może by pan sam ją napisał a może pan Janta? Pisałam o tem do Konsula prosząc o radę. Wszak sam chciał swego czasu interweniować w M.S.Z. ale się czuł zobowiązany słodkimi słowami pochwalnych hymnów tej pani na końcu książki. Otóż czy by pan nie mógł może przez owo Stow[arzyszenie] Polsko-Induskie, prof. Szayera, lekarza Bengalczyka lub cięta krytykę coś zdziałać w tej sprawie. Rumienię się ze wstydu za takie książki o Indiach w Polsce. Pani ta nie znała dobrze nawet ang[ielskiego], przyjechała na 3 mies. do siostry żony ang. oficera—od niej i szwagra (!) czerpała te wiadomości i z wrażeń wagonowo-licznych. Książka jest tandetą i kłamstwem" (uppercase by Dynowska).

in Indian languages at Warsaw University, Dr. Ghoshal (20/09/1938),⁵⁵ a popular journalist, Aleksander Janta-Pończyński (10/09/1938), or the Polish-Indian Society in Warsaw (10/09/1938). In her “campaign” against Skarbek-Peretjakowicz, Dynowska was supported by the Polish Consul at Bombay, Mr. Banasiński, although as she wrote in the above-cited letter (10/09/1938), he “felt bound by the sweet words of this lady’s hymns of praise at the end of the book” and his position did not allow him to react openly (20/09/1938).⁵⁶ Not having received any quick and unequivocal reply, Dynowska decides to review the book herself. Comparing India to an insulted friend and referring to the Truth—an idea shared by both the Theosophists and Gandhi (Trzcińska 2015: 175)—which has to be defended, she pres-

⁵⁵ Dr. Ghoshal, to whom she refers as a “physician” (PhD holder = Doctor = physician) – unaware of his academic title, but perhaps ironically as well – must be Dr. Hiranmoy Ghoshal (1908–1969), a Bengali, who since 1935 had worked at the Oriental Institute of the University of Warsaw and at the Eastern Institute as a lecturer of modern Indian languages and English. In 1940, along with his Polish fiancée, he managed to come back to India, where he actively participated in the campaign aimed at revealing the truth about the Nazi occupation in Poland. For more about his life and literary undertakings, see Walter 2007. Janina Głądoń (Sułkowska) recalls that Dynowska was on bad terms with Ghoshal since she accused him of a pro-British attitude (Beldowski et al. 2002: 63).

⁵⁶ Letter to Szukiewicz, 20/09/1938: “I have just received a letter from the Consul; he agrees that someone has to stand up against this lady, but he cannot do it officially. He advised me to write to Prof. Stasiak. I am, but perhaps you could kindly take action in this matter too? We should be really ashamed of such Polish voices. I am also writing to Mr. Ghoshal, the physician [...]. Maybe Prof. Willman-Grabowska would like to react? I entreat your help.” (“Właśnie dostałam list od p. Konsula, iż zgadza się, że ktoś musi przeciwstawić się tej pani, ale on oficjalnie nie może. Radzi napisać do prof. Stasiaka. Robię to, ale czy by i Pan nie zajął się tą sprawą? Naprawdę wstyd może nas ogarnąć za takie polskie głosy. Piszę również do p. Ghoshal’a lekarza [...]. Może by i p. Prof. Willman Grabowska zechciała zareagować? Gorąco proszę o pomoc”).

ents herself as the one obliged by a moral duty to defend the distorted image of India:

I have my own very serious reasons of moral nature. I think that if one hears one's friend being villified, one must not hold one's peace, even though it would give the matter publicity—knowing India and the issues raised, I must speak, and what results this will bring is no longer my business [...]—we have to defend the Truth. Presently, I am more concerned about this article than anything else. Ms. Bana (an acquaintance of the Karaś sisters) writes to me that she would help you to have it printed in *Wiadomości Literackie*.⁵⁷

This review—preserved in both the original and a corrected, abridged version—provides us with a significant amount of personal information concerning Dynowska's first three years in India, presented from her own perspective. Her short self-presentation at the beginning of the review might be regarded as fine-tuning the oft-repeated statement that "her attempt to participate fully in the life of Indian people is reflected in the fact that, as a rule, she travelled third class with the Hindu peasants" (Tokarski 1994: 95–96). According to Dynowska's self-narration, her immersion in India was much deeper than experiencing inconveniences of Indian local trains. Deliberately isolated from other Westerners living around, she explored—and befriended—all levels of Indian society. Her strongly articulated conviction that she is the only Pole who has explored and understood India makes one think that displaying snippets of personal information was a technique she chose to persuade the Polish reader of the rightfulness of her claims, thus also laying foundations for her own legend as a person

⁵⁷ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated; "Mam swe przyczyny natury moralnej bardzo poważne. Uważam, że jeśli się słyszy szkalowanie przyjaciela niewolno zmilczeć, choćby się przez to nadało sprawie nawet rozgłos. – Zabrać głos muszę znając Indje i sprawy poruszane, a co z tego wyniknie – to już nie moja rzecz. – musimy bronić Prawdy. Więcej mi o ten artykuł chodzi na razie niż o wszystko inne. Pani Bana, (znajoma pp. Karasiówien) pisze mi, że pomogłaby Panu umieścić to w *Wiadom[ościach] Lit[erackich]* (Dynowska's emphasis).

who enjoyed and explored the Indian way of life to an unprecedented degree. The review begins with the following passage:

After three years of my stay in India, where I have been living solely among the Indians (the only European home I have relations with is the home of the Consul of the Republic of Poland at Bombay), maintaining close and permanent contact with the representatives of all castes, classes and social layers, on familiar and friendly terms with both peasants and the university youth, with the conservative and orthodox sphere, as well as with the reformative and progressive one, where I have friends in all provinces without exception, where I managed to penetrate strongholds which are usually most tightly closed to a European—the home, the family, the temple, where I know life, the way of thinking, customs, superstitions, beliefs of the people, that is, I dare claim—having more comprehensive and firsthand idea of India than anyone else in Poland, here I encounter a book with the promising, unbiased title *Indie bez retuszu* [*India Unretouched*].⁵⁸

We may suppose that even if Szukiewicz had any reservations about the harsh (and perhaps megalomaniac) tone of Dynowska's polemic with Skarbek-Peretjatkowicz, which, by the way, might have attracted unneeded attention, he was doing his best to find a way to publish the article in Poland. The letters written by Dynowska in this period show that despite her intransigent and independent personality, the opinion of her representative, who, as it seems, persuaded

⁵⁸ “Po 3 latach przebywania w Indiach, gdzie żyję wyłącznie wśród Indusów (jedynym europejskim domem, z którym utrzymuję stosunki, jest dom p. Konsula Rz[ecz]p[ospol[i]tej w Bombaju), w bliskim i stałym kontakcie z przedstawicielami wszystkich kast, klas i warstw społecznych, w zażyłości i przyjaźni zarówno z wieśniakami, jak młodzieżą uniwersytecką, ze sferą konserwatywną i ortodoksalną, jak reformatorską i postępową, gdzie mam przyjaciół po wszystkich bez wyjątku prowincjach, gdzie zdołałam przeniknąć w twierdze zazwyczaj przed Europejczykiem jak najściślej zamknięte – domu, rodziny, świątyni, gdzie znam życie, sposób myślenia, zwyczaje, przesady i wierzenia ludzi, czyli – śmiem twierdzić – mając o Indiach wszechstronniejsze i bardziej źródłowe pojęcie aniżeli ktokolwiek w Polsce, spotykam się oto z książką o obiecującym, bezstronnym tytule *Indie bez retuszu*”.

her to mitigate her impulsive writing and unrelenting opinions, was of some value to her:

I am not denying that the critique may draw the attention of those who do not know the book, but it seems to me that it is impossible to present it without emphasizing its lies. If you find the article too fierce, even though I tried hard to mitigate my "outrage", please do delete the words or paragraphs which you find too personal—but keep the factual rectifications. As they provide positive information, I believe the piece should definitely be published, especially that it announces a series of further articles.⁵⁹

Taking into account the already acknowledged position of Skarbek-Peretjatkowicz in the Polish literary and social spheres, Dynowska was apparently aware that she might potentially bring rage upon herself if she condemned the book. Pragmatically, she was trying to get an idea of how the first-hand accounts of India delivered at that time in Poland were received and what could provoke unfavorable opinions in this regard. In the same letter, she refers to a talk given in Warsaw by Kira Banasińska, which, as she must have learnt before, was critically evaluated by Dr. Ghoshal.⁶⁰ This short passage portrays the process of Dynowska's self-creation from yet another level of her contestation of the other's knowledge: not only is the notion of India superficial in the case of representatives of the Western upper-class, even if they

⁵⁹ Letter to Szukiewicz, 29/11/1938: "Nie przeczę, że krytyka może zwrócić uwagę tych, którzy książki nie znają, ale nie zdaje mi się, by można ją przedstawić nie podkreślwszy fałszów. Jeśli Pan uzna, że artykuł jest za ostry, choć starałam się b[ardzo] o temperowanie «oburzenia» proszę skreślić słowa lub ustępy zbyt osobiste – ale zostawić rzeczowe sprostowania. Ponieważ dają one pozytywne wiadomości, sądzę że warto stanowczo go umieścić – zwłaszcza, że zapowiada szereg następnych artykułów".

⁶⁰ Banasińska recalls this event in her *Authobiography*, chapt. XVIII. In 1938, while visiting Poland, she gave a talk on India at the Oriental Institute in Warsaw. In 1958, when she and her husband applied for Indian citizenship and the processing of their documents was delayed by three years, she learnt that this was because the Indian lecturer, "Mr. Ghosh", reported to the authorities that she had emphasized the dark side of India in her talk twenty years earlier.

are friendly towards its culture, but also the opinion of Europeanized Indians (i.e. Ghoshal) is meaningless.

I would very much like to know what the “propaganda” of the Consul’s wife was reproached for. It will help me much in understanding. As far as I know her, her attitude is v[ery] kindly, but she does not know the proper life of India, because she meets the “society” only in a salon or at bourgeois meetings of various Associations. Inevitably, then, her judgment is one-sided and superficial. Was there anything more in the critique? Europeanized Indians like to boast about that which imitates Europe in India; their criticism is totally unreliable. The Mr. Ghoshal thanked Ms. Mallet, my fellow-traveler, for her lecture on India when she was in War[saw].⁶¹

Dynowska attempted to use her connections in Poland to facilitate the review’s publication in a recognized literary magazine. In line with Szukiewicz’s advice, the tone of the article was moderated, and some paragraphs were removed. The agent’s letter, authorized by Dynowska, to *Wiadomości Literackie* (dated 10/05/1939)—which eventually declined publication anyway—emphasized that in the opinion of specialists Peretjatkowicz’s book “prejudiced the Indian propaganda aimed at closer collaboration in terms of cultural and economic exchange with Poland”. In the meantime, taking every opportunity to publicize the matter, Dynowska included the essence of her review in the form of footnotes to other papers she was working on at that time.⁶² In

⁶¹ Letter to Szukiewicz, 29/11/1938: “Chciałabym bardzo wiedzieć co zarzucano ‘propagandzie’ Konsulowej. To mi dużo pomoże do zrozumienia. O ile ją znam, stosunek jej jest b[ardzo] życzliwy, ale właściwego życia Indii nie zna, bo spotyka się z «towarzystwem» tylko w salonie czy burżuazyjnych spotkaniach Towarzystw różnych. Z konieczności więc sąd jej jest jednostronny i powierzchowny. Czy było coś więcej w krytyce? Indusi zeuropeizowani lubią się chwalić tem w Ind[iach] co naśladuje Europę, ich krytyka jest zupełnie nie miarodajna. Tenże Pan Ghoshal dziękował za wykład o Indj[iach] p. Mallet, mej towarzyszce podróży gdy była w War[szawie]”.

⁶² For example, she added such a footnote to her enthusiastic review of Brunton’s book (eventually published with *Gazeta Polska*): “Ms. Skarbak-Peretjatkowicz spent, as far as I know, only a couple of months in India, as a guest of her sister—the wife of an English officer. She did not

the second half of 1939—the review still unpublished despite the fact that Dynowska has been already recognized in Poland as an expert in Indian matters⁶³—she tried to make use of her acquaintance with Janta-Polczyński who visited India the same year and covered his Asian peregrinations in reportages published with *Wiadomości Literackie*, the literary magazine Dynowska strived to cooperate with. However, in case of a fiasco, she was willing to forgo lineage, provided the review was printed, for instance in *Kuryer Ilustrowany*, a newspaper in which a little earlier a favourable review of her translation of Brunton's book appeared.⁶⁴

Dynowska considered Janta-Polczyński, a voyager and man of letters, as an individual whom she could not fully characterize. As Pobożniak relates, together with Frydman she accompanied Janta at the Indian Congress in Bihar, where they discussed with Gandhi the issues of global politics and threats to peace

encounter any representative of the Indian thought, art, deed or religion (in the military-official spheres this is regarded as unforgivably "shocking"). Not knowing any Indian language, and English only poorly, she could gather information from sources very far removed from the real life of India; hence her book does harm and not informs." ("Pani Skarbek Peretjatkowicz przebyła, o ile mi wiadomo, zaledwie parę miesięcy w Indjach, będąc gościem siostry swej—żony oficera angielskiego. Nie zetknęła się z nikim z przedstawicieli myśli Induskiej, sztuki, czynu, czy religji (w sferach oficersko-urzędniczych jest to uważane za „shoking” (sic!) nie do darowania). Nie znając żadnego z induskich języków, a i angielski słabo, mogła czerpać swe informacje ze źródeł bardzo dalekich od prawdziwego życia Indyj; stąd książka jej szkodzi, nie informuje”).

⁶³ See for instance the already mentioned article "Tajemnica Mahatmy" ["Mahatma's Secret"] by Adolf Nowaczyński printed in *Prosto z Mostu* no. 12, 19/03/1939, where the author lists Dynowska, Janta-Polczyński, prof. Willman-Grabowska, Skarbek-Peretjatkowicz and Ferdynand Goetel among the contemporary Polish specialists on India.

⁶⁴ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated ca. the 2nd half of 1939. So far I was not able to access the review mentioned by Dynowska. An excerpt from the book was published in *Świat* in February 1939.

(Pobożniak 1969: 333). However, from Dynowska's letter it follows that she saw the traveller and his writings as "a mixture of the cheapest effects and artistically deeper stuff". Her correspondence also brings to light an episode concerning Janta's encounter with Gandhi, described by the journalist in a substantial reportage piece "Widziałem Gandhiego" ["I Saw Gandhi"], printed on the first page of *Wiadomości Literackie*.⁶⁵ As Dynowska relates, when it came to an interview with Gandhi, the journalist lost courage and did not ask any question. It was she who later shared with Janta "a couple of beautiful words from Gandhi". She did it for pragmatic reasons, hoping that Janta would feel obliged to her, because "such things according to journalists are worth their weight in gold. Someone else would get 200 Polish zlotys; I only want him to help me in making my work on India accessible in Poland".⁶⁶ A sarcastic appraisal of the journalist did not prevent her from studying his essays or cooperating with him: Janta's popularity with readers impressed her, and she counted on learning from him about the public's tastes. In addition—and in a sense typically for Dynowska—she was eager to rectify any possible inaccuracies he might commit against India.⁶⁷ Although she claimed that Janta consciously avoided the most vital questions concerning the Indian life—politics and religion—still she appreciated his idea to edit a special issue of *Wiadomości Literackie* dedicated to India,⁶⁸ if only in search

⁶⁵ *Wiadomości Literackie*, no. 36(828), 27/08/1939.

⁶⁶ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated, ca. the 2nd half of 1939: "takie rzeczy wśród dziennikarzy na wagę złota się cenią. Kto inny dostałby ze 200 zł, ja chcę tylko by mi pomógł pracę o Indiach udostępniać w Polsce."

⁶⁷ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated, ca. the 2nd half of 1939: "Byłabym wdzięczna za przysłanie mi art[ykułu]. Janty, bo się można nauczyć, co lubi publiczność i sprostować jeśli haftował".

⁶⁸ The volume was announced in the last issue of *Wiadomości Literackie* published before WWII (37 (829), 3/09/1939). It was to be co-edited by Prof. Stasiak, and to contain translations of articles by Indian authors. It was almost ready for submission when WWII began (Reychman 1969: 20). According to Pobożniak, all the material got lost. The only trace of the enterprise

of opportunities to publicize a solid portion of her own writing. As she put it, regardless of the issue's content, "possibly it will draw people's attention and more serious things will follow".⁶⁹ To an extent, her determination as well as the mercilessness of her judgments find reflection in the words of Eugenia Duszyńska,⁷⁰ who remembered Dynowska as a "coarse and egocentric person" that "rightly or not was convinced that she fulfilled an important mission in the field of Polish-Indian exchange, and believed that the people around have to support her with self-denial and devotion, without expecting praise or respect".

Szukiewicz's letter to the editorial board of *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* (9/05/1938) suggests that Dynowska saw publishing in Poland as a chance to earn her living in India, where she experienced "austere and primitive conditions". She herself confessed such a need once; significantly, this was with regard to her only two papers based on a second-hand account, a fact she openly admitted. They concerned the dance and theatre on Bali, and a female monastery in Japan, respectively.⁷¹ Even though imprecise information regarding the need to make payments transpires from the letters on a regular basis, the way Dynowska speaks about her writing (and writings) does not leave any doubts that it is above all her inner urge that summons her to promote India through her writings. It is her Ananke—the Greek personification of fate and necessity—as she intimates.⁷² What is interesting, as she claimed several years later in the booklet *Razem pod wiatr...*, whereas in Poland she was engrossed in social and ideological problems, it was in India where she found writing of a much higher priority. Alongside music and nature, she considered literature

is Gandhi's message to the Polish nation published in the last issue of the magazine (Pobożniak 1969: 333).

⁶⁹ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated, received 14/04/1939.

⁷⁰ Duszyńska's reminiscence of Dynowska (possibly an obituary?) was published in *Orzeł Biały*, having no access to the source publication, I quote after Beldowski et al. 2002: 72.

⁷¹ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated, received 14/04/1939.

⁷² Letter to Szukiewicz, undated, ca. the 2nd half of 1939.

the basic manifestation of art, especially suited for the task of shaping human emotional nature. Hence, alluding to her strong patriotic sentiments, she regarded authors and publishers as “responsible for moulding the characters of the future builders of the society, and thus for the future of the nation” (Dynowska 1961: 84). Dynowska perceived her long-term engagement in translating old or even ancient texts, as well as her mental affinity with the Young Poland period, as reasons for the dated style of her writing, which maybe was not “archaic”, but definitely “non-modern”, as a Polish writer once told her in the 1930s (Dynowska 1947: VIII, cf. Trzcińska 2016: 190).⁷³ In this context, she suspected that her difficulties with publishing in Poland might have been caused not solely by the lack of interest in Indian matters among the Polish public, but by her style, full of passion and possibly too sophisticated for the average reader. She was, however, not willing to compromise it. Distancing herself from other writers and the poor techniques they have in her view, she reaches for a metaphor to make Szukiewicz understand the degree to which not only is she engaged in the process of writing, but she is her writing. Editing her texts is like dismembering her body:

I cannot and I do not like to write concisely and in a reporter’s or “cinematic” manner. And to get it printed, Oh My Dear Sir, please, try to find a solution but do not cut. I beg you! You must have noticed that I write ‘fervently’, ‘with a soul’ – shortening is a kind of vivisection – it is very difficult for me to accept it.⁷⁴

⁷³ As we can judge from another letter, in which Dynowska relates that Janta evaluated her poetry positively, but deemed it not modern enough for the Indian issue of *Wiadomości Literackie*, the critical writer mentioned in the booklet must have been him. Letter to Szukiewicz, received 14/04/1939.

⁷⁴ Letter to Szukiewicz, 29/11/1938. “Nie umiem i nie lubię pisać krótko i reportażowo czy „kinowo”. A jak to umieszczać, Ach, Panie Kochany, proszę postarać się znaleźć wyjście, ale nie okrawać. Gorąco proszę! Musiał pan spostrzec, że piszę ‘gorąco’, z ‘duszą’ – skracanie jest jakby wiwisekcją – b[ardzo] mi trudno na to się godzić”.

Several years later, in the Foreword to *Razem pod wiatr...*, Dynowska consciously shared this intimate confession with her readers. However, for the sake of publication her words are chosen less impulsively, and the metaphor seems to assume a fully-fledged form: she becomes the writings that join the two countries, a "living bridge" between them:

As for me, I can say that belonging internally not only to Poland but also to India, I have the right to become myself, and thus my own writings, a living bridge between the culture of both countries, apparently so different yet having more common, deep, essential features than any other nations on the Earth.⁷⁵

Perhaps disappointed by her limited publishing success, Dynowska began to look for a way to appeal to readers, and intended to make her writings more "banal in order to pave the way". While she constantly consulted with Szukiewicz potentially most interesting and "easiest" topics she could write about, she kept refusing to have the papers edited or extracted from her letters without her approval,⁷⁶ protecting her body of work like her own body. However, she made concessions on the choice of newspapers in which she could share her thoughts. Regardless of ideological convictions, Dynowska accepted Szukiewicz's suggestion to negotiate with *Kuryer Warszawski*, the newspaper she initially neglected.⁷⁷ Besides, with no reservations she took into account *Robotnik*, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, *Droga*, *Pion*, etc., magazines and newspapers intended for women, youth, laborers, "any provincial

See also Dynowska's letter to Szukiewicz, 18/05/1938: "Ale widzi Pan, ja nie potrafię pisać płytko i po dziennikarsku, dosłownie nie potrafię". („But you see, I cannot write shallowly and in a journalistic way, I literally cannot")

⁷⁵ "Co do mnie mogę rzec, iż, należąc wewnętrznie nie tylko da (sic!) Polski, ale i do Indii, mam prawo stać się sobą samą, a więc i swoją twórczością, żywym pomostem pomiędzy kulturą obu krajów, tak pozornie odmiennych, a przecie mających więcej wspólnych, głębokich, istotnych, cech aniżeli jakiegokolwiek inne narody na ziemi". (Dynowska 1948: i).

⁷⁶ Letter to Szukiewicz, 18/05/1938.

⁷⁷ Letter to Szukiewicz, 10/09/1938.

newspaper from Krakow or Lodz”,⁷⁸ or “radical peasant magazines”, sometimes intentionally luring the publishers with photos of monuments, although she herself found “living” India more exciting and worth of interest.⁷⁹ The only newspaper which agreed to print Dynowska’s articles on a regular basis at that time was *Gazeta Polska*.⁸⁰

Dynowska was very productive, and the range of topics she was eager to cover was quite impressive. In one of her letters (18/05/1938), in the context of subjects potentially interesting to Polish readers she mentions a traditional festival at the court of the Maharaja of Mysore and a pilgrimage to the Himalayas. Simultaneously, she is working on a volume of Indian legends (a topic suggested by her mother) and a booklet of translations of Indian poetry into Polish, with another article, “Induska bhakti” [“Indian Bhakti”], as the foreword.⁸¹ On 20/09/1938, articles on Amarnath, women’s movement, and Peretjatkowicz’s book were almost completed. In the 2nd half of 1939, Dynowska changes her publishing plans. She decides to reuse the already existing articles, supplement their extended versions with two or three new pieces, and put them together as a collected volume. Apart from the already completed articles on the pilgrimage to the Himalayas and the Indian *bhakti*, she discusses with Szukiewicz such additional topics as: a) Gandhi’s *satyagraha* (in his own words), b) the Hindu woman, c) Countryside, d) Art (music, architecture, sculpture or painting), e) Benares, f) “Respects

⁷⁸ Letter to Szukiewicz, 18/05/1938.

⁷⁹ Letter to Szukiewicz, 10/09/1938.

⁸⁰ Letter to Szukiewicz, 20/09/1938. To my knowledge, eventually *Gazeta Polska* printed: “Moje spotkania z Gandhim” [“My Encounters with Gandhi”] (in five parts), “Subrahmanja Bharati” [“Subrahmanya Bharati”], “Vitalanagar – obóz Kongresu Narodowego Indii” [“Vitalanagar—the Headquarters of National Congress of India”], a review of *Ścieżkami jogów* [A Search in Secret India] and “Teatr i dramaty na wyspie Bali” [“Theatre and Drama on the Bali Island”] (see References).

⁸¹ The article, retitled from “Induska bhakti” to “Hinduska bhakti” [“Hindu bhakti”], was eventually published as part of the *Indian Anthology*, the volume on Sanskrit, published with the BPI (1950, 1959).

to the Mother" ("Cześć Rodzicy")⁸², g) Hindu festivals, h) one of classic legends. Last but not least, she offers to write about the teachings of her spiritual master Ramana Maharshi, and her own experiences with him. As for a publisher, in this case Dynowska hopes to convince Atlas, the publishing house which at the beginning of the same year printed her translation of Brunton's book. Besides, perhaps due to financial reasons, she is willing to undertake translating work from English to Polish and submit its results to the same publisher—she proposes an autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru or Gandhi, legends, works on yoga, or diaries of the yogis with a foreword by William Butler Yeats.

Nevertheless, not all her topics were selected exclusively in accordance with the Polish popular tastes. Dynowska's treatment of India as her second homeland, her inner need to spread the truth about it,⁸³ as well as her personal involvement in independence movements, determined her to address themes related to political matters, which from her point of view proved the similarities between the two countries she loved, yet could be controversial for Western censorship. For instance, seeking a way to print the article on the Congress meeting, she insists on maintaining its tone and content, but allows Szukiewicz to change its title provided that "something national is left".⁸⁴ Her ambition is to make her articles more radical and concerned with political issues and, moreover, available not only to Polish elites; as she admitted in a letter dated 20/09/1938, "I care very much that the news

⁸² This must be either the work by Subrahmanya Bharati, translated by Dynowska and preserved in the folder, or a paper discussing the same subject.

⁸³ In the letter to Szukiewicz, 20/09/1938, Dynowska wrote: "Of course, I am so very grateful to you for this help in introducing the truth about India, which I consider my second motherland". ("Oczywiście jestem Panu tak b[ardzo] wdzięczna za tę pomoc wnoszenia prawdy o Indjach, które uważam za mą drugą ojczyznę").

⁸⁴ "B[ardzo] mi chodzi o umieszczenie sprawozdania z Kongresu, ale oczywiście bez obcinania. Tytuł może pan sam zmienić – byle coś narodowego zostało—o ten ton b[ardzo] mi chodzi". Dynowska's emphasis.

about the economic and socio-political life of India reach both the Polish laborer and the peasant youth”.⁸⁵ On 29/11/1938, in turn, Dynowska wrote:

The point is to be able to give information from the Indian national perspective, which is the most important one, but unknown in Poland. Besides, it nourishes the Indian life and not the English or Europeanized one, or one seen through rose-colored spectacles. Unfortunately, many things are not allowed to be written about.⁸⁶

A yet another of Dynowska’s fascinations at that time (29/11/1938) seems to be Indian countryside, where she spent some time “establishing weaving centers, helping with the sales and training instructors”. She writes: “I want to submit a series on the countryside [...] I am enchanted with the culture, fragility and beauty of the country life. How to show it to our people? Perhaps you could suggest which aspects of the country life would arouse interest most easily?”.⁸⁷ As Trzcińska points out, this idealistic vision of folksiness, promoted by Dynowska’s favorite Polish Romanticists, was associated with the theosophical concept of evolution and the belief that it is the vessel of a nation’s collective memory. Hence, it became another level on which Dynowska could identify Poland with India (Trzcińska 2015: 172–173). In 1939, there is a noticeable shift in her selection of topics: it is Szukiewicz himself who encourages Dynowska to write about the current political issues in India. In the circumstances determined by the unstable

⁸⁵ “Zależy mi b[ardzo] by wieść o Indjach ekonom[icznym] i społ[eczno-]polit[ycznym] ich życiu dotarła i do robotnika polsk[iego] i do młodzieży chłopskiej”.

⁸⁶ Letter to Szukiewicz, 29/11/1938: “Sę w tem żeby móc dać informacje od narodowej strony Induskiej, która jest nieznaną w Polsce a najważniejszą. Poza tym żywi życie induskie a nie ang[ielskie] lub zeuropeizowane czy przez okulary widziane. Na nieszczęście wielu rzeczy nie można pisać”.

⁸⁷ Letter to Szukiewicz 29/11/38: “Chcę też posłać cykl o wsi. [...] Zachwycona jestem kulturą, delikatnością i pięknem [...] życia wsi. Jakże to pokazać naszym ludziom? Może by pan poradził jakie aspekty życia wsi najłatwiej by zainteresowały”.

political situation in Europe, Dynowska attempted, for instance, to explain the reasons and consequences of Gandhi's fasting.⁸⁸

Last but not least, it seems that Szukiewicz strived to persuade Dynowska to work on a book, an idea she was not willing to take up and considered a very demanding venture; in her opinion, all the other writers dealing with such vast topics failed miserably. In a letter written on 29/11/1938, she seems to continue the discussion earlier taken up by Szukiewicz, informing him that she has already started a huge editorial project dealing with translations from Indian literature which she wants to publish in America:

Regarding the book...—you see—I do not want and I cannot write on a huge topic like others do. But I have started an enormous work, i.e. 15 volumes comprising articles of outstanding Indians. Each elucidates one domain of life—whether I will accomplish it or the work will be stalled, overwhelmed with obstacles, it is hard to tell today. The first three volumes I want to prepare in 1939. Although the first edition I want to publish in America, but its parts could be translated for Poland as well, and in a couple of years maybe a publisher willing to issue the whole will appear. [...] For the time being, I prefer to submit articles.⁸⁹

In another, undated letter, she firmly maintains her decision: "Regarding the book—I will not write a piece of rubbish, this is a thing of the future. Parts of a bigger work could be published in Polish as well".⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Letter to Szukiewicz, undated, received 14/04/1939. Dynowska must have referred to the three-day fast undertaken by Gandhi in March 1939 in connection to the question of reforms in Rajkot.

⁸⁹ "Co do książki... – widzi Pan – na wielki temat nie chcę i nie mogę pisać jak inni. Ale zaczęłam olbrzymie dzieło, tj. 15 tomów składających się z artykułów wybitnych Indusów. Każdy oświetla jedną dziedzinę życia – czy uda mi się, czy nie utknie przytłoczona trudnościami praca trudno dziś sądzić. Pierwsze 3 tomy chcę przygotować w 1939. Wprawdzie pierwsze wydanie chcę puścić w Ameryce, ale części można będzie tłumaczyć i dla Polski, a za parę lat może się znajdzie wydawca i na całość. [...] Na razie wolę dawać artykuły".

⁹⁰ "Co do książki – tandety nie napiszę, to rzecz przyszłości. Części dużego dzieła będą mogły i po polsku wyjść".

References to the possibility of publishing works in English overseas recur in several letters written to Szukiewicz. And indeed, years later, when the BPI/PIL was founded, its publications, mostly those connected to theosophy, often appeared thanks to the funds provided by Americans of Polish descent, who had a personal interest in the subject (Tokarski 1994: 98). Between the lines, the letters seem to suggest that Dynowska's unfulfilled ambitions in the field of building 'literary' bridges between Poland and India, reliant on Polish publishers and additionally hindered by the outbreak of the WWII, might have pushed her towards launching an autonomous publishing enterprise. This idea crystallized a few years later, when Polish refugees temporarily settled in India. Although soon after the end of WWII the Poles left the Indian subcontinent, creating the impression of Dynowska's failure caused by the unavoidable decrease in the readership of Polish books in India, the BPI's publications extended their trajectories beyond their place of origin. By various means, mostly through theosophical circles falling into oblivion,⁹¹ they reached the USA, Western Europe and eventually Poland (cf. Drygas 1963: 175).

Conclusions

A letter might be considered as a specific document which gives a random reader access to its author's intimate thoughts. However, when viewed from a researcher's perspective, it is rather a literary piece, permeated with fiction and self-creation. This antinomy characterizes all correspondence, especially when produced by outstanding individuals (Hudymač 2017: 42–43). Dynowska's confession made in a letter to Stefania Siewierska (31/12/1966)—“I am becoming a sort of myth”—proves that at the end of her life the author was aware that the public perception of herself, mostly in Poland, gradually moved

⁹¹ As Trzcińska remarks, while theosophy enjoyed substantial popularity in Poland before Dynowska's departure to India, after WWII it did not regain its position. Also in the case of Dynowska, a gradual waning of her theosophical interests can be observed (Trzcińska 2015: 176).

away from reality. Her myth, according to Trzcińska, was "remote and incomprehensible, foreign to the Catholic tradition, interpreted differently than in her books, [foreign to—EDB] the communist worldview and to timid attempts at searching for spirituality, which later on, in the New Age interpretation, gained a form that was a far cry from the suffragette's idea" (Trzcińska 2015: 177).

Referring to her reasons for staying in India with hindsight, Dynowska emphatically recollected: "Today I know why I stayed. The Polish-Indian Library had to be born. For the sake of Poland, thirty-five books had to be published, and this would have never been possible in Poland. But back then I did not know this yet, there was only an inner imperative—to stay" (Dynowska 1958). As I attempted to demonstrate, the letters written by Dynowska to Szukiewicz, as well as her articles aimed at popularizing India in Poland in ca. 1938–1939, constitute one of the spaces within which she created herself. By their means, already at that time, Dynowska undertook to create her multilayered image as the bearer of Indian culture to Poland through her writings, the image within which converged many other complementary identities: a defender of uncontaminated Indian culture threatened by European influences; a person whose knowledge about India is unparalleled and on whom depends the shaping of the Polish society; a patriot engaged in the current matters of both nations she belongs to; and, finally, a single, independent woman so dedicated to writing that she becomes the writing herself. Whether Dynowska, consciously or not, anticipated that her correspondence with the literary agent would be enjoyed by potential future readers—an issue quite common in the case of men of letters—is hard to presume, yet worth taking into consideration as another factor, besides the actual addressee, which could have influenced the line of her self-presentation (Czermińska 1975: 37–38). From such a perspective, these letters—contextualized within a certain discourse with a literary representative—might be particularly considered in terms of a space within which Dynowska could project her growing inner urge to bring Poles closer to India through writings she believed to embody, the dream which at least to some extent began to come true with the establishment of the BPI.

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