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Journalistic article in the consciousness of newspaper journalists

KEY WORDS

journalistic article, journalism, journalism information, genre of journalism, journalistic practice, genre of press

ABSTRACT

The journalistic article is present in the genealogical consciousness of practising journalists and scientists of humanities. However, the understanding of journalistic article is rather unclear. This paper presents a scientific reflection on the article, understood here as one of the basic journalistic genres. All this bearing in mind that in the existing literature journalistic article is not defined as a separate genre of journalism. Instead, it is described by its characteristic features.

The aim of this paper is to show the genealogical consciousness of press journalists regarding journalistic articles. This form of press expression has not been sufficiently discussed in subject literature so far. Its characteristics are simplified and close to the popular idea of the article as a genre. Its perception among practising journalists, who discuss it rather intuitively, is similar. Thus, to achieve this aim it is necessary to describe journalism.

The text is composed of three essential parts and their conclusions. The first section, entitled “Article as a genre of journalistic expression”, contains collected insights to the determinants of an article, whereas the second, “Briefly on opinion journalism”, presents various ways of understanding journalism in a concise way.

According to genealogical tradition, journalism is compared to information. Therefore, the formal distinctiveness between journalism and information genres is the most popular approach in media-research writings. The pragmatic and genealogical approaches have thus been described below, accounting for the form and genre. The answer to the question what journalism is, what are its features, and what distinguishes journalistic pieces from other expressions can also be found there.

Finally, the third section of the article – “Journalistic article in editorial reality” – presents opinions on article and journalism given by journalists whose daily work is press journalism, or at least who are considered as such by the journalistic circles and editors of the weeklies for which they work.

Article as a genre of journalistic expression

The attempts at genological characteristic of journalistic article can be found both in dictionaries¹ and selected works². The literature on the topic is far from extensive. Researchers either describe article superficially as a genre of journalism, usually pointing out the features common to all journalistic expressions, or simply list it without describing its features. Thus, the canonical model of article has not been singled out in genological writing. Article, commonly identified with all journalistic expressions in a newspaper, is contrasted with information in this view. However, there is no direct definition of journalistic article, and all attempts to characterise it that have been made are too general.

Due to the lack of detailed works devoted to article, the publication by Maria Wojtak deserves particular attention. While she does not write directly about article itself, she does refer to this journalistic form whenever she examines the profile in the form of an article (she considers profile as an adaptive genre using other press genres). By distinguishing the profile which adopts the features of journalistic article, Wojtak assumes the existence of the latter. She states that article is a non-uniform genre, which feature affects the form of profiles sharing structural components characteristic of journalistic articles. The researcher seeks in these components the genre indicators of article, both obligatory and optional, such as expanded heading, complex body, and captioned pictures³.

Journalistic article as a genre of journalistic expression is present in genological consciousness; however, its understanding is close to the common notion of article. Therefore, it is extremely important to engage in in-depth reflection on this form of expression, considered as a basic press form. The aim of my broader study is to supplement the state of research with notes on article, since I believe the latter to be an autonomous press genre. The analyses of journalistic articles from opinion-making press I performed have also been the

¹ Dictionaries containing the definition of journalistic article include: *Słownik języka polskiego* [Polish dictionary], ed. M. Szymczak, Warszawa 1982, vol. 1, p. 82; *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. W. Doroszewski, Warszawa 1958, vol. 1, p. 211; *Słownik terminów literackich* [Dictionary of literary terms], ed. J. Sławiński, Wrocław 1988, p. 44.

² The notion can also be found in genological literature; see, e.g.: Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie* [Journalistic genres], in: *Dziennikarstwo i świat mediów* [Journalism and the world of media], ed. Z. Bauer, E. Chudziński, Kraków 2000, p. 160; K. Wolny-Zmorzyński, A. Kaliszewski, W. Furman, *Gatunki dziennikarskie: Teoria–praktyka–język* [Journalistic genres: Theory–practice–language], Warszawa 2006, p. 85–86; J. Frasz, *Dziennikarski warsztat językowy* [Journalists' linguistic proficiency], Wrocław 1999, p. 86–90; L. Zakrzewska, *Informacja* [Information], in: *Dziennikarstwo od kuchni* [Journalism from the inside], ed. A. Niczyperowicz, Poznań 2001, p. 9–10; A. Kozieł, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód, cechy i funkcje* [Journalistic genres – lineage, features, and functions], in: *O warsztacie dziennikarskim* [Journalistic proficiency], ed. J.W. Adamowski, Warszawa 2002, p. 119; Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie* [Journalistic genres], in: M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo* [Journalism], Warszawa 2007, p. 73–77; M. Wojtak, *Gatunki prasowe* [Press genres], Lublin 2004, p. 304–314.

³ M. Wojtak, *Gatunki prasowe*, op. cit.

basis of two essays. The first of them – Architektonika tekstów dziennikarskich: Refleksje strukturalne wokół meta- i paratekstu artykułu publicystycznego [Architecture of journalistic text: Structural reflections on meta- and paratext of journalistic article] – was delivered as a presentation during the 5th All-Poland Seminar in Media Studies “Genres and formats in modern media” (Pol. *V Ogólnopolskie Seminarium Medioznawcze “Gatunki i formaty we współczesnych mediach”*). The seminar was held by the University of Warsaw on 26–27 March 2015. My second essay, *Tytuł wiele ci powie – krótki tekst, wiele informacji. O tytułach artykułów publicystycznych* [Title will tell you a lot – short text, much information: Titles of journalistic articles], was presented at the conference “Modern media – informational media” (Pol. *“Współczesne media – media informacyjne”*) convened by the Department of Journalism of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS) in Lublin on 15–16 April 2015⁴.

Briefly on opinion journalism

In the tradition of press studies, (opinion) journalism is usually contrasted with information: thus, journalistic texts are distinguished from informational ones, the journalistic is confronted with the informational, the informational style compared with the journalistic style, etc⁵.

The treatment of journalism and information as opposites brings several approaches to these terms. For instance, Wojtak notes that, as terms, both the journalistic and the informational are similar, as they function in the press studies literature as ambiguous, polysemous⁶. Whereas Irena Tetelowska takes the position that both the informational and the journalistic are first and foremost intrinsic components of certain expressions, trains of thoughts. Texts communicate and comment on something, describe, analyse, provide opinions on something, with a journalistic or informational dominant⁷.

There are also pragmatic approaches to journalism. Thus, one may discuss the journalistic function, providing commentary and interpretation, present in press texts similarly to the informational, or notifying, function. The following authors, among others, wrote about information and journalism as fundamental function of media texts: Andrzej Kozieł, Zbigniew Bauer, Jacek Maziarski, Maria Wojtak, Marek Chyliński, Stephan Russ-Mohl⁸. Bauer, for

⁴ Both have been since submitted for printing.

⁵ Cf., e.g.: A. Kozieł, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód...*, op. cit.; M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo*, op. cit.; Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie*, op. cit.; W. Pisarek, *Nowa retoryka dziennikarska, cz. II Działanie* [New journalistic rhetoric, Part 2, Activity], Kraków 2002.

⁶ M. Wojtak, *Gatunki prasowe*, op. cit., p. 27

⁷ I. Tetelowska, *Informacja – odrębny gatunek dziennikarski* [Information – a separate journalistic genre], „Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” [Media Research Issues] iss. 1–2, p. 19.

⁸ Cf., e.g.: A. Kozieł, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód...*, op. cit.; Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie*, op. cit.; J. Maziarski, *Informacja* [Information], in: *Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie* [Encyclopaedia of press knowledge], ed.

once, wrote in this context that if information communicates about something and conveys data about reality in a clear and objective way, just shedding light on it, journalism interprets this reality, presents it from a subjective and personal point of view, attempting to elicit specific responses from recipients. For the scholar, information means notifying, while journalism means persuasion and interpretation⁹. In turn, Wojtak notices that journalism informs, in its own specific way, about judgments and opinions, whereas information notifies about facts and events¹⁰. Journalism, like information, is treated as a form. Wojtak argues that this approach makes opinion journalism a certain type of journalistic message¹¹. Koziel even points out a journalistic form of expression as opposite to the informational form, stressing at the same time that both journalism and information can be considered as forms of expression¹².

Here we should move to the genre approach to opinion journalism, which is sometimes also treated as a separate journalistic genre or form (e.g., Michael Kunczik and Astrid Zipfel wrote about it) and, as an autonomous form, confronted with information¹³. More often, however, scholars write about various journalistic genres comprising the form of journalistic writing, just like informational writing is composed of informational genres. The division into journalistic and informational genres was the subject of detailed studies by, among others, Kazimierz Wolny-Zmorzyński, Andrzej Kaliszewski, and Wojciech Furman¹⁴. Whereas another scholar, Walery Pisarek, wrote about genre poetics. He listed the journalistic poetics of expression besides the informational and reportage poetics¹⁵.

Therefore, which traits can determine the informational or journalistic nature of a genre? In subject literature a certain set of traits has been developed for informational genres. Pisarek calls them an “official catalogue”¹⁶, containing first and foremost: topicality, understood as the “communication possibly short after the event, taking into account its possible result; fidelity, or representing the reality without distortion; accuracy; vividness”¹⁷, along with the unusual, the extraordinary, the strange, and even the bizarre; the speed, clarity,

J. Maślanka, Wrocław 1976; M. Wojtak, *Gatunki prasowe*, op. cit. M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo*, op. cit.

⁹ Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie*, op. cit., p.150–151.

¹⁰ M. Wojtak, *Gatunki prasowe*, op. cit., p. 32.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 30–31.

¹² A. Koziel, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód...*, op. cit., p. 115.

¹³ Cf. M. Kunczik, A. Zipfel, *Wprowadzenie do nauki o dziennikarstwie i komunikowaniu* [Introduction to the science of journalism and communication], Warszawa 2000.

¹⁴ Cf. K. Wolny-Zmorzyński, A. Kaliszewski, W. Furman, *Gatunki dziennikarskie...*, op. cit.

¹⁵ W. Pisarek, *Nowa retoryka dziennikarska...*, op. cit., p. 241–242.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 115.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

objectivity/ neutrality/ impartiality, communicativeness, precision, honesty, and consistency¹⁸. The list of main informational press genres usually includes: news/information, message, mention, note, sneak peek, report, interview, announcement, biography, correction, correspondence¹⁹; report, coverage, event report, report with quotations²⁰.

In the case of journalistic forms, dictionaries²¹ mostly pay attention to the topicality of the subjects taken up in the journalistic texts and their subjective presentation²². Similar traits of journalistic genres are pointed out by scholars, who note that what distinguishes them from informational genres is the way of using information. Chyliński and Russ-Mohl recognise information as the common core of various journalistic forms²³, while Koziel underlines that journalistic expressions are, to a greater or smaller extent, based on information²⁴. Journalistic texts may, for an instance, expand or supplement information. Information may be used in a manipulative way, mainly to provoke²⁵. As Bauer notes, authors of journalistic texts can evaluate and comment on information, as well as present complex argumentation and reasoning²⁶, while Jarosław Ściślak emphasises that they can adopt a journalistic point of view²⁷. The authorial perspective presents itself as, perhaps, one of the most important determinants of journalism. Bauer also states that the exposition of the sender is a result of presenting a specific worldview and hierarchy of values²⁸. Koziel notes, in turn, that the author's perspective of journalistic text is accompanied by a number of issues²⁹. On the one hand, it is good that the sender's point of view is emphasized yet, on the other hand, the viewpoint cannot be too clear-cut, or clearly biased. According to Bauer, one-sidedness, accompanied by excessive evaluation, undue moralising, and use of stereotypes and intellectual short-cuts, threatens with the ideologisation of the text³⁰. Whereas a press expression, even journalistic, as Koziel writes, should have the nature of a dialogue³¹ or, as

¹⁸ M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo*, op. cit., p. 52–56;

¹⁹ A. Koziel, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód...*, op. cit., p. 115–116.

²⁰ M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo*, op. cit., p. 61–62; There are obviously many classifications of informational genres, and various typologies are accompanied by controversies related to the inclusion of individual expressions into specific collections of press articles.

²¹ *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. M. Szymczak, op. cit., vol. 2., p. 1074; *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. W. Doroszewski, op. cit., vol. 7, p. 706.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo*, op. cit., p. 73–74;

²⁴ A. Koziel, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód...*, op. cit., p. 110–111.

²⁵ M. Chyliński, S. Russ-Mohl, *Dziennikarstwo*, op. cit., p. 73–74;

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 73–74.

²⁷ J. Ściślak, *Jak zostać dziennikarzem* [How to become a journalist], Wrocław 2007, p. 107.

²⁸ Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie*, op. cit., p.157–158.

²⁹ A. Koziel, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód...*, op. cit., p. 119.

³⁰ Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie*, op. cit., p.162–164.

³¹ A. Koziel, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód...*, op. cit., p. 119.

Ściślak claims, “the character of a debate divided among several voices”³². The authorial nature of journalism is not tantamount to extreme subjectivism or one-sided and ideological involvement of the author in the described issue. Authorial reasoning means presenting a viewpoint in opposition to others³³. According to Bauer, a text should facilitate the moulding of public opinion and not create it by enforcing only one perspective³⁴. In this view, he suggests a way in which subjects may be realized in journalistic texts. He considers as most appropriate the combination of several approaches, i.e., the presenting, interpretative, polemic, and appellative³⁵. Koziel also added affirmative and critical to these approaches³⁶.

Many scholars suggest various typologies of journalistic genres. Koziel recognises leading article, commentary, editorial article, discussion article, polemic article, occasional article, column, essay, story, review, and reportage as main journalistic forms³⁷. Pisarek treats journalistic genres and reportage as opposite to information³⁸. Bauer voices a similar opinion, then moves to distinguish many forms of reportage and subtypes of commentary as journalistic genres in opposition to information. Here he lists: editorial commentary/ leading article, regular column, critics/ review, satirical commentary/ gloss, local commentary, caricature, interview, and intermediary forms, such as profile and obituary³⁹. The work by Wolny-Zmorzyński, Kaliszewski, and Furman includes the following among journalistic genres: article, leading article, problem/ journalistic reportage, commentary, and review⁴⁰.

Regardless of the adopted classifications, however, the press genology is headed towards the unification of genres, which results from broader phenomena such as media convergence. Wojtak’s theory of press genres turns out to be of particular value. In her discussion and analysis of press genres, the scholar does not show the differences between informational and journalistic expressions or, in other words, does not aim at emphasising these differences. She links genres based on similarities, considering as similar these genres which are related in some way, e.g., show the reality in similar ways, are motivated by similar intent, have the same style, etc. In her considerations Wojtak opts at thinking about press genres in terms of a continuum. She believes thus that there is no need to distinguish the

³² J. Ściślak, *Jak zostać dziennikarzem*, op.cit., p. 107.

³³ Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie*, op. cit., p. 164.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 157.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 164.

³⁶ A. Koziel, *Gatunki dziennikarskie – rodowód...*, op. cit., p. 119.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 119-123.

³⁸ W. Pisarek, *Nowa retoryka dziennikarska...*, op. cit., p. 243. It should be noted that, in his work, Pisarek does not refer to modern journalism, strictly speaking.

³⁹ Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie*, op. cit., p. 74–83.

⁴⁰ K. Wolny-Zmorzyński, A. Kaliszewski, W. Furman, *Gatunki dziennikarskie...*, op. cit., p. 85–97.

informational as such and the journalistic as its opposite⁴¹. In her classification of press forms, the researcher employs a four-pronged genre analysis (structural, cognitive, pragmatic, and stylistic). She sees structural determinants as genre signals of a given press expression, which enable only preliminary qualification of said expression into any given genre. She believes that typological divisions into genres are introduced, firstly, by relating them to specific genre models and by making the description of genres more schematic; and, second, by taking into account the current research and showing respect to the authority of the scholarly tradition, which divides press expressions into informational and journalistic⁴². Beyond doubt, however, Wojtak stresses the existence of certain normative and usual genre models, which can be modelled and modified to such an extent that the line between individual genre fields becomes blurred⁴³.

Like information, opinion journalism is a main branch of press journalism and has to be understood in a syncretic way, whereas the differences between information and journalism are increasingly more difficult to distinguish. More and more frequently it is the similarities and not differences which are noticed between given press genres as well as between individual press forms, and even various media forms and genres. Currently it is assumed that, under various conditions, journalism can be subject to modifications. It is in this light that modern press genres are perceived⁴⁴.

Journalistic article in editorial reality

In the light of the above considerations, a question arises regarding the way in which journalistic article is understood by journalists, and – more broadly – how they perceive opinion journalism. Can we find common traits of the theoretical assumptions of press genology and genological consciousness of journalists?

I asked practising journalists, authors of journalistic articles, open questions about the essence of journalistic article, institutional context, and personal convictions with regard to the mission of a journalist–publicist. The answers allowed me to verbalise the views on the

⁴¹ M. Wojtak, *Gatunki prasowe*, op. cit., p. 30–37.

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 30–37.

⁴⁴ Cf., e.g.: Z. Bauer, W. Chudziński, *Dziennikarstwo i świat mediów: Nowa edycja* [Journalism and the world of media: New edition], Kraków 2008; *Gatunki internetowe w prasie – przykłady konwergencji medialnej* [Internet genres in the press – examples of media convergence], in: *Współczesne media – język mediów* [Modern media – language of the media], ed. I. Hofman, D. Kępa-Figura, Lublin 2013; *Konwergencja mediów i jej skutki dla współczesnego dziennikarstwa* [Media convergence and its consequences for modern journalism], vol. 1, ed. M. Wielopolska-Szymura, Z. Oniszcuk, Katowice 2012.

conceptualisation of the genre of journalistic article, describe its features and the principles of writing journalistic texts accepted by specific editors.

The following questions were sent out:

1. How do you understand the notion of 'journalistic article'?
2. Which basic features of such an article can you name?
3. As editors, have you adopted specific criteria for the writing of journalistic articles, e.g., some models or schemes?
4. What is the most important thing for you in your work as press journalist, opinion journalist?

This set of questions was sent to the official e-mail addresses of the weeklies "Polityka", "Wprost", "Newsweek Polska", and "Uważam Rze", as well as to personal e-mail addresses of these weeklies' journalists. Editorial mailboxes of weeklies are processed by on-duty journalists for the given day. Out of 32 sent messages I received 18 replies: 16 from journalists and 2 sent from e-mail addresses of editorial teams. The editorial replies were generated automatically by the system controlling electronic mailboxes and contained the information that it was not possible to contact the editors at that time. Out of 16 replies from journalists, as many as 13 contained refusals justified by the lack of time to reply, promises to send a reply in the following days (alas, unfulfilled), expressive messages about difficulties in conveying precise thoughts, etc. I am adducing several such expressions as examples: "I'm sorry, I won't be able to"; "I'm sorry but I don't have any time at the moment, I'll contact you within the next few days"; "Unfortunately I have no time"; "I'm sorry, I'm unable to give you answer to these questions"; "I won't answer these questions because I haven't written journalistic texts for a long time"; "I am up to my ears in work and won't be able to write anything about it"; "It would be hard for me to answer many questions"; "I cannot give precise answers to these questions"; "I never think over what is journalistic and what isn't, so I won't answer your questions".

Journalists either do not have time, or opportunity, or ability to answer the question regarding journalism, even though they are authors of this type of texts. Which gives rise to the question, why journalists cannot define that which is journalistic, why it is a problem for them. This information could be found in two of the replies: one journalist wrote that he did not write journalism any more, another that he does not deliberate on which texts should be included in opinion journalism. It is clear that journalists find it hard to move from practice to theory.

Only 3 journalists sent replies to the questions I formulated. They answered all questions or only some of them, also referring to other issues associated with the work of journalists, such as their own journalistic experiences or the specific conditions of working in certain editorial teams. It is possible to dig up from their comments opinions on how they perceive journalism, what their understanding of journalistic article is, and what features and functions they ascribe to it.

The meagre group of respondents included Renata Kim⁴⁵, who in her replies defined journalistic article as an “author’s opinion by a journalist on a burning political, social, or economic issue”, expressing the “author’s personal opinion on the given subject”. Moreover, the journalist adds, the article “evaluates some event, predicts its effects, argues with someone’s words, or explains their meaning.” She also distinguishes the particular tone of the articles, which may be provocative in order to “spur further debate”⁴⁶. Kim finds in article the elements of opinion, commentary, evaluation, polemics, explanation, pertaining to an important subject, which simultaneously cause further commentaries, evaluations, polemics, etc. She emphasises the authorial aspect of article, therefore she considers subjectivism as its predominant feature, without influences or pressures in its cognitive layer: “I have never heard of any guidelines. I don’t think any journalists would be told from above what to think and write.” In her opinion, the author of articles should have vast knowledge and appropriate skills – to synthesise, predict, provoke – since only then a text gets good. She cherishes and reads such texts herself: “I highly appreciate Janina Paradowska’s journalism. It shows the author has a vast knowledge on political subjects, can synthesise it and predict what is going to happen in Polish politics.” Kim then writes that she also appreciates texts “full of passion, perverse, making risky theses, and provoking. And they spur debates, which is the point of journalism.” Along with subjectivism, it is the provocative tone the journalist considers as an important feature of a journalistic article. These two components can be seen as an author’s journalistic passion.

Another journalist of the weekly, Marek Rybarczyk⁴⁷, associates the basic feature of the article with its author’s own passion. He writes that it “has to be interesting, reliable,

⁴⁵ Renata Kim, journalist at “Newsweek Polska”. Before, she worked for the weeklies “Wprost”, “Przekrój”, and for “Dziennik”. She began her career of a journalist in radio: RMF FM, Programme 3 of the Polish Radio, and Polish Section of BBC, <http://autorzy.newsweek.pl/renata-kim,103954,1,1.html> [accessed: 24/01/2015].

⁴⁶ The quotations come from the electronic exchange of correspondence with Renata Kim [all statements adduced here and below are quoted for scientific purposes with the consent of respondents; the interviews were carried out in 2014 – M.K.].

⁴⁷ Marek Rybarczyk – a reporter, correspondent, radio journalist, and opinion journalist in weeklies. A journalist of “Newsweek Polska” since 2006. He was the deputy head of the World section. Author of many publications on Great Britain and Ireland, as well as many other European countries: Italy, Spain, France. Formerly a

dynamic, surprising”, thus apart from the pragmatic function, encouraging readers to read the text, the informational function emerges as well: the message should not be boring but must be professional. Rybarczyk would not call his texts journalistic articles. Besides, he remarks, he finds it hard to determine the nature of his writings. He also notices a certain inconvenience in naming individual genres: “I don’t often write journalistic texts, maybe with journalistic elements, but it’s a buzzword [...]. I write without thinking if it’s journalism or not”⁴⁸.

The following opinion on this subject comes from Michał Kacewicz⁴⁹, who emphasises the ambiguity in the understanding of the term “journalism”. The journalist believes that various journalistic forms interlace with one another, making their features indistinguishable: the author’s point of view in journalistic texts is too strongly imprinted. In his opinion, various journalistic forms are brazen opinions and emotional commentaries from their authors, while they should describe reality, present and confront with each other the opinions and comments of social protagonists, and analyse events, situations, issues, and their evaluations and commentaries. In consequence, Kacewicz sees in journalism and its forms rather a “kind of a writing person” than a way of writing or a press form; at the same time, he describes journalistic texts, including journalistic article, as a “form of expressing opinion.” According to the journalist, the reduction of journalistic forms to opinions and commentaries has been affected by the development of on-line journalism and politicisation of Polish journalistic discourse. Kacewicz notes that Journalists mainly comment and provide opinions, since it is being enforced by the rules of electronic media, where these two predominate. He also states that journalists take one of the sides in the conceptual and ideological conflict, polarised as the opposition of Law and Justice (Pol. *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS*) (and its coalition partners) vs the rest. These two factors – on the one hand, politicisation of journalistic expressions and journalists themselves, on the other, the infiltration of press journalism into electronic media – lead, according to Kacewicz, to the lowering of journalistic proficiency, decrease in the substantive and aesthetic value of press texts, and marginalisation of the subjects which actually are important, interesting, and innovative:

journalist of “Przekrój”. Author of comments for TVN24, TOK FM, and Programme Three. Journalist for the “Newsweek Historia” monthly. <http://autorzy.newsweek.pl/sylwetki/marek-rybarczyk,106692,1,1> [accessed: 24 Jan 2015].

⁴⁸ Quotations from the exchange of emails with Marek Rybarczyk.

⁴⁹ Journalist of “Newsweek Polska”, author of texts for the on-line version of the weekly. Journalist in its foreign department. He deals with the areas of the former USSR, Middle East, Balkans, and above all Russia and Ukraine.

I would like to emphasise that I don't consider myself an opinion journalist. That is, I know there are various definitions, but I actually do not subscribe to the one most commonly understood and used in Poland. The thing is that an opinion journalist is far too often a kind of person who writes on all subjects, expresses opinions but does not describe reality, seek information or opinions of others, or descriptions of the world. I prefer to remain simply a journalist. [...] Of course, I engage in the so-called journalism from time to time. It is linked mainly to the development of the on-line edition of "Newsweek", where the so-called opinions are, unfortunately, a common form. Alas, this does not affect only newsweek.pl but the entirety of on-line media, which slowly turn into a bazaar. This means that people go to the Internet mainly to express opinions and submit to emotions instead of gaining knowledge, seek analyses, etc. [...] A certain emotional involvement surely is a feature of journalism. However, a great disadvantage of the present-day Polish journalism is its, as I should call it, "parochialism", that is, positioning of the majority of views and opinions around an unambiguous political and ideological conflict. In short, it is the division between conservatives and liberals, between the advocates of a national state and proponents of universal values. Even more shortly, PiS vs others. It is this division that finishes off Polish journalism as, regardless of the topic, it oscillates around these divisions. Which are actually just secondary to global processes and attest to a fairly limited approach of both sides of the Polish division. Polish journalism lacks fresh topics which would depart from this canonical Polish division. For me, a journalist interested in the world and processes occurring within it, Polish [opinion] journalism is just painfully boring⁵⁰.

Kacewicz has a negative opinion of modern Polish journalism, he does not distinguish individual genres but rather tries to find similarities between various journalistic formats. He does not only negatively assess the functions, values, and features of journalism but also its level of competence as well as social and political phenomena affecting modern journalism. As a result, he rejects calling himself an opinion journalist, he prefers to be just called a journalist, and the texts he writes he describes as informational and analytical, or simply reporter's writings.

⁵⁰ The definition comes from the e-mail exchange with the journalist.

Moreover, according to Kacewicz, it is also noticeable that the texts published by the editors are repetitive. He writes that the cognitive and substantive aspects of expressions are based on the aforementioned socio-political opposition (PiS–others). In his words, the selection of texts in line with this ideology is ensured by the selection of appropriate authors. Because Kacewicz has been working for “Newsweek” since 2001, i.e., since its creation (he has worked under 5 editors-in-chief), he had the opportunity to observe the every-day life of the editorial team and the changes taking place in it. He also reminded that, in the beginning, the way of writing articles followed certain rules, which resulted from the supervision by the Americans enforcing the franchise rules. The pattern of the texts of the time is distinguishable:

Texts consisted of the so-called picture (an intro in the form of a colourful story, sometimes about a specific character), followed by the so-called billboard, that is, short and concise, the thesis of the article and a time anchor (or why we write about it now, some event, etc.), then the proper text and the punchline⁵¹.

He emphasises that this pattern, with slight modifications, was in force for quite a long time, and that a visible change took place when Tomasz Lis took the position of editor-in-chief. Then the article construction model changed.

Now we build articles from certain segments. First comes a kind of entry, interesting story, followed by paragraph divided by subheadings. Since many texts resemble the so-called “profile” of some person, the paragraphs often follow the chronological order related to the biography of that person; also, as an aside, we try to write about some phenomenon linked to that person⁵².

In fact, this outline is easily discernible when reading the weekly. The “entry” mentioned by the journalist is the lead or the first section (paragraph), whose main goal is to introduce, summarise, present the protagonist, etc., in its way encouraging the reader to continue reading. The following paragraph remain in a cause-effect relationship and are divided by subheadings.

⁵¹ From the e-mail exchange with Michał Kacewicz.

⁵² Ibidem.

According to Kacewicz, even if any pattern exists, it can be filled in a random way; the pattern usually is a constructed structure, based on formal requirements, without rules on its cognitive or stylistic aspects other than simply the line-up of the press title. Journalists do not describe the journalistic article in detail, ascribing its features to the journalistic, in its broad meaning, which characterises all journalistic forms.

The essay *Like bread with an extract: On journalism in the press* by Jerzy Baczyński and Mariusz Janicki is a kind of voice regarding the genealogical consciousness of practising journalists. Even though its authors were not respondents of my questionnaire, their texts often deliver answers to the questions I formulated.

Opinion journalism, according to Baczyński and Janicki, is “today, along with investigative journalism – the true kind, involving the author’s own work – the most prestigious press genre, [...] the real showcase of a newspaper, where the best writers are sent (at least such is the rule). It is an extract of reality – something much greater than the sum of the facts”⁵³. Further on, they indicate that opinion journalism “differs from other journalistic forms in that it pays attention not to singular events but to problems. It describes the reality through the lens of the author’s views. The essence of opinion journalism is to express one’s own opinion either directly or through presenting the reasoning in such a suggestive way that it can be seen as an indubitable conclusion”⁵⁴. The media (press) world-view thus becomes, in part, the author’s (journalist’s) world-view. Both journalists ascribe to opinion journalism a clearly positive value compared to other press genres, while pointing out such traits of the former as subjectivism and authorial nature of reasoning, cohesiveness of expression, importance of topics, and evaluative-commentary tone.

Janicki and Baczyński also list the following journalistic genres, which they call forms: article, column, commentary, interview, and journalistic reportage. They also consider article as the most representative and classical form of opinion journalism in the press, a characteristic journalistic form, most frequently found in the practice of the press. At the same time, they state that journalists are very frequently unaware that they are writing journalistic articles. Their whole reasoning reads like a guidebook containing aids how to write a good article. It is worth mentioning that, in the essence, the structure described by Janicki and Baczyński follows the theoretical findings formulated above. The structure should consist of

⁵³ J. Baczyński, M. Janicki, *Jak chleb z ekstraktem. O publicystyce w prasie* [Like bread with an extract: On journalism in the press], in: *Biblia dziennikarstwa* [Journalism Bible], ed. A. Skworz, A. Niziołek, Kraków 2010, p. 599.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 599.

the title, lead (entry) and the primary thought, the main part with many paragraphs, and the punchline⁵⁵.

The theoretical description of editorial practice, postulated by Janicki and Baczyński, is actually devoid of any in-depth reflection from the viewpoint of practising journalists, as the authors only marginally refer to their experiences. Instead, they use already known interpretation tracks, just show them in a more accessible way, thus turning towards academic didacticism.

Conclusions

Practising journalists do not define journalistic article in a precise way. This most likely stems from the difficulty of grasping opinion journalism as such. In consequence, they focus not so much on the genre division of journalism, or are aware of the traits of journalistic article, as they try to describe journalism as a whole. They seek similarities between various journalistic forms, pointing out above all the subjectivism visible in the opinions and commentaries of authors, vividness and colours of described events, reliability in the formulation and presentation of facts.

I believe, however, that practitioners try to put journalism in a broader context. When they say that, above all, they have to describe, analyse, and comment on the reality, this reality (which they know well) shapes their views, which are then articulated as journalistic expressions. I think, therefore, that, from the reflections of journalists, who are the creators of the journalistic (media) view of the world, one can distil the essence of the relation between the social reality, the journalistic image of this reality, and the journalists who conceptualise this reality. For the reality affects journalists and the nature of journalism itself. That which significantly affects reality also affects the journalistic view of the world. Here one of the basic features of journalistic article, and opinion journalism in general, comes again to the fore, namely, the significance of the topic taken up by the author; thus, it is the important, journalistic topics which are worth describing, commenting on, and evaluating in the first place.

Clear-cut, sometimes controversial attitudes and opinions of journalists are considered as valuable, and the neutral ones as boring, both in the construction layer of the text, and in the cognitive aspect. It can be guessed that practitioners realise press genres in a rather intuitive way. What matters to them is not theory but if the text is good, interesting, describes

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 599-610.

important issues, etc. Yes, they do use some generally accepted structural schema, yet it is above all else the way and type of filling this schema that counts. A practising journalist will not ask what kind of text it is, how it is structured, what are its features, but will look for the following answers: what is the topic of a given piece, if it is a good text, that is, reliable, professional, if it exhausts the topic; he will also ask what he is commenting on and why in this way and not another. In an editorial reality the geological knowledge does not matter as much as geological intuition or journalists' experience in writing journalistic texts. Both the notions of opinion journalism and journalistic article function only as certain frames and structural schemes, which are then filled with content during the writing of articles.

That which the theoretical and practical approach to journalism have in common is seeing it as a certain guide to the world. This metaphor was coined by Bauer⁵⁶, followed by other scholars. Practitioners share a similar view of journalism too. They want to see it as a Bauerian "guide to the world", "here and now". For journalism is an answer to the current, present needs of recipients. However, this section of reality is embedded in a broader context, as this "here and now" is related to "yesterday" and has its results in "tomorrow". Opinion journalism mostly touches upon the subjects important from the point of view of modern recipients/readers. The core of the section of reality is a certain fact, which is being explained and interpreted by the sender/author in a way specific to him or her, corresponding to his or her view of the world, yet at the same time in such a way as to stimulate the recipient to reflect on and evaluate such a presentation of facts. Journalistic expressions can be given various forms belonging to press and journalistic genres. Any given genre is just a different attempt at the diagnosis of a certain phenomenon, a topic related to a specific section of reality. These are the terms in which journalistic article is perceived, too. It is one of the ways to view the reality, a tool to describe and interpret it.

⁵⁶ Z. Bauer, *Gatunki dziennikarskie*, op. cit., p. 73.