Which Way to the Słowacki Fan Club?
Ways of Remembering the Polish Romantics

The medallion of Juliusz Słowacki (age 32) by Władysław Oleszczyński.
THE SARMATIAN REVIEW

From the Editor

The dearth of translations of Juliusz Słowacki’s works was only slightly alleviated by Michael Mikołajczyk’s bilingual selection of Słowacki’s poems This Fateful Power/Ta sila fatalna (Lublin: Norbertinum, 1999). Mikołajczyk’s volume contains parts of Canto Five of Beniowski (1841) of which we present a longer excerpt in Christopher Zakrzewski’s translation. We are pleased that at least a tiny bit of Słowacki’s poem now exists in two translations, for the reader to compare and savor. The bulk of Słowacki’s poems, plays, and prose works remain untranslated Ditto Cyprian Norwid. Oh, the riches of which the American Slavists remain unaware, and not just in Polish literature (see the review of Myrosław Shkandrij’s book in BOOKS). The text was translated from Słowacki’s Dzela wszystkie [Complete Works] edited by Juliusz Kleiner (Wroclaw: Ossolineum, 1952–4). Oleszczynski’s medallion on the title page was reproduced from the same edition.

This issue also contains the translations of two Sonnets by Polish Renaissance poet Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński. The translator, Steven Clancy, has already translated for SR Valeria Novodvorskaia’s essay in 1997. We are pleased to publish a Herbert-inspired poem by a poet from Oregon, Robert Davies, whose ‘Mr. Cogito Press’ has published many poems from the American heartland and from Eastern and Central Europe. Lastly, we publish a poem by a Polish woman poet, Marta Fox, translated by a young Slavist Anna Gasiencia-Byczyn. This is our way of foregrounding the fact that women’s concerns must be recognized for what they are: a vital part of literature and of social and cultural life. Polish and other Central and Eastern European literatures have been male-oriented, and women’s concerns have all too often been relegated to issues of secondary importance. Fox’s poem forcefully reminds us that there is a world out there that needs to be recognized. And not only her poem: Manuela Gretkowska’s novel Polka reviewed in BOOKS carries an even weightier message. Gretkowska is a world pioneer in giving voice to pregnancy and childbirth, and in exploring the feelings of women who have become incubators of another life.

Bogdan Czykowski’s review of Piotr Wilczek’s habilitation treatise, Dyskurs, przekład, interpretacja, is in many ways exemplary of how good reviews should be written. A fair summary of the book’s content is essential in a good review. Czykowski does this, and more: he rephrases a number of subtle points in Wilczek’s book that a casual reviewer would have sacrificed to the speed with which books are read nowadays.

In his review of a German-language account of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, Marek Chodakiewicz reminds us of the power of ‘elbowing out:’ cultural politics in Soviet-occupied Poland privileged works of left-wing resistance over centrist and right-wing resistance, and thus an opinion was formed (even among historians) that the first played a substantial role whereas the second was mostly concerned with opposing progress and the Soviets. The figures which Chodakiewicz quotes: 6,000 for left-wing PPR/AL and 70,000–90,000 for right-wing NSZ, indicate that publishing policy can distort history and leave a lopsided image of what actually happened.

Our Take takes on the issues of Orientalism and Occidentalism as they are being debated in literary periodicals including NYRB. Central and Eastern Europeans need to generate a discourse on these and related issues, lest they be subsumed by the dichotomy of which they do not partake.

Finally, we include in this issue the second installment of Zofia Ptasnik’s dramatic Diary. This source material on World War II history will continue to appear in subsequent issues.

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April 2002
The Sarmatian Review Index

War and peace
Amount of the world's produced oil consumed by Americans: 25 percent.
Amount of the world's proven oil reserves in the United States: 3 percent.

Misery
Percentage of working Poles who make between $125–$250 (Zł 500–Zł 1,000) per month: 78.7 percent.
Percentage of working Poles who make less than $125 per month: 13.4 percent.
Average salary of a medical doctor in Poland: $275 (Zł 1,100) per month.
Average nurse’s salary in Poland: $210 per month.

Salaries and taxes
Monthly salary of deputy heads of the Polish National Bank: $8,250–$9,000 (Zł 33,000 to 36,000).
Monthly salary of members of the Currency Board in Poland: $6,250 (Zł 25,000).
Monthly salary of deputy head of a large Polish bank: $42,500 (Zł 170,000).
Approximate rate of exchange in Fall 2001: $1=4.1 Zł.
Monthly income of members of Parliament in Poland: salary $2,240 (Zł 8,980), reimbursement for office expenses $2,350 (Zł 9,320). Additionally, the MPs receive $1,900 (Zł 7,600) per year for hotel expenses outside Warsaw and free travel on Polish railways, bus lines and airlines.
Percentage of Poles who pay the lowest rate of income tax due to smallness of their income (under $8,150 (Zł 32,736) per year: 94.6 percent.
Percentage of taxes paid by this group: 52.3 percent.
The remaining taxpayers (5.4 percent) pay 47.7 percent of all taxes.
Source: Polish Finance Ministry, as reported in Donosy, October 2001.

Life under Soviet-imposed socialism
Number of pairs of shoes per inhabitant (Poland’s population in 1980 was 36 million) in 1981: 1.6 pairs.

Church finances in Poland
Average monthly salary of employees of the Lublin Diocese in 2001: $240 (Zł 957).
Total budget of the Diocese (consisting of the Curia expenses, diocesan seminary and charitable work) in 2001: $2.2 million (Zł 8.7 million).
Budget deficit for 2001: $5,450.
Source of income for the Diocese: per-person tax assessed by the bishop from the larger and richer parishes.
Size of tax: one to one-and-a-half US cents per person per week.
Source: Archbishop Józef Życiński, as reported by Lena Białkowska in Donosy, 7 January 2002.

Migration
Number of immigrants in Russia (pop. 144 million) in 2001: 8 million.
Of these, number of legal immigrants: 800,000.
Number of immigrants in the United States (pop. 280) in 2001: 7–8 million.

Demography
Percentage of Poland’s 39 million inhabitants employed on the land in 2001: 18 percent.
Number of citizens of the Russian Federation who are Muslims: 22 million, or almost one in six.
Number of Ukrainians estimated to have worked illegally in Poland in 2001: 300,000.
Corruption
Transparency International’s ranking of Russia in the global corruption survey of 91 countries: 81, below Pakistan and above Tanzania.


Gold and money
Number of tons of gold the Bolsheviks found in the Moscow treasury when they assumed power in 1917: 1,300.
Number of tons of gold the Yeltsin government found in the Moscow treasury in 1991: 280.


Estimated amount of foreign currency Hungarians held in savings accounts in September 2001: $2.5 billion.
Percentage of holdings in DM (German marks) of all Polish savings held as foreign currencies: 90 percent.
German officials’ estimate of the percentage of DM circulating outside Germany as of 2001: 30–40 percent.

Source: Geza Molnar of AFP, 26 December 2001.

Economy
Size of Russian GDP in 2001 by comparison to 1990: 64 percent of the 1990 level.
Size of the CIS GDP as compared to 1990 level: 62.7 (35 percent in Moldova, 43 percent in Ukraine and 90 percent in Kazakhstan).


The total of loans granted to individuals and companies in 2001: Russia, 12 percent of GDP; Poland, Hungary, and India, 25 percent of GDP; Brazil, 35 percent; Czech Republic, 57 percent; United States, 145 percent of GDP.


Religions
Percentage of Muslims in France in 2001: 10 percent.

Source: Alain Besançon in Znak (Kraków), January 2002.

Voter turnout
Voter turnout in elections to district councils in Moscow on 16 December 2001: 25 percent, or a minimum threshold necessary to validate the elections.
Threshold for validating local elections in the Leningrad district, in the Tomsk district, and in the Altai republic in southwestern Siberia: zero percent, ten percent, and 50 percent, respectively.

Source: AFP (Moscow), 16 December 2001.

Voter turnout in the elections for newly-created regional assemblies in Slovakia in December 2001: 26 percent in the first round, and 22.61 percent in the run-off.

Source: AFP (Bratislava), 16 December 2001.

Suicides
Number of suicides in Russia in 2001 per 100,000 inhabitants: 32.


Legacy of Soviet Russia
Percentage of ethnic Kazakhs who perished during the Moscow-imposed collectivization in 1929–1932: 34 percent.
Number of the Kazakh intelligentsia members executed on Moscow’s orders in 1937: 30,000.

Source: Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), 21 December 2002.

Prisons
Polish prison population in 2001: 80,000, or up 25 percent from the year before.

Source: AFP, 6 December 2001.

War prisoners
Number of Taliban prisoners being held by Americans in the prison at Shibarghan, Afghanistan, in December 2001: 3,500.
Breakdown of prisoners by nationality: 2,000 Afghans, 700 Pakistanis, with smaller numbers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Sudan, Morocco, Iraq, the Muslim republics of Russia, and the countries of Central Asia.
Number of Chechens among them: none.


Languages
Number of students who graduated in Arabic from universities in the United States in 2000: nine.

Pan Beniowski

Final Part of Canto Five

Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849)

Translated by Christopher Adam Zakrzewski

Surging like a vast current of salmon or sheatfish,  
Coiling up and down like an iron serpent  
That rears now its torso, now its head,  
The armed horsemen breast the prairie grass. —  
But hold! my song’s device breaks down:  
My Muse begs a rest, having drained her cup  
Empty of sweet nectar; and so, farewell  
To you, on that steppeland rise,

My pair of golden, sun-drenched statues!  
My iron ranks wallowing in the grass and herbage!  
One needs here the yearning of a Malczewski—  
The kind found in men who are half angels.  
One ought to sing here; meanwhile I weave fables.  
Whenever I stir up the ashes of my homeland  
And then raise my hand once more to the harp,  
Specters from the grave rise before me—specters

So lovely! So transparent! Fresh! Alive! Young!  
That I am incapable of shedding real tears over them:  
And yet I lead them in a dance about the valleys.  
They take from my heart whatever they like:  
A sonnet, a tragedy, a legend or sublime ode.  
It is all that I have, all that I cherish and believe in.  
Believe in. . . You ask me, my dear reader,  
What I believe in? If I told, it would raise a furor.

In the first place, this rhyme which scoffs and reviles  
Has a political credo: these are Dantesque regions  
You have entered. I believe with a pagan’s heart  
In Shakespeare’s rhymes, in Dante and in Homer.  
I believe in the commonwealth of an only son —  
In our case it was that surly fellow—Mochnacki!  
Though he never stopped spinning his mighty dreams,  
He allowed the Dictator to stretch him upon a cross.
I believe that he came into being in human form
  And went to the Great Judgment that lights up
Our land; on the way, he dropped in on the Aristocracy
  And bided in that flameless Hell for three days;
Then in a little book he passed judgment on his brothers:
  Those who are upright and those who feel no shame;
In him I believe, and in his two unfinished books:
  I believe in all the saints of our émigré circles,
And in their spiritual communion with our nation;
  In the forgiveness of sins committed by our leaders
And the resurrection of our elected Sejm under Herod
  Which being a very amusing body will constitute
The best proof of the resurrection of the body—
  The supreme instance of bodily resuscitation;
And finally, secure as to the future, I should add
  That I believe in the life everlasting of that Sejm.

_Amen_. . . This _amen_ chokes me, catches in my throat
  Like the _amen_ Macbeth uttered. — Still, I believe
That like cranes chained to the wing the nations are making
  Progress . . . that knights rise out of the bones. . .
That the tyrant cannot sleep when he bloodies the bed
  Or robs the eagles of the youngest brood. . .
That fire and serpents and fear are his bedfellows. . .
  All this I believe—yes—and in God as well!

O God! Who has not felt You in the blue fields
  Of Ukraine where the level plains arouse
Such sadness in the soul that ranges over them! —
  When, accompanied by a windy hymn,
The dust which Tartar hordes drenched in blood
  Takes wing, shrouds the golden sun in ashes,
Blurs, reddens it, then suspends it in the sky
  Like a black buckler with blood-shot eyes —

Who has not seen You, Almighty God,
  On that great steppe, under a lifeless sun,
When the mounds on which all crosses stand
  Bring blood to mind—or crooked flames;
When far off thunders a sea of bent-grass,
  Burial mounds cry out with a terrible voice,
The locust unfurls its black rainbows, and the garland
  Of graves melts away into the distance;

Who has not felt You in the terrors of nature:
  In the great steppe or on Golgotha’s hill
Or among columns surmounted not by a roof
  But by a moon and an untold number of stars;
And who in the zest and ardor of youthful feeling
Has not felt that You exist, or, plucking daisies,
Has not found You in those daisies and forget-me-nots?
Yet still he seeks You in prayer and good deeds:

No doubt he will find You — no doubt he will —
I wish small-hearted men a humble faith
And a peaceful death. — Jehovah’s flashing face
Is of vast measure! When I count up the layers
Of exposed earth and see the bone piles
Lying there like the standards of lost armies
At the foot of mountain ridges — skeletal remains
That also bear witness to God’s being —

I see that He is not only the God of worms
And things that creep and crawl upon the dust:
He loves the booming flight of gigantic birds;
Puts no curb on stampeding horses. . .
He is the flaming plume of proud helms. . . Often
A great deed will sway Him where a tear-drop
Shed on the church doorstep will not: before Him
I fall down prostrate — for He is God!

Where then is humility’s forerunner?—the man
Who contended with me like a god? I seek him still;
I’ll cleave his head with a lightning bolt, just as yesterday
I dealt him a blow on the breast. Have you seen him?
His lips are seasoned with wormwood. . . The people
Who believed in him make a show of joy
Yet droop their heads, for they know it was my nod
That brought the Prophet-Bard back to life.

Bit by bit, I tore my heart to shreds,
Forged the pieces into firebolts and hurled them
At his face; each piece boomed like a crag
As if high in the sky I had shattered a god into bits
And now the pieces were raining down. . . I smashed him —
But what have I gained in the eyes of the people today?
The battle and victory took place high in the heavens —
People see nothing in me, but courage.

Indeed. . . My nation! If you had but seen
How lonely and sorrow-laden I was
Knowing that if my firebolt failed to pierce him,
The Lithuanians would seize me in their collective claws;
But then, recalling my nest in the eastern marches,
I beckoned to Kremenets Mountain that it rise up
And put that rabble to flight — that it stand with me —
Or take up an inferior position beneath me.
For my sad heart breaks into pieces at the thought
That there are no noble-hearted souls taking my part;
That to no purpose do I cast impassioned words
Filled with tears, blood and brilliant flashes
On hearts that remain repellent to me — I
Who also have a land that is rich in flowering meads,
A native land flowing with blood and milk:
And it ought likewise to love me.

If you — you! — are without hearts, then my heart
Shall feel for you; shall forgive without measure.
River Ikwa! Inundate this carpet of green meadows!
You too have renown, for it is as if your lapping waves
Were weighing matters of colossal moment with the Niemen —
It was you who forced old Niemen to confess
My greatness: that we are flowing forward to glory. . .
But he said: Let him go where we go.

But oh my Prophet-Bard! Where are you going?
What harbor beacon lights your way, and where?
Either you founder in the depths of Slavonic atavism
Or with your lightning mind you sweep up
The refuse and drive it at the Pontiff’s triple crown.
I know your harbors and coastlands! I shall not go
With you, or go your false way — I shall take
Another road! — and the nation will go with me!

If it should chose to love, I shall give it a swan’s voice,
That it might sing out its love. If it should chose to curse,
It will curse through me; should it chose to burn —
I shall furnish the heat: I shall lead it wherever God
Would take it — to infinity — in every direction.
My name will serve as a vessel for its blood and tears.
My standard shall never play it false: by day
It will shine like the sun, by night, like a fiery cloud.

Ah! So you show up at last, my knight?
Now I shall have at you with my sword!
First I shall show you the sun reflected in my shield,
Then before the sun I shall unbosom you of fear. . .
I shall reveal the falsehood in your latest orison,
And, with that falsehood shown, deal your death blow;
I gaze on your face — green in the night like the moon —
So have you renounced the power of the sun?

I told you that you were like a Lithuanian deity rising
Out of a holy place embosomed by dark pines;
Clutched in your hand like a celestial moon was a cross;
On your lips, flashing like a lightning bolt, was the word.
And saying this — am I not the son of song? A king’s son! —
I fell. — And you stepped up — did you not? —
To place your foot upon me as though I were dead
And I rose — having merely feigned terror and death!

You will always find me standing before your eyes —
Unshakable, proud and terrible. . . I am not you —
You are not an Eternal Flame. And even if you are
A god — I at least am a living one!
Ready to lash a graven image with my snaking whip
So long as you drive this world down a false path. . .
I cherish our people more than dead men's bones. . .
I love — but I am without mercy and tears

For the vanquished. — Such is my panoply of arms!
And such is the sorcerer's magic of my thoughts!
Though you may oppose me today, the future is mine! —
Victory shall be mine — beyond the grave. . .
The Troy of your poets shall fall at my feet,
No Hector's courage of yours will save her.
God has charged the future with my defense:—
I shall slay you — draw your corpse behind me!

And let the ages pass judgment. — Keep well, my Bard!
With you this song began, ancient deity!
I have laved your bays in a rain of burning words
And shown that a broken heart can be traced
Upon your bark — your trembling leafage
Reveals a dry rot gnawing at your soul.
Keep well! Foes do not bid farewell like this,
Only two divinities — upon opposite-facing suns.

NOTES
The above section of Słowacki’s lengthy narrative poem refers to the rivalry between him and Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), the most popular poet of Polish Romanticism. The Polish original can be found in vol. 5 of Słowacki’s Complete Works (Dzieła Wszystkie) in 15 vols. edited by Juliusz Kleiner (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1952–55).

Page 865: Antoni Małczewski (1793–1826) was a Ukrainian-born Polish Romantic poet. Maurycy Mochnacki (1804–1834) was a Polish literary critic. He participated in the 1831 uprising to which Słowacki’s poem alludes.

Page 867: “Humility’s forerunner” and “Prophet-Bard” are references to Adam Mickiewicz who was born and raised in Belarus-Lithuania. Hence Słowacki’s references to “Lithuanians” who might “seize” him “in their collective claws.” Słowacki was born in Kremenets (Krzemieniec), Ukraine.

Page 868: In his poetry, Mickiewicz often refers to the river Niemen familiar to him from childhood. Słowacki brings in the river Ikwa which was the river of his childhood. The poem’s speaker further attacks Mickiewicz by mentioning the older poet’s brief infatuation with panslavism. In the 1840s, Mickiewicz fell under the influence of a mystical charlatan Andrzej Towiański whose “God’s Circle” preached panslavic fantasies. Słowacki also alludes to Mickiewicz’s audience with Pope Pius IX in 1848 during which the Pope expressed disapproval of revolutionary activity. Mickiewicz allegedly grabbed the Pope’s sleeve and exclaimed that God is on the side of the Paris workers. In 1848, Pius IX secretly signed a concordat with Russia, thereby abandoning the cause of Polish Catholics in the Russian empire and joining the reactionary circle of European rulers desirous to retain at any price whatever was left of the old regimes.

Page 869: Słowacki was deeply disturbed by Mickiewicz’s infatuation with Towiański, as were many other orthodox Catholics. Zygmunt Krasiński once accused Mickiewicz of being akin to Panclus in Undivine Comedy. Słowacki’s generosity however shows itself at the end of the poem where he acknowledges Mickiewicz’s greatness.
BOOKS BOOKS and Periodicals Received


Excessively concentrated on ecclesiastical and hierarchical rather than social history, this tome is nevertheless a worthy beginning. The issue at hand is integration of Polish Catholicism into the history of Christian Europe and elucidation of the role Christianity has played in making Europe powerful culturally and politically. The author points out that Catholicism in Poland was slow to take root but when it did, the effect was overwhelming. At the time when Poland truly became Christianized (two or three centuries after the initial baptism of 966), the theological debates in western Europe tended to concentrate on the doctrine of the Incarnation and the role of Mary as the Mother of God. These two doctrinal points sank in deeply and played a greater role in Polish Catholicism than in the Catholicism of Poland’s western neighbors. In particular, popular religiosity developed a deep attachment to these two dogmas, and it has created a range of artistic expressions to affirm them (the crèche tradition, popular songs and poetry, caroling etc.).


A collection of essays by various authors on Polish relations with NATO, OSCE, Russia, the United States and other countries. At the end of the book, there are useful tables showing military expenditures of Poland’s neighbors. According to one table, in 1995 Russia spent $82 billion on its military, whereas Germany spent $41.8 billion.


The author is a professor of Slavic literatures at the University of Manitoba. His work sketches out the tense relationship between Ukraine and Russia over the last two centuries. Ukraine’s relationship with Poland is also considered, and Poland does not always look good. One of the urgent tasks for the Central European nations is to recognize Ukraine as distinct and separate from Russia. The book is elegantly and clearly written, and it is warmly recommended for audiences in countries bordering on Ukraine, as well as for those interested in questioning Russian hegemony over Ukrainian discourse (or the Eastern European discourse in general).


With its soft-porn-like front cover presenting a headless and naked female body, and with a sexually attractive picture of the author on the back cover, this novel may be mistaken for pulp literature. But, like Witold Gombrowicz’s _Pornografia_, it has little to do with pornography. Gretkowska is an up-and-coming Polish novelist who dares to take on the topic of pregnancy, birth, and women’s emotions and attitudes surrounding these familiar but intellectually neglected processes. What do women really feel and think about the process of pregnancy, are they always the welcoming mothers as history has presented them? The sheer originality of Gretkowska’s topic pushes her to the forefront of Polish prose fiction of the early twenty-first century. The novel is a first-person narrative of a none-too-intellectual female who experiences the hopes and humiliations of the Central and Eastern European females who have traveled to the West in search of a better life or to escape the destructive vapors of communism.


Like Geraldine Glodek’s novel, _Nine Bells at a Breaker_ (reviewed in _SR_, XXII:1, January 2002), this is a story about the real Polish Americans: the reliable whites who take low-prestige jobs in factories and mills of America, whose parents likewise worked in unglamorous professions, who do not seem to be going anywhere, who timidly form clubs and associations where they rehearse the tired slogans of their “Polishness,” and who are light years apart from the euphemistic and homogenized culture of America’s official cultural outlets. The story takes place in Wisconsin and the time of action is the late 1960s during the Vietnam war. A powerful piece, very much recommended for the Polish intelligentsia.

_Letters to Vilna 1805/Listy do Vilna 1805, edited and translated by Richard Sokoloski._ Foreword by Sergei Ivanovich Nikolaev. Ottawa, Canada: Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa and Institute of Russian
A bilingual collection of letters written by Prince Adam Czartoryski, onetime member of an unofficial Committee at Tsar Alexander’s court, eventually demoted to curator of “Vilna University” (Szkoła Główna, or Akademia Wileńska, founded by Polish King Stefan Batory in 1575 and renamed “Vilna University” by Tsar Alexander I). Rumor had it that Prince Adam was an illegitimate son of Catherine’s ambassador to Poland, Prince Repnin, and for that reason he was initially trusted by the Russians. It turned out however that Prince Adam’s Polish mother exerted an influence on him, and he turned out to mind Polish interests more than the Russian. Alexander would not tolerate that, hence Prince Czartoryski’s demotion to a job in the provinces. However, it should be added that before Nicholas I closed Akademia Wileńska in retaliation for the 1830 Uprising, it was the largest university in the Russian empire, and it surpassed in the number of students (1,322) the University of Oxford in England. Thus Nicholas’s revenge was massive, aiming as it did at the cultural heart and identity of Russia’s western colonies.

Originally, the Letters were part of a collection maintained by Polish historian Ignacy Onacewicz who lived in St. Petersburg. Whatever remains of the collection is presently held by the Russians, an instance of hundreds and perhaps thousands of colonial appropriations that the Russian empire affected to the disadvantage of the colonized peoples. How did Onacewicz’s property become Russian property? The editor keeps mum on that. Nor does Sergey Nikolaev’s Introduction deal with the problem. Instead, the Introduction gives the official Russian version of the reasons for Russia’s aggression against of Poland (it was the Poles’ fault, you see), and it tries to legitimize Russian robbery of Polish lands including the appropriation of a major portion of the property of the Jesuit Order in the Russian-occupied part of Poland. That this kind of writing is still produced and published by a Canadian university can only be cause for wonder and distress.

A note: it is regrettable that a greater concern for Lithuanian sensibilities has not been demonstrated in selecting the volume’s title. The word “Wilno” rings pleasantly to Polish ears, but to Lithuanians ears it has the same connotations as the word “Breslau” has to the Polish. Since Wilno, or Vilnius, has never been an ethnically Russian city, there was no reason to use the Russian version in the title. It should have been “Vilnius.”

The Letters themselves are of considerable historical value, and thanks are due to Professor Robert Sokoloski for translating some of them into English. Most of these letters are in (bad) Polish, some were written in German or French. Not all have been translated: the choice seems to have been the editor’s. Marian Hemar: od Lwowa do Londynu. Szkic do biografii artysty, by Anna Mieszowska. London: Polish Cultural Foundation, 2001. 254 pages. Index, bibliography. Paper. Available from the Nowy Dziennik NY Bookstore, tel. 212-594-2386. In Polish.

Marian Hemar (1901–1972) was the author of hundreds of cabaret texts widely known in Poland before the second world war. He was born in Lwów/Lviv (then Lemberg) to an assimilated Jewish family. In 1925, he moved to Warsaw where he worked at the popular cabaret “Qui pro Quo.” He also performed in “Banda” (1931–1933), “Cyganeria Warszawska” (1933–1934) and “Cyrylik Warszawski” (1935–1939). Among his most popular songs are “Kiedy znów zakwitną białe bzy” and “Karpacka Brygada.” His songs were performed by such popular singers as Hanka Ordonówna, Mira Zimińska, Fryderyk Jaroczy, Kazimierz Krukowski, Ludwik Sempoliński, Mieczysław Fogg and others. In other words, he was a quintessential entertainer, and his success far exceeds that of his colleagues in the trade.


A collection of essays on Josif Brodskii by one of Poland’s notable Russicists. The personal tone of the essays make this little book attractive to those who, like Fast, find Brodskiy to be a ‘kindred soul.’ Fast says: “I discover in Brodsky’s poetry meanings which correspond to my way of looking at the world and my emotional life.” Probably many intellectuals feel this while reading
Brodsky. According to Fast, Brodsky’s central concern is time and its influence on human beings. Brodsky himself once said that in the center of his interests lies the influence the passing of time has on individuals; he tries to understand how time changes individuals, how it reshapes them. A fine homage to a fine poet.


This article appeared in the quarterly titled (in Polish) Russian Review. The quarterly is published in Katowice under the editorship of Professor Piotr Fast. This particular article compares the vision of light in John Paul II’s encyclical Veritatis Splendor and the writings on related topics by Russian Orthodox theologians.

Other Books Received


Kochanowski’s Threnoids, or Laments, a series of unusual lyrical poems written to commemorate the death of the poet’s daughter in 1579, attracted a number of translators. A review to follow.


A Polish translation of Between East and West: Across the Borders of Europe. The author traveled to Kaliningrad, Vilnius, Novogrodek, Minsk, Brest, Livv, Chisinau, and many other cities with double and sometimes triple or quadruple names and histories. Her luggage included a writing facility and familiarity with the history of the region. The product is eminently readable.


This aptly titled book delivers what it promises. It was written with the English-speaking reader in mind: even Mickiewicz’s name is rendered into an easier-to-pronounce form of Mitskyevich. References to British history are common, thus enabling a reader innocent of the Central European realities to relate to facts and stories otherwise as alien as could be. The method of writing is clearly pedagogical, a mix of narration, poetry translations, summaries and historical commentary. This material may seem elementary to most Polish readers, but the author’s ability to find parallels with British poetry and history make this volume extraordinarily useful to academic teachers of Polish literature in the United States. The book reads like one of the biographies of Russian writers by Henry Troyat; the difference is that Dębeka gives us incomparably more primary materials than Troyat ever did. Dębeka never criticizes too harshly: even the bitter relations between Poland and Russia or the brutality with which the Russians deported thousands of Poles (including Mickiewicz) into other parts of their colonial empire are passed over with relative serenity. Perhaps this is Dębeka’s strong point rather than a weakness: the book is optimistic and cheerful, one of those tomes that can be read after dinner or in bed without evoking negative feelings and thoughts.


Holocaust survivor Marek Edelman considers this book to be a pioneer work. It deals with connections between history, philosophy, and literature. Jedlińska states, as have so many others, that the Holocaust has had a profound influence on art. It resulted in a frequent presentation in art of the feeling of emptiness, apathy, despair, and catastrophe. Theodore Adorno’s famous question: is poetry possible after Auschwitz, is also discussed, as are the history of anti-Semitism and the history of totalitarianism. (Aleksandra Ziółkowska-Boehm)


Janusz Rózewicz was the older brother of the Polish poet Tadeusz Rózewicz. He was executed by the German Gestapo police in 1944. Feliks Przyłubski was his school teacher. An interesting volume showing the destruction wrought on the Polish people by the (hopefully) the last colonial war in Europe: the second world war.

A collection of eight papers given at a workshop on translation held at KUL in 1999. The papers deal with translations from (or into) Polish from English, Russian, and Latin. Some attention is given to problem of period style, in particular, to translations of Polish baroque poetry into contemporary English.


A collection of essays culled from the pages of “Przegląd Polski,” a literary supplement to the Polish American daily *Nowy Dziennik*. The author is a teacher of Polish who left Poland in the 1960s but has traveled there frequently. In a witty and entertaining manner, she comments on recent developments in the Polish language. She also writes about the attitude to Polish of the Polish immigrants to America for whom language is often a major source of identity and who teach it to their children and grandchildren. (A.Z.-B.)


On early Brodsky.


A collection of essays by various Polish and foreign authors on Brodsky.

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**Dyskurs, przekład, interpretacja Literatura staropolska i jej trwanie we współczesnej kulturze**


**Bogdan Czaykowski**

There are few contemporary Polish literary critics who write scholarly prose as elegantly as the author of this handsomely produced book. Similarly, Piotr Wilczek’s erudition, while exceptionally broad and often arcane, is never merely pedantic. Each section of the book and indeed the book as a whole present an argument, though the argument of the entire collection is less explicit than of its individual sections. The reason for the latter is the complex relationship between the three main concepts that inform the book: discourse, translation and interpretation. It is also the result of the time span covered, from the sixteenth century to the present, and of the variety of the subject matter which ranges from an interpretation of a sixteenth-century poem through an analysis of religious polemics in Poland at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to a consideration of baroque elements in Tadeusz Różewicz’s poetry and the question of how to define religious poetry. What gives the book its cohesiveness is its overall conceptual framework and thematic focus expressed by the book’s subtitle.

Part One focuses on Jan Kochanowski (1530–84), the greatest Slavic poet before Mickiewicz and Pushkin, whose work is presently beginning to receive recognition in Britain and North America, thanks mainly to several new translations of a cycle of poems titled *Laments* (*Treny*, 1580), of which Barańczak and Heaney’s vies for first place with that of Adam Czerniawski’s (a revised version of the latter has just been published by Legenda Publishers in Oxford). The Kochanowski section consists of three chapters. The first deals with the *Laments*. Wilczek argues that the *Laments* is a polyphonic poem presenting in a dialogic manner a series of approaches to the central question it addresses: whence suffering and death, while leaving a final answer open. Those approaches, Wilczek points out, are conveyed through the use of the *personae* including Job, Brutus, Niobe, Orpheus, David, and Cicero who are masks for the author’s inner drama. In Wilczek’s view, Kochanowski is an epistemological agnostic: human beings will never solve the enigma of suffering, not in this world anyway. There is much additional evidence in the poem to support the author’s thesis that goes beyond his chosen focus. For the masks are not the only carriers of points of view. It may, in fact, be argued that the real debate in the poem is between the Christian and the humanist world view, with the Christian stance conveyed by the imitation of the Psalms and the long speech of the *persona* of the Mother—who, however, as Wilczek rightly insists, is not the poet’s ‘mask’—and who addresses the poet in his vision in the last and longest poem of the cycle. At the same time, her restatement of the Christian outlook is not treated by Kochanowski as conclusive, since the nature of the vision is rendered ambiguous by the poem’s last lines:
Although Wilczek does not discuss directly the question of Kochanowski’s own attitude to the orthodox religious viewpoint expressed in Lament XIX, he does return briefly to it in the last chapter of the book, where he quotes with cautious approval Witkot Weintraub’s contention that Kochanowski’s religious outlook “resembles what Wilhelm Dilthey called ‘a religious-universalist’ theism of the Italian humanists.”

The second chapter deals with the translations of Kochanowski’s Lament X, from the early rendering by John Bowring (1827) to the quite recent ones of Michael Mikoś, Adam Czerniawski and Stanisław Barańczak/Seamus Heaney. Here the analysis is stylistic and semantic, and it displays not only an excellent analytical apparatus but a balanced and fair treatment of the topic. Wilczek illuminates such crucial problems of translation as archaization, the choice of metrical patterns, and fidelity to the original. His conclusion is that a perfect translation (in Polish: przekład kongenialny) is impossible. He thus challenges the views of those who, like Barańczak and Joseph Brodsky, want to reproduce in translation the largest possible number of formal features of the original.

The third chapter deals with Kochanowski’s Polish version of Horace’s ode “O nata mecum consule Mantio.” Here the author has chosen for his analysis a poem that may well be considered untranslated because of its strong cultural determination. The problem of how to find equivalents for elements that carry different values in discrete cultures was first addressed in a discursive way in connection with the translations of the Bible into vernacular languages. As is clear from the author’s chosen example, practice preceded theoretical discussions. Wilczek considers Kochanowski’s rendering of Horace’s ode to be a masterpiece of Renaissance translation, in that it demonstrates that a poet of real genius can sometimes achieve what seems virtually impossible. But, he argues, it was not only Kochanowski’s poetic genius that made this feat possible. What helped Kochanowski was the sixteenth-century concept of translation as a transfer from one culture into another of a poetic and semantic structure in such a way that the result is not a ‘faithful’ version, but a version which is an equivalent of the original in the target language, in the sense of being a poem in its own right, or an original poem. Wilczek points out that in the sixteenth century, translations did not take the place of the original poems, but existed side by side with them. There was no need for the former, since readers knew the language (in this case Latin) and could read the original poems for themselves. A consideration of some recent translations into Polish of Horace’s hymnic ode shows how attempts at transferring realia from one culture into another, while ostensibly more faithful to the original, burden the new version with elements which carry no meaning in the culture of the target language. The ‘ideal’ translation, the author concludes (and one wonders how consistent this conclusion is with the argument of his preceding chapter), is one that does justice to both the poetic and the philological virtues of the original.

Part Two consists of six chapters, and it is devoted to religious polemics between the Jesuits and the Arians (Anti-Trinitarians) in Poland, with a separate chapter devoted to the critique of Luther by the sixteenth-century Polish Catholic polemists. It ends with a consideration of the value of religious polemics in the history of ideas. This section of the book is varied, fascinating, and impossible to summarize. Wilczek’s discussion of the content, style, and nature of religious polemics (the main issues being the nature of Christ and the authority of the sacred text) is exemplary in its clarity and balance. While it is obvious that the author does not share the approach of those who institutionalize a single point of view, he nevertheless treats all arguments as equal before the arbiter of reason. This chapter throws light on Polish culture between 1570–1620, and it shows how often it has been misinterpreted by those who apply anachronistic criteria to the past. One is especially struck by the imagination of the polemists, their adept use of rhetoric and their vigorous style (often unsparring of the opponent) both in syntax and diction, which at times brings to mind Witold Gombrowicz. Finally, the contempt in which many modern writers hold the Jesuit order is certainly not justified on Wilczek’s showing, at any rate not in the period in question. He demonstrates that the first generation of Jesuit theologians and polemists in Poland matched in intellectual acumen their radical challengers, the Polish Brethren.

Part Three has, at first sight, a more disparate character than the first two parts. The most substantial chapter deals with the revival of interest in rhetoric among the postwar Polish literary scholars such as Miroslaw Korolko, Jerzy Ziomek, Adam Rysiewicz, Barbara Otwinowska and Jakub Z. Lichański. The author subscribes to Rysiewicz’s view about the
importance of rhetoric for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Polish writing, and he illustrates this by analyzing a treatise on rhetoric by Stefan Mikanus which appeared in 1561 in Kraków. The difficult question of the relationship between rhetoric and poetics is posed (though not resolved), while the general thesis of the importance of rhetoric in literary studies is made amply convincing.

The role that an older poetic tradition may play in the context of a totalizing ideological offensive (in this case, Marxist) and the interpretive distortions that this can lead to, are well brought out in a discussion of the still valuable anthology of the Polish Arian poetry, Arianie w świetle własnej poezji, compiled by Jan Durr-Durski in 1948. Chapter three of Part Three deals with the question (already touched upon earlier in the book) of the practice of archaization in poetic translation. It analyses Jerzy S. Sito’s translation into Polish of John Donne’s Sonnet X. While Wilczek finds some of Barańczak’s criticisms of Sito’s translation unconvincing, he nevertheless puts forward several important arguments against the practice of archaization, and he clinches the argument by quoting Barańczak’s modern and superior version of the sonnet. The last but one chapter looks at the persistence of the baroque tradition in contemporary Polish poetry by focusing on the example of Tadeusz Różewicz’s poem “Totentanz.” Here the focus, while fairly narrow, serves to illuminate a whole spectrum of related issues. Finally, the essay on religious poetry is an interesting attempt to clarify this difficult concept by drawing on Helen Gardner’s essay “Religious Poetry: A Definition” in the context of several other approaches, such as T.S. Eliot’s and Michael Lieb’s. A number of subtle distinctions allow the author to make the concept of religious poetry meaningful without committing him to an unnecessarily narrow definition.

Piotr Wilczek’s book is written with admirable conceptual and stylistic clarity, and while it gives evidence of the author’s considerable knowledge in the area of modern theory, it is free of jargon or convoluted theorizing for its own sake. The book is written in the best tradition of Polish literary scholarship, as exemplified for instance by the work of Wiktor Weintraub, one-time professor of Polish literature at Harvard. Had the Polish community in the United States established a Wiktor Weintraub Prize for a work of scholarship of a superior character and quality, Dr. Wilczek’s book would undoubtedly be among the strongest contenders.

Der Warschauer Aufstand 1944

Marek Chodakiewicz

The story of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 is grim. Over 200,000 Poles died, most of them civilians. The Polish independentist elite (which was anti-Nazi and anti-Communist) was decimated, in particular its youth who fought and sacrificed in the hopeless endeavor to regain the nation’s independence. The capital was in ruins, methodically blown up block by block long after the insurgents surrendered on October 4, 1944. “Polen hatte eine ganze Generation verloren, und seine Hauptstadt dazu,” according to the apt conclusion of Włodzimierz Borodziej who ably retold the story of the Uprising to the German reader. (1)

Borodziej set out to synthesize the existing knowledge about the Uprising. To anchor the tragedy within its proper context, he painted a broad historical background starting with the partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century. Next, he concentrated on the German and Nazi occupation regimes in Poland after September 1939, stressing correctly that “ohne den Hitler-Stalin-Pakt vom 23. August 1939 hätte es keine polnische Frage im Zweiten Weltkrieg gegeben.” (2)

Arguably, Borodziej is at his best when dealing with the diplomatic background. Poland was basically abandoned by its allies in 1939, and the tradition of neglect continued afterward both diplomatically and militarily. Neither the British nor the Americans were willing to antagonize Stalin by opposing his Polish policy. For Stalin, according to Borodziej, the main bone of contention was, first, Poland’s eastern territories and, second, the desire to control the rest of the country through a Communist proxy regime established in Moscow and later transplanted to Lublin.

Poland’s experience from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries was punctuated by insurrections against foreign powers occupying the country: Russia, Prussia, and Austro-Hungary. Initially, the risings were staged by regular Polish military units reinforced by volunteers (1794, 1806, and 1830–1831). Later, Poland’s armed endeavors were based upon poorly trained levée en masse commanded by Polish veterans of foreign armies. The only successful Polish rising took place in November 1918, when the Poles of
Poznań/Posen rebelled against the Prussians. As the news of the rising spread, coinciding with the armistice on the western front, the Polish underground disarmed German and Austro-Hungarian troops throughout central Poland. The Poles thus liberated themselves and re-established a Polish state after almost 120 years of captivity.

As Borodziej correctly points out, almost all senior officers of the Polish army and underground during the second world war had been junior participants in the rising of 1918 and were hoping to repeat its success in 1944. Accordingly, from the very beginning, they drafted numerous contingency plans for a national uprising to liberate Poland. Also from the very beginning, the Polish independentist underground leadership, which organized and commanded the Polish Underground State and its main clandestine force, the Home Army (Armia Krajowa, or AK), took the stance that Poland had two enemies: Hitler’s Germany and Stalin’s Russia. Although after June 1941 the latter became “the ally of our allies,” unofficially the Polish attitude toward the Soviet Union remained mistrustful at best.

The situation became seriously exacerbated after the discovery of the victims of the Katyn massacre perpetrated by Soviet Russia and the subsequent break-off of diplomatic relations between the Polish government-in-exile and the USSR. Katyn was but the tip of an iceberg. A powerful wave of revolutionary banditry swept central and eastern Poland with the Soviet and Polish Communist partisans raiding Polish villages and assaulting the AK troops. By 1944, in certain regions of Poland, the Wilno/Vilnius area in particular, a state of virtual war existed between the independentist Poles and the Communists. As Soviet forces rolled west, Stalin’s ill-will and hostile intentions became manifestly transparent. Once the Red Army crossed Poland’s pre-war frontier in January 1944, local Home Army units were given orders to commence the “Operation Tempest.” This was envisioned as a rolling insurgency. The objective was to defeat the Germans and re-establish Polish administration before the arrival of the Soviets. In practice, the AK succeeded in taking power on its own in some places, but in most instances it simply assisted the Red Army offensive. Afterward, invariably, the Poles were disarmed, arrested, forcibly drafted into the Polish Communist army or sent to the Gulag. Some AK men were shot.

Both the command of the Home Army and the Polish government-in-exile were aware of those developments as the Red Army approached Warsaw. Nonetheless, acting on faulty intelligence (has it ever been investigated?) about the allegedly imminent entry of the Soviet troops into the capital, Home Army Commander-in-Chief General Tadeusz Komorowski (alias “Bór”) gave orders to commence the rising on August 1, 1944. However, it was the AK Warsaw commander Colonel Antoni Chruściel (“Monter”) who led the insurgents in the struggle, a crucial fact of which Borodziej informs us only on pages 142 and 146 of his book. The decision to fight resulted from the behind-the-scenes political actions of a few senior AK officers who outmaneuvered the majority of their colleagues, including General Komorowski. The distinguished minority decided to act on the Goethe-like “ideology of the deed” (ideologia czynu) to demonstrate to the world Poland’s will to freedom. Borodziej, who carefully avoids almost all judgment, delicately asks, “Nur: Musste dies die Entscheidung bedeuten, einen nach militärischen Gesichtspunkten mehr als zweifelhaften Kampf in einer Stadt mit mehreren hunderttausend Einwohner aufzunehmen?” (3)

Terrible carnage and predictable failure resulted. Even if the Uprising had succeeded, what then? Would Stalin have allowed a free Polish government in Warsaw? That would have been the question. As in Wilno/Vilnius, Lwów/Lviv, Lublin, and elsewhere, the AK insurgents would have been disarmed, arrested, and sent to the Gulag, if not shot. ‘Western public opinion’ would have cared as much as it did when the insurgents were bleeding in vain before the Nazi onslaught.

From August 1 on, Warsaw was largely left to its own devices. The greatest contribution of the Allies was to have secured, late in the game, the recognition of the AK as a full-fledged combatant, which somewhat moderated the Nazi treatment of Polish POWs. On the other hand, the Allied supply drops were inadequate, if not symbolic. Only in mid-September did the Russians allow the Americans to use their airfields. Stalin also permitted an ill-fated expedition by a token Polish force under Communist command to cross the Vistula River to assist the insurgents. Those troops were massacred, as were the AK fighters. Meanwhile, the Nazis bombed hospitals, executed civilians, burned alive the wounded and medical staff, and used women and children as human shields for their tanks. Despite the exemplary heroism of the insurgents, the districts of Warsaw fell one by one. The defiant Poles refused to surrender. When, on September 18, the Wehrmacht sent its emissaries to the beleaguered AK commander of Żoliborz, the Polish officer told the Germans that they should surrender to him (p. 178). Nonetheless, on October 4, having exhausted all means of resistance, the Home Army capitulated. The insurgents were sent to POW camps. Warsaw’s population was deported and the city systematically raised to the ground. Borodziej argues that had it not been for the Uprising, the
resistance to the Communist takeover would have been much stronger (p. 218).

Probably the most original part of Der Warschauer Aufstand 1944 is the author’s acknowledgement that, although only an episode in the Second World War, the Warsaw Uprising domestically became a symbol of monumental proportions, second to none, signifying for the next fifty years Poland’s unquenchable desire for independence and freedom. The Communists first attempted to destroy the legend of the Uprising; later, they tried to appropriate it; and, finally, they joined the rest of the Poles in the ritual of the solemn celebration of that tragic event.

This is the story that Borodziej narrates in an admirably calm and systematic manner. For the most part, his monograph is informative, accessible, and well organized. However, Borodziej leaves his scholarly peers somewhat unsatisfied. Most importantly, there are a few problems that are inherent in synthetical, rather than analytical works. Borodziej based himself largely on what others have published, including both primary and secondary sources, which he then squared with his preferences. On the other hand, he avoided other sources. For example, one is surprised that he failed to mention Polish-American scholar J. K. Zawodny’s Nothing but Honor (1978) which deals incisively and specifically with the Warsaw Uprising. Nor did Zawodny’s pioneering work on the Katyn massacre even make the bibliography.

There are other lacunae as well. First, Borodziej fails to shed new light on Stalin’s decision-making during the Uprising. True, Borodziej’s intuitive interpretation of the Soviet dictator’s motives and actions seems to be right, but the final verdict must wait until a lucky historian is granted access to these particular files in the post-Soviet archives.

Next, it is frustrating that Borodziej did not elaborate on the fact that the “fremdvölkische Truppen im Einsatz gegen Warschau” constituted “fast 50 Prozent der Angreifer unter deutschem Kommando.” (4) Although the topic of their participation against the insurgents of Warsaw still awaits serious scholarly consideration, there are nonetheless at least a few monographs dealing with the East European auxiliaries of the Nazis and plenty of references to them in Polish memoirs and secondary works. (5) It is a pity that Borodziej did not take note of them. What does the participation of the ex-Soviet auxiliaries of the Nazis in the Uprising signify? How did it bear on the Polish attitudes toward all ‘Ruskies’: Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Russians? Sure, the Nazi commanders deserve the bulk of the blame, but is it still warranted to refer continuously to the enemies of the insurgents as “the Germans” when we know that some of the most bestial atrocities were committed by the ex-Soviets in Nazi uniform?

Next, his depiction of General Komorowski is unimaginative and unflattering, partly because, as Borodziej has admitted himself, no scholarly monograph on this commander exists. Yet there is enough available material to have qualified the negative picture of the General, just as Borodziej did when dealing with General Leopold Okulicki, one of the major advocates of the launching of the rising. Therefore, just for the record, it is worth recounting some basic facts about General Tadeusz Komorowski, an erstwhile Habsburg officer and a conservative noble landowner.

In the Polish Army Komorowski commanded the 12th Lancers. Seriously wounded in the battle of Komorów in 1918, he refused to leave the field. In 1920, he distinguished himself in the war against the Bolsheviks, earning Poland’s top medal, the Virtuti Militari. During the September 1939 campaign Komorowski acquitted himself well defending the Vistula. Later, he went underground, operating in Kraków. Having been appointed commander-in-chief of the Home Army after the arrest of his predecessor, General Stefan Rowecki (“Grot”), Komorowski indefatigably strove for the unity of the independentist underground. He succeeded in subordinating to the Home Army most of the far-right National Armed Forces (Narodowe Siły Zbrojne) and much of the left-wing Peasant Battalions (Bataliony Chłopskie) by 1944.

Komorowski’s sense of honor and duty was legendary; he made no allowances for his family. For example, on July 31, 1944, a day before the Uprising, the General failed to warn his wife, who was in an advanced state of pregnancy, of the impending action and to spirit her out of the city. Mrs. Komorowska miraculously survived the Uprising, even though, at the end, she was used as a live shield by the Nazis for the Nazi tanks. Later, the General commented: "there were many pregnant women in Warsaw at the time... I was unable to evacuate all of them and therefore I was unable to make an exception for my own wife! Besides, I was obligated by the rule of military secrecy to keep silent." (6) All that of course does not imply that Komorowski was right to have succumbed to the minority of the AK staff that had pushed for the Uprising. Borodziej is correct in criticizing the general’s failure to prevent the tragedy. After all, he was in charge and could have acted accordingly.

Another sin of omission is the virtual lack of discussion of the participation of women in the Uprising. Borodziej admits that they constituted about
10 per cent of the Home Army (p. 162). How valuable were they? What functions did they play in battle? What was the impact of their presence on the troop morale?

There is not much on the lot of the Jews during the Uprising. Borodziej limits himself to recalling parenthetically a few incidents. One learns that about 15 Jews remained in hiding after the capitulation (p. 206). Also, he tells us that in September, a few rogue insurgents, “who had plagued the civilian population before (die schon vorher als Plage der Zivilbevölkerung gegolten hatten),” robbed and murdered about 15 Jews (p. 199). This and other incidents were subject to an immense public debate in Poland in the mid-1990s.

(7) One would like to hear more about it. In another instance, Borodziej narrates that the Home Army freed up to 100 Hungarian Jews from the custody of the SS (p. 115). However, why did the scholar relegate to a footnote (230 n. 9) the most important action of the Home Army on behalf of the Jews during the Uprising, namely the liberation of the Nazi concentration camp “Gęsiówka,” where about 300 Jews were imprisoned? Many of them joined the insurgents and fought in their ranks with distinction.(8) On the other hand, why did not Borodziej address the hypothesis that had there been no Uprising, about 20,000 Jews who were hiding in the capital on its eve would have survived the war? (9)

It is distinctly unhelpful to talk about “the Jews” during the Warsaw Uprising because it obscures the social and ideological plurality of the remnant Jewish population, including the resistors. It would have been helpful to be informed that, because of its mistrust of the communists and Soviets, the Jewish Marxist Bund joined the left-wing Polish People’s Army (Polska Armia Ludowa) rather than the communist People’s Army (Armia Ludowa). Neither can one find anything about the activities of the far-right Jewish Military Union (Irgun Zwoi Leumi/Żydowski Związek Wojskowy). The Irgun fighters acquitted themselves bravely, including some, as for example Caleb Perechodnik, who fought during the Uprising in the ranks of the National Armed Forces.(10) Again, much of the material concerning the Jews during the Uprising is dispersed through numerous memoirs and scholarly monographs. Much of it is inaccurate and should be supplemented with archival research. Hopefully, an in-depth analysis of the Jews during the Uprising will be available in the forthcoming monograph of Gunnar S. Paulson.(11)

Further, there are questions concerning Borodziej’s interpretation of the Nazi and Soviet occupations. He seems to have a problem with the periodization. Borodziej undoubtedly considers the Soviet attack in September 1939 and the subsequent actions of Stalin in eastern Poland until 1941 as aggression and occupation. But what of the period after 1944 when the Soviets occupied Poland again? Was that freedom?

Moreover, Borodziej postulates a parity of suffering among all ethnic groups under the first Soviet occupation of eastern Poland. This interpretation is problematic, indeed untenable. The Soviet terror targeted first and foremost ethnic Poles and Catholics, members of the Polish elite in particular. Poles were a minority in eastern Poland. Yet, they accounted for the majority of the victims of mass executions (in Katyn and elsewhere), arrests, and deportations, which included entire families of ‘enemies of the people.’ The Polish victims of Stalin also lost their properties to confiscation. In comparison, local Jews were repressed to a much lesser extent than refugee Jews from the West, who were overrepresented among the Jewish deportees.(12)

Borodziej correctly considers the Jewish population to be the primary victim of Nazism. However, it should have been noted that until 1941, the Polish Christian elite was the principal target of the Nazis and it suffered disproportionately to its numbers. This continued well into the second Soviet occupation of Poland. In contradistinction, the bulk of the Christian population suffered most mainly during the final period of the Nazi rule (1942–44).

Last but not least, one is troubled by Borodziej’s asymmetrical treatment of Poland’s far-right National Armed Forces (NSZ) and Stalin’s Polish Communists operating as the Polish Workers Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza) and its military arm, the People’s Army (Armia Ludowa). Borodziej devoted four sentences to the NSZ. Without footnoting his claim, he confidently states that “in Warsaw however the extreme right did not play a large role” (p. 35). How does he know that? On the other hand, immediately after this remark about the NSZ, he becomes quite talkative about the PPR/AL (pp. 35–37 and numerous other remarks throughout the book). Granted, the PPR/AL merited attention because the communists represented Soviet interests in Poland. Neither their numbers nor their combat record however merited such detailed consideration. The problem becomes obvious when one consults the recently published documents of the NSZ and PPR/AL, which Borodziej completely ignored.

In September 1943 the National Armed Forces fielded about 70,000 soldiers. By April 1944, when the NSZ subordinated themselves to the Home Army, they had an
estimated 90,000 fighters. The Warsaw garrison of the NSZ had about 6,800 soldiers, including a small minority of 2,000 radicals who did not subordinate themselves to the AK. During the Warsaw Uprising, the number of the NSZ men and women fluctuated. Because the NSZ leadership was not informed of the Uprising, most soldiers were caught off guard and failed to join their detachments. Instead, they fought in Home Army units and were considered Home Army soldiers. Only a minority managed to assemble as separate units, albeit subordinated to the Home Army. On August 9, 1944, their commander, Colonel Spirydon Koiszewski ("Topór"), reported to his Home Army superiors 2,316 men, including 340 officers. Colonel Chruściel established that "the AL Headquarters reported that the AL had 278 fighters. On October 1, 1944, the AL Chief of Staff deserted two days prior by sewers to the northern suburb (between 100 and 300 people, including civilians) had failed to list them. Thus, the NSZ fielded about 3,500 men, not counting several partisan units operating in the close proximity of Warsaw to assist the insurgents (e.g., Bateria "Kampinos"). The National Armed Forces lost at least 1,079 killed in action during the Uprising. The Home Army leadership commended the NSZ soldiers for their valor.(13) Unfortunately, their exemplary combat record and great sacrifice merited only one sentence in Borodziej's book, where he notes that "deren Kampf im Aufstand bis 1989 verschweigen wurde" (their fight in the Uprising was glossed over in silence until 1989), and that only in the 1990s did the NSZ veterans begin openly to participate in the commemorative activities of the Uprising (p. 217).

How about the Communists? According to party documents, at their peak in June 1944, the PPR/AL enrolled slightly over 6,000 members. In March and April 1944, there were only 91 fighters in the Warsaw underground cells. During the Uprising their strength increased. The Communists may have contributed as many as 400 insurgents to the struggle. For example, according to a dispatch of August 30, 1944, there were 35 Communist fighters and 122 support personnel in the Old Town alone. They were armed with 5 rifles, 2 submachine guns, two handguns, and 18 grenades. Most of their comrades (between 100 and 300 people, including civilians) had deserted two days prior by sewers to the northern suburb of Żoliborz. On October 1, 1944, the AL Chief of Staff reported that the AL had 278 fighters. On October 1, 1944, Colonel Chruściel established that "the AL Headquarters claimed to have commanded first 1,000 and then 700 persons. In fact their battle-readiness (stan bojowy faktyczny) is as follows: 1 platoon somewhat equipped with arms (more than 40 persons). More than 200 fled to Żoliborz. One-hundred and sixty and the aforementioned storm platoon made it to the city center."

Borodziej is also willing to cut the Communists more than a fair share of slack. When most of the AL deserted from the Old Town on August 28 (and not on the 25th), the scholar judges the desertion to have been "natürlich ein relativer Begriff" (p. 150). Why naturally? Why relative? Most of their colleagues in the Home Army, who stayed behind, would have found such relativism plainly offensive. Relativism may be a fashionable concept among academics in peacetime, but it certainly was not in style among the insurgents of Warsaw where desertion was a matter of life and death. Finally, what of the fact that the Communists planned to attack the Home Army and other ‘reactionaries’ during the Uprising and that they hoped to convert the Uprising into a social revolution so they could seize power?(14)

Borodziej found it appropriate to include in his brief resume of the NSZ a remark about the alleged collaboration with the Nazis, but he remained silent about the thorough penetration of the PPR leadership and many field units by the Soviet secret police, the NKVD. Borodziej does not call the Polish Communists ‘Soviet collaborators;' perhaps he simply considers them ‘Stalin’s Polish puppets’ and assumes that the reader would take that for granted.

To reiterate, Borodziej’s work is weakened by his failure to incorporate recent scholarship into his work. On the other hand, had he included it, he might have been obliged to re-conceptualize his story. On balance, his synthesis, although very useful for the general reader, remains largely captive of the state of historical knowledge in the 1980s.

NOTES
1. Włodzimierz Borodziej, Der Warschauer Aufstand 1944.8 (afterward Der Warschauer Aufstand).
4. Borodziej, ibid., 120.

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9. At least one historian charged that the Warsaw Uprising caused the death of Jews everywhere west of the Vistula River because it retarded the advance of the Red Army. See Icchak (Henryk) Rubin, Żydzi w Łodzi pod niemiecką okupacją, 1939–1945 (London: Kontra, 1988). Paulson estimates that only some Jews perished in the Uprising: “Of the 27,000 Jewish fugitives in Warsaw, 17,000 were still alive 15 months after the destruction of the ghetto, on the eve of the Polish uprising in 1944. Of the 23,500 who were not drawn in by the Hotel Polski scheme [in which some 3,000 well-to-do Jews on the ‘Aryan’ side were lured out of hiding on false promises of passage out of Nazi Europe on foreign passports], 17,000 survived until then. Of these 17,000, 5,000 died in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, and about 10,500 were still at liberation.” See Gunnar S. Paulson, “The Rescue of Jews by Non-Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland,” The Journal of Holocaust Education, vol. 7, nos. 1–2 (Summer/Autumn 1998): 19–44.

10. Caleb Perekhodnik fought in the Chrobry II NSZ-AK battalion. More specifically, he was a soldier in the national-radical storm squad “Baśka” of the “Neda-Kosa” company (which originated from the Sword and Plow Movement [Ruch “Miecz i Plug”] and was commanded by Lieutenant Leonard Kancelarczyk (“Jeremi”) of the National Radical Camp’s proletarian “Crew” [“Zaloga”] section). There were other Jewish insurgents in the unit; at least two of them were killed in action. Many more served in other AK units, including the elite “Baszta” battalion. See Chaim Lazar Litai, Muranowska 7: The Warsaw Ghetto Rising (Tel Aviv: P.E.C. Press Ltd., 1996), 327; Sebastian Bojemski to Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, 3 December 2001. An erstwhile ghetto policeman, Caleb Perekhodnik penned a well-known memoir during the war, Czy ja jestem mordercą? (Warszawa: Karta, 1993), English trans. Am I a Murderer? Testament of a Jewish Ghetto Policeman (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press/HarperCollins, 1996).


12. About 43,000 refugee Jews were deported to the Gulag, constituting 62% of all Jewish deportees from Poland. The number of Jews killed by the Soviets is unknown. However, among an estimated 5,000 that died the most prominent victims included the Chief Rabbi of the Polish Army and the Chief Rabbi of Warsaw. See Ben-Cion Pinchuk, Shtetl Jews under Soviet Rule: Eastern Poland on the Eve of the Holocaust (London: Basil Blackwell, 1990); and Mark Paul, Neighbors on the Eve of the Holocaust: The Jewish Community in Eastern Poland during the Soviet Occupation, 1939-1941 (Toronto and Chicago: PEFINA Press, 2002). (forthcoming)


Teatr i sacrum w średniowieczu


Jolanta W. Best

The book was published by the Foundation for the Benefit of Polish Scholarship. The aim of the Foundation is to promote original and innovative writings of Polish authors in the areas of fine arts and social sciences. Andrzej Dąbrówka is the author of numerous articles and books, and he is employed by the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IBL PAN) in Warsaw.

Dąbrówka sees himself as a “cognitive analyst,” and he asserts that cognitive structures in language, literature, and art bridge various disciplines and theories (p. 49). His work has a twofold structure. The first and major part (chapters II–IV) investigates the ontology of the sacred and uses the prism of phenomenology of religion to interpret it. The author analyzes aspects of the sacred through the philosophical tradition of Rudolf Otto, Gerhard van der Leeuw, Mircea Eliade, and others. He also outlines the main steps of his argument: 1. religion as a cultural system, 2. sacramentalism, 3. the idea of recapitulation 4. holistic aesthetics for medieval creativity between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries.

The second part (chapter V) applies these theoretical points to dramatic material. The author compares various forms of piety (biblical, folk, and sacramental), and seeks parallels between mystery plays, miracle plays, moralitets,
and farces. He states that the early medieval genres incorporated both the sacred and the profane, and that the medieval dramatic forms offered a unique articulation of God ("God’s will in the world," p. 407) and of divine matters. Consequently, the medieval theater is impossible to fully appreciate and understand without the knowledge of the religious life from which it sprang.

Dąbrówka asserts that the medieval theater depicted dynamic civilizational changes. The theatrical genres echoed the religious, social, and cultural processes of the Middle Ages. The author rejects the thesis of Jean Delumeau that the medieval epoch was not Christian, but rather pagan (58). He is closer to Clifford Geertz and Osborne Hardison who are of the opinion that the Middle Ages were more Christian than is sometimes asserted. Dąbrówka seems to be influenced by Geertz in that he strongly reaffirms his definition of religion as a cultural system (60). He also postulates complex links between beliefs and culture, and he posits that the main distinction between the two is that religion possesses metaphysical elements that are not always present in culture.

The relationship between the sacred and the profane has been analyzed in the works of Emile Durkheim (1912), Rudolf Otto (1917), and Gerardus van der Leeuw (1956). These authors postulate a kind of cohesion and balance between these two opposing realms. Dąbrówka works within this tradition, but he proposes an additional inquiry based on the sociological methods of Howard Becker. He refers to the “Becker’s ladder” (62–65). It allows him to emphasize the developmental processes in the sacred. An alternative clarification by Eliade links “sacredness” with ontological reality (126–9). Finally, spiritualization and transcendentalization (149) are viewed as the ultimate ontological aspects of the sacred.

Dąbrówka associates medieval religiosity with the idea of sacramentalism and recapitulation. Sacramentalism has to do with a transition from direct to symbolic relation to God. The rise of sacramentalism occurred in the thirteenth century, when the difference between the presence of the sacred in the universe and in the sacraments was first fully articulated. A common, obligatory, and formalized system of rules was established, to be obeyed under the supervision of the Church.

If received properly, the sacraments lead to a salvation of individual souls and transformation of secular activities into spiritual values. Sacramentalism played a vital role in the Middle Ages by triggering a variety of political, cultural, and social developments.

Dąbrówka states that the theological idea of recapitulation was formulated by St. Paul and he had to do with seeing Christ as the head of the Church. He defines recapitulation as a peculiar aesthetic which popularized a lifestyle based on the image of Christ. It encouraged conversion from an extrovert to an introspective personality (“człowiek wewnętrzny,” 362) and strove to facilitate and promote the salvation of the human soul through various religious practices, ceremonies, rituals, and creativity. The typical hero of recapitulation appeared as a Sinner in mystery plays and in moralities.

Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, the concepts of sacramentalism and recapitulation laid the foundation for a holistic aesthetics. Among elements of this aesthetics were spirituality and ontology of the sacred. God is the human beings’ ultimate goal, and various forms of piety can be not only tolerated but also encouraged in order to facilitate reaching Him. The concept of recapitulation also strengthens social cohesiveness and facilitates communication among members of society.

Dąbrówka further states that medieval civilization was based on the principle of “explicitness.” That means that the entire cultural system could be clarified and objectivized through form and language. The relation between the whole structure and its elements can likewise be objectified through language. Dąbrówka borrows the concept of explicitness from Erwin Panofsky who used it to explain Gothic architecture. Dąbrówka uses the term rather loosely, to emphasize that in the Middle Ages, culture was more of an open book than it is today. The idea of elitism and of superior knowledge was alien to members of medieval society, and esoteric knowledge, had it existed, would have been considered improper and harmful. The medieval theater was founded on these principles.

Dąbrówka’s book is ambitious. In addition to sketching out the philosophical roots of the medieval theater, he comments on an entire gamut of artes liberales as practiced at that time. The bibliography is thirty-three pages long. Numerous footnotes help the reader interpret the material in the proper context. The quantity of information sometimes is overwhelming. Some footnotes occupy a disproportionate amount of space on the page (pp. 229–230, 232, 242, 271, 376). The book is rich in material but at places it seems that the author tried to convey too much information in the space he allotted for it.

About the Authors (continued from page 887)
Zofia Praśnik was a Polish housewife and diarist who died in 1941 while working as a slave laborer for the Soviets in Kazakhstan.
Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849) is a Polish Romantic poet.
Christopher Adam Zakrzewski is a Canadian author and translator. He has recently completed a new translation of Adam Mickiewicz’s Pan Tadeusz.
Aleksandra Ziółkowska-Boehm is a Polish author and journalist.
Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński (c. 1550-1581)

Sonnet II
On those words of Job: Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore etc.

In shame is man conceived, through pain is born,
And brief the time upon this earth he goes
In life inconstant, full of fears and woes.
He dies, a shadow by the sun forlorn.

And yet from such a man (O Endless God,
Within Thyself glorified and blissfully
Living through Thyself) almost wistfully
Dost Thou desire—from him!—both love and laud.

Wondrous the works of Thy charity are,
At which Cherubim (comprehension’s crest)
Wonder bemused and righteous burns afar
The flame, the Seraphim, in love’s sweet zest.

O most Holy Lord, would that we too had,
To give thee back, that which thou have hast bade!

Sonnet IV
On our war waged with Satan, the World, and the Body

Peace is happiness, but war is our plight
Under the heavens. He — prince of the night,
Severe captain— and the World’s vanity
Work for our corruption diligently.

Not enough is this, mighty Lord of all!
The Body, our home for fleeting pleasures,
Envies heedlessly the Spirit’s treasures
Constantly craving our eternal fall.

How shall I wage a battle so terrible,
Frail, yet headstrong, a soul in isolation?
King Universal, Peace most veritable,
In Thee alone is hope of my salvation!

Do Thou, Lord, place me safely next to Thee
I will battle and win decisively!

Translated by Steven Clancy

The Polish originals can be found in Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński, *Rytmy albo wiersze polskie*, edited by Jadwiga Sokołowska (Warsaw: PIW, 1957).

Orientalism and Occidentalism
Where do the Central Europeans stand?

After the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978),
the title word began to designate an attitude of Western elites toward the nonwestern countries and peoples, the attitude replete with condescension and ignorance. Adding insult to injury, the Westerners tended to apply their own categories of thinking (judging them universal) to a set of problems and phenomena that could be articulated only by partaking of the categories of thinking characteristic of the East.

But the tables have been reversed. On January 17, 2002, in the *New York Review of Books*, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit published an essay on “Occidentalism” charging that third world elites have demonized the West and what it stands for: urban civilization, commerce, mixed populations, artistic freedom, sexual license, scientific pursuits, leisure, personal safety, wealth and its usual concomitant, power.

What is the Central European stance in this grand debate? It might seem obvious that the non-Germanic Central Europeans would side up with Buruma and Margalit against Said. Central Europe thinks of itself as Western. But things are not so simple. First, Poland and the rest of non-Germanic Central Europe have been colonized by the great powers of the region. Colonization left deep marks on the Polish psyche and it crippled the Polish economy. The colonizers came from East and West; most recently, they came from the East (the half-century of Soviet occupation). In some ways, they acted toward Poles like the British colonizers did toward the Asian nations. To add insult to injury, they were perceived by Poles as inferior (no such perception was evident in Asia or Africa with regard to the British). What is worse, they monopolized discourse about Poland on the world arena. They made the world believe that the Central European nations had to be represented by others, rather than allowed to speak for themselves. Just as the Western image of India or Malaysia was influenced by the “orientalizing” writings of British historians, novelists and explorers (Joseph Conrad!), so has the image of Poland and Poles been drawn in the West by Russian and German historians such as Nicholas Riasanovsky and Heinrich von Treischke, by such novelists as Fyodor Dostoevsky, and by politicians.

Thus Poles in particular have good reasons to sympathize with Edward Said and his charge that certain
nations have been forced into the straightjacket of categories and images generated by those who wielded raw military power over them.

Does that mean that Poles have to take Said’s side against Occidentalism? Not at all. Poles in particular have prided themselves on being a Western nation (although located on the margins of Western geographical space), and thus public opinion in Poland and among Polish Americans is firmly pro-Western.

But many Poles do not subscribe to the interpretation of Occidentalism espoused by the American intellectual establishment. The Polish notion of the West is grounded in the idea of Christian Europe, and not in the idea of secular Enlightenment, the social contract and the rest. Alongside such historians as Christopher Dawson and such writers as G.K. Chesterton, Poles see the roots of democracy in the Christian precept of equality of all before God. Paradoxically, this vision of Western culture as originating in (but not limited to) Christian Europe is shared even by those in Poland who are not Christian, let alone Catholic — e.g., Leszek Kolakowski.

Buruma and Margalit see the roots of Westernism in the Enlightenment. The rights of man and the reliance on reason which the Enlightenment proclaimed supposedly sprang from nowhere; they just appeared in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland and Germany like a deus ex machina. For most Central Europeans, this notion is unacceptable.

There are other statements in the NYRB article with which most Central Europeans (including the greatly secularized Czechs) would disagree. Buruma and Margalit blame the “German-inspired ethnic nationalism” in Europe and Asia for a great deal of trouble the world experienced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They seem to believe that Herder and other Germans invented the notion of national unity in the West and in the East. Yet, as Anthony Smith has shown, national identity goes back to the European Middle Ages. It did not arise solely because of the rise of literacy and a refusal to allow “others” to be members of a nation (pace Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson). While nationalism of the strong and aggressive nations (such as Germans and Russians) has proven deadly in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, the smaller nations of Europe practiced defensive nationalism meant to preserve their identity and heritage rather than to de-nationalize others.

Furthermore, it is not true that the cult of heroes (originating in medieval chivalry and in the cult of the saints) is an invention of fascists and Talibs, and that one should proclaim the happy mediocrity of capitalism, or Americanism (of which Alexis de Tocqueville spoke) as preferable to any worship at all. The cult of heroes is deeply rooted in any society that has a sense of the sacred. In fact, the medieval heroes, from King Arthur and Roland to Krakus and Zawisza in Poland, have often provided a yardstick with which to measure achievement.

There are in Central Europe pockets of resistance to any version of Occidentalism. There is in certain circles an exaggerated worship of the Polish village (wsi spokojna, wsi wesoła, . . . niech na całym świecie wojna . . . etc.). There are good reasons to consider nature and agrarian life to be a source of renewal and a reminder of where we come from, but that does not mean that primitivism is a virtue. This kind of anti-urban mentality has to be rejected. But one should not pour the baby out with the bath water. Shallow Occidentalism is as bad as unexamined primitivism.

To see where Americans of Central European background stand in this grand debate, it is necessary to delve deeply into their past and present and to hear their voices unmediated by those who presume to speak for them. These Americans have to speak through their own organizations and publications. They can perhaps provide a more satisfying definition of Occidentalism than one issuing from the flawed philosophical system called Enlightenment rationalism (Thomistic rationalism, which Poles have traditionally espoused, is a better choice). They can also provide an insight into Western arrogance (Said wrote about it a great deal) without condemning Western values (as third world intellectuals sometimes do). In doing so, these Americans (and their Central European cousins) prove themselves truly Western, for it is in the nature of the West continuously to supply a critique of itself, so that improvements can be made. This is also what Buruma and Margolis assert, and in this matter we agree with their provocative essay.

Mr. Cogito in East Central Europe

Robert A. Davies

The trouble with you Mr. Cogito
you don’t smile.

Display your teeth
sell yourself
or the next guy will take
your Nobel right
from under your nose.
In the new order
if you want to write
why just write.

Don’t expect
to be given readings
don’t expect
publishers (of poetry?
don’t make me laugh!)
to ask for a book.
Soon nobody
will read poetry
like the U.S.A.
It’s dog eat dog.
Play it safe
write what the new
bosses want
study your navel
keep pleasant
not political.

All the Mornings of the World
Marta Fox

Do all the mornings of the world pass irreversibly?
Do you really believe that Miró?

Then explain please why there is still inside me
that morning when you painted mysterious
signs
creating a woman and a bird and the moon and
I
felt every movement of your brush on my arm
as if you rubbed me against the canvas
changing
me into a woman setting my eyes
in the starry night created by you

Miró explain why a different morning
didn’t pass inside me when with a help of
a thread you drew you led me from the
labyrinth
of hate and I became free
existing in freedom like the sun and the rain

Miró time passes irreversibly
only when it does not sculpt touch ring hurt
It covers with dust and ugly scars

Only trivial happenings that do not deserve
any better

*Translated by Anna Gąsienica-Byrcyn*
Marta Fox, “Wszystkie poranki świata.” *Nie jestem która wszystko zniesie* (Katowice: Forum Sztuk, 1999), 5. Translated by permission.

Letters
Correction
In the BOOKS section of the January 2002 issue of *Sarmatian Review* (vol. XX:1), a reviewer incorrectly identified Barry Keane’s translation of *The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys* by Jan Kochanowski as “the first English translation of Kochanowski’s remarkable play.” Keane’s translation was preceded by Ruth Merrill’s translation in *Poems by Jan Kochanowski* (edited by G.R. Noyes, 1928), and by my own translation in *Polish Renaissance Literature: An Anthology* (1995).

*Michael Mikoś, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*
We apologize for not having caught this mistake. *Ed.*

Compliments department
In your review of Geraldine Glodek’s *Nine Bells at the Breaker* (*SR*, vol. XXII:1), you bring out what we were directly aware of in working with the novel, Glodek’s skill and attentiveness in the telling of her characters’ story, but also, beyond that, aspects of the real world revealed and illuminated by the author’s vision. Thanks for making a place for the book and for Sally Boss’s deep reading of it.

*Brian Treadway, Editor-Publisher, The Barn Peg Press* (barnpeg@barnpegpress.com)
I enclose my subscription dues and a donation, together with a sincere expression of admiration for the entire editorial board.

*Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, Mooroolbark, Victoria, Australia*
Professor A.S. Ehrenkreutz was editor of *Studium Papers*, an American quarterly on Polish affairs published in the 1970s and ‘80s. *Ed.*

Announcements and Notes
*Polish Cultural Institute in New York*
Headed by Paweł Potoroczyn, former Consul of the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles, the recently founded Institute organizes and sponsors Poland-related cultural events in the New York Area and elsewhere. On 13 March 2002, the Institute sponsored “An Evening in Celebration
of “Contemporary Polish Poetry.” Readings included poems by Zbigniew Herbert, Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska, and Adam Zagajewski. The Institute maintains a Web page: <www.PolishCulture-NYC.org/>

Subscriptions again
As you might have noticed, we returned to the routine of enclosing subscription notices and envelopes in the mailed issues. Our volunteer labor force made this change imperative. We hope that you will notice the blank folded over the title page and will respond to the subscription renewal requests promptly. Those readers who send in their subscription dues without reminders are GREATLY appreciated. Journals stand or fall on the subscription figures, and SR is both inexpensive and—we shall boast a little—unique among ethnic academic publications in the United States. Thank you for your time and the bit of money you have spent on giving the Central European ethnics a voice.

Internet Page on Polish Culture
Titled simply “Culture.pl,” this excellent initiative of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute contains current information about cultural happenings in Poland (publications, music, film, plays), essays on Polish culture, and much more. It is available in Polish, English, and French: <http://www.culture.pl/>.

Internet Page on DPs in Germany after WW2
<http://www.dp-camp-wildflecken.de/index-english.htm> presents Wildflecken—Displaced Persons Camp 1945–1951. The webpage designer, Heinz Leitsch, has done a fine job. Germans have made great strides in acknowledging Nazi crimes in Poland, an attitude that allows Poles to achieve closure with regard to German occupation of Poland in WW2.

Corrections
The January 2002 issue of SR was incorrectly identified as “vol. XXI” on the title page. It should have read “vol. XXII.” Also, the Krazynski lecture and the back page had “2001” instead of “2002.”
In “About the Authors,” Professor Anna Cienciala’s Select English language works on the history of Eastern Europe (available on the Web) was incorrectly identified as published by the University of Kansas Press.

Condolences
We express sincere condolences to the parents of Dr. Margaret Checinski Mallory, Stanley and Jadwiga Checinski of Phoenix, AZ, on their daughter’s untimely demise. Both Dr. Mallory and Mrs. Checinski have been longtime Sarmatian Review subscribers and friends.

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Lives Remembered

Death by a Thousand Cuts
A Polish Woman’s Diary of Deportation, Forced Labor and Death in Kazakhstan: April 13, 1940–May 26, 1941
Part Two

Zofia Ludwika Małachowska Ptańik
Translated by Leszek M. Karpinski, edited by John D. L. McIntosh, assisted by Bogdan Czykowski and Kenneth Baulk

Day, April 28, Sarsai Center
I adjusted my watch to the local time, four hours earlier than central European time. In the morning I walked to the canteen to buy a bowl of soup: black dumplings floating in water. Now the Szkudlapskis prepared black coffee and I drank half a cup with a slice of black bread. I have been on a diet for five days; no wonder I have lost so much weight.

First Farm: 7 p.m.
The Szkudlapskis, the Ciesielskis and I arrived here after a 6-hour trip on two oxcarts. The Ciesielski women got the smaller room with a cauldron for cooking and a floor; the Szkudlapskis and I got a larger one without a floor but with a cauldron. Windows cannot be opened. The ride was “romantic:” after 2 miles the Kazakh driver unhitched the oxen to let them drink water and he decided to take a snooze. After one hour I bravely woke him up and persuaded him to bring back the oxen, which by now had walked quite a distance away. With the help of Tadzio the Kazakh barely managed to get them back, when suddenly the smarter one ran away into the steppe and did not want to return. Fortunately, a two wheel horse-drawn cart with two people arrived, unharnessed the horse and caught up with the fugitive. In our convoy there was only one driver for both carts. The driver stopped at the Second Farm and lost count of time. The boys started ahead on their own. He caught up with them and told Tadzio to follow him up as a second driver. I drove with the Kazakh. Suddenly the oxen saw a puddle of water, turned rapidly and stopped. My suitcase fell into the mud.

Tuesday, April 30, 1940: First Farm
Two days have gone by. Yesterday we were joined by three women and a girl - two of the Orłowski women—the wife and mother of an arrested driver and Mrs. Holowiczowa, the wife of a policeman.
Today, early in the morning, the chairman of the sovkhoz came to see us. Józef will go “to sow bread” [plant grain, a Russian expression]. We shall see how much he earns. The chairman promised us a stove for cooking and bunks for sleeping. At present we sleep on the floor covered with hay which we took from a nearby haystack. We all sleep side by side on the floor. The kind-hearted Mrs. Szukulapska allows me to use her feather comforter, so I’m warm and sleep well, free of bad dreams about the country and family. Last night, all of a sudden, I dreamed about the two aspen trees by the statue of the Virgin Mary that was smashed before Easter. I dreamed that the trees were chopped down. Even a dream will not tell me how my only son or my sister Winia or Marysia or Hania are doing. I cannot give them my address. Who knows how much farther we shall be taken.

Poverty here is wretched, nothing is available except milk and eggs. We still have the two-day supply of bread given to us on the train. On Monday, to our delight, we treated ourselves to pierogies with curds [potato-filled dumplings]. I kneaded and rolled the dough with a bottle, and together with Mrs. Wittmanowa, stuffed them with potatoes. Józef kept the fire going under the stove and Janka was boiling twelve dumplings at a time. Next day we cooked beans with noodles made of the leftover pierogi dough. The worst of all is that we constantly get infested with lice as we live in such filth and misery. We gather small twigs, splinters of wood, and dry grass for fuel and Józef does the cooking in a small pot propped on two bricks on the stove. Mrs. Szukulapska tried to make some improvements and damaged the stove so we cannot cook now. Luckily, Mrs. Ciesielska pulled out her gas heater. She also offered a couple of handfuls of rye flour, Mrs. Szukulapska found some buckwheat and I provided eggs. From all these resources put together, we are making dinner for all of us. A rainy and cold day. We are not able to gather any fuel on the steppe. It is good, however, for sowing which they are trying to complete speedily; not taking time off for celebration of the May 1 holiday. Yesterday I walked to the granary where they were getting oats for sowing. The oats are of poor quality and full of dirt, but the wheat is clean, thick and good-looking.

On our farm there are two cowsheds with only heifers. At this time of the year most of the cattle are grazing in the steppe both day and night. The vegetation around is very poor, the soil is dry and cracked. It is covered with sparse grass which is not yet starting to turn green. There is a profusion of colorful flowers everywhere; they seem to grow in bunches and look like flower baskets.

For the last two evenings we have been saying the Holy Litany to the Virgin Mary for our speedy return to our country. It is only here, in the monotony of desert land and being the subject of exploitation that one fully learns to appreciate the beauty and good life back home.

If it were not for the strength drawn from a belief that we will be back home before the arrival of winter, we would sink into deep despair. News circulating among us is that America demands the return of deported people and threatens war, or something worse, and that Italy is at war with the Germans. All this talk gives us some hope.

Here a person who owns a cow is obligated to give to the government 50 rubles, nine pounds of butter and 150 pounds of meat for the right to use the pasture in the steppe. We cannot buy butter here, it costs 20 rubles per pound. A Kazakh boy brings us milk for 1.5 rubles a liter. It tastes sour and is thick, not like ours, but it is palatable. We get many visitors all day long: Kazakhs and Russians with whom we can barely communicate. They keep telling us that in the past they kept thousands of sheep. For the last six years the region has suffered from drought and that is the cause of this poverty.

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What joy! The Szukulapskis bartered Janka’s embroidered blouse for 8 pounds of pork back fat. It is thin and not fresh but they eat it raw. I do not touch it but give them an egg for a teaspoon of lard which I use in my soup.

Thursday, May 2, Ascension Day
Again a strong wind is blowing while the sun is shining. The boys are getting ready to go to the central depot of the collective farms to get some bread. Through some local farm people, we received a note from the Lewkowicz. They informed us that the organist’s family was left in the central depot: we feel very envious. It is probably easier to survive over there, being able to use the canteen, than here with only milk and eggs available. We look into our bleak future with growing anxiety. I dreamt today about a return to our home.

[Comment added later]:
Mrs. Hołowiczowa died in March 1941 after a few days’ illness. Helena Orłowska perished in a dust storm on February 2, 1941. Her body was not found until May.

Wednesday, May 1: First Farm
Today, early in the morning, the chairman of the sovkhoz came to see us. Józef will go “to sow bread” [plant grain, a Russian expression]. We shall see how much he earns. The chairman promised us a stove for cooking and bunks for sleeping. At present we sleep on the floor covered with hay which we took from a nearby haystack. We all sleep side by side on the floor. The kind-hearted Mrs. Szukulapska allows me to use her feather comforter, so I’m warm and sleep well, free of bad dreams about the country and family. Last night, all of a sudden, I dreamed about the two aspen trees by the statue of the Virgin Mary that was smashed before Easter. I dreamed that the trees were chopped down. Even a dream will not tell me how my only son or my sister Winia or Marysia or Hania are doing. I cannot give them my address. Who knows how much farther we shall be taken.

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Friday, May 3

This morning Józef went to work by truck. I’m curious what he sees and how much he earns. We have finished the last crumb of bread. The boys’ trip was in vain: there was no bread available in the central depot. In the canteen, soup was given only to [local] workers. The boys met the Lewkowicz: they work with cattle dung making kiziak [fuel made from dried manure]. The three of them are promised 200 rubles for a month’s work, and 200 grams of bread a day per person. Nisiek Baumohl took a job as a shepherd. We had a visit from a Russian of Polish descent; his name is Dubrowsky. He keeps crowing like a raven that we will all die here and never see our native land. As there are no jobs for us here, he advised us to apply for a transfer to a city where we could find work as seamstresses in a factory. Mrs. Wittmanowa and Mrs. Ciesielska dream about escaping to Turkey: it’s easy to talk! Little Krzyszia plays with the Kazakh children. The little companions in misery seem happy despite poverty, cold, and lice. Today we saw many trucks carrying loads of men guarded by soldiers. They are probably being taken to an iron mine in Rudnik, 12 miles away. Little Janka ask me to write the alphabet down on a sheet of paper. I also make a triangle; now we are trying to call up spirits. Staszek [her dead brother] tells us that Winia is well, while Mieczek and Marysia have not been deported. As to the date of return: it’s said to be May, but which year? Staszek said, “you will return.” One is horrified at the prospect of our surviving winter here. Even now we are freezing both indoors and outside.

Saturday, May 4

Yesterday they told us to get ready for work next morning. We will get 120 rubles monthly, meat, and 200 grams of bread. I decided to try to see what I can do. We got up at 7 a.m. Mrs. Szkudłapska mixed rye flour and curds and made patties. I ate them, as we have no more bread left. While waiting, we gathered some dry grass and dry dung for fuel. From branches of a steppe bush we made a broom—no more borrowing from others. . . .

Monday, May 6

It’s our second day of work gathering dung in and around the sheds and stones. Tadzio drives an oxcart carrying all this stuff away to the dump. Mrs. Szkudłapska takes pains to make something edible from this Siberian flour: the patties are awful. Now, she is trying to make bread, kneading flour with curded milk and soda. If only we could get a good stove and wood, we could bake better bread, not underdone and half-raw as it is now.

About the Authors
Jolanta W. Best teaches philosophy at the Houston Community College System.
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University of Virginia

Accommodation, Collaboration, Resistance in Poland, 1939–1947
A theory of choices and a case study

Marek Chodakiewicz received his doctorate in history from Columbia University in 2001. He specializes in recent Polish history and has published widely on the topic. His lecture will be based on his dissertation.

April 5, 2002 (Friday)
7:30 PM
309 Sewall Hall
Wine-and-cheese reception to follow

Meeting report
Consul Leonard M. Krazynski’s lecture, “Sealed Boxcars Moving East: Personal Remembrances of Soviet Russia’s deportations of Polish civilians to Siberia and Central Asia in 1939–1940” held by Rice University’s Central Europe Workshop on January 25, 2002, drew a record number of attendees: nearly 200. Apart from Consul Krazynski’s excellent public speaking skills, it must have been the topic that attracted attention. The largely-untold story of deportations of Poles and others to the Soviet Gulag continues to be an understudied segment of World War II history.

Polish American Historical Association (PAHA) seeks new members. Membership in associations such as PAHA is essential to keep the Polish American discourse going. To ask for membership forms, write to Dr. Karen Majewski, PAHA, St. Mary’s College, Orchard Lake, MI 48324.

Thank You Note
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