Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821–1883)
Poet and painter

Naiads (1838), by C. K. Norwid. Public domain.
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Sarmatian Review Data

New discoveries about German death camps in 1933–1945
Number of concentration camps set up by Germans under their Nazi government: 42,500, or six times more than the previous estimate of 7,000.
Breakdown of these into types: 980 concentration camps, 30,000 slave work camps (including extensions), 1,000 camps for war prisoners, 1,150 Jewish ghettos, and at least 500 bordellos staffed by imprisoned non-Jewish women from conquered countries. Berlin alone had 3,000 work camps and “houses for Jews” slated for deportation to death camps.
Source: Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC) research, as reported by Bernhard Schulz, “US-Forscher: 42.500 Lager in der Nazizeit,” Der Tagesspiegel, 3 March 2013.

Polish food exports
Value of exports of Polish food products in 2012: 17.5 billion euros, or 14.8 percent more than in 2011.
Breakdown of exports by area: 13.4 billion euros to EU, 2 billion euros to countries of the former USSR.

Current economic migration from Poland
Percentage of people with higher education that emigrated from Poland under the present government: 10.2 percent.

Crime and punishment in present-day Poland
Number of people killed by the military during workers’ protests in the Baltic ports of Poland in December 1970: 45.
Number of wounded: 1,165.
Number of those harassed and then fired from work: hard to estimate because harassment and job loss also touched the victims’ families.
Perpetrators facing the court of law in April 2013: communist dictator of Poland Wojciech Jaruzelski (not charged); former deputy prime minister Stanisław Kociołek who directly supervised the Baltic area; two military commanders Miroslaw W. and Bolesław F. on whose orders the soldiers began shooting (the remaining nine accused are either deceased or claiming poor health).
The highest possible punishment in Poland for these crimes: life imprisonment.
Warsaw district sentence pronounced in April 2013: Kociołek was freed of charges, while the remaining two received two years’ probation. They vowed to appeal.
Source: Rzeczpospolita, 19 April 2013, <rebelya.pl>, 19 April 2013 (both accessed 19 April 2013).

Polish minority in Lithuania
Percentage of Lithuanian population that is Polish by nationality: 200,000, or 6.6 percent according to the 2011 census.
Largest concentration of Poles: Vilnius/Wilno and surrounding areas where the percentage of Poles ranges between 26 and 78 percent.
Percentage of college graduates among Lithuanian Poles: 13.8 percent (as opposed to 21.2 percent among the general population).
Percentage of Lithuanian Poles who declare themselves Roman Catholics: 88.6 percent (as opposed to 82.9 percent among the general population).

Russian opinions about the origins of man
In an April 2013 national poll about the origin of man conducted by Obshchestvennoe Mnenie Foundation, 26 percent of Russians declared belief in biological evolution, 31 percent opined that God created man, 30 percent refused to answer, and 12 percent offered still another opinion, such as arrival from another planet.
Russian preferences about school textbooks with regard to Darwinism vs. creationism: 18 percent would like to see only Darwinian evolution taught, 14 percent wish to see only creationism taught, and 44 percent feel that both points of view should be taught.
Activities of Jews in Poland before the eighteenth-century partitions

Names of Polish Piast princes and kings who leased their mints to Jewish entrepreneurs: Mieczysław III (Mieszko III, 1173–1209), Kazimierz Sprawiedliwy (Casimir the Just, 1194), Bolesław Kędzierzawy (1201), Leszek Biały (Leszek the White, 1205), Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great, 1310–1370), Władysław Jagiełło (1348–1434).

Punishments imposed by Mieszko III for killing a Jew: as recorded in Wincenty Kadłubek’s Chronicle, the punishment was the same as for an act of sacrilege or insult against the King; the parents of youth harassing Jews were either fined or sentenced to work in salt mines.

Name of Jewish banker of famed wealth who served as banker to three Polish kings (Casimir the Great, Ludwik I the Great, 1326–1382, and Władysław Jagiełło): Lewko son of Jordan, who leased from the king the Kraków national mint and salt mines in Wieliczka and Bochnia, and was also tax collector for the city of Kraków. He lent money to various dignitaries, including Queen Jadwiga (canonized in 1997).

Results of competition between Jewish and Catholic merchants and burgers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: guild members won retail trade whereas Jews took over wholesale and international trade.

Profession that allowed Polish Jews to recoup losses caused by the Khmelnytsky rebellion and other wars between 1648–1680: production and selling of alcoholic beverages (beer, vodka, and mead).

Name of king who between 1649–1668 gave Polish Jews a virtual monopoly in producing and selling alcoholic beverages in the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Jan Casimir.

Names of the first Jews who made fortunes on alcohol production and retail trade in vodka and beer: Marek Nekel (also treasurer of the Jewish community in Poland), Jozue Moszkowicz (he received the permit to produce and sell alcohol in Ukraine), as well as some two dozen Jewish kahals.

Other means by which Polish authorities helped Jews recover after military turmoil: permission to engage in trade without paying taxes.

Names of Polish Jews who performed various services for the Crown and amassed considerable fortunes in the mid-seventeenth century: Salomon Włochowicz from Kraków, Salomon and Eliah Nekel (sons of Marek Nekel); Lazar Mojżeszowicz from Grodno (all during the reign of Jan Casimir); Lejb Zysmanowicz (secretary to King Michał Wiśniowiecki); Herman Salomonowicz, Benasz Abrahamowicz, Pesach Lewkowicz, Abraham Natanowicz Rebej, Joachim Pacanowski, Jakób Becalel who held the exclusive right to collect taxes and tariffs in Ukraine, Icko Zelmanowicz, Szmerl Zelmanowicz Szerszewski (collectors of taxes in Lithuania)—all of these were given their privileges by King Jan III Sobieski; Fiszew Lewkowicz (King Augustus II gave him the exclusive right to produce and sell liquor in the Polish part of the Commonwealth).


Choices of Polish high school graduates concerning foreign languages

Number of students who in 2013 declared readiness to take the appropriate exams for obtaining a “Certificate of Maturity” (matura): 365,000.

Of these, number of those who selected English as their language of choice: 330,000, or almost 90 percent.

Percentage of students who selected other languages: German, 5.1 percent; Russian, 3.9 percent; Spanish, French, and Italian, less than 1 percent each.


Polish alpinists: triumph and tragedy

Names of the four Polish alpinists who were the first to climb Karakorum Broad Peak (8051 m) on the border between China and Pakistan in winter: Maciej Berbeka, Adam Bielecki, Tomasz Kowalski and Artur Małeń.

Number of peaks over 8,000 conquered by other Polish alpinists: 10 out of 14.

Number of peaks in the area no one has conquered in winter: Nanga Parbat (8,126 m) and K2 (8,611 m).

Tragedy: two of these alpinists perished during the descent.

Source: Portal <wpolityce.pl>, 5 March 2013 (accessed on the same day).
Death as the UnRead Writing in the Poetry of Cyprian Kamil Norwid

Łukasz Niewczas

In this essay I treat the word death as a sort of writing: a sequence of signs, the meaning of which is not always obvious and therefore permits various interpretations. Understood in this way, death, through its ambiguity and “multi-interpretativeness,” opens the perspective for reading in the direction that is a priori always indefinite. However, regardless of various interpretations it can be assumed that understanding the writing of death requires three basic abilities. First, noticing the sign character in the fact of dying, due to which it is not treated as something that simply happens and exhausts itself in its hastiness. Second, regarding the immanent interpretation of death, correctly decoding its deep sense. This is a result achievable only through the third ability: placing the writing of death in the appropriate context, explicating its meaning to the fullest and in the most versatile way.

The opinion presented above may seem inspired by such methodologies as semiotics and post-structuralism that emphasize the textual character of reality and the inevitable entanglement of its phenomena in sign relationships. However, such an approach is, primarily, very Norwidian and also very Romantic.

In the dialogic poem “On History” Norwid shows the tragic consequences of misinterpreting the martyrdom of the first Christians.

Why is it Norwidian? In Norwid’s poetry one can find metaphorical connections between death and writing. This connection does not merely appear in accidental poems or in an accidental scene; it is prominent in Norwid’s most significant poem, Quidam. Its nameless protagonist, the son of Alexander of Epyr, dies from an axe blow in the market square as the result of an incidental quarrel. His death does not evoke any strong emotions among the staring spectators. In contrast, the Gardener, who is a Christian, first blesses the soul of the butchered man and then addresses the crowd as follows:

I bless
Your soul, and as for you, what the death
Of this youth means, you’ll learn someday—
You who are blind Cains,
Demolishing brotherhood, setting up on the world
Figures of your own derangement
With deeds, each of which uncovers you—
And as theatrical scenes teach,
As if searching for keys to hidden truths.
God, when a knife was upraised
Over an offering of a young man,
Put forward a sheep, caught in thorns,
Not wishing that He be praised with human blood;

But you, missing the bull with your axe,
Cool yourselves in human blood—insane people!
With this, I say, when you begin to read the pattern
Of writing, which reddens in the air,
You will fall to your faces.1

Błogosławię
Duszy twej – a wy! co znaczy skonanie
Młodzieńca tego, kiedyś się dowiecie –
Którzy jesteście ślepi Kainanie,
Rozbijający braterstwo na świecie,
Obrazy stawiać własnego zbłąkania
Czynami, z których każdy odsłania –
I jako scena w teatrum naucza,
Do prawd zakrytych by szukano klucza –
Bóg, gdy ofiarę nożem czynić miano
Na niewinnego młodzieńca wznesdayom,
Nasunął owcę w ciernie uwikłaną,
Krwią ludzką, nie chcąc, aby był chwalonym;

Ale wy – byka minąwszy toporem,
W człowieczej krwi się chłodzie – szaleni!
Tym, mówię, czytać gdy poczniecie wzorem
Pisanie, co się w powietrzu czerwieni,
Padniecie na twarz –2

The above lines show the specificity of Norwid’s poetic imagination. It can be called semiotic because the artist is especially sensitive to the sign character of reality, incessantly searching for the traces of transcendence in the earthly here and now. Such a perspective was not uncommon in Norwid’s time. It can be regarded as a typical trait of romantic
epistemology, prone to perceiving the world, history, and man as a book. However, among the Polish Romantics this tendency is probably the strongest in Norwid. In all his works the author of Vade-mecum “czytał żywotów i skońań księgi” (was reading the book of lives and deaths) and criticizing the inability of his contemporaries to do this kind of reading both in history and in the present. This inability to “read” death is the subject of analysis in the remainder of this paper.

Norwid subtly comments on this matter in the poem titled “Death” (Śmierć) in which he also presents his own Christian understanding of death connected with his conviction that man is “older” than death—he is able to overcome and outlive it. The poet presents this view in the context of the pre-Christian attitude to death typical of ancient philosophers: the inclination to avoid eschatological reflection, to flee from memento mori. Such an escape resulted from “tough faith” that death “touches people, not situations,” thus being the ultimate end to human existence. This inappropriate—according to Norwid—interpretation of death, preferred in ancient times, results in an immature attitude toward the end of time:

Once you hear a woodworm drilling a bough
Intone a song or hit the kettle-drums;
Don’t think that somewhere there are full-grown forms;
Don’t think of death now. . .

Pre-Christian and blissful it is a way
To make one’s own easy recreations
Tough is the faith that death touches people
Not situations—

But still wherever his touch has fallen
Substance—not essence in it—he rents
Nothing but moment he has stolen
Man as his elder stands!

Skoro usłyszysz, jak czerw gałąź wierci,
Piosenkę zanuci lub zadzwoni w tymbały;  
Nie myśl, że formy gdzieś podojrzewały; 
Nie myśl – o śmierci. . . 

Przed-chrześcijański to i blogi sposób
Tworzenia sobie lekkich rekreacji, 
Lecz ciężkiej wiary, że śmierć: tyka osób, 
Nie sytuacji—

A jednak ona, gdziekolwiek dotknęła, 
Tłó—nie istotę, co na tle—rozdarłszy, 
Prócz chwili, w której wzięła—nic nie wzięła:  
—Człek—od niej starszy!

In one of his best-known poems “What have you done to Athens, Socrates” (Coś ty Atenom zrobił, Sokratesie), the poet uses the motif of the misunderstood and misinterpreted “transcript of death” in the context of tragic relations between eminent individuals and their times. In the burials of Socrates, Dante, Columbus, Camoes, and Kościuszko that hid the shameful truth about the actual circumstances of these great men’s deaths (dying in oblivion, rejection, or as a result of unjust punishment), Norwid saw not an accident but historical regularity. Society is unable to recognize and accept truly eminent persons during their lives; they are often recognized properly only after they die:

What have you done to Athens, Socrates,  
That people gave you a golden statue,  
Poisoning you first?  
. . . 

Each one, like you, the world cannot
Admit right away to a peaceful plot
Nor, old as it is, has it ever,
For clay unto clay seeps unceasing,
While opposing bodies are nailed together
Later . . . or sooner. . .

Coś ty Atenom zrobił, Sokratesie,  
Ze ci ze złota statuę lud niesie, 
Otruwszy pierwej? . . .

. . .

Każdego z takich jak Ty świat nie może  
Od razu przyjąć na spokojne łóże,  
I nie przyjmował nigdy, jak wiek wiekiem,  
Bo glina w glinę wtapia się bez przerwy,  
Gdy sprzeczne ciała zbija się aż ćwiekem  
Później . . . lub pierwej. . .

These poems to which I have just referred are examples of Norwid’s usage of the motif of the “un-read writing of death.” I restrict myself to presenting the problem of death of a martyr, seen, first of all (but not only) from the perspective of Norwid’s nineteenth-century Poland.

One of the most important subjects of conversation presented in the poem “On History” (O historii) is the martyrology of the
Polish nation which is, for the predominant group of interlocutors, the reason for idealizing national history and equating the Poles with the first Christians: “among whom one after the other fell dead every day./ And no one asked what is to be left after them” (U których co dzień padał trup po trupie./ I nie pytano, co po nich zostanie). The juxtaposition of the repressive measures of the invaders after the Polish risings with Christians prosecuted in Rome allows the creation of the vision of “radiant history” that justifies every suffering and apparently relieves it from the need for deeper reflection on the purposefulness of the sacrifices. Such a view is most visible in the words of one of the protagonists:

out of our [Polish\textsuperscript{13}] crosses
Another history seems to be composed
Perhaps less politically correct, but radiant!

z naszych krzyży
Zda się układać historia odmienna,
Mniej literacka może, lecz promienna!\textsuperscript{14}

This conviction predominates among the interlocutors. Only Jerzy, a figure that could be Norwid’s \textit{porte-parole}, opposes it. He responds to the words about history written with crosses in the following way:

\textit{Indeed—Jerzy replied to it—}
The illiterate do write with the signs of crosses.\textsuperscript{15}

– No, przecież – Jerzy na to – już ci piszą
Znakami krzyża pisma nie znający.\textsuperscript{16}

The proper sense of Jerzy’s response is difficult to understand in all of its dimensions. The reference to the well known fact that those who cannot write put down crosses instead of their names cannot be viewed as Jerzy agreeing with the previous speaker. He seems to say, “I agree, the simpletons who cannot write sign documents with crosses instead of their names.” In such an observation one can see a certain symbolic regularity, making the idea of the Polish crucifix less likely and ordinary history more probable.

However, the undertones of the phrase “write with the signs of crosses” point to a more complicated meaning. This phrase is a graphic procedure typical of Norwid, and it suggests a deeper significance of the expression. Jerzy’s answer is marked with irony that results from juxtaposing the national crosses, the symbols of suffering (Passion) with the crosses used as a mechanical way of notation. His words should thus be understood as a polemic retort. Moreover, the whole first part of the poem is filled with divagations about the condition of historiography, especially in its national variant.

In Norwid’s view, in modern Poland citizens have to seek fulfillment through life rather than through thoughtless suffering and death.

In this context Jerzy’s statement ironically reveals the way of thinking about history that makes the national crosses the indicators of subsequent epochs and the criteria of taxonomizing the history of Poland. According to Jerzy, this way of thinking is characteristic of those who “do not know the writing,” which should be understood in its metaphorical meaning, referring to the writing of history. Lack of awareness of the deep sense of history is shown by a vast majority of participants in the conversation, which results in elevating the idea of the history of the crosses. What Jerzy says about writing with the signs of crosses can therefore be understood as a tragic diagnosis of the Polish nation and a model of its historical existence. In such an interpretation, the nation itself becomes that illiterate who, not knowing the writing of history, records the story of his life with crosses. What is more, misunderstanding its mission, it adjusts the martyrological interpretation to historical facts and then this interpretation further becomes a specific instruction, determining the direction and purpose of national perseverance. However, it is a destructive instruction, because it has been written by an illiterate, “not knowing the writing.”

Thus in the dialogic poem “On History” Norwid shows the tragic consequences of misinterpreting the martyrdom of the first Christians. Interpreted within the framework of the modern history of Poland, such misinterpretation can lead the nation to destruction. What is criticized is the lack of understanding of the deep sense of martyrdom
and imitation of only its external form, as expressed in the calls for blood sacrifice (a characteristic element of the Polish Romantic thought in its predominant stream). However—and this is especially important for Jerzy—the typical Christian readiness to sacrifice one's own life was, paradoxically, combined with “blood meaness,” or the attitude in which no sacrifice is needless or ill-considered.

Norwid's polemics with an erroneous vision of martyrdom was also a polemic with Andrzej Towiański's destructive calls to martyrdom.

In expressing his opinions on the situation of the Polish nation in “On History,” Norwid pays a great deal of attention to differences in the historical conditions of martyrdom. Referring to the examples of martyrs for the faith in the first century A.D., he seems to state that a different historical context requires a different formula of action and a different formula of martyrdom. The first Christians gave testimony to truth and faith through their physical martyrdom, but in modern times what is required is action. One has to fulfill oneself first of all through life, rather than through thoughtless suffering and death. In the political conditions of the mid-nineteenth century, death frequently turns out to be, in Norwid’s words, “martyrdom without faith” deprived of deep justification.

Thus the inability to decipher the writing of death involves the inability to comprehend its meaning and/or the invoking of death in the wrong context. Such a double mistake is addressed in the poem “To A. T.” (Do A.T.), of which Andrzej Towiański is the poetic addressee and in which the figure of Socrates is referred to. The Greek philosopher was very important to Norwid as one of the great individuals able to confirm the truth they preached with their lives and also with their deaths. This segment of Socrates’s biography—the conscious choice of imprisonment and rejection of the possibility of avoiding unjust punishment—is used by Norwid in his discrete polemics with Towiański. The poem has as its subject the national bondage; however, an awareness of the consequences of Socrates’s choice (drinking hemlock) also introduces the way of death as the ultimate confirmation of one’s way of life.

The figure of Socrates could serve the supporters of Towiański as a heroic example, idealizing their ideology, explaining—through actualization—the contemporary situation of the Polish nation. In the perspective of the confessors of Towiański’s “God’s Cause,” the martyrdom of the oppressed nation was something justifiable and even purposeful. It was a kind of penance for sins committed and—as such—should be willingly accepted. Up to this point, the views of Towiański’s supporters coincide with the choice made by Socrates, but it is a superficial affinity, as Norwid reveals in the key fragment of the poem:

For what didn’t Socrates flee from his prison  
We—we should flee. . .  
The spirit and blood order us to do so.\(^{17}\)

Dla czego Sokrat nie uszedł z więzienia,  
My – ujść winiśmy. . .  
Duch, krew, każe to nam\(^{18}\).

For the same reason that Socrates chose prison and death, “we”—the Poles—should avoid imprisonment and death. Any imitation of Socrates’ attitude, if it is to be mature and profound, should not be based on merely copying its external manifestation. It must reach the essence of Socrates’ choice that expresses faithfulness to the truth he preached and is its incarnation. By deciding to die, Socrates made this truth immortal. This is the very reason why he did not flee from prison.

In the situation of nineteenth-century Poland the same goal, to give testimony to truth, required an entirely different strategy than one used by Socrates. It involved rejecting consent to slavery that corrupts and exterminates nations, and leads to their demise literally and metaphorically. In contrast to Socrates’ case, the choice of death would be an unnecessary and unjustifiable sacrifice. This is what the poem “On History” tells us so emphatically.

Norwid's polemics with an erroneous vision of martyrdom—one that lost its previous meaning because it involved a thoughtless imitation of martyrs’ deaths in the past—was accompanied by the poet’s search for a formula that could turn
out to be functional in nineteenth-century Poland. In the poem titled “To Walenty Pomian Z.” (Do Walentego Pomianu Z.), Norwid defined a correct (in his view) perspective of martyrdom, indicating that the ways to achieve it are dramatically different from what was then advocated by the likes of Towiński:

Martyrdom is a testimony to truth
No matter how it is marked: an axe? blood? an interrogation?
Or—taking insults serenely—

Męczeństwo prawdy jest świadectwem,
Bez względu, czy toporem? krwią? czy jakim śledztwem?
Znaczone – czy? obelgi pogodnym prze-życiem –

It seems that the last of the above-mentioned aspects of martyrdom that could be called “ordinary martyrdom,” is Norwid’s especially valuable new concept, an original idea in the context of romantic understanding. Presenting heroism as faithfulness to noble ideas in spite of adversity, Norwid connects it with common human experience and opens up the perspective of available martyrdom to each man or woman who is not in a position to perform heroic deeds or devote his life to an abstract cause. Thus Norwid makes heroism more mundane, yet without any detriment to its value.

In nineteenth-century Poland the same goal, to give testimony to truth, required an entirely different strategy than one used by Socrates. It involved rejecting consent to slavery that corrupts and exterminates nations, and leads to their demise literally and metaphorically. It involved living.

Among the many fictional and authentic protagonists of Norwid’s works who represent the poet’s view we can find Jan Gajewski, an émigré of noble birth and an engineer and employee of the Southern French Railway Company who, together with several workers, tragically died in Manchester in 1858 as the result of a steam kettle explosion during a factory test. Gajewski’s death was both tragic and prosaic. It can be surmised that many people died in similar circumstances in the rapidly modernizing Europe in the “age of steam and iron.” Such a perception of Gajewski’s death seems to have prevailed: like many others, it was merely a fatal accident deprived of any deeper sense. In such an interpretation Gajewski’s death is neither a sign nor “writing”—nor does it deserve to be read because it can be totally explained in the context of an ordinary course of events.

However, Norwid’s perspective is different. In the poem “On the Death of Jan Gajewski” (Na zgon ś. Jana Gajewskiego), the poet perceives in the circumstances of the engineer’s death a symbolic completion of what determined the value of his life, the situation when “life still takes advantage of death.” Gajewski dies working together with the simple workmen, just as he worked with them during his life, thus contributing to the progress of civilization. The circumstances of his death reveal the significance of Gajewski’s life. It is his participation in the strenuous process of developing all of humanity, as well as—and this emphasis is very strong in the poem—aiming at overcoming class divisions, advancing the attitude of social solidarity. That is why in Norwid’s poem the metaphorical “banner of brotherhood” flutters over Gajewski’s death, the banner of the cause of which he turned out to be the martyr. The acceptance of Norwid’s perspective allows for idealizing and sacralization of Gajewski’s death. When the protagonist’s death is juxtaposed with the martyrdom of John the Evangelist who, according to a medieval legend allegedly “died from a cauldron”—thrown into a tub of boiling oil. An echo of the Prometheus myth also appears here, since Gajewski’s sacrifice and solidarity with simple laborers pays for the “fire of progress” “stolen” by means of human thought.

All the poems discussed above touch on the problem of “reading,” or deciphering, the meaning of death. Norwid uses the motif of the unread writing of death (Quidam) first for polemical purposes. Reinterpreting the patterns of death fixed in history and placing them in appropriate contexts (in “Death,” “What have you done to Athens, Socrates,” “On History,” and “To A. T.”), Norwid opposes the fascination with death so characteristic of Polish Romanticism and related to the call to shed
blood for the fatherland. He criticizes thoughtlessness and prematurity of actions that often lead to tragic effects. On the other hand, in making an effort to read the unnoticed, silent, and forgotten deaths (“To Walenty Pomian Z.” and “On the Death of Jan Gajewski”), Norwid brings out their symbolic meanings and their hidden but significant and valuable subtexts. Both these ways of “reading” death, the polemic and the postulative, demonstrate the originality of Norwid’s reflection in the context of Romanticism and emphasize his uniqueness as a Polish poet-thinker.

(Endnotes on Page 1793)

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**Intermarium**

**The Land Between the Black and Baltic Seas**


**Karl A. Roider**

In 1962 Oscar Halecki published a book entitled *Limits and Divisions of European History*. In this work he divided Europe geographically into four zones: Western Europe, which comprised Britain, France, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal; West Central Europe, which consisted of Italy and Germany; East Central Europe, made up of Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, the Baltic States, and Slovakia; and Eastern Europe, which comprised the Ukraine and Belarus. Everything east of that was Asiatic barbarism. Chodakiewicz’s work is reminiscent of that book. For Chodakiewicz the Intermarium includes the Baltic States, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova. It is hard to pick out the primary theme of the book—there are many—but one of them is that the struggle for the soul of the Intermarium is between the Polish model, which represents tolerance, prosperity, parliamentary democracy, intellectual achievement, and freedom, and the Russian model, which represents totalitarianism, corruption, cronyism, atheism, and moral relativism.

Chodakiewicz declares early on that the audience his book seeks to capture is an American one, particularly Americans who can influence foreign policy. He wants Americans to be more aware of Polish history as part of Western civilization, and voices the old complaint that America did not do enough to assist Poland in resisting communism between 1945 and 1989. But the book demands that the reader know a good deal about Polish and Eastern European history. The author mentions a number of historical events, organizations, and movements without explaining what they were; he assumes that the reader will know. The

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**Carpe diem**

Jan Twardowski

Love while we can people are soon gone leaving empty shoes and unanswered phones only the trivial drags its bovine hooves what’s important happens so fast it catches us out the ensuing silence so normal it’s unbearable like innocence born of sheer confusion thinking of someone who’s left us Don’t be sure you’ve time, for unfounded certainty Robs us of our awareness just as all happiness Comes at once like pathos and humour Like two passions always weaker than one Fleeting as a thrush’s song in July Like a slightly harsh sound or a stiff bow In order to see aright eyes are closed Though being born is a greater risk than dying Yet we still love too little and always too late Don’t write of this too many times rather write it once and for all And you’ll be gentle yet strong like a dolphin Love while we can people are soon gone And those who don’t go don’t always return And speaking of love you never know Whether the first is the last or the last is the first

Translated by Patrick Corness
structure of the book is chronological in a general way, but it is hard at times for the reader to link cause and effect as the text proceeds.

Most of the book focuses on the post-1989 Intermarium. The two contenders for power are what he calls the postcommunists and the patriots. The postcommunists are the Russians or the Russophiles, who are in cahoots with Western deconstructionists, feminists, environmentalists, gay rights advocates, nihilists, and postmodernists who are entrenched in American and Western European universities. These folks are all conspiring to do—something, although Chodakiewicz is not clear what that might be. In fact, there are conspiracies everywhere in this book, but the author offers no names, no institutions, no objectives, and no strategies. Whoever these apparent evildoers are, they are undermining the Intermarium’s return (and he stresses a return following the example of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before 1772) to the ideals of parliamentary democracy, rule of law, respect for private property, widespread religious faith, freedom, and individualism. But who exactly is preventing this from happening is unclear; all Chodakiewicz is certain of is that the conspiracy runs deep.

Chodakiewicz’s most important message comes in Chapter 19, titled “Lifting the Velvet Curtain.” There he calls for an alliance between the United States and the old Eastern European countries—Poland, the Baltic States, the Balkans, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary—to contain Russia. Chodakiewicz declares the Western European countries and therefore NATO too anti-American and too infected with political correctness to be of much use. Proposing such an alliance in some ways reminds one of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s distinction between the New Europe and Old Europe following the 9/11 attacks, and in other ways the old French cordon sanitaire against Germany from the interwar years.

Chodakiewicz is at his least polemical in chapters 17 and 18 when he analyzes recent politics in the different Intermarium states. In these chapters he shies away from his postcommunist and patriot labels and discusses current politics in a rational and informative way—who is in, who is out, who is waiting in the wings, and why. The one thing all of the Intermarium states have in common, no matter what side of the political fence they are sitting on, is corruption. Heritage, tradition, conspiracies, and religiosity all take back seats to corruption.

Chodakiewicz’s call for more American attention focused on the Intermarium states and their neighbors will likely fall on deaf ears. It would seem that American foreign policy is now shifting from a focus on the Middle East to one on East Asia, which means that other parts of the world will be garnering little attention. The author complains that Russia uses its energy and economic policies to extend its influence, but for America those matter little compared to the oil-producing Middle East and the manufacturing power of China. Besides, the only foreign policy issue that generates passion among the current national politicians is the security of Israel, and that passion usually consists of accusing one another of being insufficiently supportive of it. Add to that the virulent divide between Republicans and Democrats on virtually any domestic initiative, and no one of consequence in the United States will be paying attention to the geopolitical fortunes of the countries Chodakiewicz cares about. That is just the way it is at this time in history.

Politics, History and Collective Memory in East Central Europe


Pawel Styrna

First, briefly: this book, a collection of papers by eminent scholars, is recommended reading not only for historians of the region, but also for policy analysts and journalists reporting on it. It deals with the territory of the Intermarium (Polish Międzymorze, Ukrainian Mizhmorya, and
Lithuanian *Tarpjūris*, or the lands between the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas. This large swath of European heartland is all too often imagined in either postcolonial or narrowly ethno-nationalistic terms. What the late Pope John Paul II named as one of Europe’s “two lungs” is generally not conceptualized as a historic-cultural entity of its own.

On the one hand, Central and Eastern Europe are frequently viewed as subordinate borderlands of the more important and influential neighboring powers, i.e., as an eastern march of Germany or a western “near abroad” of Russia, or perhaps a combination of both. On the other hand, the region is disassembled into its ethnostatist constituent elements: Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Romanian, Slovak, Croat, Serb, and several others. True, the Intermarium has often been conquered by neighboring invaders, and ethnic particularisms have played a strong role in the region as well. Yet indigenous powers existed in the area for much of its history sometimes fighting among themselves, at other times forming alliances and unions or simply coexisting—and by no means as the “bastards of Versailles,” to invoke the Soviet foreign minister Viacheslav Molotov’s derogatory comment. During the span of four centuries the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian state under the Jagiellons united quite a few of the lands between the Baltic and the Black Seas. Around the year 1500 the Jagiellonian dynasty also reigned over Bohemia and Hungary, thereby projecting its power all the way to the Adriatic Sea and the Danube River.

This book, coedited and coauthored by Professors Krasnodębski, Garsztecki, and Ritter is a collection of papers that provides diverse insights into the modern-day successor states of the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian Commonwealth: Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Poland. Most authors are native to the region; some hail from universities in Germany and the United States. While this may lead to concerns about “insider bias,” the “insider” authors are quite familiar and at ease with “outsider” sources and perspectives. Several contributors seem to be convinced that these outsider perspectives have often distorted the history of the Intermarium, thus compelling the “natives” to offer a corrective.

The thread weaving its way through this collection is the deleterious impact of communism and postcommunism on the historical memory of the Intermarium peoples. In an ideological quest to mold a new man, the Bolsheviks proceeded to reinvent and Sovietize the cultures of the nations under their power. Their historical consciousness and collective memories were assaulted and partially altered. The so-called captive nations were decapitated through the extermination of their pre-Soviet elites who were the custodians of identity and memory. The common man was subjected to terror and indoctrination. Communist schools, media, and other propaganda outlets fed the captive nations a distorted version of their own history, refashioned to suit the needs of the Bolshevik captors. This picture emerges from several papers, most notably from Arvydas Anušauskas’s contribution. The final incorporation into the Soviet empire (either as constituent republics or satellites) of the captive peoples was presented to them as a natural fulfillment of their historical destiny. The communist terror apparatus plus media and education monopoly made opposition difficult and dangerous, as Marek Jan Chodakiewicz’s essay explains. Many feared even telling their own children that a family member had, for example, perished in the Ukrainian famine or fought in the anticommunist underground. While the communists ultimately failed at their goal of total Sovietization, they nevertheless managed to inflict serious damage on the communities they sought to destroy.

The situation following the implosion of the Soviet bloc brought mixed results as far as rebuilding fact-based historical memory was concerned. The postcommunists retained considerable influence and power in the former “people’s democracies,” and they have worked to salvage and reinforce as much of the Bolshevik institutions, procedures, and myths as possible. They sought legitimacy in a new political context by wrapping themselves in the mantle of patriotism and reinventing themselves as social democrats. In this they were assisted by former dissidents of leftist provenance who, as Zdzisław Krasnodębski points out in his essay
on Poland’s Solidarity movement, sought to demobilize society after the Round Table agreements of 1989.

Concurrently, the anticommunist forces continued to try to de-Sovietize their nations’ historical memory. This drive was often fueled by ethnonationalism that has caused much lamentation in the allegedly postnationalist West. The nationalist reaction has sometimes generated ugly results, such as the glorification of certain chauvinistic traditions in Ukraine or the Baltics. However, some writers argue that nationalism may also be a necessary step in helping the atomized victims of totalitarianism rebuild their societies. While Germans or Frenchmen freely cultivated their nationalism for generations, the national aspirations of the Intermarium peoples were suppressed for decades. This led to the projection of the ethnonationalist perspective onto the past and attempts to “nationalize” even the history of such multiethnic states as the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian Commonwealth. On the other hand, the Russophile forces in the postcommunist successor states are, as several authors point out, the purveyors of a Kremlin-oriented brand of “imperial” supranationalism (Mykola Riachuk’s and Genadz Saganovich’s essays). Riachuk in particular describes the struggle for the soul of the post-Soviet Ukrainian society and shows the mechanisms used by Ukraine’s post-Soviet elites to manipulate historical memory. At the same time, he portrays the chauvinistic OUN-UPA in a sympathetic way, as many are prone to do particularly in western Ukraine, in large part because of Soviet and post-Soviet negative propaganda against this formation. Nothing is said about the mass murder of tens of thousands of ethnic Polish civilians by the OUN-UPA volunteers during the Second World War. However, for Riachuk and indeed for many others in the region between the Black and Baltic Seas, the nationalist project, albeit in a democratic form, is the only feasible alternative to post-Sovietism. The latter means an acceptance of Russian hegemony—and Russia, as Andrzej Nowak’s essay points out, continues to display imperial ambitions. Of course, an overly narrow ethnonationalism, by obstructing geopolitical unity in the Intermarium, can also facilitate the Kremlin’s agenda to reintegrate the post-Soviet zone. Marek Jan Chodakiewicz proposes a kind of pan-national conception that would seek inspiration in the “universalistic message of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth since it is the principal historical phenomenon binding the newly independent post-Soviet nations to the West.” However, except for the Poles, the former participants in this Commonwealth show no interest in such a solution.

Ethnonationalism has an influential rival in academia and the media—postmodernism, whose influence is disruptive to the process of reconstruction of historical memory. The postmodernists negate the reality of nations, portraying them as “social constructs,” a disturbing echo of Marxist allegations that national identity is nothing more than “false consciousness.” The postmodernists tend to fish out ugly episodes in their national histories, especially the mistreatment of minorities by the majority ethnic group, to cast these histories in an unequivocally negative light. The purpose is, of course, to undermine nationalist “myths” and “hubris.” However, it can also be posited that postmodernism encourages national self-hatred, and therefore it is inimical to the attempt by the former captive nations to dig themselves out from the rubble of communism and postcommunism by restoring their collective historical memory. Politics, History and Collective Memory in East Central Europe also contains essays written in the spirit of postmodernism. For instance, Egle Rindzevičiūtė, whose contribution focuses on Vilnius/Wilno, argues that “it was both an elitist ethnic Lithuanian concept of sovereignty and a rhetoric[al] heritage from the Cold War that were conveyed by the major current projects in narrating the past in Lithuania.” This reflects the postmodernist view of nationalism as a tool for bolstering the power of the elites, and of anticomunism as a crude reflection of the right-wing’s lack of sophistication. I would also describe Stefan Garsztecki’s essay on memory as postmodernist. Altogether, the essays making up the book are enlightening and stimulating, in spite of the fact that some translations could have used more editing.

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Out of the Nest
Polish Women Immigrants in Canada in the XX century


Bożena Karwowska

In the introduction to her book the author states that “Out of the Nest tells the story of the twentieth-century Polish women who left their home country and moved to Canada, a country completely foreign to them, to start new lives as immigrants.” This authorial description provides a good point of departure for more detailed observations, beginning with the fact that Jarochowska-de-Kosko’s book allows the rare opportunity to engage in Polish-Canadian migration discourse. This, together with a limited availability of studies devoted to the situation of women as immigrants, especially in the period immediately following the Second World War, makes her study a pioneering work.

The emerging feminist field in exile and emigration studies is characterized by the fact that studies of women immigrants are almost exclusively conducted by researchers who themselves are female immigrants. They tend not only to stay within their gender but also within the experiences conditioned by ethnicity and social background, and by the same token they blur the boundaries between the researcher’s own experiences and those of her studies' subjects. The author of Out of the Nest belongs to that category of writer-researcher studying the lives of émigré women cohorts of which she herself is a part. She came to Canada from Poland in 1965 after completing her graduate studies, and continued her academic career as a professor at various Canadian universities.

Thus Jarochowska-de-Kosko looks at the experiences of Polish émigré women through the lens of the cultural values and beliefs that she herself professes. The title of her book reflects a firm belief in national identity and in the traditional understanding of gender roles. She further suggests that these Polish women who found themselves in Canada were forced to find their place in life outside their “nest,” that is, far from the sheltering familiarity that offered them a lifelong social identity.

Jarochowska-de-Kosko divides women immigrants into four distinctive waves based on the dates of their arrival in Canada: 1900–1940, 1940–1956, 1956–1979, and 1979–2000. She points out that only the first group came to this country voluntarily, i.e., for economic rather than political reasons. Nevertheless, in the author’s view all Polish newcomers, regardless of the differences between them, were united by their limited knowledge of Canada. This lack of knowledge is an important aspect of Jarochowska-de-Kosko’s narration and her ability to deal with it is the book’s most important asset. In studies devoted to Polish literature and culture Canada is seldom seen as a separate and unique entity; instead, it is overshadowed by its large and powerful neighbor to the south. In works on Polish émigré writers, e.g., Janusz Pasterski’s study of Bogdan Czaykowski’s poetry, reflection on the Canadian form of multiculturalism has been replaced by irrelevant and confusing references to American policies. Despite such common critical errors, Canadian immigrants have built a country and a nation whose multicultural framework is strikingly different from that built by their American neighbors, and these differences have had an impact on the lives of Polish Canadians.

Jarochowska-de-Kosko is aware of this, and she is justly proud of her own and other Polish women’s achievements in Canada, including their roles in Canada’s growth. She sees immigration as a two way process—a negotiation between the self and the new culture that is not static but constantly evolves due to various political and cultural pressures. In regard to Canada’s economic conditions, Jarochowska-de-Kosko does not fail to point out that Canada warmly welcomed only those Poles who could actively contribute to its economic growth. This was especially true in the 1960s when she herself became an immigrant. Her generation’s émigré wave was strongly rooted in Polish national identity and rather suspicious of hybrid
identities. Accordingly, Jarochowska-de-Kosko pays much attention to all forms of belonging and contribution to the Polish diaspora, dispersed throughout the vast Canadian provinces. She offers numerous insights regarding this diaspora’s geographical as well as generational and class-related differences. Dedicating her work to the lives of Polish female immigrants to Canada, she writes about women as different as “country women who settled in Western Canada, ‘white collars’ who filled the offices of central and eastern cities, and professional women who surprised Canada (and often themselves) with their accomplishments.”

*Out of the Nest*, originally published in Polish and titled *Poza gniazdem* (2006), has had limited circulation in Poland, partly because it was published in Canada. It did not reach English-speaking Canadian scholars either. Hopefully, this skillful translation by Zbigniew Izydorczyk, another Polish-Canadian from the University of Winnipeg, will remedy this. The book offers unique insights into the lives of female immigrants to Canada whose fate, I repeat, was frequently quite different from that of the Polish women who emigrated to the United States.

### Between the Brown and the Red

**Nationalism, Catholicism, and Communism in 20th-Century Poland: The Politics of Bolesław Piasecki**


**Ewa Thompson**

This book deals with the political career of Bolesław Piasecki (1915–1979), a minor politician and activist in Soviet-occupied Poland who gained notoriety as head of a quasi-Catholic organization, PAX. PAX enjoyed considerable privileges in a country where committed Catholics were marginalized or persecuted, and where Catholic publications were censored or otherwise prevented from freely reaching society. It could publish certain Catholic books when other publishers were forbidden to do so, and was permitted to open bookstores and devotional stores in cities where sales of Catholic devotional items were limited to churches. At the same time, rank-and-file Catholics were aware that PAX was kept on a medium-length leash by the political police and that it was frowned upon by the Church. No bishop has ever belonged to PAX, and the priests who joined were distrusted by their bishops. Writer Marek Nowakowski (b. 1937) stated in a February 2013 interview that the goal of PAX was the destruction of the Catholic Church in Poland.

The author begins with the peregrinations of a group of people in prewar Poland to which Piasecki belonged and whose marginal presence in Polish society manifested itself mostly in numerous regroupings involving changes of the name by which they called themselves. While Kunicki admits that both the Polish Catholic clergy and *Endecja* (right wingers) had “largely ignored” the groups of which Piasecki was part, he seems obsessed with presenting Piasecki as an incipient danger. He states that “as a leader of a small fascist group, Piasecki envisaged Poland as a prototalitarian state” (3). Yet Piasecki was alienated both from the left and from the right; indeed, he served time in the Bereza Kartuska camp for political offenders together with assorted radicals and Marxists. I submit that the terminology coined by the leftright-leaning American scholars does not fit Polish developments.

Piasecki survived the Second World War, but was arrested by the communists and, one assumes, chose collaboration over a painful death. This aspect of Piasecki’s choice (fear of a painful death) is ignored in Kunicki’s narrative. As a communist collaborator, Piasecki attempted to infiltrate the Catholic Church and its priests via PAX which he created in circumstances that have not been clearly documented. PAX was a tiny organization, and its only visible presence in society was the aforementioned bookstores. As Piasecki’s usefulness to the communists
diminished, he fell into obscurity and died a powerless man.

The book is more of an attempt to fit Polish history into the Procrustean bed of a neo-Marxist script than a biography. Having read it, I still do not know what kind of person Piasecki was, what could have motivated him in various stages of his life, or why his son was murdered and the perpetrators have never been caught. The final part of the text is a collection of random comments on unrelated topics, including “Polish nationalism” which the author suggests is dangerous and sinister. Unable to document a connection between Piasecki and a contemporary activist priest named Tadeusz Rydzyk (unlike PAX and its priests, Rydzyk is a priest in good standing in the Catholic Church) the author challenges the intelligence of the reader by simply stating that they are made of the same cloth (185).

The impression of “puffing up” what was in fact marginal is confirmed by the elevation of Piasecki’s prewar publications to the status of milestones in Polish political discourse. In fact, they were brochures of several dozen pages, published by hitherto unknown publishers and not discussed at all in the leading periodicals. They could be compared to publications of a Flat Earth Society. To wit: Piasecki’s *Duch czasów nowych a Ruch Młodych* (The spirit of new times and the Youth Movement) is called a “magnum opus, the foundation of his ideology (30). In fact, it is a sixty-four-page brochure put out by an unknown publisher named Wilkoszewski. The author calls it “repetitious and convoluted”; if such a short brochure was “repetitious” then it can hardly be credited with presenting a coherent ideology as the author alleges.

One perceives here an attempt to elevate a minor individual to the position of a leading voice, and then saddle Soviet-occupied Poland with an alleged inheritance of intolerance and xenophobia. The author tries to harness Catholicism to his ideological enterprise as well, suggesting that the culprit behind the deplorable Polish proclivity to fascism is the authoritarian structure of the Catholic Church that allows individuals such as Fr. Rydzyk and his radio and television to clamor for public attention (186f.).

Some of Kunicki’s allegations border on disinformation. For instance, he states that a friendly relationship existed between Pope John Paul II and Jerzy Turowicz’s *Tygodnik Powszechny*, a Polish Catholic weekly that gradually moved to the far left in its perception of the Catholic Church and in its advocacy of change in the Church. In fact, after the Round Table Agreement of 1989 (the agreement allowing former communists to retain positions in Polish public life), *Tygodnik Powszechny* distanced itself from Pope John Paul and even tried to avoid publishing the Pope’s letter of April 5, 1995 complaining of *TP’s* lack of loyalty to the Church. The letter was finally published on May 14, 1995, after the issue gained notoriety and public dissatisfaction forced the hand of *TP’s* editor. The Pope wrote: “Excuse my saying so, but the presence of this [anti-Catholic] influence could be felt in *Tygodnik Powszechny* as well. Alas, in those difficult moments the Catholic Church did not find in *TP* the kind of support and defense it could legitimately have expected to find. . . . I write about it with pain.” The relations between Wojtyła and *TP* were never mended, to the point that *TP* refused to send its representative to the papal anniversary celebration organized by the Kraków monthly *Arcana* shortly before the Pope died.

Similarly, the presentation of Jerzy Borejsza as a jovial fellow who fraternized with Catholic intellectuals in Stalinist times is misleading (83–85). Kunicki designates him as a “historian” (36), which is like calling Trotsky or Lenin “historians.” Borejsza wielded the power of life and death over the educated class, and his smiles were not unlike Stalin’s. The two brothers, Borejsza and Różanski, were appointed by the Soviets to dictate in cultural affairs (Borejsza) and to head the political police and prison system (Różanski). The American reader gets no inkling of these dreadful realities as he/she reads of Borejsza’s sociability.

Some statements in this book seem lifted from the books of communist ideologues who have tried to justify the Soviet military takeover of Poland in 1945. On page 54 the author claims that the London government-in-exile “had little connection” to the prewar government of Poland. If so, how did this government maintain
a huge underground network of resistance involving hundreds of thousands of people and eventually order the underground army to start a rising on 1 August 1944? The communists tried to belittle the role of the government-in-exile in order to legitimate breaking off their relations with it and imposing their own, Soviet-created government on Poland. Now Mr. Kunicki confirms their mendacious claim.

Even though they were not related to Piasecki, Kunicki also comments on the events of 1968 in Poland. Such participants in these events as Professor Barbara Fedyszak-Radziejowska (a student at the time) have pointed out that at that time student demonstrations started independently of struggles going on inside the communist party between two opposing groups, the Pulavians and the Moczarists. Student demonstrations were in solidarity with two students, Adam Michnik and Henryk Szlajfer, expelled from Warsaw University for ideological reasons. To link these spontaneous demonstrations with the struggles of two communist factions—both of them repulsive to Polish society and both of them deriving from Soviet power—is not supported by facts. The students despised them both. An attempt to present one faction of communists as “good” and the other one as “bad” smacks of Stalinist ways of describing the past when communist parties were purged of their “bad” factions and only the “good” communists remained.

The mispresentation of facts is so routine in this book that it would take several pages to mention them all. The author foregrounds KOR (Committee for the Defense of Workers numbering at various times from twelve to thirty-eight intellectuals), but hardly mentions ROPCIO (Movement for the Defense of Human Rights numbering at various times from eighteen to several hundred intellectuals and common people). ROPCIO’s publishing and political activities are passed over in silence. The conservative ROPCIO is virtually ignored while KOR is credited with much of the work that ROPCIO did.

This brings me to the problems with Kunicki’s footnotes. Sometimes Kunicki injects allegations into his text and supplies a footnote. Upon consulting the footnote, however, it turns out that it does not support the allegation. For instance, he states that Cardinal Hlond gave Piasecki 500 dollars to start his quasi-Catholic operations (86) and supplies a footnote to back this up; but upon consultation it turns out that the footnote, referring to a book published in 2008, says the opposite (208). Kunicki suggests that Piasecki romanced one of the bloodiest monsters of the Soviet-run secret police, one Julia Brestygier who specialized in the torture of males by squeezing their private parts into pulp: the footnote, however, states exactly the opposite (210). Quite a few opinions are footnoted as coming from the author’s interview with Andrzej Micewski, a PAX member who died in 2004.

A passage about an anonymous article in Piasecki’s paper Słowo powszechne illustrates the author’s ways of arriving at conclusions. According to him, the article “undoubtedly reflected Piasecki’s opinion about the March [1968] events” (153). This judgment is footnoted, but in the footnote we only find a mention of a communication between the author and one Jan Engeldard forty-five years after the March 1968 events took place (225). I searched for “Jan Engeldard” in the author’s index and in his bibliography but found nothing. I then went to Google: the sole reference to “Jan Engeldard” was Kunicki’s book. This way of arguing would not stand in court; it should not stand in scholarship either.

The bibliography includes a number of works by hardcore Stalinists such as the aforementioned Borejza and Adam Schaff, but not the more recent works by Waldemar Chrostowski, Wojciech Roszkowski, or Marek Jan Chodakiewicz. In his assessment of Poland Kunicki depends on works on Poland written by foreign rather than native historians. He assimilates them in the same way in which those locals who served British colonialism in India assimilated the assessments of India by Britishers. The book seems blissfully unaware of Polish realities while subscribing to theories that have remained alien to Polish history.

The author’s assessment (“protofascist”) of prewar Poland appears to be lifted from the assessment of neo-Marxist Western authors whom the author cites in his bibliography. This amounts to a classic neocolonial approach in which weaker nations and states are assigned a
place on the map of the political systems that they do not see themselves as occupying. Polish historians, except for communist ones, do not see prewar Poland as a protofascist state. Kunicki is unable to provide any credible proofs that Poland was in any way evolving in the direction of Nazi Germany, but foreign historians handily impose this label on Poland, thus contributing to the postcolonial pigeonholing of Poland in American scholarship in particular. Kunicki seems a willing participant in this process. Toward the end the author remarks that “Piasecki’s memoranda were the products of a profoundly ideological mind operating on the verge of obsession” (169). Unfortunately, the same could be said about Kunicki’s book.

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Here


James E. Reid

Wisława Szymborska, Poland’s fifth recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, passed away in February 2012. Szymborska’s poetry was popular in Poland, but she was perhaps not as well known abroad as some of her contemporaries such as Czesław Miłosz, Zbigniew Herbert, or Tadeusz Różewicz. Miłosz received the Nobel; many feel that Herbert should have. Różewicz’s Sobbing Superpower: Selected Poems (translated by Joanna Trzeciak), was nominated for the prestigious $65,000 International Griffin Poetry Prize in 2012. How Poland has the ability to produce so many poets of international stature is an engaging question for another essay.

Szymborska’s work is often characterized by the modesty we hear in the opening words of her 1996 Nobel speech: “I’m supposed to talk about poetry. I’ve said very little on the subject, next to nothing, in fact. And whenever I have said anything, I’ve always had the sneaking suspicion that I’m not very good at it.” This is not false modesty, but the true modesty of an honest and questioning poet facing the necessity of speaking about her poetry before an international audience. Her poetry has an open, graceful, and almost tactile surface that does not quite conceal the range and depths of her concerns. The publishers of the hardcover edition of this book offer an invitation to her inviting tactility. The cover of Here has the most welcoming texture of any dust jacket I have touched.

Miłosz introduced many of Szymborska’s poems to a wider audience in his 1996 anthology A Book of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry. There he criticized poetry that was excessively abstract, and spoke about the importance of the tangible world for the poet: “I am obviously interested in the visible world, again and again unveiling itself and offering itself to the eye.” That Szymborska shares this deep interest in the here and now is obvious in her previous books as well as in Here. Her translators, Clare Cavanagh and Stanisław Barańczak, have honored her voice by producing translations that read as clearly as if she had composed these poems in English.

Here (Tutaj) was published less than two years before Szymborska died of lung cancer. Her commitment to write with care and good humor about the everyday world and its concerns is again evident in this collection. What is new in Here is the extent of her references to death, a topic that Szymborska has treated occasionally in a matter of fact way in her earlier books:

Death? It comes in your sleep, exactly as it should.

“I’m Working on the World,” Calling Out to Yeti [1957]

In the collection of poems in Here, she comes at death with a range of approaches, as its approach draws near. She speaks humorously in tongues: “We wax eloquent in unknown tongues, / talking not with just anyone, but with the dead” (“Dreams”). Facing her own mortality and mystified by microorganisms, she finally leaves off trying to understand them with “But the time is short. I write” (“Microcosmos”). Then, after a number of attempts, she finally abandons trying
to picture clearly someone who has already passed away: “No, no, all wrong. / He should be alone” (“Portrait From Memory”). “In A Mail Coach” finds her transported to an early nineteenth-century mail coach, crossing Poland in the company of Juliusz Słowacki (1809–49), one of Poland’s great Romantic poets, where she enjoys bringing him the news that:

I’ve come from the Future, and I know how it turns out. 
Your poems are loved and admired
And you lie with kings in Wawel Castle.

Was Szymborska smiling as she brought these glad tidings to Słowacki? How many other poets would offer this kind of generosity toward an earlier poet who is now long gone? Is she accompanying him now across Poland and into whatever exile awaits?

In “Metaphysics” Szymborska concludes her meditation on the inconclusiveness of being and nonbeing with the tasty recollection that at least “today you had a side of fries.” And she knows with certainty how quickly the dead are forgotten. “The Day After—Without Us” provides a weather forecast in twenty lines, coolly free of any gloomy emotion about the departed who are so quickly forgotten, even in the poem’s conclusion: “those still living / should bring umbrellas.”

Near the end of Here Szymborska conducts an “Interview With Atropos,” the Greek goddess who, for thousands of years, has been cutting the thread of each human life to end it. This meeting is a challenging undertaking that many writers would shy away from but Szymborska approaches it with her usual fearless grace. Atropos, however, is more than a little prickly and defensive about the deadly work she has been deeply committed to for thousands of years. They part with Szymborska’s “Au revoir” (Do widzenia). How many poets would conclude an interview with death with such a breezy “until we meet again”?

“Greek Statue” describes in relentless detail the wear and tear of time on this ancient and now decaying representation of what was once a young and beautiful human body:

It first removed the nose, then the genitalia, next, one by one, the toes and fingers, over the years the arms, one after the other

This memento mori inventory awaits us all. However, Szymborska’s various approaches to death are not grim or ghastly, but are leavened with a gentle humor that lifts the weight from these harbingers of finality. An exception to this lightness is “Labyrinth,” the penultimate poem in Here. It does not resemble Zbigniew Herbert’s quiet recollection of his Minoan visit in the Labyrinth On The Sea. Her way through the labyrinth proceeds with the ragged and edgy unpredictability of an implacable labyrinth that leads her.

to the very intersection 
where your hopes, errors, failures, efforts, plans, and new hopes cross paths
so as to part.

Szymborska continued to write after she completed Here, and we can look forward to the posthumous publication of her final work, Dwukropek or Colon. In keeping with her commitment to reach into the past and make it present, the title of her next and probably last book, Dwukropek, is the last word of the last poem in Here. Her death came at home, peacefully in her sleep, surrounded by friends and relatives, “exactly as it should.”

The Wall & Beyond


Katia Mitova

“People have asked me, am I an American poet or a Polish poet writing in English? Maybe being a poet is supranational. It’s like being in a journey; in fact, my poetic ‘I’ often sits in a train,” states Joanna Kurowska in the fall 2011 issue of Apple Valley Review. There are, of course, different ways of traveling. Regular commuters tend to be oblivious of the
environment, usually absorbed by their own thoughts, the music in their headphones, or a book. Visitors from out of town look around, smile, and notice little things that normally wouldn’t attract their attention. Kurowska’s poetic ‘I’ seems to be traveling in both ways.

Some poems in The Wall & Beyond invite the reader to a particular place in Poland or to an internal space that has little to do with what is happening on the train. Other poems start with an observation—of an ant (27) or a sparrow (10)—and expand to include the larger world, philosophical abstractions, truth, and God. This variety of poetic perceptions makes the collection pulsate between the in and out, small and large, particular and abstract—it makes it alive. The mind of the poetic ‘I’ wanders freely and thoughtfully, even whimsically at times. The reader follows from the intoxicating smell of the lilies in Grandma’s room in Ożarowo, through the credo that begins with “I believe in the silence of the invisible God” (13), to the sudden disillusionment of hearing one’s own voice “singing in Polish” in an American shower and feeling like “an abysmal stomach / crying to be fed” (28).

What makes Kurowska’s poetic meditations interesting is not so much the “pulse” of this collection but interruptions of the pulse: “being surrounded by a rough wall” (1), “wall-like silence” (4), understanding that the wall “too / is full of despair” and “becoming a wall” (21), or foreseeing that “one day, the roughcast / of plaster and flesh will fall off // the wall will stay silent” (21), “or a sparrow // there will be only you” (41). Readers of Polish poetry may associate this stirring experience of a clash between physical and metaphysical with the poems of Czesław Miłosz and Zbigniew Herbert. The association with a fiction writer would be less likely unless one is aware of Kurowska’s scholarly interest in Joseph Conrad’s amalgam of material and spiritual.

Besides the poetic kinship with the legacy of Conrad, Miłosz, and Herbert, there is another reason to consider this book in a broader literary context. Conrad made a conscious choice to write in English from the outset of his literary career; Miłosz collaborated on the translations of his poems with several American poets; Herbert left it to his translators to capture and interpret the many dimensions of his poetry. Joanna Kurowska, who published two poetry collections in Polish Ściana (1997) and Obok (1999) a decade after she immigrated to the United States, translated her Polish verses into English as she was writing, more and more often, new poems in English. A comparison of Kurowska’s English poems collected in Inclusions (forthcoming from Cervena Barva Press) with her translated poems and their Polish originals may contribute to the understanding of bilingual writing as an aesthetic and cultural phenomenon. How is active bilingualism affecting the poet’s voice, considering that poetry is shaped by the unique linguistic features of its medium? It will be interesting to see how Kurowska’s bilingualism develops. English has already become her primary poetic language, and she has also published Polish translations of her new English poems. Thus far, a reading of The Wall & Beyond demonstrates that it is possible to reenact one’s own writing persona in a new language. The musical instrument has changed, but the score is the same. Compare the Polish and English last stanzas of “Joseph Conrad”:

Ból jest duchem ukrytym w muszelce istnienia
Postacią o boskich rysach, która otwiera drzwi
Wiodące do wnętrz dłoni i do wnętrz ziemi
Gdzie płyną po kamieniach zapomniane źródła. (29)

The spirit hiding in life’s seashell is pain.
He is the god-figure that opens the door
and takes you to the earth’s heart and the hand’s palm
where long forgotten sources flow over stones.
(Obok, p. 60)

Nie można zdradzić Ewangelii
Rozmowy z abp. Ignacym Tokarczukiem


John M. Grondelski

The Roman Catholic Church played a decisive role in Poland’s struggle against
communism. While Primate Stefan Wyszyński’s “non possumus” and Karol Wojtyla’s efforts—as a cardinal building the Nowa Huta church, as Pope on the international cold war stage—are well-known examples of the Church’s role in that struggle, other members of the Catholic hierarchy also played pivotal parts. A major figure in that struggle was Ignacy Tokarzuk, archbishop of Przemyśl (1966–1993), who died in December 2012. His church-building program and vigorous support of the Polish opposition elicited communist invigilation through most of his thirty-three-year episcopal service.

Krzysztofino’s book consists of interviews with the archbishop. The first two chapters focus on Tokarzuk’s birth, family, youth, and studies in the Kresy (Polish Borderlands) area including his ordination for the archdiocese of Lwów/Lviv and his early years as a priest, both in today’s Ukraine and after his communist-induced exile in postwar Poland (Katowice, Olsztyn, and Lublin). The bishopric of Przemyśl was his last appointment. The subsequent five chapters cover his service to Przemyśl, with particular focus on his illegal church-building program that resulted in 400+ new churches built in the Przemyśl diocese during his tenure; his pastoral work such as the Millennium of Christianity celebrations and relations with Greek Catholics/Orthodox; his relations with individuals in his diocese, including priests who collaborated with the regime; his activities outside the diocese, such as travels to Rome and his meetings in Paris with Kultura’s Jerzy Giedroyć, especially concerning Polish-Ukrainian relations; and his support for the Polish opposition, including the rights of rural dwellers, encounters with Lech Wałęsa, Jacek Kuroń, and Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko. The book concludes with two chapters on Tokarzuk’s meetings with Popieluszko and Pope Karol Wojtyla. It is profusely documented with extended notes and bibliographical citations that explain Tokarzuk’s references and allusions.

Because of Tokarzuk’s robust defense of Polish Catholics’ rights to religious freedom he was the object of particularly harsh communist repression, ranging from refusals to allow him to travel abroad (his first ad limina visit was impeded for almost a decade), through physical attacks by unidentified perpetrators, to the secret police’s elaborate planning in case of Tokarzuk’s anticipated appointment to succeed Wyszyński as Primate. Because Tokarzuk advocated a good offense as the best way to defend Polish Catholic rights, he also sometimes proved inconvenient to some ecclesiastical circles, especially during the conciliatory Ostpolitik of Paul VI’s later years. Tokarzuk discusses meetings in Rome with such key Vatican foreign policy figures as Luigi Poggi and Agostino Casaroli, who unsuccessfully pressured him to tone down his opposition to communism. Archbishop Tokarzuk’s hardline helped save Cardinal Wyszyński from a fate similar to Hungary’s Cardinal Mindszenty, who, as a result of an Ostpolitik deal with Budapest, was eventually sidelined in exile. In the interview Tokarzuk revealed that after Pope John Paul II’s succession and the abandonment of the Casaroli pro-Soviet policies, Poggi himself eventually asked Tokarzuk’s forgiveness for pressuring him.

Another interesting part of the book is the recurring theme of Polish-Ukrainian relations. Tokarzuk narrowly escaped death at the hands of the UPA [Ukrainian Liberation Army], and during his episcopate was sometimes criticized for taking over Greek Catholic churches in his diocese. In his defense, Tokarzuk argues that by taking over these churches, he actually saved these architectural treasures that would otherwise have been brought to ruin, as has been the case in Soviet Ukraine. He also addresses tensions over pastoral care of the Łemki people, who were largely located in his diocese and who claim separate identity (neither Polish nor Ukrainian). Finally, he notes that part of his diocese actually lay in Ukraine. This was a territory over which he was unable to exercise any pastoral jurisdiction, but because of his contacts with people there, “I knew that Russia faced the necessity of internal change, because otherwise there would have been an explosion within communism itself” (p. 68, my translation).

Scholars such as Sabina Bober in Persona non grata have recently devoted attention to Tokarzuk’s role in ousting the most notorious institutions of communism. This book provides additional insight into this important figure and
religion’s role in bringing down totalitarianism.

MORE BOOKS


Janine Wedel is a brilliant social scientist who has articulated a problem that is often sideswiped by the powerful information industry: the fact that “upending rules and authority” (ix) has become the norm in virtually all countries, and the goal is to increase one’s own status and influence. “The new breed of international players” has fashioned new rules of the game to benefit themselves (x). Today power and influence are held not by their ostensible holders but rather by “flexians” (xi), who are the real agenda-wielding players. It is this “network of [anonymous] interlocking players” (xii) that matters and not the ossified institutions, titles, and offices. Those who participate in the networks are called flexians and perform overlapping roles in large foundations, the government, and industry. They “reorganize relations between bureaucracy and business to their advantage” (7) and are “accountable only to their patrons” (9). They are people of diverse ideological persuasions, which they change depending on which way they feel the wind blows. Their goal is not always money; more often it is influence and promotion of their ideological views. Flexians are particularly numerous in Eastern European countries; the former communist apparatchiks transformed themselves into go-betweens and mediators in the new system. This shadow elite undermines democracy and capitalism.

Wedel posits that “neoliberal policies facilitate the blurring of state and private relationships, and thus make local environments friendlier to flex activity” (33). She then offers examples of flexians that range from ostensibly ordinary folk to government figures. The Rywin affair in Poland that involved Agora, Adam Michnik, and many other persons of power is described in detail. It should be stressed that many flexians are persons whose names are not household words, yet they behave as if they wielded some mysterious power—in the Polish case, they seemed to wield power over those who questioned them in the Polish Senate hearings.

Subsequent chapters show “flexing” in the U.S. government and argue that government today includes a “shadow government” consisting of “consulting firms, nonprofits, think tanks, and other nongovernmental entities” (76). Wedel states that at some point three-fourths of federal government employees were contractors (78). These figures make the perennial discussion about paring down the government mere campaign talk. In particular, the Department of National Security (called a “megabureaucracy” by Wedel) recorded “colossal increases in contract spending with Defense accounting for nearly three-quarters of the total federal procurement budget in 2008” (79). The general public has no idea about this shadow government that leaches out resources and in practice rules over the country. There are companies employing tens of thousands of workers who mainly work for the U.S. government. Supervision of these companies is scant, statistics are nonexistent, and the functioning of this system is shrouded in mystery.

Wedel also discusses Moscow and the privatization process in the former Soviet Union. Finally, we return to the United States to look at the “commandeers” of this new way of governing (147). Wedel submits that the “neocon core” (147) deserves that name more than anyone else. She mentions Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and Douglas Feith, three government officials who distinguished themselves by skirting bureaucracy, breaching regulations, and being skillful in bailing each other out of trouble (147).

Can one speak of accountability then? Not before another term is introduced, “truthiness.” It differs from truth in that truthiness means presenting events and ideas in the way we would like them to be, and not necessarily in a way congruent with facts. In literary studies this is called postmodernism. Truth has lost its
previous position in public discourse. What appears in the media and in the mouths of celebrities is “truthiness.” Celebrities play themselves on television, as do government officials. “The rise of the shadow elite warrants revising age-old thinking on corruption. . . “flexians and flex nets pursue the ends of their own ideological masters who often contradict the other masters they supposedly serve,” remarks Wedel (205). This book is well worth buying, especially for the reduced price available at Amazon.com. (SB)


A major work of interpretation that combines theoretical sophistication with genuine concern for factual detail as reflected in Polish literature starting with the Romantic poets and ending with contemporary novelists. In this book Polish literature is seen in a postcolonial mirror, as well it should given the forcible partition of the Polish state during the period of Romanticism and its status as a province of alien empires throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. The author is familiar with the most recent postcolonial studies, and many of his insights are highly original and seminal to the study of postcolonialism in the former Soviet empire. This habilitation book makes the author a leading authority on postcolonialism in Poland and one of the leading voices in postcolonial studies worldwide. A longer review to follow.


A collection of essays by American academics (with an introductory essay and an afterword penned by the editor), detailing the ways in which “politically incorrect” aspirants to academic positions are elbowed out of academia. What makes potential professors fail to obtain academic rank? What reduces them to perpetual adjuncts paid by the course like housemaids paid by the hour? The authors list two reasons. The first is a refusal to consent to use, praise, and teach the Marxist or neo-Marxist methodologies such as those practiced by the Frankfurt School or, in generations past, by the old-fashioned communist fellow travelers so well represented at American universities and colleges. The second is a refusal to engage in the study and teaching of narratives about several select minorities such as sexual minorities. Not all minorities have been certified for academic approval: try to establish an Institute for the Study of non-Germanic Central European Minorities and you will encounter empty coffers and the blank gaze of your administrative superiors. It takes courage and pluck to dare to speak about such issues in public since complaints about discrimination based on the above two reasons for academic rejection are frowned upon in American academia. We salute Dr. Mary Grabar for daring to come forth with this book. Gutta cavat lapidem. Hopefully, books like this one will eventually lead to a great academic awakening in America.


This is the first and so far only English-language study of the German Nazis’ dramatically different treatment of the Polish population, as opposed, say, to the French
population (a difference that can easily be seen if one simultaneously reads this book and Andrzej Bobkowski’s Szkić piórkien). The photographs are memorable. It is a plain account without editorializing or philosophizing, just a story of events as they unfolded in the various regions of Poland. The pictures of the gassed Polish Catholic children are unforgettable. It is both encouraging and discouraging to see the third edition of this classic: encouraging, because it means that there is demand for it and it continues to be read; discouraging, because not one American PhD dissertation has been written to further document and interpret what happened to Polish Christians under German occupation.


A PhD dissertation by an Indian scholar who chose as her topic the story of the Polish children transported from the Russian Gulag to India. It contains a detailed account of where those children were transferred, how generosity of the Indian Princely States and their rulers allowed the children to stay and thrive in India during the Second World War, and how some of them, e.g., Frank Herzog, wrote memoirs that commemorated these events. The late Bogdan Czaykowski, a Polish poet and former coeditor of Sarmatian Review, was among those children. A number of them made it to the United States or other free countries after 1945, when Poland was overrun by the Red Army and the Soviet occupation of Poland began. In the April 2013 issue of SR we published an abbreviated version of Dr. Bhattacharjee’s dissertation.


This volume begins with early poems (1947) and ends with those written in the twenty-first century. I liked the later poems better, but overall my distinct impression is that Różewicz is not in the same league as Herbert, Szymborska, or Miłosz. When he writes about the passing of time and growing old, I remember that Yeats did it better (“Among School Children”); when he reflects on himself as a poet I hear Milosz doing it better. Then there are poems like “Francis Bacon or Diego Velazquez in the dentist’s chair” that seem to be imitations of Zbigniew Herbert. The title poem, “Sobbing Superpower,” does not save the book—its sarcasm seems just a little bit out of place. There is a certain hollowness about the poems, a whiff of postmodernism perhaps, a consent to the proposition that even philosophy is not a consolation, contrary to what Boethius maintained. Perhaps this is the reason why Różewicz seems to be well liked by postmodernists. Like Herbert, he sees and describes the years of communism as years of emptiness, but while Herbert never lost faith in a world that makes transcendent sense, Różewicz seems to be postmodernly indifferent to any search for meaning. The only thing that is first-rate about this book is its translation: Joanna Trzeciak is enthusiastic and confident that she is doing the right thing. Indeed, the translations are flawless. An index, preferably bilingual, would have helped to locate the poems more efficiently. (SB)


A detailed bibliographical account of who, where, and when. The booklet is as impressive as it is useful, and to an inexperienced eye it may give the impression that Polish Studies on the American continent are thriving. Alas, the opposite is the case.

The novel begins in 2025, and it is the continuation of Clark’s excellent Wcichym lesie Vermontu (2010). The narrative centers around Halina Szadurska’s daughter who is, perhaps, also the daughter of the famed novelist Rubin (modeled on Philip Roth). As always in Clark, a detective story and an unexpected ending compete for attention.

I Remember Białystok
Pamiętam Białystok

Mark F. Tattenbaum

Huddled deep under the bed clothes
Skulony głęboko w pościeli
As deep as the blanket of snow
Outside my window

I remember Białystok
Pamiętam Białystok

My Grandfather’s Białystok
Mego dziadka Białystok

Now My Białystok
Teraz mój Białystok
And I remember the desolation of the Polish Winter
Polska zima
That followed so quickly
On the heels of that Golden Polish Autumn
Birch trees with golden leaves
brzozy w złote liście
Against the cobalt sky
Of my Grandfather’s village
Mojego dziadka wioski

Deep under this blanket of snow
Głęboko pod tą koldrą śniegu
I remember. . .
I remember
Akademicka Street
Pamiętam
Ulīcę Akademicką
Walking in the park
Amongst a cathedral of trees

Surrounding me
Ducks on Branicki Palace pond
Brides posing for photographers
That Glorious Golden Polish Autumn
Ta Glorious złota jesień polska
On Academia Street. . .

I remember
past Akademicka Street
up the walkway
where it joins the Rynek
There is a Bar
where the Polish Lunch Ladies work
Telling me to “Take Vegetables”
Snippets of the Cold War remain . . .

I remember
walking on Młyńska Street
Beyond the Hall of Justice
There!
There stands the remains
Of the Nazi justice
Severely dealt to
The Polish Jews
Locked in the Temple
Burnt to the ground
A dinosaur remains
The giant
Metal skeleton
Twisted and torn
Only the dome survives

Lying on the ground
It remains
2000 souls perished
There!

The old Orthodox Church
in the middle of the city
close to the shwarma stand
Surrounded by walls
old wooden gate
swings to admit me.

I wander about
the church door unlocked
I slip in
like one of Amahl’s night visitors

The immenseness of the church
swallows me
the fragrance of the incense 
transports 
me to G-d

Architecture and Angels
surround me
faces of Saints
stare back at me
They recognize me
they smile
But I do not
recognize
these Eastern Saints.

I pray
from fear or joy
I know not which
An eternity passes
I slowly remember myself
and pass through the
swinging wooden door.

Out again

to the streets of the profane world

Out to Bookstores
Searching for English texts in a Polish world

Out to Candy stores
Searching for chocolates in a Polish world

Out to the Delicatessen
on the Rynek

Where the Delicatessen Ladies
waited on the crazy American Professor
and hand sliced my Salmon and
wrapped my cucumbers and onions
all with a smile for Professor Pepsi!

Out of Bialystok!
Somewhere in northeastern Poland
Transported by Pawel.
Volkswagen gliding
black ribbon of highway
surrounded by fields of snow.

We travel deep into the forest
close to the Belarus border.
We park near Bocian’s nest.
Just for luck!

We set off into the forest.
My mind’s eye conjures images
German tanks and German soldiers.
The din of tanks and gunfire.
The silence of premature death.
Alone in this forest cacophony of carnage.
Alone in the past.

A low stonewall delimits the boundary of the graveyard.
Blowing snow . . .
eyes have difficulty
reading inscriptions.
Headstones incised with three languages.
What do the dead care to read?
Pawel’s quiet words gently shake me from this dream.
Marek, we should have some soup.
It is bitter in this forest.
I am worried you are cold.

We emerge from the forest.
We meet with a Professor of Tatar Studies
Enjoy a simple Tatar soup.

We return to Bocian
Wracamy do Bocian
Head to Bialystok
Picking up a hitchhiker
On this cold cold day
In northeastern Poland.

The sun descends
the sky is dark. . .
stars ascend into the heavenly canopy
I cannot shake the horrors of the past.

We return to Bialystok
Wracamy do Białegostoku
I remember
pamiętam
the warm city lights
Ciepłe światła miasta
that warmed my cold soul.
które ogrzewają moją zimną duszę.

I remember
pamiętam
so many places
Tak wiele miejsc
so many smiling faces
Tyle uśmiechniętych twarzy

I remember
pamiętam
so many students
tak wielu uczniów
so many smiling faces
Tyle uśmiechniętych twarzy

I came searching for my Grandfather
Przyszedłem szukać mojego dziadka
I came searching for my past
Przyszedłem szukać mojej przeszłości
I found my future in you
Znalazłem moją przyszłość w Tobie

What a wonderful discovery!
Co za wspaniałe odkrycie!

I sit in my library
Siedzę w mojej bibliotece
this cold winter day
W ten zimny zimowy dzień
sun low on the horizon
Niskie słońce na horyzoncie

I remember
pamiętam
Because of you
Dzięki Tobie
I remember Białystok!
Pamiętam Białystok!
Not my Grandfather’s Białystok. . .
Nie Białystok dziadka. . .
But. . .
My Białystok!
Ale. . .
Mój Białystok!

(Continued from Page 1776)

NOTES

5 Unless stated otherwise, fragments of Norwid’s poems are given in Agnieszka Mizera’s translation.
7 The translations by Brajerska-Mazur were done especially for this article.
10 Norwid, vol. 1, 236.
11 To date the problem of martyrdom in Norwid has been studied most extensively by Beata Wołoszyn in Norwid ocala. Heroizm, śmierć i zmartwychwstanie w twórczości postromantyka (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2008) and Jacek Salij, “Problem męczeństwa u Norwida,” in Norwid a chrześcijaństwo, eds. Józef Fert and Piotr Chlebowski, 31–51 (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2002).
13 My annotation – LN.
14 Norwid, vol. 1, 164.
15 Translated by A. Brajerska-Mazur.
16 Norwid, vol. 1, 164.
17 Translated by A. Brajerska-Mazur.
18 I use Stefan Sawicki’s redaction of Norwid’s poem “Dla czego Sokrat nie uszed łęż cięcia na ją ziemię” in the chapter titled “Czy Norwid sławi mistrza Andrzeja? O wierszu ‘Do A.T.’,” in Wartość – sacram – Norwid 2. Studia i szkice aksjologiczno-literackie (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2006, 231); it is significantly different from the one presented in Pisma wszystkie edited by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (Cyprian Norwid, vol. 3, 519). In the subsequent part of my essay I also use Sawicki’s interpretative findings.
19 Norwid, vol. 2, 156.
Announcements and Notes

Norwid Conference
The Institute for the Study of Cultures at the Catholic University of Lublin will hold a Cyprian Kamil Norwid Conference on 5–7 November 2013. Those wishing to read a paper or to otherwise participate should contact Dr. Ryszard Zajaczkowski at rzajac@kul.pl or <www.kul.pl/zajaczkowski>.

Thank you Note
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