

the Miłosz family walked into, in which “just relax” was the mantra of the day, as well as the emotional *sturm und drang* of his time in France (which included frequent thoughts of suicide). There are also fascinating passages describing the situation of his wife, “abandoned” in Washington at the end of her second high-risk pregnancy, begging Czesław not to bring his family any closer to the Communist bloc.

Which brings us to another juicy part: Miłosz’s romantic relationships. Every reader may have a different opinion of his treatment of women, from his cynical early flings to his first love, Jadwiga Waszkiewicz, whom he left (probably after she became pregnant), and then to his first wife (Janina Dłuska), with whom he was not always happy, and finally to his second wife, Carol Thigpen, so different in age and in background (yet the marriage was happy). They are treated admirably, with a sensitive effort neither to reflexively defend nor castigate Miłosz by assuming that these interesting and intelligent women were hapless victims of his egotistical genius. This task involves biographer and translator alike, since individual words may skew readers’ interpretations of such delicate matters. We receive a portrait so carefully nuanced that it deserves attentive reading and re-reading. Nowhere do we feel that our hand has been forced: each reader will come to his or her own conclusions about this exceptionally multi-faceted poet and thinker. This book will interest anyone curious about Miłosz or, indeed, the bloody century to whose history he gave voice.

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“Sailing towards Poland” with Joseph Conrad. By Jean M. Szczypien. American University Studies: Series XIX General Literature, vol. 42. New York: Peter Lang, 2017. 270 pp. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$94.95, hard bound.

Joseph Conrad’s Polish Soul: Realms of Memory and Self. G.W. Stephen Brodsky. Ed. George Z. Gasyna. Conrad: Eastern and Western Perspectives, vol. 25. Lublin, Poland: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2016. 409 pp. Bibliography. Index. \$60.00, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.154

Though they reach their conclusions in very different fashions, both Jean Szczypien, in “Sailing towards Poland” with Joseph Conrad, and G.W. Stephen Brodsky in *Joseph Conrad’s Polish Soul: Realms of Memory and Self*, agree on a fundamental principle: it is difficult to correctly assess or even understand Conrad’s work without a firm grasp of its Polish contexts. “Conrad’s Polonism is in the very warp and woof of his narratives,” Brodsky writes, before going on note as “deplorable” the Anglo-American critical “neglect of Conrad’s [Schlachta] class culture” (20, 22). Szczypien adopts a similar critical perspective, but pursues an intertextual treasure hunt based upon the notion that Conrad “had secreted part of himself, part of his Polish cultural heritage in [his] pages” (42).

Brodsky begins reviewing Conrad’s critical biography. Though he does not write a conventional narrative of Conrad’s life, it is a fitting way to start, since his approach is informed and shaped by Pierre de Nora’s concept of *Les Lieux de mémoire*, geographic or cultural loci where we “buttress our identities” and archive individual and collective consciousness (303). The result is a series of examinations of, and incursions into Conrad’s life and work in the light of his Polish identity. Brodsky begins from the assertion that one cannot really understand Conrad except by understanding his Polonism, especially his perception of honor in his role as *Schlachcic*. He notes the important role such luminaries as Zdzisław Najder have played towards setting

the Polish context for Conrad studies, though he rejects the narratives of guilty exile that others like Gustav Morf have so persuasively advanced. Instead, he suggests that a cultural context that “should have been a challenge to Conrad scholars” has been largely ignored (61).

His roving examination redresses that missing component in a series of chapters dealing with aspects of Conrad’s life, the partitioning of Poland, family pre-history, Conrad’s exile, the cultural role of the duel, the *Schlachcic* honor code, and his time in Marseille, along with chapters that focus more on elements of his canon, his Malay fiction, his treatment of *Under Western Eyes*, the short story, “Prince Roman,” and, in a chapter informed by Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of *car-nival*, Conrad’s use of irony.

While Brodsky dismisses the instinct to seek for “‘Polishness’ in every phrase,” suggesting, in fact, that Conrad’s Polishness is sometimes misunderstood and complicated by his borderland status as “an exile from birth,” he is sometimes guilty of the same (82). The Polish connections are teasing, but sometimes tenuous. The fictional Malay location, Sambir (actually Tanjong Redeb, or variants), is revealed as a Ukrainian site, and noted as “mandate enough alone to look for his Polish past in an imagined Eastern present” (256). Brodsky’s point is well-taken, and the account of orientalism in Conrad’s Malay fiction is fascinating, though the link with Conrad’s Polish past, like the perceived echoes of the heroic Vistula rivermen in the treatment of the Malay natives, sometimes strains the reader’s credulity.

While Brodsky focuses primarily on historic *lieux de mémoire*, Jean Szczypian examines textual monuments of Polish identity like Adam Mickiewicz’s *Konrad Wallenrod*, an approach informed by the critical models of Julia Kristeva and Michael Riffaterre. Kristeva’s foundation claim that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations . . . and poetic language is read as at least double” (Szczypian 33–34), is followed by Riffaterre’s contention: “The intertext is hidden like the psychological unconscious and, . . . hidden in such a way that we cannot help finding it” (Szczypian 134).

Szczypian’s study begins with *Almayer’s Folly* and a careful study of the holograph manuscript, as well as an assessment of Conrad’s emendations and markings. There, on the verso of chapter 4, page 3, she discusses an ornate embellished K, and “Konrad” printed twice. This she links with Conrad’s chosen pen name, and suggests that the association with *Konrad Wallenrod* constitutes a tacit declaration of Conrad’s writing life in resistance to Russia’s autocratic authority as a loyal Pole, and very much the son of his father.

Her approach is often characterized by subtle and telling close observations, hinging at one point on the language choice of the verb “buried” in his phrase from a letter: “I have buried a part of myself in the pages” (Szczypian 41). She notes: “In Polish there are two words for bury, *chować*, which also means to hide, and *grzebać*, whose etymology is ‘to hide a dead person in the ground’ and suggests that Conrad’s choice of the first word suggests that he is ‘secret[ing] part of himself, part of his Polish cultural heritage in these pages.’” (42–43).

Szczypian diligently searches for those hidden secrets in such works as *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, *Under Western Eyes*, and Conrad’s memoir *A Personal Record*. While some of Szczypian’s Polish nuggets seem less convincing than others (the Polish moustachio of Charles Gould, in *Nostromo*, for example), some of her best and most assured work comes in the late discussion of Conrad’s intimate memoir *A Personal Record*, and its relationship to his uncle and guardian Tadeusz Brobrowski’s own posthumous memoirs.

The richest detail comes where Szczypian offers close intertextual analysis, such as her examination of the play *Nie-Boska komedia* (*The Undivine Comedy*) by Zygmunt

Krasiński (written after the failed Polish November Uprising of 1831 against Russia) as an antecedent to *The Secret Agent*. While much has been written of the novel's relationship to anarchist and social revolutionaries of late Victorian and Edwardian England, the debt Szczypian outlines of the novel's connection to Romantic Polish revolutionary literature is thought-provoking and fresh.

Early in her study, Szczypian notes Conrad's admonition to his friend and biographer, Richard Curle: "Explicitness . . . is fatal to the glamour of all artistic work, robbing it of all suggestiveness, destroying all illusion" (27). In some ways, the admonition might be directed at both Brodsky and Szczypian, who seek in these books to shine their light into the penumbra of Conrad's obscured cultural and artistic identity. Though neither ultimately offers a definitive argument to support their claims that one only truly understands Joseph Conrad in the context and revelation of his Polish identity, each makes the case that critical approaches to his fiction and life are enhanced and enriched by such examination, and each is rewarding in its own right for those interested in Joseph Conrad, or in the question of Polish culture and identity.

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Doprinosi nepoznate elite: Mogućnosti sasvim drugačije budućnosti. By Svetlana Tomić. Belgrade: Alfa BK Univerzitet, Fakultet za strane jezike, 2016. 375 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Photographs. Paper.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.155

In her *Contributions of the Unknown Elite: Possibilities of a Totally Different Future*, Svetlana Tomić, assistant professor at Alfa BK University in Belgrade, focuses on Serbian women writers in the period of realism, especially those who have been partly neglected or misinterpreted, although some were prominent in their own time. Tomić's aim is to broaden the existing, still male-centric approaches to Serbian culture; enhance the relationship between past, present, and future; and use cultural capital (which is more open and heterogeneous than cultural canon) as a means of solving current problems.

In four chapters and an appendix (287–320), together with archival material, Tomić presents a number of women starting with Draga Gavrilović (born in 1854), their literary works (both fictional and nonfiction), translations, correspondence, and social activities, ranging from healthcare and education to women's organizations. She analyzes some memoirs and travel journals written by women and men, and lists translations done by women. She also presents children's books by Danica Telečki Bandić and the correspondence of Milica Jovanović with her editor in Sarajevo, showing how she understood that for him books were merchandise. She concludes with *Srpkinja* (1913), a lexicographical work on women.

Tomić is keen on showing a number of women intellectuals, active in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth centuries, whose achievements are relevant for Serbian literature and society. Many were teachers who helped build Serbian culture and advocated for better education and at least a moderate version of women's emancipation. They brought innovations such as tolerance for "Otherness" (Jelena Dimitrijević in her travel journals from the Ottoman Empire, India, USA); critique of the patriarchal system (Gavrilović, Dimitrijević); clear feminist ideas (Paulina Lebl Albala, Delfa Ivanić); or interesting memoirs (Queen Natalija Obrenović, Stanka Glišić). Some were authors of translations or even of historical works (London-born Elodie Lawton Mijatović).