хотел дать именно эту развязку. Конечно, в начале у Толстого было еще неосознанное стремление дать герою более важное место в романе, чем это было в его замыслах. С развитием романа Левин становится одним из самых важных и сложных персонажей *Анны Карениной*. В процессе написания, Толстой не только расширил рамки романа, но и вложил в своего героя психологические черты и жизненный опыт самого автора.

Довольно много написано о той связи, которая существует между автором и Левином, но, по-моему, самое главное состоит в том, что герой и автор на каком-то этапе не сходятся, а расходятся в своем миропонимании и мироощущении.

Исповедь в многом повторяет восьмую, последнюю часть романа *Анна Каренина*. Но здесь Толстой резко изменяет некоторые идеи Левина.

В одной из последних статеи Толстого, *О жизни* (одна из самых важных философских работ последнего периода), автор проповедует мысль о том, что человек должен жить настоящим. Чтобы достичь этой цели, человек должен в корне изменить самого себя. Толстой не смог бы прийти к этой мысли без помощи Левина, без романа *Анна Каренина*, без глубокого анализа того психологического состояния, в котором личность преобразует настоящее во имя будущего.

American Contributions to the Eighth International Congress of Slavists, 1978

A PARADISE LOST?: THE IMAGE OF *KRESY* IN CONTEMPORARY POLISH LITERATURE

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I

O Lithuania, my fatherland,
Thou art like health; what prise
   thou shouldst command
Only that man finds who lost thee
   quite.
Today I see, and limn, thy beauty
   bright
In all its splendor, for I yearn
   for thee.[1]

These opening lines of *Pan Tadeusz*, the most celebrated Polish Romantic poem familiar to every Polish child for almost a hundred and fifty years, contain more than just an expression of poetic nostalgia. They give an interesting clue to Mickiewicz's creative method of "I see and limn," *widzę i opisuję*, which proved to be one of his basic poetic devices. Seeing means here as much as evoking an image which only then can be described, and since "art is thinking in images," as Viktor Šklovskij maintained,[2] among others, Mickiewicz managed to give the simplest possible disclosure of his poetics in the very first quatrain of his poem. He did, as a formalist critic would say, "lay bare his devices" for all those authors who were to follow him into the land of their childhood, united by the same fate. To the reading public at large, of course, *Pan Tadeusz* means much more, for each generation finds in its lines a new meaningful expression of its sorrows, losses, and hopes. Originally intended as a tender evocation of the lost land of the poet's childhood, an attempt to embark *à la recherche du temps perdu*, it has grown in significance until it achieved its rank of a national poem. At the same time *Pan Tadeusz* has introduced one of the most persistent motifs in Polish literary history, a nostalgic and often sorrowful remembrance of the lands gradually taken away from Poland, lands lost to her eastern neighbor by each generation, after each of many lost wars, uprisings, and political changes in the last two centuries, and of the constant shrinking of the territories dominated by the once powerful *Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*, the Res Publica of two nations. Thus Mickiewicz's *ars poetica* merges poetic imagery with the national *ethos*, to a large extent built upon the knightly tradition born in *kresy* and still surprisingly strong in modern Polish literature written some thirty years after the final loss of the eastern provinces.[3]

In order to grasp the full meaning of the initial lines of *Pan Tadeusz* and consequently the whole problem of *kresy*—a meaning, after all, perhaps somewhat confusing to a foreign reader who would expect "Poland" rather than "Lithuania" in that all-Polish poem—it may be useful to recall the political structure of the *Rzeczpospolita* before the partitions split her into three parts. Until 1795 "the state consisted of two principal units: the Crown (*korona*) which comprised Polish and Ruthenian (Ukrainian) areas, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania encompassing Lithuanian and Belorussian lands."[4] Equally complicated was the social structure of the ruling class, the nobility (*szlachta*), as, according to Piotr Wandycz, "a quarter of all Polish speaking inhabitants of the commonwealth belonged to the *szlachta*. Most noblemen in Lithuania, the Ukraine, or Belorussia became 'Polish' in the sense of embracing a higher form of state nationality. They did not become denationalized, as witnessed by the expression *gente Rutheni natione Poloni* (of Ruthenian race and Polish nation). Being a good Lithuanian in no way interfered with being a Pole."[5] Thus Mickiewicz's "Lithuania, my fatherland" referred to his native land as well as to the territories of *kresy* in general, an integral part of the *Rzeczpospolita*.

Those territories, usually called *Kresy Wschodnie*, the eastern borderlands, actually might be referred to by an American term, "the frontier," or as "lands forming the furthest extent of a country's settled or inhabited region,"[6] or, to be even more precise, as Poland's cultural frontier. "The furthest extent of the settlement" in this sense means as much as the extent of a certain predominant cultural and political influence with disregard of the local population, the peasants in the case of Poland, the native Indians in that of America. The cultural tradition which has formed the patterns of Polish national consciousness and subsequently its literary images is generally known as *kultura szlachecka*, at the expense of local, mostly folkloristic cultural traditions which began to emerge

only at the end of the 19th century with the awakening of a national awareness among Lithuanians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians. Aleksander Brückner explained that process of cultural superiority of Poland and the widening chasm between the two cultures in the following terms: "It was that *kultura szlachecka* superiority which, together with the state, extended beyond Smolensk and Černigov but did not embrace the population (*lud*) who maintained the schism and deepened the denominational difference by adding to it the social and national factors against which Poland, due to her meager ethnic layer, could not hold her previous preponderance."[7]

It was precisely that cultural preponderance which found its reflection in Polish literature quite early and resulted in a number of works rendering the fascination with frontier life on the one hand, and some new, strong characters of frontiersmen on the other. Three young Romantic poets, Antoni Malczewski, Seweryn Goszczyński, and Józef Bohdan Zaleski of the so called "Ukrainian school" paved the way in the mid-1820s for the poetry of Juliusz Słowacki, whose many poems and dramas reflected that fascination in its own brilliant way. Malczewski in particular, thanks to his poem *Maria* (1825) "made a valid contribution to that cult of the Ukraine, because he not only made her a land of unusual beauty but populated it with some unusual characters, 'half-angles,' as his admirer Słowacki later said, with people stigmatized by suffering and doomed to misfortune," according to Julian Krzyżanowski.[8] Characteristically, Malczewski, "a typical representative of a generation thrown overboard by the current of history,"[9] wrote his *Maria* after he had left the Ukraine, and like Goszczyński and Zaleski, settled temporarily in Warsaw, gaining, as it were, a nostalgic perspective on his homeland. The poets of "the Ukrainian school" set forth the tone for their followers, the Romantic poets of the Great Emigration, Mickiewicz and Słowacki, both of whom dwelled upon the theme and the spirit of the frontier in many of their poetic works written abroad, in their exile away from home.

The very list of writers who continued that theme in the decades to follow reads like a syllabus of Polish literary history. Almost every major author, beginning with Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and Eliza Orzeszkowa, seemed to be preoccupied with the theme of *kresy* in one way or another until finally Henryk Sienkiewicz created its most illustrious image in his historical trilogy which, in fact, represents an apotheosis of that land and its people. Interestingly enough, the shrinking of Polish influence over the more distant extent of the frontierland has become evident in a more limited application of the term *kresy* even in its geographical sense. While the poets of "the Ukrainian school" still saw the Ukraine as a familiar, domestic territory where they were at home, Sienkiewicz's seventeenth-century heroes in his novels written in the 1880s came from more remote parts of the former commonwealth, embodying the image of places once dominated by *kultura szlachecka* but doomed to permanent loss in the following centuries. Kmicic, the protagonist of *Potop* (1886), who arrives in Wodokty in Lithuania in 1655, had lost his estates near Orša and thinks of himself and his merry companions as "us poor *exules* who had lost our fortunes, and have only as much as the war gives us as a booty."[10] And yet he proudly maintains his title *chorąży orszański* (a non-commissioned officer's rank) as a precious heritage from his native province. Similarly Wołodyjowski, who eventually will die defending the castle in Kamenec Podolski, claims that he was born far east in the Ukraine, descended "from the Ruthenian Wołodyjowskis, and until this time I still have a village there, temporarily occupied by the enemy,[11] although the prototype of this fictitious character, the historical Jerzy Wołodyjowski, was apparently born in Podolia, near Kamenec Podolski.[12] Clearly, Sienkiewicz wanted to extend the image of *szlachta kresowa* to the territories which had been dominated by Poland and her cultural influence, thus creating a new dimension of his country's past greatness and glory, and adding it to the ultimate goals of his historical novels "written in several years, and quite a bit of labor to comfort the hearts."[13]

Naturally enough the stereotype of an exuberant, often wild character of a *kresy* knight created by Sienkiewicz was to be used later on by his ideological opponents as a cliché in reverse. Modern authors, particularly those affiliated with the communist movement, use it as a weapon to expose the exploitation of the local population by the *szlachta*, and make it a caricature of the virtues accepted by the national *ethos*. A vicious landlord in Wanda Wasilewska's *Gwiazdy w jeziorze* (1950) reacts to the Ukrainian rebellion during the war in September 1939 literally "with fire and sword," and explains his behavior as follows:

> You know, lieutenant, I like it. I should have been born in a different age. Let's say, some three, four hundred years ago... To have a small outfit armed—and into the steppe! Against the Tartars, the Cossacks, riding in the broad steppe! Why, it's all ours, up to Kiev, up to the Black Sea! Oh, petty people we have today, lieutenant, petty times...[14]

The eighteen-century partitions of Poland, and the ultimate loss of the remote territories (with the Polish *szlachta* residing as far as Smolensk) did not mean a complete withdrawal of Poles from those regions where some of them, like the Tyszkiewiczs, for example, lived on their estates in Lohajsk "for fourteen generations, since 1517."[15] In spite of political and social changes in the nineteenth century, the *szlachta kresowa* continued to remain there and to supply Poland and consequently Polish literature with "exuberant, knightly characters for whom that land, located at the gate between the rivers Dvina and Dnepr, on the approaches to Smolensk, marked with the distinction of twenty eight major battlefields, was a breeding ground," as Melchior Wańkowicz, himself a representative of that breed, noted in his autobiographical essay.[16] Only after 1917, when the October Revolution cut those lands away from Poland and transformed them into a new land of the Soviets, the image of *kresy* achieved a new, nostalgic and tragic dimension. Wańkowicz, whose family history represents the best and perhaps the most typical traditions of *szlachta kresowa*, closed that long chapter in Polish history with a note of resignation and a sad acceptance of change:

> The land is there, the house is there, the orchard and the balcony, and the same owners are there.
> But there is no former life.
> It had to go.
> I understand it.
> But I feel sorry.[17]

The shock of the Revolution and the war of 1919-1920 between Poland and the Soviet Union found wide echoes in Polish literature although it did not result in any literary masterpieces. With the few exceptions of some powerful short stories by Eugeniusz Małaczewski or war novels such as *W polu* (1937) by Stanisław Rembek, it brought about a number of works documentary in character rather than artistically mature. Written mostly by former landowners whose accounts of the representatives of *szlachta kresowa* centered mostly on the bestiality of the Revolution, and faithfully narrated the sequence of events with little attention to artistic values. Even internationally acclaimed bestsellers of the 1920s such as *Pożoga* (1922) by Zofia Kossak-Szczucka can be read today as historical rather than literary accounts of the ordeal suffered by the Poles in the Ukraine, first engulfed in the peasants' revolutionary movements, and then under the Soviets, although some images of Red Army soldiers certainly provide a sobering footnote to the characters of proud fighters for human progress created by Isaak Babel' in his *Konarmija*.[18] In spite of certain artistic weaknesses of *Pożoga*, its truly dramatic contrast between a quiet, idyllic existence in prerevolutionary days and the total destruction of every established pattern of life after "the blaze" prompted a Polish critic Tomasz Burek to comment on the merits of that novel some thirty years later: "It was like Marynia Połaniecka entering the world of Shakespeare."[19]

Finally, *kresy* underwent still another, this time final change in 1939. With the Soviet invasion of all territories east of the river Bug and their incorporation into the Soviet republics of the Ukraine, Belorussia, and Lithuania respectively, the Polish eastern frontier was moved as far west as never before.[20] The mass resettlement of the Polish population following the wartime deportation of Poles to remote regions of the USSR very extensively depleted *kresy* of its Polish element. Hundreds of thousands of the residents of the rural areas as well as of two major urban centers, Wilno and Lwów, had to settle in central Poland or move to her newly acquired western provinces which had been emptied of their German residents. Those mass migrations have brought to Poland a significant number of people who have come there carrying in their hearts and memories a lasting image of the lands of their childhood, a paradise lost forever.

II

The political climate in Poland of 1945-1956 did not permit any expression of nostalgic sentiments concerning *kresy* because it was feared by the communist authorities as a sensitive and even explosive problem which might challenge the new rulers of the country and offend their Soviet patrons who claimed *kresy* to be an integral part of the three Soviet republics, allegedly returned to them on historical and ethnic grounds. Decided by the Great Powers at the Teheran Conference in 1943 and sealed in Yalta in 1945, the fate of *kresy* was not to be mentioned again except by those who would give the regime their full support. Thus while a handful of writers like Jerzy Putrament, descendent of the prominent Wilno family, and Wanda Wasilewska, a long time member of the Communist party, hypocritically applauded the new policy, the majority of Polish writers who had been related to *kresy* in one way or another remained silent on that issue. Only after 1956, when a more liberal cultural policy was introduced, some, initially modest, literary references to *kresy* began to appear in print and gradually became a major theme in contemporary Polish literature. At the same time Polish emigré writers, many of whom went through the nightmarish experience of the Soviet deportations in 1940-1941 and left the Soviet Union in 1942 with the Polish Army under the command of General W. Anders, more and more frequently returned to their native lands first in their memoirs and reminiscences, and lately in more artistically mature works of fiction. Once more, the image of *kresy* has acquired a new reflection in Polish literature as if following the pattern established in the 1830s by Mickiewicz and Słowacki and continued by Sienkiewicz.

For some authors, *kresy* serves merely as scenery of their fiction, for some it provides valid material for politically oriented novels, while for a small but perhaps the most interesting group of authors it has grown into an overwhelming image, and a nostalgic, ever-haunting motif, referring to days gone by, the days before the universal catastrophe which shattered the very foundations of human life in the modern world. Their mission was to be, as Józef Wittlin aptly called it, "Orpheus in the inferno of the twentieth century."

The problem of *kresy* and its literary image has never been given sufficient critical recognition in post-war Poland until most recently, when Zofia Kurzowa published a short linguistic study *Elementy kresowe w języku powieści powojennej* (1975). Neither compendia of contemporary Polish literature nor separate studies and articles in literary journals have ever dealt with that problem for obvious, political rather than literary, reasons. Perhaps the most perceptive among modern Polish critics, Kazimierz Wyka, avoided the discussion of that question in his first attempt in summarizing the novelistic trends emerging in Poland right after the war in his collection of essays *Pogranicze powieści* (1948). Only in 1956, reviewing the novel *Rojsty* (1956) by Tadeusz Konwicki, he titled his review significantly as "the last novel by Orzeszkowa," and later decided to include it in a new edition of his essays. His warning to literary opinion was as explicit as the new spirit of 1956 could permit it:

> A process which subjectively caused many tears, many regrets, a process which in the hearts and allegiances cannot be completed in one generation is being carried on. These are problems literature cannot be silent about under penalty of being false, of covering it up. Those lands have not been natively Polish but how deeply have they been saturated with our culture and our common history: [consider] the city with the cell at the Basilian Fathers' of the Great Improvisation.[21]

Emigre critics somehow neglected it altogether. In a survey of Polish emigré fiction written between 1940 and 1960 Zygmunt Markiewicz limited his observations to a remark about "a group of writers from *kresy* ... who distinguish themselves by natural talent,"[22] but failed to reach any significant conclusion. And yet, in Poland and in exile the list of those authors in whose works *kresy* plays a paramount role is not only extensive but quite distinguished as well, encompassing an impressive number of names of some of the most prominent Polish novelists, from Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (born 1894) to Włodzimierz Odojewski (born 1930). "All of them," notes Kurzowa, "were born in *kresy*, for nobody else would have been able to render the complicated socio-political, psychological, ethnographic, and linguistic problems of those lands, would have been able to capture the charm and the uniqueness of that world, of its people, nature, and landscape."[23] Their works taken all together deal with an unique world indeed, and the emerging image of *kresy* seems to be worthy of careful critical examination which should reveal whether the land of their childhood really comes through as a paradise lost, or turns into something else, a tragic vision which a Polish critic Zbigniew Bieńkowski, in the title of his review of Odojewski's *Wyspa ocalenia* (1964), appropriately named "That Paradise is Hell."[24]

III

The geographical limits of *kresy* as reflected in contemporary Polish literature extend roughly from the territories of today's Lithuania in the north to the Ukraine in the south, reaching east as far as the rivers Berezina in the northern parts, and Dnepr in the south. Although some novels, like *Nie trzeba głośno mówić* (1969) by Józef Mackiewicz place the setting as far as Minsk, since certain political and military actions covered that area during World War II,[25] a great majority of them is confined within the boundaries of pre-war Poland. Only some older authors, like Józef Łobodowski in his trilogy (*Komysze*, 1955; *W stanicy*, 1958; *Droga powrotna*, 1961) going to the Kuban region, or Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz in his ambitious novel *Sława i chwała* (1956) placing it partly in Odessa, reach for the remote borders of *kresy* mostly for autobiographical reasons. Generally, *kresy* is given a geographically coherent image as an area close to central Poland, related to her in many ways.

One of the most interesting features differentiating *kresy* from Poland and yet making it close to her is the description of the landscape which sets the mood common to most of the novels under consideration. That gentle "land of birches, fogs, and heath fields, the land of my ancestors"[26] is being remembered with tenderness and lyricism by Tadeusz Konwicki in a now famous passage which comes as close to Mickiewicz's poem as modern prose could ever come to Romantic poetry in its lyrical intensity:

> Belorussia, Belorussia. Why do you call yourself Belorussia if you do not have any whiteness in you, if your whiteness is reddish autumn fields, if your whiteness is gray pieces of cloth in the sunshine, if your whiteness is the hot sweat of tired people. You should be called Goodrussia, you should be called Good Land of Good People...
>
> When I recall a Belorussian word, when the wind blows from the northeast, when I see a linen shirt with a sad embroidery,

> when I hear a cry of pain without complaint, then my heart always begins to beat faster, then always a gentle longing will appear out of somewhere, then always a sudden chill of a vague remorse, guilt and shame will engulf me.
>
> Belorussia, Belorussia green-gray, with an enormous sky above your fair head, you are too good, too gentle, too noble for our time.[27]

But lyricism turns into eschatology when memories come closer to the war years. Each recollection will eventually lead to a tragedy, each passage will end with a vision of ultimate destruction. Typical in this respect is a method employed by Leopold Buczkowski in his *Czarny potok* (1954) throughout that novel:

> After August the grass on the escarpments became reddish and withered. Pigs walked about the gossamer-strewn yard, looking for pickings...
>
> The summer was growing cold; only the forest still had active, silently prowling starlings in its dry lining. The rustling of these sparrows alarmed the refugees from Szabasowa...
>
> In the late fall the Jewish cemeteries died. Green, mossy *maceils* carpeted the paths. Tanks cranked on the sacred paths...
>
> In the fall, the forest grass is white and smells of fish, is spiderwebbed and springy. Cirla pulled up some grass and thrust it under her child's back, then sat down and covered herself and the child with a black, woolen kerchief...
>
> Then, amidst the uncertain days, snow fell. A white renewal for the hunt with dogs sniffing and for the spies tracking down Jewish hiding places in caves and holes in the ground...[28]

And then Buczkowski's image of that nightmarish world leads to a generalizing conclusion: "Damp spider webs rustled in the forest clearings. In fall, the fields watch, the forest listens. A barren landscape is the enemy of a pursued man."[29]

From the image of a barren landscape there is just one step to the image of scorched earth under the merciless sun in the opening chapter of

Odojewski's *Wyspa ocalenia*. The cycle of destruction has been completed, the homely, hospitable "land of birches, fogs, and heath fields" has ceased to exist for, indeed, it must have been "too good for our time."

The landscape, however, is not alive without people who populate the land. Diversified as they were in reality, the characters in the novels can be divided according to either their nationality or to a social stratification, with representatives of the Polish aristocracy and landed gentry standing for the traditions of the *szlachta* while the Polish middle class occupies a gap between them and the Ruthenian peasants and the Jewish inhabitants of small towns. In some novels there also appear some Germans whose settlements dotted *kresy*, particularly in the south. Almost each group, either taken separately or in relationship with others, finds its spokesmen in post-war Polish novels, with the exception of the Ukrainian nationalists whose image is always tainted with blood and violence. Perhaps the most representative in this respect is the first part of a novel *Strefy* (1971) by Andrzej Kuśniewicz. In an imaginary dialogue between three former classmates from the small town of Żydaczów, Gutek Ostroróg coming from an aristocratic family, Olek Bogaczewicz being the son of a school teacher, and Salo Grynszpan, a Jewish friend of those two, the boy who had impressed them most in their school days, an Ukrainian, Genek Łyczko, "Jewhen" as they used to call him, appears in the novel only as a fading silhouette reflected in a window pane during a casual meeting, without any voice in that dialogue, carried on over the oceans after the war:

> And suddenly I realized that Jewhen is no longer with me. That he has disappeared. I thought for a while that he was here, that he existed only and solely in my imagination, called in by my desire, that I had materialized him for myself, and now, taking advantage of my inattention when I took my eyes off him, he had ceased to exist.[30]

Equally enigmatic is the image of Konrad Richter, a German classmate of the protagonists, who could have ended his military service in the Polish army in 1939 either as a *Volksdeutscher*, or as a Polish soldier slapped in the face by the victorious German invaders. Recalling with true sympathy the scenes of the exodus of the German colonists driven away from Wolhynia by the Soviets in 1940, Kuśniewicz refrains from passing any judgment on the question of various nationalities in *kresy* and concludes with an open question: "To what degree are we bound by the laws resulting from a many years, many centuries old community? And whom did they bind? Everybody living there?"[31]

Communal laws and obedience to them were by no means equally shared and understood in the same way by every group of the population. For the aristocratic Polish family in Andrzej Stojowski's novel *Podróż do Nieczajny* (1974) *kresy* was the center of the world located "between the east and the west, between the south and the north," and based on the tradition of "the land, old names connected with it, our homes, old places, old trees."[32] The difference between the aristocrats and the peasants was equally simple: "We love our land—they crave for it."[33] Consequently, the expulsion of the aristocracy, although a phenomenon occurring in *kresy* more than often throughout the centuries, is associated with an image of uprooting, frequently taking a Čexovian symbol of cutting down the trees. In Iwaszkiewicz's *Sława i chwała* it accompanies the scenes of the revolution of 1918 in the Ukraine and is particularly strong due to the fact that instead of a cherry orchard the revolting peasants cut down the old oaks. The same image returns in Stojowski's novel about 1940 with the message clearly spelled out: "That was the beginning of an end."[34] But as early as 1920, when count Janusz Myszyński, the protagonist of *Sława i chwała*, meets with his Soviet friend, he seems to be representing the attitude of his class in the following dialogue:

> "Do you remember, there, at your home?"
> "I will not forget it as long as I live."
> "Are you going to avenge it?"
> "No, but I am not going to forget it either."[35]

The landed gentry, the *szlachta*, takes a much less passive attitude when threatened with uprooting, particularly in novels about World War II. Paweł Woynowicz, the protagonist of *Zasypie wszystko, zawieje* (1973) by Włodzimierz Odojewski

> left at dawn. He woke up at the sunrise and left (as if he was leaving just for a few minutes), he simply left without saying good-bye to anyone... he disassembled his rifle, packed it into a cover, and then, having gathered his things put them into a bundle, strapped it up and slipped out of the Czuprynia home.[36]

He then joins the Polish Home Army guerilla unit, and will take bloody revenge on the Ukrainian peasants who have killed his mother, in the best traditions of Sienkiewicz's heroes. His cousin, Piotr Czerestwieński, despite his half-Russian blood will do the same for he "cannot voluntarily get out from that what has grown up, what was implanted in his childhood, and what is in his blood, the same blood as his parents' and his parents' parents, and even further into the darkness beyond memory, but out of which the blood runs through the veins from generation to generation in a hot stream of everything."[37] The Faulknerian motif of the dark blood heritage of hatred makes Odojewski's fiction much richer than most of the novels written either by his predecessors or by contemporaries dealing with *kresy* although he has inherited from Sienkiewicz in particular some features of his characters and some compositional devices.[38] In general, it is the inherent tradition which determines an individual's actions, often undertaken against his own sober assessment of its feasibility and usefulness, to such a degree that even the most sceptical characters, like the protagonist of Konwicki's *Rojsty*, a young man strongly apprehensive of the underground action against the Soviets in 1944, joins the Polish guerillas and fights a war without hope.

But before they saddled up their horses and went on fighting the war, the characters from *kresy* had to be brought up in that tradition of their ancestors, and some Polish authors ventured into the past to explore and explain this. In one of a few contemporary novels attempting to trace the history of *kresy* in the last hundred years, a novel skillfully combining Orzeszkowa's themes of the life of the impoverished *szlachta* with the problem of forced Russification made famous in the novels written by Stefan Żeromski at the turn of the century, Maria Kuncewiczowa in her *Leśnik* (1957) develops the theme of Polish patriotism winning over a seemingly confusing question of nationality in *kresy*. As a Russian teacher in her novel finds out:

> It's terrifying what a mix-up of notions. In the same "Polish" Polesie of yours, which is sometimes called Lithuania, the local people, sometimes called Belorussians,

> falsely accused your father, an exemplary official in the tsarist administration, as I gather, of conducting a Polish subversive action. Or perhaps not so falsely, eh?[39]

Having gone through a traumatic identity crisis Kazimierz, the protagonist of the novel, finally becomes a *tutejszy*, a native, one of those people "in Polesie where nobody really knew whether he was a Pole or a Lithuanian, a native Russian or of German descent perhaps."[40] But the allegiance to Poland prevailed, for, as Czesław Miłosz explained in his autobiographical essay *Rodzinna Europa* (1959), "the mélange of Polish, Lithuanian, and German blood, of which I myself am an example, was so common that admirers of racial purity could find little to boast of. Besides, the whole set of cultural notions was tied up with the Commonwealth and, through it, with Poland."[41]

In a number of novels the problem of "the natives" in a more recent past is explored quite closely. In some novels, oblivious of their *szlachta* heritage and their social position, the characters have their national awareness limited to the fact that they are Catholics and therefore must be Polish, i.e., different from either the Orthodox peasants, or the Protestant German colonists, or the local Jews. They could not determine their nationality on the basis of their language because, as Kurzowa explains, they spoke a local language quite different from standard Polish; their speech

> cut off from the living trunk of the common language began to live its own life developing some new features unknown to common Polish, cultivating some old ones which the pure Polish had eliminated long ago, and absorbing elements of the Ruthenian linguistic background, because the common Polish linguistic norm did not work and did not check it there. Thus the native Poles have developed a feeling of the incomprehensibility, of the strangeness of the *kresy* language, whether pleasant to the ear or not, but still a linguistic mixture difficult to determine whether it was really Polish or Ruthenian.[42]

On the social level "the natives" also differed considerably from their ancestors who, like some

characters in Kuncewiczowa's novel believed what "the officials maintained: whoever exploits the peasants is a *pan*, in other words, a Pole."[43] In the majority of novels dealing with the period between the two world wars the Poles who consider themselves "natives" and do not identify with either the aristocracy or the *szlachta* seem to be living mostly in a peaceful symbiosis with the non-Polish and non-Catholic population of *kresy*. As an example one may refer to a strong contrast in Wanda Wasilewska' s trilogy *Pieśń nad wodami* (*Płomień na bagnach*, 1940; *Gwiazdy w jeziorze*, 1950; *Rzeki płoną*, 1952) the first part of which introduces, on the one hand, the young Płońskis sympathetic not only to their Belorussian neighbors but to communist infiltration as well, and, on the other hand, a settler from central Poland whom the peasants try to drive away as a stranger encroaching on their land. The problem of "class struggle," eventually emerging in her trilogy, is rather unique in contemporary Polish fiction—in a strong contrast to its Soviet counterpart in which it predominates, but its presence in her works should be easily explained by her long time association with the Communist party and the fact that *Płomień na bagnach* was written shortly after the Soviet invasion, when she officially joined the Soviets and eventually accepted Soviet citizenship. With only a few exceptions the lines in Polish novels are drawn along national and sociocultural rather than economic differences between antagonistic groups.

Generally, Poles in contemporary novels are fascinated with the multicultural mosaic of peoples populating *kresy*, and take it for granted as a living proof that national differences can be overcomed. Evidence of such attitudes is abundant, from the Wilno region to the Ukraine, as demonstrated in numerous novels by Tadeusz Konwicki and Andrzej Kuśniewicz. Particularly the latter, in his novel *Strefy*, gives a graphic image of a pattern of communal co-existence:

> ... it seems to me one could draw some sort of a triangulation net, I even tried to make something like that once, having nothing better to do and pondering over the structure of our community—if one could speak about it at all—well, take such a scheme: one line connecting, let's say, Jewhen and myself, those discussions of ours, our intimacy bordering on friendship, our politically philosophical

> conversations which appear so childishly naïve today, and a second line would connect my father and Father Hryć Łyczko, they also had those conversations leading to nothing... and also Gutek's father as a third vertex of that triangle, and many other lines, crossing each other and entangled, various political and personal relations... and let's not forget our neighbors from the German colony Gelsendorf, we knew them, didn't we...[44]

It was, in fact, the father of one of the three narrators, the old teacher Bogaczewicz, who dreamt about "a Res Publica of three nations—as on a knight's pectoral hanging over your bed—do you remember?—three coats-of-arms connected in concert—an Eagle, the Lithuanian *Pogoń*, and a Russian Archangel. And so it was with my father, so naïve and just, impractical and moving!"[45]

The Jewish population of *kresy*, particularly in the southern provinces known as Eastern Galicia where it represented roughly one sixteenth of the population by the end of the 18th century,[46] but increased to 8.5% by 1939,[47] initially lived in self-imposed ghettos out of which it began gradually to emerge, becoming more closely related to the Poles and the Ukrainians in the period between two world wars. While Julian Stryjkowski, in his novels, described the feeling prevailing among those Jews ca. 1912 as isolationism based on constant fear ("we live as if in one large community held under siege by our enemies, like a herd of sheep surrounded by wolves"[48]), Kuśniewicz and Stojowski present quite a different image of the late 1930s. Mandatory schools in particular diminished the differences, and helped to integrate Jewish young men and girls with the rest of society. When Salo Grynszpan had disclosed to his friends some secrets of Jewish orthodox rites, and one of the Polish boys frowned at them as superstitions

> we don't listen to him, we push him away, out of the circle tightly surrounding Salo Grynszpan. Breitner and Goldberg as well as Schapiro—wise, quiet, intelligent boys, first, second and third in our class—move away, too. They don't want to be a part in that all. They are clearly shocked. They, too, are progressive, they too have left the ghetto as well as Chasidism a long time ago, but to speak about these things in public, in front of the gentiles, with that idiot Salceson, with those nationalists like Ludek or Felek Okoń, for public mockery—oh, no, not that![49]

Some Jewish characters, to be sure, achieved a strong financial superiority over the *szlachta*, and Stojowski gives an example of such a successful Jewish businessman, Mr. Katz, in a hilarious scene taking place at the Żydaczów horse fair, when the entrepreneur approaches a prince and wants to talk business disregarding usual ceremonies required by social standards:

> And the prince was almost stricken.
>
> Although he remained motionless his face began to change color. First it turned pale, then wax-yellow, until it flared with all shades of red simultaneously reaching the crimson: the prince looked now like a purple carp thrown out of the water, he opened his mouth with difficulty, gasping for breath. His eyes whitened, a pin holding his grey scarf on his throat broke with a snap. Silence fell over the square, we all thought the prince would die...
>
> And Mr. Katz bent down, picked up the pin from the dust, breathed on it, cleaned it with the tail of his coat, took it in his two fingers, and lifting it to his eyes with an air of a connoisseur he said:
>
> "Well, that's a lovely pin! I'd pay for it five zlotys in a pawnshop. But for you, Mr. Prince—seven zlotys!"[50]

Mr. Katz, incidentally, seems to be quite a unique character in contemporary Polish fiction, for he speaks a grammatically and phonetically distorted Polish the way it used to be spoken by many uneducated Jews. While local dialects form an important part of characterization of the inhabitants of *kresy*, indicating their origin even when it is not directly mentioned, e.g., the Korsaks in Konwicki's *Sennik współczesny* (1963),[51] any imitation of incorrect Jewish pronunciation has been generally avoided as a discriminating feature. As a possible explanation for the Stojowski case the date of publication of his novel could be taken into consideration, since its publication coincided with the beginning of an anti-Semitic campaign in Poland in

1968.[52] Only in 1975, as if trying to counterbalance that image of a *kresy* Jew, the leading literary journal *Twórczość* published a story, "Lerech," by Tadeusz Chrzanowski, portraying a typical Jewish *kresy* merchant in the most sympathetic and even charming way.[53] Thus, with the exception of the Ukrainian nationalists and the local Germans, the only social group so far largely neglected in contemporary Polish fiction are the peasants, "the natives," who are still waiting for their spokesman. They have not found their novelist although an attempt to speak up for them has been made by Halina Auderska in her novelistic diptych *Ptasi gościniec* (1973) and *Babie lato* (1974) presenting a story of a Polish peasant from Polesie caught in the whirlpool of history during World War II. As a Polish reviewer, Gracja Traczyk, stated, not quite correctly, the first of the two novels "enters, perhaps for the first time in our literature, the territory of questions so far passed over in silence... *Kresy*, what a perfect territory for confrontations! It is not second to Faulkner's South as far as the flagrancy of its problems is concerned."[54] Being aware, however, how politically involved those problems might be, the same critic remarks cautiously: "For as there is the God of children, and the God of drunkards, there must be some God of literature who arms writers with an immunity of saintly naïveté or unawareness of the dangers lying in wait."[55]

Auderska succeeded in avoiding many dangers—political, ideological as well as aesthetic ones—thanks to an ingenious device: in the form of a monologue of a simple fisherman from Polesie, written entirely in local dialect, *Ptasi gościniec* tells the story of the transformation of a *tutejszy* into a conscientious Pole but only after he had been through years of harrowing experiences during the war. Szymon Drozd, the narrator of his life story, because of his comparatively low social position, is able to demythologize the official version of modern Polish history and to tell it in his own way without succumbing either to the "heroic" tone used by the regime oriented writers, or to passing over the tragic fate of *kresy* in silence like most of his contemporaries chose to do. Thus he can afford such bold statements as the following exclamation:

> And what's the use to sing like a wood grouse, to convert me? I've been converted a long time ago, I know my stuff, and I can tell you one thing: either you're going to write down quietly the story of my life—it means the true story—or you may go to hell.[56]

And indeed, the novel tells the story "as it was" thus becoming one of the very few *kresy* novels published in Poland which shows, in all frankness, how "our lives, difficult but not bad at all, lives to which we were accustomed ... but didn't rebel against"[57] turned into tragedy, sufferings beyond imagination, and eventually into new forms of life, irreversibly different from the existing patterns as a result of the war and its aftermath.

IV

> And it happened so that the 102nd Lancers Regiment, organized for this war, was retreating further, toward Spoćkinie. With one thought only left—go to Lithuania. The dead body of General Olszyna-Wilczyński lying on the cross roads warned them: you don't have anything more to do here, soldier!

This opening paragraph in one of the most popular postwar Polish short novels, *Hubalczycy* by Melchior Wańkowicz,[58] casts a deadly shadow on the whole image of *kresy* during World War II. Although describing the desperate fight against the Nazis in central Poland the story of Major "Hubal" does not comment on who had committed the murder of the General, a commandant of the Grodno Military District located near the Soviet Border, it is obvious to a Polish reader even superficially familiar with the history of the campaign that the brutal execution had been committed by the invading Soviet troops entering Poland on September 17, 1939.[59] As a crime unparalleled even by the German Wehrmacht, it stands alone as a symbol of the fate soon to befall the Polish population in *kresy*, beginning with the unprecedented mass murder of some four thousand Polish officers in the Forest of Katyń,[60] the never explained disappearance of another ten thousand Polish P.O.W.'s in the USSR, and ending with the deportations of some two million people from *kresy* to remote regions of the Soviet Union, where they were funneled through the Gulag system, in most cases never to be seen again. Even more conscionable

Russians admit to have been well aware of the crimes committed in *kresy* against the Polish population. Lev Kopelev, an ardent communist in 1944, who later was to become a model for Lev Rubin in Solženicyn's *The First Circle*, notes in his memoirs:

> They welcomed us [in Toruń] really joyfully, not at all like in Białystok or Grodno, where 1939 and 1941 have not been forgotten. Quite often I noticed there fear and distrust in their eyes, a polite hospitality. And they were taking shots at us at night once in a while, too (*A byvalo po nočam i podstrelivali*).[61]

What followed September 17, 1939 can only be described as a nightmarish web of fear, terror, and finally total annihilation. Without taking into consideration the wealth of information and evidence in historical documents, eyewitness accounts, memoirs and reminiscences published outside of Poland, semi-fictional and purely literary works, novels and short stories, provide a sufficiently dramatic history of *kresy* after the Soviet invasion. Interestingly enough, fiction leaning heavily toward politics and history of military operations of the Polish underground organizations in *kresy*, as well as novels concerned with the physical extermination of the local population, such as those written by Józef Mackiewicz, Herminia Naglerowa, Sergiusz Piasecki, Wiktor Trościanko—to mention just a few Polish emigré authors—seems to be factual rather than literary in character, and does not rank high in artistic quality. These novels provide a sombre image of the general atmosphere prevailing in *kresy* first under the Soviets, between September, 1939 and June, 1941, then under the German occupation, and again under the Soviets after and since July, 1944. While the period of the German occupation of *kresy* has found a fairly adequate image presented by the authors publishing in Poland, writers in exile treat both occupations with equal attention and tend to emphasize the Soviet periods. In both groups the autobiographical elements seem to overshadow fiction, and only the writers of the younger generation who either do not or hardly remember the war seem to be able to create novels in which literary and artistic elements come to the fore. As an interesting example, two Polish-American authors, Jerzy Kosiński (born 1933) and W. S. Kuniczak (born 1930), could be

mentioned since the image of *kresy* presented in a sophisticated manner plays a significant role in their respective novels. While Kosiński's *The Painted Bird* (1965) uses "the villages in that region ... neglected for centuries, inaccessible and distant from any urban centers, [they were] in the most backward parts of Eastern Europe"[62] as a terrifying, wild background for his horror tale, *The Thousand Hour Day* (1966) by Kuniczak in its day-by-day chronicle of the September campaign brings one of its protagonists to an Ukrainian village where he dies under the pitchforks of a rebellious mob.[63] It should be mentioned that the Polish lancers avenge the death of their *rotmistrz* by setting the village aflame, but this motif, familiar from Wasilewska's novel discussed earlier, plays an entirely different role in Kuniczak's work: whereas in *Gwiazdy w jeziorze* it was meant as a senseless outburst of the Polish landlord's violence against the innocent peasants, the American author uses it as a logical and just consequence of an action set in motion by the cruel and hostile villagers. Instead of being a device of political propaganda, the scene heightens the novel's realism.

The authors in Poland have been facing a much more difficult task when they are to write about *kresy*. Initially passed over in silence or mentioned only casually and in a cautious manner, the topic could not be completely dismissed from some autobiographical accounts, and some authors resorted to metaphors when expressing their attitude to the events of 1939-1941. Adolf Rudnicki in a story first published in 1947, "Wielki Stefan Konecki," wrote thus:

> When I first arrived in Lwów in December [1939] I had been like dough flung into a very hot oven: instantly turned red outside but intact inside. In the warmth and well-being my soul gradually returned to its original colors: I was turning white as a bone, and whitening I gladly visited with the old reactionary and readily listened to him.[64]

More open treatment of *kresy* has actually begun only after 1956, when some hitherto unpublished manuscripts finally saw the light and achieved immediate success with the readers. As a typical example one may remember Konwicki's *Rojsty*, originally written in 1948 but published only eight years later, or Odojewski's *Wyspa ocalenia* which had won a literary prize in 1951 without ever being published, and when it finally appeared in 1964 became an international success. And yet, even with a somewhat more liberal cultural policy in Poland after 1956, authors there have to create works of such literary power that artistic reasons prevail over political odds and make the publication of politically controversial novels possible in a communist ruled state. There are, of course, certain limits never to be transgressed. *Zasypie wszystko, zawieje...* by Odojewski had been appearing in excerpts in various literary magazines between 1967 and 1969, but because it dealt with the politically explosive problem of Katyń its publication in book form was denied, forcing the author to leave the country. And again, when the novel was published abroad it brought Odojewski international acclaim.

In general, however, it is their literary value which distinguishes the novels about *kresy* published in Poland, and the powerful imagery by which they render the war years in that territory rather than merely exploiting autobiographical elements. Perhaps better than anything else the following image in Odojewski's novel renders the conditions in *kresy* by the end of 1943: following the Polish guerillas, Paweł Woynowicz is trapped in a forest, and has to hide side by side with a wounded Ukrainian. From their hiding place they see first "the Ukrainians of the Melnyk's sign" fighting with a Polish unit; they are followed by a column of motorcycles "painted in asymmetric, green-yellow-black spots ... with the Germans, two of them on each bike, and those sitting in the back-seats holding submachine guns ready to shoot"; and then "men with drum-like machine guns in their hands, with field-caps and hats on which they had pinned up stars."[65] The fact that Paweł perceives the changing movement of men and machines like "on a movie screen" creates the feeling of a movement going over the land which ceases to be real, and becomes merely scenery for a drama enacted upon it by powers beyond control and comprehension to the two native inhabitants of that territory—two mortal enemies overpowered by the same hostile forces.

The realistic method used by most emigré authors proves to be inadequate to render the effect of a total collapse of a world—or "a twilight of a world," as Odojewski titled a collection of his short stories—built on a solid system and a traditional set of values which had lasted for centuries. Although some emigré writers, like Józef Mackiewicz who, in his epic account of the last war, moved from the realistic method of his *Droga do nikąd* (1955) to a collage of fictitious plot, documents, and newspaper clippings in his *Nie trzeba głośno mówić* (1969) in a manner similar to Solženicyn's *August 1914*, only authors publishing in Poland ventured further in their search for methods which could create a new image of the war years. The total annihilation of the existing order created chaos, and only chaos in the established forms of fiction could possibly come close to an adequate image of reality as they saw it during the war. Hence Leopold Buczkowski's *Czarny potok* and its sequence *Dorycki krużganek* (1957) defy any logical development of plot or even a comprehensible narration of events. Instead, an anonymous narrator and a number of characters try to rebuild their stories from some shattered fragments of recollections, impressions, dialogues, and single episodes, all of which, taken together, strive to recreate not the sequence of events but the overall atmosphere of life in *kresy* during those fateful years. Hence Odojewski's novels and short stories, like Konwicki's *Sennik współczesny*, recreate *kresy* either in dream-like visions or in a state of high fever, burning and distorting reality. Hence Kuśniewicz's dialogue between the three friends separated in time and space but united by common and completely different visions of the land of their childhood. As a result of those attempts one may speak about a new kind of novelistic form being born out of *kresy* experience in contemporary Polish fiction, a kind quite different from merely *recherchez le temps perdu*. It has its strong bearings in the present not as a result of merging the past and the present but because the present is seen there as a continuation of the past and becomes structurally dependent on it. "When seen from a distance, the lost valley of childhood appears as a happy and idyllic one, so the protagonist returns home—but then the causes which made him leave it begin to appear in all brightness," writes Jan Walc in his penetrating study of Konwicki's novels.[66] And Stanisław Lem in *Wysoki Zamek* becomes even more explicit:

> What is so fascinating in things and stones which surrounded me in my childhood? That they possess a magic value of uniqueness

> which cannot be compared with anything else? Where does their categorical demand come from, that I have to give them an account of their existence after they have perished in the chaos of the war and in the dumppits?[67]

The answer seems to be obvious: a need to understand the reason beyond all that had happened to *kresy*. Polish writers still cannot become reconciled to this fate, and even if they remain critical about pre-war Poland they cannot accept the post-war situation either. Thirty years after the war they still remain in a limbo, desperately trying to find a logical, or at least an acceptable answer to their own psychological problems as well as to the history of their country. Many of them have reached a point of no return and they do not want to accept it easily. And that is a problem much broader than just the issue of *kresy*, for it encompasses the very existence of contemporary Poland, and the kind of life created there as a result of the war.

In a short story not directly related to *kresy* and yet conceived in the same spirit of despair, Jerzy Gierałtowski seems to be summing it up in a scene of a movie making: a skid-row character, a town drunk, formerly a N.C.O. in the Polish cavalry, is given a cameo appearance, and having put on a pre-war uniform he is suddenly transformed into a youthful, dashing officer gracefully leading his squadron of lancers. Watching that man's glory and pride returning in a brief moment of illusion, an impassionate observer cannot restrain her tears and exclaims: "My God, what have they done to us" (*Co oni z nas zrobili*).[68] Indeed, "no iron can stab the heart with such force as a period in just the right place," as Babel' once observed.[69]

There are however some writers who refuse to give up easily their cherished land and its memories. "We shall return there soon," writes Stojowski, "tomorrow perhaps, we shall be returning there forever, throughout our whole natural life, throughout eternity, for as long as the memory of places lasts people will visit there in their thoughts."[70] And they do return, no matter how exasperating their experiences might have been. Scenes of mass deportations and imprisonment in Naglerowa's novels, rampant Ukrainian nationalism in *Strefy* and *Zasypie wszystko, zawieje...*, an uneven fight against the Soviets and the Nazis in *Nie trzeba głośno mówić*, total destruction of anything Polish in *Zmierzch świata*, and anything Jewish in *Czarny potok*, all those motifs keep returning in virtually every novel on *kresy*. The writers bear witness to the once happy world lost forever as a sombre memento for the future. Occasionally there are even some attempts to enliven the tragic image with some humor—a black, sarcastic humor, to be sure. In an imaginary scene in *Strefy*, Kuśniewicz speculates ironically on what might have happened after the Soviets had entered Żydaczów and established nearby a model "Sovxoz Suxodil-Ganovce." After welcoming "The Great Days," as he ironically calls the Soviet take-over, there comes to the former Ostroróg estate a visitor from the Soviet Union, "a young student (from a drama school? a movie studium? a painting academy?—from Kiev? Moscow? Xar'kov? Čeljabinsk? where from?, Veročka-Sonečka? Marfa, Tat'jana? Ljuba?)"[71] and tries to visualize for herself the former life there, entirely strange to her. Suddnely she is overwhelmed by haunting ghosts from the past who have taken possession of the land again, and scare away not only the Russians but even the local *kolxozniki*:

> And a certain tractor driver in winter—the night was cold, and a frosty fog covered the trees, even one's breath would freeze—sees a sight: they are coming toward him, his horses panic, as he told later, all sixty of those mechanical horses, when one of them started rattling, all stopped. The tractor got stuck in some clay. The driver, a graduate from a tractor drivers education course in Stryj, got out, he looked inside: everything was all right. The horseshoes intact, none of the sixty horses foundered, what's the matter? He looks up, and there, on a wayside willow, there is a gray beard, and next to it another one, a reddish-black one, a double one, and a red eye above it, and yet another one covered with an eyelid, and on a third willow, in the fog a single little eye, and an ear like an owl on a stick, and...[72]

Disregard and violation of the history of the land and its centuries old traditions turns here into a Gogolian grotesque with macabre, threatening overtones. Kuśniewicz's dependence on the Ukrainian tradition was first noticed by Kazimierz Wyka who reviewed his first volume of poetry *Słowa o nienawiści* (1956) and titling his review "An Ukrainian Heritage" noted not only the poet's close relationship to Słowacki but also his deep bitterness.[73]

There have been, of course, some attempts to visit *kresy* not merely in imagination but physically, although most authors hardly ever dare to face the post-war realities in the land of their childhood overrun by the Soviets. Some of them, like Janina Kowalska in her autobiographical novel *Moje uniwersytety* (1971)—an ironic borrowing from Gorkij—shudder at the very sight of the new border because even on its west side "there is no life here anymore ... only the old ones spend the remaining days of their lives in the old corner." The conclusion is obvious: "I will leave from here but this time in the opposite direction—not eastward. To the West!"[74] With the great majority of the *kresy* writers living now either in Western Europe or in the western provinces of Poland where they had to rebuild their lives in "the home on the Oder," like the narrator of Zygmunt Trziszka's stories under that title, or the protagonist of Auderska's novels, some, driven by an emotional urge, make the nostalgic trip to see with their own eyes what has been left from the time of their youth. To complete the image of *kresy* in contemporary Polish literature it seems only appropriate to end it with a fragment from the most recent autobiographical work by Konwicki, an author who has remained most faithful to *kresy* throughout his entire literary career in the last thirty years. In his *Kalendarz i klepsydra* (1976) the narrator who identifies with the author visits his former home and his cousin in Wilno. Aunt Pola, as she is characteristically named, is very proud of her two daughters:

> "You see, Tadzia, both have graduated from a Polish high school," bragged aunt Pola tearfully watching both daughters who indeed resembled two exotic flowers.
>
> And then the dark one said in a slightly offended tone: "Mama, I'm going out. I've a date with that *Saška*, near *vogzal*, you know, the boy from *zavučilišče*."
>
> And then the fair one informed us: "Mama, in the evening I'm going to work on a *stengazeta* in *krasnyj ugolok*."
>
> And both disappeared, for ever, as much as I was concerned.[75]

Konwicki's conclusion seems to be summing up the long literary tradition of *kresy* existing in Polish literature ever since Mickiewicz had recalled that land in the opening lines of *Pan Tadeusz* quoted at the beginning of this study. Perhaps Konwicki was more successful in making the return trip than the great poet who died in exile without ever seeking *kresy* again, but the return in reality does not make the novelist any happier. On leaving Wilno he closes his visit with a realization which seems to apply to the whole problem of *kresy* and to all those writers who have made it a vital part of modern Polish literature:

> And I have understood that the land of my childhood is no more. That it lives in me only, and together with me it will turn into dust one of these hours arriving from nothingness.[76]

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NOTES

[1] Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz*, tr. by Watson Kirkconell (New York, 1962), 7.

[2] Viktor Šklovskij, "Iskusstvo kak priëm," in *Poètika* (Petrograd, 1919), 101.

[3] For a discussion of Polish traditions in *ethos* see Maria Ossowska, *Ethos rycerski i jego odmiany* (Warszawa, 1973), 114-118.

[4] Piotr Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918* (Seattle and London, 1974), 4.

[5] Ibidem, 5.

[6] *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (New York, 1967), 570.

[7] Aleksander Brückner, *Dzieje kultury polskiej* (Kraków-Warszawa, 1946), IV, 597.

[8] Julian Krzyżanowski, *Dzieje literatury polskiej* (Warszawa, 1969), 260.

[9] Ibidem, 259.

[10] Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Dzieła* (Warszawa, 1949), XI, 43.

[11] Ibidem, 134.

[12] Władysław Czapliński, *Glosa do Trylogii* (Wrocław, 1974), 163.

[13] Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Dzieła* (Warszawa, 1950), XIX, 269.

[14] Wanda Wasilewska, *Gwiazdy w jeziorze* (Warszawa, 1950), 36.

[15] Melchior Wańkowicz, *Szczenięce lata* (Warszawa, 1934), 103.

[16] Ibidem, 124.

[17] Ibidem, 91.

[18] Sophia Kossak, *The Blaze*, tr. from Polish (London, 1927), 264ff. See also Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star* (London, 1972).

[19] Maria Goszczyńska, ed., *Literatura polska 1918-1932* (Warszawa, 1975), I, 482. The heroine of Sienkiewicz's novel *Rodzina Połanieckich* serves here as a symbol of naîveté and impracticality.

[20] For an extensive bibliography and figures see Laurence Orzell, "Poland and Russia, July 1941-April 1943: The 'Impossible' Alliance," *The Polish Review*, XXI, No. 4, 35-58.

[21] Kazimierz Wyka, *Pogranicze powieści* (Warszawa, 1974), 442. This is a second, enlarged edition, including essays and reviews published in literary periodicals in 1946-1957.

[22] Tymon Terlecki, ed., *Literatura polska na obczyźnie 1940-1960* (Londyn, 1964), I, 171.

[23] Zofia Kurzowa, *Elementy kresowe w języku powieści powojennej* (Warszawa, 1975), 6.

[24] Zbigniew Bieńkowski, "Ten raj jest piekłem," *Twórczość*, XXI, No. 1, 126.

[25] The military intelligence of the Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa) started a major sabotage action in the rear of the German Army on the Eastern Front in 1942-1943 ("Akcja Wachlarz"). See Cezary Chlebowski, *Zagłada IV Odcinka* (Warszawa, 1968).

[26] Wańkowicz, op. cit., 95

[27] Tadeusz Konwicki, *Kalendarz i klepsydra* (Warszawa, 1976), 31-32.

[28] Leopold Buczkowski, *Black Torrent*, tr. by David Welsh (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1969), 38-39.

[29] Ibidem, 42. See also Marian Stępień, "Od mowy pozornie zależnej do 'czarnego potoku' świadomości," in: Michał Głowiński and Janusz Sławiński, eds., *Literatura wobec wojny i okupacji* (Wrocław, 1976), 163-185.

[30] Andrzej Kuśniewicz, *Strefy* (Warszawa, 1971), 67-68. Jewhen Łyczko is also one of the principal characters in Kuśniewicz's earlier novel *W drodze do Koryntu* (Warszawa, 1964).

[31] Ibidem, 209.

[32] Andrzej Stojowski, *Podróż do Nieczajny* (Warszawa, 1974), 26.

[33] Ibidem, 28.

[34] Ibidem, 148.

[35] Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, *Sława i chwała* (Warszawa, 1956), I, 275.

[36] Włodzimierz Odojewski, *Zasypie wszystko, zawieje...* (Paris, 1973), 223-24.

[37] Włodzimierz Odojewski, *Zmierzch świata* (Warszawa, 1962), 184.

[38] See Jerzy R. Krzyżanowski, "The Land of No Salvation: The Podolian Cycle by Włodzimierz Odojewski," *The Polish Review*, XXIII, No. 2.

[39] Maria Kuncewiczowa, *Leśnik* (Warszawa, 1957), 142-143.

[40] Ibidem, 32.

[41] Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm*, tr. by Catherine S. Leach (New York, 1968), 24.

[42] Kurzowa, op. cit., 9-10.

[43] Kuncewiczowa, op. cit., 32.

[44] Kuśniewicz, op. cit., 90-91.

[45] Ibidem, 126.

[46] Wandycz, op. cit., 11.

[47] Orzell, op. cit., 37.

[48] Julian Stryjkowski, *Głosy w ciemności* (Warszawa, 1971), 332.

[49] Kuśniewicz, op. cit., 100.

[50] Stojowski, op. cit., 113. The original Polish text reads: "Tś, bardzo szliczny spineczek! Ja by dałem w lombard za taki spineczek złotych pięcz. Nu, dla pana kszęcza złotych szedem!"

[51] See Jan Walc, "Nieepickie powieści Tadeusza Konwickiego," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, LXVI, No. 1, 85-108.

[52] Stojowski's conformist position could be also construed from the subtitle of *Podróż do Nieczajny* which reads "Opowiadania leodyjskie" rather than regular Polish "lwowskie." The city of Lwów is never mentioned in the novel by its name although its old Latin name "Leopolis" is quite implicit in the subtitle.

[53] Tadeusz Chrzanowski, "Lerech," *Twórczość*, XXXI, No. 8, 10-34.

[54] Gracja Traczyk, "Tożsamość," *Twórczość*, XXX, No. 9. 111.

[55] Gracja Traczyk, "Genus loci," *Twórczość*, XXXI, No. 5, 108.

[56] Halina Auderska, *Ptasi gościniec* (Warszawa, 1973), 100.

[57] Ibidem, 33.

[58] Melchior Wańkowicz, *Hubalczycy* (Warszawa, 1959), 3.

[59] An autobiographical novel on the Katyń massacre *Night Never Ending* by E. A. Komorowski with Joseph L. Gilmore (New York, 1974) opens with the

scene of General Olszyna-Wilczyński's execution by the Soviets. Although the identity of Komorowski is somewhat doubtful, the account is quite accurate. The most recent history of the September campaign published in Poland, *Wojna polska* by Leszek Moczulski (Poznań, 1972) does not mention the incident at all, and lists only Olszyna-Wilczyński as one of the five Polish generals killed in action (p. 511).

[60] See J. K. Zawodny, *Death in the Forest* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1962).

[61] Lev Kopelev, *Xranit' večno* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1975), 154.

[62] Jerzy Kosinski, *The Painted Bird* (New York, 1965), 2.

[63] W. S. Kuniczak, *The Thousand Hour Day* (New York, 1966), 603ff.

[64] Adolf Rudnicki *Żywe i martwe morze* (Warszawa, 1956), 62. Available English translation (*Ascent to Heaven*, tr. by H. C. Stevens, New York, 1951), does not render the metaphor correctly.

[65] Odojewski, *Zasypie...*, 230-31.

[66] Walc, op. cit., 108.

[67] Stanisław Lem, *Wysoki Zamek* (Warszawa, 1968), 192.

[68] Jerzy Gierałtowski, *Wakacje kata* (Warszawa, 1970), 206.

[69] Isaac Babel, *The Collected Stories* (Cleveland, 1966), 331.

[70] Stojowski, op. cit., 48.

[71] Kuśniewicz, op. cit., 180.

[72] Ibidem, 184.

[73] Kazimierz Wyka, *Rzecz wyobraźni* (Warszawa, 1959), 273-282.

[74] Janina Kowalska, *Moje uniwersytety* (London, 1971), 255.

[75] Tadeusz Konwicki, op. cit., 385.

[76] Ibidem, 386.

Streszczenie

Czy raj utracony?
Obraz kresów we współczesnej literaturze polskiej

Kresy Wschodnie Rzeczypospolitej zajmowały ważne miejsce w historii i literaturze polskiej od wielu stuleci. Nierozdzielnie związane z twórczością Mickiewicza i Słowackiego, Orzeszkowej i Sienkiewicza kresy zmieniały swój obraz w literaturze w miarę postępujących zmian politycznych i terytorialnych. Po Drugiej Wojnie Światowej kresy przestały istnieć jako samodzielne pojęcie terytorialne wskutek włączenia ich do zachodnich republik ZSSR, żyją jednak w pamięci wielu pisarzy polskich, zwłaszcza tych, którzy związani są z nimi pochodzeniem. Po roku 1956 wielu pisarzy wprowadza motyw kresów jako zasadniczy temat swoich utworów powieściowych. Począwszy od Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza (ur. 1892) aż po Włodzimierza Odojewskiego (ur. 1930) kilkudziesięciu wybitnych autorów powraca w swoich utworach do tematyki kresowej, przy czym zwłaszcza pisarze krajowi osiągają wysoki poziom artystyczny tworząc nostalgiczny choć niejednokrotnie przerażający obraz życia na kresach w okresie międzywojennym i w latach wojny. Podczas gdy w powieściach pisarzy emigracyjnych obraz kresów występuje najczęściej w formie realistycznej relacji o silnym zabarwieniu politycznym pisarze krajowi sięgają do nowych środków ekspresji uzyskując zaskakująco nowe formy wyrazu artystycznego. Szczegółowe prześledzenie motywu i obrazu kresów we współczesnej literaturze polskiej stanowi zasadniczą część niniejszej pracy, będącej jak dotąd pierwszym szerokim studium tego zagadnienia.