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## (Review) Alienated Women: A Study on Polish Women's Fiction, 1848-1918

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train whistle here, an alarm bell there, a sound which punctuates lovemaking and remembering alike. Kliment's textual landscape is the language of sound, sense and image. In many ways it evokes the novel lyricism of Czech poetry of the 1940s. Yet, replete with words that resound deep from Czech linguistic roots, the text also deftly conveys the majestic richness of the Czech landscape and cultural heritage.

Robert Wechsler convincingly translates this unique style into English, rendering a subtle, sensuous text. For his English readers, rather than replicating Kliment's often highly polished, nuanced vocabulary or, at times, his sophisticated turns of phrase, Wechsler opts for clarity and fluidity; the result is a lucid, lithe, elegant version of the original. In many ways he contours Kliment's text in much the same way as Kliment traces the shape of the Czech landscape: by touch. At times he retains phrasing that "comically squeaked" (38) or Czech idiosyncrasies, such as "Christian names" (125) to remind us that this indeed is a translation; otherwise, caught up in the text's smoothness and Kliment's circling thoughts, we hardly even notice departures from the original. This edition also includes a revealing translator's preface where Wechsler points to his particular translation difficulties, an informative introduction to Kliment's oeuvre by writer Ivan Klíma and even a handy bookmark of Czech pronunciation—thus the book is perfect for a class syllabus. Certainly, it is also a brilliant testament to the consciousness of a time gone by, surely pertinent even today.

*Madelaine Hron, University of Michigan*

Grażyna Borkowska. *Alienated Women: A Study on Polish Women's Fiction, 1848–1918*. Trans. Ursula Phillips. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001. Index. 337 pp., \$47.95 (cloth).

As the first comprehensive work on Polish women's prose in English, Grażyna Borkowska's *Alienated Women: A Study on Polish Women's Fiction, 1845–1918* is a milestone in Slavic women's studies. A translation of Borkowska's 1996 book, *Cudzoziemki: Studia o polskiej prozie kobiecej*, it contains a wealth of information on dozens of Polish women writers from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, concentrating on the figures of Narcyza Żmichowska, Klementyna Tańska-Hoffmanowa, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Maria Wielopolska, Zofia Nałkowska and Maria Dąbrowska. As co-author of *Pisarki polskie od średniowiecza do współczesności (Polish Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present*, Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2000), author of acclaimed books on Orzeszkowa, Dąbrowska, Halina Poświatowska and others; and chief editor of the Polish literary journal, *Pamięnik Literacki*, Borkowska is a leading scholar in Poland today. It is with good reason that the publisher calls this work, her first comprehensive analysis of Polish women's writing, "a landmark study for students and scholars of Polish literature, women's studies and feminist theory."

The book is organized into eight chapters consisting mainly of previously published material, and is preceded by an introductory essay on Western feminist approaches to cultural analysis. Borkowska neither advocates nor employs any single approach, claiming that "in a work that represents one of the first substantial 'feminist' publications on Polish literature, such a choice would be a limitation" (18). The first four chapters explore the life and works of Żmichowska (1819–1876), concentrating on her involvement in the "Enthusiasts" (*Entuzjastki*) circle, her editorship of the *Works (Dziela)* of Klementyna Tańska-Hoffmanowa (1798–1845), the themes of her major fiction, and the posthumous significance of her contribution to Polish letters. Borkowska's most controversial claim in these chapters is that Żmichowska, a late Romantic writer, is "the first Polish Postmodernist," who prefigures that movement by a hundred years

through her "prose touched by a sense of artistic crisis . . . scornfully doubting its literary mission" and her "creation of something new out of traditional elements" (122).

Chapters 5 and 6 treat the writings of Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841–1910), exploring the formal and thematic features of her prose and including discussions of a dozen other women writers of her generation. Borkowska cites generational differences in attitudes regarding the women question: whereas Żmichowska and other women writers of her time portray positive mother-daughter relationships and highlight women's personal development, Orzeszkowa's generation presents a different model of femininity characterized by self-restraint, mimicry of the dominant male aesthetic, and a taboo treatment of the erotic. Chapter 7 turns to the writings of Zofia Nałkowska (1884–1954) and Maria Jehanne Wielopolska (1884–1940), focusing on the feminization of culture in Polish Modernism (255). Borkowska explores their responses to war, revolution, the writings of Frederich Nietzsche, the retreat from family and public life, and their attempts to forge a "third path" of feminine creativity between the spheres of emotion and intellect. The final chapter presents a brief but illuminating comparison of the diaries of Nałkowska and Dabrowska (1889–1965). Nałkowska, she claims, "does not express the objective truth about the world" in her writing but rather "her own emotional, intellectual and aesthetic attitude towards life" (317). Dabrowska, on the other hand, strives "to objectivize her own truth and create a lasting, unshakable foundation for her novels" (318–19).

With the exception of the table of contents and index, which have been updated to more accurately reflect the contents of the book, the English text is a direct translation of the original with no significant revisions. The Polish title, *Cudzoziemki*, echoes the title of Maria Kuncewiczowa's 1936 novel, *Cudzoziemka* [*A Foreign Woman*], an allusion that is unfortunately lost in translation. Whereas the Polish title reminds readers that Polish women writing under the partitions were foreigners in their own land, both as Poles in a stateless nation occupied by neighboring powers and as women in a primarily male cultural domain, the English title *Alienated Women* evokes a kind of psychological angst. The subtitle of the English text, *A Study on Polish Women's Fiction, 1845–1918*, gives a sense of the translation as a whole. The curious use of the preposition "on" in this context lends a non-native quality to the text, while the choice of the word "fiction" for the Polish "*prosa*" makes the English title a misnomer, for a good portion of the book treats narrative non-fiction. These problems, however, do not significantly detract from the book's overall quality, for the text is quite readable and the translation generally accurate. *Alienated Women* provides a long awaited introduction to Polish writing for non-specialists, while offering compelling analyses of the works of some of Poland's greatest writers to scholars in Slavic women's studies.

Andrea Lanoux, Connecticut College

Nikita Nankov. *V ogleдалnata staina: Sedem obraza na bulgarskiia literaturen selograd* (*In the Hall of Mirrors: Seven Images of Bulgarian Literary Hicktown*). Sofia: Izdatelstvo Sonm, 2001. 310 pp.

*In the Hall of Mirrors* encompasses essays written and reworked by Nikita Nankov from 1977 to 2000. They are works not without a certain flavour of methodological self-parody of two different paradigms. The first essay is written in the style of Bulgarian Structuralism of the late 1960s, similar to a "close reading" of a canonical Bulgarian work, "A Bulgarian Woman," by Ivan Vazov (1850–1921). The subsequent essays, written in the post-Structuralist era, deal with various aspects of Modernism: the nature of its development (the second essay), the translatability and transference of one culture into another (the third), the inevitable "blind-

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