

RAFAŁ MARCELI BLÜTH AS A CONRAD SCHOLAR¹

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Abstract: The aim of the present article is to present the achievements of Rafał Marceლი Blüth (1891-1939) in the field of Conrad scholarship. During the period between the First and Second World Wars, Blüth was a prominent Catholic intellectual and—along with Prof. Józef Ujejski and the well-known writer Maria Dąbrowska—was one of Poland’s foremost Conrad critics. As well as interpreting Conrad’s novels, Blüth researched the writer’s biography, particularly with regard to the role played by family tradition in the Polish eastern borderlands. He also put forward a detailed interpretation of the factors which might have influenced Conrad’s decision to leave Poland while he was still in his teens. Blüth’s greatest achievements as a literary critic include interpretations of novels such as *Victory*, *The Rover* and *Nostramo*, an attempt to classify the main characters of Conrad’s novels and a study comparing Conrad’s writing and view of the world with those of Dostoevsky.

Keywords: Rafał Marceლი Blüth, Polish Conrad scholarship between the wars, Joseph Conrad’s biography, Joseph Conrad’s writing, Joseph Conrad’s novels

Anyone who has but a cursory knowledge of the history of commentaries on the writing and biography of Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski in his partitioned homeland can say without a doubt that the first Polish manifestations of interest in Conrad date back to the 1890s. These found their expression in sparse translations, equally sparse articles of a general nature and—above all—the regrettable controversy over ‘the emigration of talent’, which in 1899 engaged the minds and pens of Wincenty Lutosławski, Tadeusz Żuk-Skarszewski and Eliza Orzeszkowa and which took place in the columns of the *Kraj* magazine (published in St. Petersburg). At that time, interest in Conrad was rather limited and was mainly confined to elite literary circles. Authors of sporadic texts on Conrad then included Stanisław Brzozowski, Maria Komornicka, Kazimierz Waliszewski and Wiktor Gomulicki. Things changed considerably following Conrad’s family trip to Cracow (and subsequently to Zakopane) in 1914—on the eve of the outbreak of the First World War. The somewhat confused Polish attitude towards Conrad at that time is aptly conveyed by the following anecdote.

¹ The first (Polish) version of this article—“Rafał Marceლი Blüth – badacz Conrada”—appeared in: R. M. Blüth, *Conradiana*, ed. S. Zabierowski, Warszawa: Biblioteka “Więzi”, 2017, pp. 5-40.

dote—related by the then very young author Maria Kuncewiczowa—on the subject of reading *Lord Jim* during the war:

I remember how, as I was returning a copy of *Lord Jim* to Żaneta, I muttered the words, “But ... what brings that Englishman to Zakopane?”

“Englishman?” cried Żaneta, “Korzeniowski?! But he’s Polish! He just writes in English under a pseudonym.” I can still recall that sudden surge of unrestrained pride: a Pole ... in Patusan ... Then I felt a twinge of sorrow: a careerist!²

The situation improved dramatically after Poland regained its independence, mainly thanks to the highly esteemed novelist Stefan Żeromski, who was probably the most important person to have met Conrad in Zakopane during the latter’s enforced sojourn there in 1914. In his preface to a newly published Polish edition of Conrad’s collected works, Żeromski wrote:

Every effort must be made to make the entire English writings of Joseph Conrad into Polish originals and every effort must be made to make this collected edition into a salutation—a salutation that is worthy of us Polish men of letters—sent to the great writer from the land in which his cradle stood.³

On another occasion—after Conrad’s death—Żeromski wrote:

Because of our extraordinary indifference to matters of culture, we have done nothing to uncover and highlight the Polish facet of Conrad’s spirit. We have neither his biography, nor the history of the nest from which he flew out into the wide world. Nor do we have any authoritative study of this truly remarkable writing. However, this literary phenomenon—this extraordinary phenomenon of world literature—cannot be fully appreciated without taking into account its Polish aspect.⁴

Between the two world wars, it was the editorial board of the *Wiadomości Literackie* weekly magazine—together with its circle of poets, critics and journalists—that did most to raise the Polish reading public’s awareness of and interest in Conrad’s writing and biography. The special commemorative issue which was published after the author’s death (1924, № 33) bears eloquent testimony to this. The *Wiadomości Literackie* weekly carried many articles discussing Conrad’s life and work, as well as his place on the literary map.

It was only some years later, however, that Conrad and his writing became the subject of scholarly reflection in Poland. Roman Dyboski—the country’s foremost English scholar—published a whole series of articles in the press and in collected studies. Lectures on Conrad were given by Stefan Kołaczkowski at the Jagiellonian

² M. Kuncewiczowa, “Odkrycie Patusanu” [in:] *Conrad żywy*, ed. W. Tarnawski, London: B. Świdorski, 1957, p. 51.

³ S. Żeromski, “Joseph Conrad – autor rodak” [in:] *idem, Pisma literackie i krytyczne*, ed. S. Pigoń, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1963, p. 149.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

University and by Józef Ujejski at the University of Warsaw, where they had an immense following. As one of Prof. Ujejski's students recalls:

Prof. Ujejski's lectures at Warsaw University during the 1933/1934 academic year made a deep impression on me at the time. The professor's strong individuality was closely intertwined with that of the author who was the subject of his lectures. I listened as if spellbound, remarking that this great man was telling us about someone who was a genius. And I was by no means alone in this. The lectures on Conrad were given in the university's great lecture hall, which was absolutely packed. There were even students perched precariously in the window recesses.⁵

In 1937 Ujejski presented the results of his research in a study entitled *O Konradzie Korzeniowskim (On Conrad Korzeniowski)*. This book monumentalized Conrad as an unquestionably great author. In the professor's own words:

[...] the impression which Conrad normally made in everyday life was not at odds with what his readers imagined him to be like, [and so] they were not disappointed. [...] it was awe-inspiring and perhaps in some way disconcerting.⁶

Ujejski's book aroused great public interest, as his lectures had done. Readers' questionnaires listed it as one of the most interesting books of the year.

A different and highly original approach to Conrad's biography and writing was put forward by Rafał Marcei Blüth, who was one of the most interesting intellectuals of the interwar period, being a member of the elite Catholic circles that were associated with the "Verbum" journal and with the Institute for the Blind in Laski. He was "a literary historian, a literary critic and a columnist writing on social, religious and political issues."⁷

In his Conradian studies, Blüth mainly concentrated on the author's biography and quite early on became interested in the circumstances which surrounded what turned out to be Conrad's permanent and momentous departure from (partitioned) Poland in 1874.

He was by no means the first Polish man of letters to examine this issue. On the occasion of Conrad's death in 1924, Stefan Żeromski had written:

This impulse to look for something different—which ejected him for ever from his native land when he was still a young man—may be placed alongside the grim and deeply tragic nature of his childhood experiences. In those days he was by no means the only Pole to escape from that torture chamber. If Mieczysław Romanowski, that powerful and impassioned poet of the January Uprising, could cry out in despair:

Orły, sokoły, dajcie mi skrzydła!
Gruz i popioły—ziemia mi zbrzydła,
Ja bym chciał w górze pohulać z wami
I tam na chmurze żyć piorunami ...

⁵ M. Młynarska [M. Tarnawska], "Lord Jim w powstaniu warszawskim" [in:] *Conrad żywy, op. cit.*, p. 264.

⁶ J. Ujejski, *O Konradzie Korzeniowskim*, Warszawa: Dom Książki Polskiej, 1937, p. 285.

⁷ P. Nowaczyński, "Wstęp" [in:] R. M. Blüth, *Pisma literackie*, ed. P. Nowaczyński, Kraków: Znak, 1987, p. 7.

[...]
 A tu żałobą pokryte doły ...
 Dajcie mi skrzydła, orły, sokoły!

Eagles and falcons, lend me your wings!
 Rubble and ashes—the land repels me,
 I would soar with you aloft
 And there live among thunderbolts on a cloud ...

[...]
 Here below all is shrouded in mourning ...
 Lend me your wings, eagles and falcons! [Transl. R. E. P.]

... then what are we to say of the feelings of this boy, who on all sides was surrounded by graves?⁸

A few years later, the issue of Conrad's departure from Poland was the subject of a discussion in the columns of the *Wiadomości Literackie* magazine. It was started by one of the magazine's leading literary critics—Karol Wiktor Zawodziński—who put forward the intriguing hypothesis that Conrad's departure indicated an "excess" of patriotism and not—as Eliza Orzeszkowa had maintained—a lack of it. Poland's subjugation—Zawodziński argued—was a psychological affront to Conrad, who headed for Britain because it was Britain that had opposed Russia during the Russo-Japanese War—a risky hypothesis, as Zawodziński himself freely admitted:

I have no certainty that this or any other hypothesis of mine will be borne out by the documentary evidence. Indeed, I expect to be shown apparent arguments to the contrary. Be that as it may, I believe that the basic line of reasoning which I have sketched out holds true. At the very least, my hypotheses bring some order to our understanding of the life of this exceptional Pole who was destined to become a great English writer.⁹

Zawodziński's hypotheses were questioned by Artur Prędski, who pointed out that it would be of greater value to ask not why Conrad had decided to leave Poland, but why he wrote his novels in English. Prędski suggested that Zawodziński held the anachronistic conviction that patriotic feelings could be a source of literature and accused him of having no grounds for projecting the experiences of his own generation—that of the Polish Legions—onto the psyche of Konrad Korzeniowski.¹⁰

It was at this point that Blüth joined the discussion. In an article published in the "Polska Zbrojna" journal he attempted to explain the reasons Conrad could have had for leaving Poland, putting forward the hypothesis that it was Society itself that was largely to blame for Conrad's departure—not only that section of Society whose patriotism was 'excessive' and which continued to support the ideals of the 1863 January Uprising, but also the opposing camp, i.e. the conservative Cracow 'Stańczyks':

⁸ S. Żeromski, "Joseph Conrad – autor rodak" [in:] *idem, Pisma literackie i krytyczne, op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁹ K. W. Zawodziński, "Nieuwzględnione motywy decyzji życiowej Conrada", *Wiadomości Literackie* 1927, no. 39.

¹⁰ A. Prędski, "W sprawie Conrada", *Wiadomości Literackie* 1928, no. 12.

Let us recall for a moment the feelings that reigned in Cracow during the years 1865-1880—hat disproportionate, “excessive” condemnation of madcap insurgents. After all, today we can afford to be “moderate”. And let us put ourselves in the position of a young schoolboy whose mind was daily confronted with the sight of the dying exile who was his father.¹¹

Blüth’s continual preoccupation with the controversy over Conrad’s decision to leave Poland is testified by a passing remark which he made in an article (published in France) on the links between Conrad and Dostoevsky:

One day—in a book on Conrad’s youth—I hope to be able to explain Józef Korzeniowski’s ‘sudden exit’ in 1874 by drawing on arguments that are completely objective.¹²

He returned to the subject for the last time a few years later, in a lengthy article published in the *Verbum* journal. The article had been inspired by Ujejski’s study and was in part a counter-proposition to the latter’s views:

Ujejski’s book is first and foremost and above all else the work of a witness and a devotee, i.e. a person who has been deeply and extensively moved by the writing of the author he is discussing—a person who by means of intuitive guesswork has in his reading caught a glimpse of the author himself and has thus been won over in spirit.¹³

Elsewhere, he deemed it necessary to add:

We may treat Conrad’s greatness as an axiom of his Polishness, but we cannot treat him as an author in such an ‘axiomatic’ manner, for this is an area that can and must be examined only by means of psychology and scholarship—not faith.¹⁴

He was of the opinion that Conrad’s traumatic childhood experiences had played a key role both in the shaping of his personality and in his decision to leave Poland:

As we know, Konrad Korzeniowski spent several years of his childhood in exile with his parents—in what for him must have been terrible conditions. What we know about the way in which those Polish exiles lived under the missionary leadership of Apollo Korzeniowski—in an artificial atmosphere of asceticism and seclusion [...]—provides us with ample grounds for supposing that in such conditions the boy may well have developed certain psychological problems. I myself would call that negative mental state—which was fraught with consequences for the future—a ‘loneliness complex’.¹⁵

The time Conrad later spent in Galicia did not substantially alter the situation. On the contrary, the death of his consumptive father merely compounded his feelings of loneliness. Blüth was of the opinion that the boy’s uncle and guardian Tadeusz

¹¹ R. M. Blüth, “Ucieczka Conrada-Korzeniowskiego”, *Polska Zbrojna* 1928, no. 93.

¹² R. M. Blüth, “Joseph Conrad a Dostojewski. Problem zbrodni i kary”, transl. W. Kwiatkowski [in:] *idem, Pisma literackie, op. cit.*, p. 220.

¹³ R. M. Blüth, “O tragicznej decyzji krakowskiej Konrada Korzeniowskiego. Parę myśli i uwag w związku z książką profesora Ujejskiego *O Konradzie Korzeniowskim*” [in:] *idem, Pisma literackie, op. cit.*, p. 239.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

Bobrowski—a vehement critic of the 1863 January Uprising—played a particularly negative role in the shaping of the orphan’s views. Indeed, Blüth was the first scholar to question the veracity of some of the information given by Bobrowski in his *Memoir* (*Pamiętnik*). Until then, Bobrowski’s account had been treated as being perfectly reliable by Conrad scholars as well as by Stefan Żeromski. Blüth accused Bobrowski of having created a false image of Conrad’s parents, claiming that Conrad’s mother—i.e. his own sister Ewa—had voluntarily gone into exile with her husband Apollo, whereas she had in fact been sentenced with him by the same tsarist court. Bobrowski also claimed that towards the end of his life Apollo had suffered from depression and had ordered his manuscripts to be burnt, whereas they had in fact been deposited in the Jagiellonian Library. Bobrowski even suggested that the death of his brother Stefan had really been an act of suicide following the crushing of the 1863 January Uprising (of which Stefan Bobrowski had been one of the leaders) because—he argued—his brother’s severe short sight would in normal circumstances never have allowed him to fight a duel with Adam Grabowski. Blüth’s conclusion was as follows:

Bobrowski saw Ewa, Stefan and—indirectly—that sickly and badly shaken child as having been victims of Apollo’s ghastly Romanticism—an obsession which had taken precedence even over the passionate love Apollo had felt for his wife and the affection he had felt for his child. I myself strongly suspect that below the threshold of Conrad Korzeniowski’s consciousness there was a somewhat similar resentment—borne of his own rebellion and the insinuations of his uncle—towards the father whom he had adored as a child.¹⁶

Several elements of Blüth’s portrayal of Tadeusz Bobrowski have been endorsed by other Conrad scholars—most notably Zdzisław Najder.¹⁷

Blüth was of the opinion that the difficult situation in which the young Konradek found himself when—after the death of his father—he came under the ideological influence of his uncle was in later years reflected in the novels he wrote as Joseph Conrad. According to Blüth, the image of the father which has formed in the mind of Axel Heyst—the main character of *Victory*—can also tell us why the young Conrad decided to leave his native land. Writing about Conrad’s departure, Blüth assures us that ...

It was no ‘quixotic’ impulse, but a conscious break with the whole paternal legacy that tormented him—with the whole world of national struggles and national tragedies, if not with the world of European culture.¹⁸

Such an interpretation is questioned by Zdzisław Najder in his own biography of Conrad:

Korzeniowski’s departure from Poland is the most hotly discussed turning point in his biography. What were the motives for this decision? Above all, we must remember that it was Tadeusz Bobrowski who decided that his ward should leave. The latter could only ask or insist. So why

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

¹⁷ Cf. Z. Najder, “Conrad i Bobrowski” [in:] *idem, Nad Conradem*, Warszawa: PIW, 1965, pp. 46-69.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

did he ask? And why was he allowed to leave the country before finishing grammar school? Conrad's biographers have put forward several conjectures, not all of which would seem to be plausible [...] Even less convincing are attempts to ascribe to him a desire to flee the atmosphere of national celebration which then reigned in Cracow—a life dominated by continual reminders of a magnificent past—or a desire to make “a conscious break with the whole paternal legacy that tormented him—with the whole world of national struggles and national tragedies, if not with the world of European culture”.¹⁹

Blüth's most important text on the subject of Conrad's biography was a study entitled *Two Borderland Families* (*Dwie rodziny kresowe*), which was published just before the outbreak of World War II. This is a sociological and ideological study of the Bobrowski and Korzeniowski families—from which Conrad's parents came—seen in the context of the political and social changes which affected the Polish nobility in those Polish lands which had been incorporated into tsarist Russia. The portrayal of the Bobrowski family is marred by a conspicuous blemish, for according to Blüth, Conrad's maternal grandfather was rather unpleasant in that he had all the traits of a *nouveau riche* and a careerist:

Despite what Tadeusz says about the unimpeachable probity and national loyalty of his father (notwithstanding his underscored minor foibles), I must raise one objection. In establishing his own social position and that of his family, Tadeusz's ambitious father Józef Bobrowski certainly had no compunction in pulling as many strings as he could. We need only look at the professions which he chose for his sons. He destined two of them for careers in the army and the third—Tadeusz—not for the simple profession of court official or barrister, but for the post of senior ministerial advisor in St. Petersburg. Thinking in practical terms, he could not have contemplated achieving such ends without being able to count on the covert protection of friends in high places. He was not disappointed.²⁰

Blüth stresses Józef Bobrowski's “aggressive worldliness and the somewhat arbitrary self-confidence of a man who has his eyes fixed on goals which are very much down-to-earth and which he is totally bent on achieving.”²¹ His wife, however—Conrad's grandmother Teofila Bobrowska (née Biberstein-Pilchowska)—was completely different, being highly intelligent and—unlike her indifferent husband—deeply religious. On the basis of the sources that were at his disposal, Blüth argued that:

Józef Bobrowski and his wife also differed in their attitude towards their native land, i.e. in the matter of patriotism. Being wary of anything to do with emotions, Józef Bobrowski at the very most remained loyal to the national cause in order not to antagonize the people he lived with. His wife, who was related to the Paradowskis and who was even more closely related to Pilchowski (a supporter of the political reforms advocated by Szymon Konarski), was an ardent patriot.²²

Blüth was of the opinion that after Józef Bobrowski's death a greater role in making family decisions fell to Uncle Mikołaj and Aunt Petronela, who hoped to marry

¹⁹ Z. Najder, *Życie Josepha Conrada-Korzeniowskiego*, vol. I, Lublin: Gaudium, 2006, p. 77.

²⁰ R. M. Blüth, “Dwie rodziny kresowe. (Z kroniki rodzinnej Josepha Conrada)”, *Ateneum* 1939, no. 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

Ewa Bobrowska off to a wealthy person in order to make a substantial improvement to the family's financial standing. As a result, ...

Though very much in love with each other, Ewa and Apollo suffered greatly until they finally managed to overcome the objections of the Bobrowski family [...] and were married in 1856—after an engagement that had lasted for seven years.²³

In order to retrace the vicissitudes of this engagement, Blüth compared various sources which expressed quite different points of view: Tadeusz Bobrowski's *Memoir*, a booklet entitled *Malo znany poeta (A Little-Known Poet, 1870)* written by Apollo's friend Stefan Buszczyński, poems written by Apollo—including those to be found in Teofila Bobrowska's *Sztambuch (Album)*—and Apollo's play entitled *Komedia (A Comedy, 1856)*. In a biographical essay, Blüth puts forward his own quite daring interpretation of the latter:

Komedia—our Romantic poet's first attempt at writing a play—does not entirely deserve to be seen as an unoriginal work, being no more than an imitation of Griboyedov's famous Russian satirical comedy entitled *The Woes of Wit*. Apollo's extensive borrowings and the copying of whole passages—and the most important ones at that—would seem to show that in reality *Komedia* was meant to be a paraphrase of the Russian play, albeit adapted to local Polish social realities.²⁴

Years later, Blüth's opinion regarding the originality of Apollo Korzeniowski's play was echoed by Tadeusz Mikulski:

It is neither an imitation, nor an adaptation (even in the sense of literary dependency, as was only to be expected in the case of Polish Enlightenment drama). The plot, the character of the Secretary, the character of Lydia, the clear social target of the accusation levelled by the play and its justification, the only too authentic portrayal of contemporary social realities—all these taken together give Korzeniowski's play the quality of genuine originality.²⁵

Blüth put forward the original hypothesis that apart from the theme of social satire (borrowed from Griboyedov), the fortunes of Henry and Lydia are a camouflaged portrayal of the story of Apollo and Ewa's love for each other.

In his discussion of the Korzeniowski family, Blüth drew attention to the fact that the way in which it is portrayed in Tadeusz Bobrowski's *Memoir* is clearly one-sided. This becomes apparent when we compare it with Stefan Buszczyński's booklet on Apollo, which tells of the Korzeniowski family's long-standing tradition of exemplary patriotism. Before taking part in Polish national uprisings, Conrad's grandfather Teodor Korzeniowski had fought with distinction at the battle of Raszyn. The Korzeniowski family had lost its property not as a result of reckless extravagance—as Bobrowski implied—but as a result of confiscations carried out by the partitioning power.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ T. Mikulski, "Przedmowa" [in:] A. Korzeniowski, *Komedia*, Warszawa: PIW, 1954, p. 13.

As far as its attitude towards the Polish national cause was concerned, the Bobrowski family was clearly divided. The father and the three elder sons were conformists (if not careerists), while the mother, the youngest son Stefan and the surviving daughter Ewa were—as later developments (not noted by Blüth) amply showed—ardent patriots. As the patriotism of the poet Apollo Korzeniowski was equally ardent, his marriage to Ewa Bobrowska (which her father and her elder brother Tadeusz had opposed) was a great success. On the birth of their son ...

Faithful to their Romantic ideals, the happy couple chose the symbolic name of Konrad for their child. They also chose the worthiest of godfathers for him—J. I. Kraszewski—who at the time was seen as a leading cultural figure.²⁶

Blüth's study was of immense importance for research into Conrad's biography, as it answered Żeromski's call for more work to be done by Polish scholars to reconstruct the cultural and social "nest" from which Conrad had flown out into the world. His reasoning was based on a critical examination and comparison of surviving written records. He was also the first scholar to point out that Conrad had made use of his uncle's *Memoir* while writing his autobiographical volume entitled *Some Reminiscences / A Personal Record*. Years later, Zdzisław Najder continued and further developed this line of research in a study devoted to Tadeusz Bobrowski, showing just how much Conrad had drawn on the contents of the *Memoir* in some of his own works. Najder observes that ...

Conrad developed ordinary thoughts and descriptions recorded by Bobrowski, sharpening their import, adding comments and digressions that were either lyrical or amusing.²⁷

Unfortunately, Blüth's study—believed by Polish Conrad scholars to have been part of a greater whole entitled *Historia opuszczonego gniazda (The Story of a Deserted Nest)*—did not have its intended impact, as it was published just before the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1957 it was cited by Roman Taborski in his biography of Apollo Korzeniowski.²⁸ References to Blüth's ideas were also made by Paweł Jasienica in his novel *Biały front (The White Front, 1953)* and in his historical essay entitled *Dwie drogi (Two Ways, 1960)*. It was only in the 1960s, however, that Blüth's study was cited by Polish Conrad scholars, among whom were Zdzisław Najder and Róża Jabłkowska.²⁹

Blüth's other fascination was with Conrad's fiction. This dated back to 1928, when the "Dom Książki Polskiej" publishing house began work on an edition of Conrad's collected works. Blüth published reviews of individual volumes in the *Polska Zbrojna* newspaper, which itself was published by the Polish military. The first novel which he reviewed was *Victory*:

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Z. Najder, "Conrad i Bobrowski", *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

²⁸ R. Taborski, *Apollo Korzeniowski, ostatni dramatopisarz romantyczny*, Wrocław: Zakład im. Ossolińskich, 1957.

²⁹ S. Zabierowski, *Conrad w Polsce. Wybrane problemy recepcji krytycznej w latach 1896-1969*, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1971.

Despite its poverty of ideas, this novel is a tremendous anti-Romantic broadside. Conrad-Korzeniowski reaches down to the subconscious strata, so to speak, where Romantic attitudes towards life have their origin. The subject of the novel is the real life of an unreal person—real life, because the author gives us an account of the direct experiences of Heyst, i.e. his everyday life in a port and on a desert island.³⁰

Blüth also drew a striking parallel between Conrad and Stanisław Brzozowski, both of whom had a critical attitude towards Romanticism as well as being fascinated by English culture. On the occasion of the publication (in that same year) of Polish translations of *Within the Tides* and *Tales of Hearsay*, Blüth's reviews discussed the question of evil in Conrad's writing:

Evil lurks everywhere. In Conrad's fiction evil is usually ready to pounce on you from behind a corner. To begin with, everything is almost idyllic. Then, all of a sudden—like the devilish canopy in *The Inn of the Two Witches*—it descends on you, silently but surely smothering you to death.³¹

However, there is a zone from which evil is barred. As Blüth explained:

The sea plays a bizarre role in Conrad's novels. It is a region where Man comes face to face with Divine Providence. Out at sea, evil is totally defeated. Back here on land, however, it is only partially defeated. Clever rogues perish, but those good characters who in their naivety dare to fight against them suffer terrible blows. The result is a frightful battleground.³²

Blüth's originality also lay in the fact that in discussing the collection of stories entitled *Tales of Hearsay*, he was critical of *Prince Roman*, which by other scholars had been seen as a manifestation of Conrad's Polish patriotism:

I see another lack of true epic detachment in the famous story *Prince Roman*. All in all, though, it is a cold work. Roman Sanguszko's nobility is quite simply ... overly pompous.³³

The last of Conrad's works which Blüth discussed as a literary critic was the novel *Nostromo*, which had also come out in Polish translation in 1928 and which he valued highly:

Nostromo is one of the most profound novels of our time. Its theme is the process whereby culture is born from the transformations undergone by elemental force in nature and in Man.³⁴

Blüth would also seem to interpret the novel's basic subject in an original way:

Nostromo is an epic set in a silver mine in Sulaco, for in this new novel it is the silver mine that is the main character—the principal actor. People are merely forces that interact with this

³⁰ R. M. Blüth, *Tragizm romantyzmu w "Zwycięstwie" Conrada-Korzeniowskiego*.

³¹ R. M. Blüth, "Pesymizm Conrada", *Polska Zbrojna* 1928, no. 126.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ R. M. Blüth, "Nostromo Conrada", *Polska Zbrojna* 1929, no. 47.

elemental force. Like the sea and the naturally occurring treasure, it draws people and their personal problems into the vortex of its life, imposing its own fate on them.³⁵

Later, in the columns of the *Głos Prawdy* weekly, Blüth returned to his discussion of *Nostromo*, noting that it is a unique synthesis of Romantic and Positivist elements:

In some strange, apparently incomprehensible manner, Conrad combines Prus's positivism with the Romantic cult of heroism and the Romantic predilection for adventure, risk and conquest.³⁶

Writing on the history of literature, Blüth would seem to have developed and expanded some of the ideas which he had earlier sketched out in his articles on Conrad. His study entitled *O tragicznej decyzji krakowskiej Konrada Korzeniowskiego* (*On the tragic decision taken by Konrad Korzeniowski in Cracow*) is a continuation of his article entitled *Ucieczka Konrada-Korzeniowskiego* (*Conrad-Korzeniowski's Escape*), while the forerunner of Blüth's study entitled *Samburański Hamlet* (*The Hamlet of Samburan*) was his article entitled *Tragizm romantyzmu w "Zwycięstwie" Konrada-Korzeniowskiego* (*Tragic Romanticism in Conrad-Korzeniowski's "Victory"*).

Blüth's views on Conrad took shape during his sojourn in Paris, which lasted from September 1929 to April 1931 and which was made possible by a scholarship awarded by the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education (on the recommendation of Waclaw Borowy). The fruits of this period spent in Paris were a biography of Conrad entitled *Historia opuszczonego gniazda* (*The Story of a Deserted Nest*)—which answered Żeromski's call for a "Polish" biography of Conrad—and a study comparing Conrad and Dostoevsky. As Piotr Nowaczyński, the diligent editor of Blüth's *Literary Works* (*Pisma literackie*) relates:

For some unknown reason, *Historia opuszczonego gniazda* (*The Story of a Deserted Nest*)—a biographical novel (written in Paris) on the subject of Conrad's youth spent in Poland—was never published. Blüth returned to the subject just before the outbreak of war, but only managed to publish an introductory section entitled *Two Borderland Families. Joseph Conrad's Family Chronicle* (*Dwie rodziny kresowe. Z kroniki rodzinnej Josepha Conrada – 1939*).³⁷

There is some confusion here. Although Nowaczyński writes about a "biographical novel", Blüth would seem to have attempted to present the Polish section of Conrad's biography as a scholarly work, as is shown by the study entitled *Two Borderland Families*. The matter cannot be resolved one way or the other, however, as—according to the testimony of Blüth's son Prof. Tomasz Szarota—all the critic's manuscripts perished during the wartime occupation of Poland.³⁸ Be that as it may, that part of Blüth's study which has come down to us has certainly been an important (if not always sufficiently appreciated) contribution to research into Conrad's Polish biography.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ R. M. Blüth, "Epopcja kopalniana *Nostromo*", *Głos Prawdy* 1929, no. 289.

³⁷ P. Nowaczyński, "Wstęp" [in:] R. M. Blüth: *Pisma literackie, op. cit.*, p. 13.

³⁸ T. Szarota, "Mój Ojciec" [in:] R. M. Blüth, "*Likwidacja leninowskiej elity*" oraz inne pisma sowie-tologiczne 1933-1938, Warszawa: Towarzystwo "Więź", 2016, p. 276.

Blüth's comparative study entitled *Joseph Conrad et Dostoïevski (Joseph Conrad and Dostoevsky)*³⁹—published in Paris in the monthly *La Vie Intellectuelle* journal deserves particular mention, as it was then a pioneering work in the Polish scholarly world. Being an expert on the history of Russian literature, Blüth proved to be more than equal to the task. He took as his point of departure Joseph Conrad's well-known aversion to Fiodor Dostoevsky, the two sources of which were—in his opinion—national antagonism and literary rivalry. According to Blüth, the antipathy which Conrad felt towards Dostoevsky was basically of a cultural nature:

Conrad is of the opinion that the Russian mentality, which manifests itself so forcefully in Dostoevsky's works, cannot and above all should not become part of Western culture. Being a source of irrational instincts, it leads to anarchy and chaos. The West could not assimilate it without paying a terrible price.⁴⁰

Taking Conrad's *Lord Jim* and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* as examples for comparison, Blüth was particularly interested in examining the questions of morality that are raised in the works of both authors. The biographies of the two authors formed the basis of Blüth's inquiry, Conrad's novel being a settling of accounts for having deserted his native land, while it was Dostoevsky's spell of penal servitude that determined his ideological transformation. Juxtaposing these two selected novels, Blüth compared the attitudes of their respective main characters:

In *Jim* we have a minimum of clarity of awareness, while in *Raskolnikov* we have a frightful excess of reason. The crime of the former is borne of imagination that is undisciplined and not curbed by reason, while that of the latter, who is nothing but intellect, is borne of mercilessly logical reasoning. In each case, the source of guilt lies in a monstrous imbalance of mental faculties that has been *carefully nurtured*, for this is the part played by free will, which entails responsibility. But whereas this responsibility is fully accepted by Conrad's main character—whose awareness of it, I would venture to say, is all too acute—it is quite simply evaded by Dostoevsky's main character, who resorts to a disturbing expedient.⁴¹

According to Blüth, what Conrad and Dostoevsky had in common was their view of Man's inner self:

Dostoevsky and Conrad share the same starting point, i.e. a feeling for the mysterious chaos that reigns in the human soul—that elemental, irrational and blind force which exists outside the sphere of consciousness. Conrad, whose character and culture makes him a thoroughly Western intellectual, sees this elemental force as an enemy—a lifeless obstacle which must be overcome, for it is only by fighting it that human dignity can be achieved. Dostoevsky, whose religiosity and mysticism makes him a thoroughly Eastern intuitionist, sees this sphere of the subconscious as being nothing more than an important part of spiritual life.⁴²

³⁹ R. M. Blüth, "Joseph Conrad et Dostoïevski", *La Vie Intellectuelle* 1931, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 320-339.

⁴⁰ R. M. Blüth, "Joseph Conrad a Dostojevski. Problem zbrodni i kary", transl. W. Kwiatkowski [in:] *idem, Pisma literackie, op. cit.*, pp. 212-213.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 223.

Blüth's lasting achievement is his reading of significant passages of Conrad's writing as polemics against that of Dostoevsky. This applied not only to *Lord Jim*. Indeed, Blüth planned to investigate other links between the two authors:

The scope of this article does not allow me to proceed further by comparing *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Victory*, which are two fundamental works. If I were to take up this subject, I might—by way of contrast—show the mental profile of each of these two authors in a clearer and stronger light.⁴³

Although Blüth's interest in possible comparisons between Conrad and Dostoevsky was then something quite unusual in Poland, it should not surprise us, as Blüth was very well acquainted with the history of Russian literature and with the work of Russian literary critics, some of whom were very much preoccupied with the links between Conrad and Dostoevsky. The subject had been taken up by critics such as Ivan Aksionov, Sergei Bobrov and Viktor Krasilnikov. Blüth himself cites the work of Evgeny Lann, who was then the most distinguished of Russian Conrad scholars.⁴⁴

As far as we know, no one in Poland continued Blüth's line of research during the period between the wars, though the subject of the links between Conrad and Dostoevsky was taken up by émigré Polish scholars and critics after World War II on the occasion of Wit Tarnawski's 1955 translation of Conrad's novel entitled *Under Western Eyes*. Those who took part in the ensuing discussion included Wit Tarnawski, Stanisław Vincenz, W. Dołęga, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński and J. P. Dąbrowski.⁴⁵ Much later, the Polish émigré poet and scholar Andrzej Busza published a dissertation entitled "Rhetoric and Ideology in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*" in which he also examined Conrad's literary polemic against Dostoevsky.⁴⁶ After the Polish October "Thaw" of 1956, which saw a relative relaxation of State censorship, Zdzisław Najder published an article entitled *Conrad a Dostojewski (Conrad and Dostoevsky)* in the *Życie Literackie* magazine.⁴⁷ It is worth noting that in none of these Polish contributions to the discussion on the links between Conrad and Dostoevsky—mostly written in the style of an essay—is there any mention of Rafał Blüth.

The Evolution of Heroism in Conrad's Work (Ewolucja heroizmu u Conrada)—published alongside articles by Julian Krzyżanowski, Witold Chwałewik and Jan Durr in an issue of the *Ruch Literacki* magazine that was devoted to Conrad—was another significant literary study written by Blüth.⁴⁸ This special issue also carried

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁴⁴ Cf. W. Borysow, *Joseph Conrad w Rosji. Recepcja Conrada w krytyce rosyjskiej*, transl. W. Bieńkowska, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1987.

⁴⁵ W. Tarnawski, S. Vincenz, "Czy Conrad był antyrosyjski?", *Kultura* (Paris) 1957, no. 4; G. Herling-Grudziński, "W oczach Conrada", *Kultura* (Paris) 1957, no. 10; J. P. Dąbrowski, "Conrad a wielka trójka literatury rosyjskiej" [in:] *Conrad żywy*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ A. Busza, "Rhetoric and Ideology in Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*" [in:] *Joseph Conrad: A Commemoration*, ed. N. Sherry, London: Macmillan, 1976.

⁴⁷ Z. Najder, "Conrad a Dostojewski", *Życie Literackie* 1963, no. 8.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Ruch Literacki* 1932, no. 8.

Blüth's transcription of Apollo Korzeniowski's poem entitled *A Song for the Day of Baptism* (*Piosenka na dzień chrztu świętego*), the manuscript of which was held by the Jagiellonian Library.⁴⁹ Here we might add that Blüth also published transcripts of parts of the manuscripts of some of Apollo Korzeniowski's patriotic poetry.⁵⁰

At this stage, Blüth was fascinated by the evolution of Conrad's prose—and particularly by the transformations undergone by his main characters, which he classified in accordance with the typology suggested by the classics scholar Tadeusz Zieliński in his thesis entitled *Filhelleńskie poematy Byrona* (*Byron's Philhellenic Poems*).⁵¹ Zieliński distinguished three types of main character: (1) the heroic type, who is totally devoted to one idea which—if it fails—brings about his demise; (2) the daemonic or superhero type, who goes to the utmost extremes; (3) the Titanic type, who—being quite the reverse—exhibits an all-round development of human personality. Blüth was of the opinion that this typology was entirely applicable to the interpretation of Conrad's novels:

The inner evolution of Conrad's fiction (here I am thinking of the dry-land group of novels) followed [...] a pattern that is very reminiscent of that of Byron: from the heroic via the daemonic to the titanic. Indeed, it may well be that this fundamental inner transformation is more easily discernible in Conrad's work than in that of Byron.⁵²

According to Blüth, the motif of heroism in the case of the main character in Conrad's various novels evolved in accordance with the following pattern:

[...] from Almayer's tragic dream of return, through Jim's culpable irremediability, Heyst's rebellious cosmic solitude and Lingard's entanglement in other people's problems to the return that is made possible by expiatory death for Peyrol's piracy.⁵³

Lord Jim may serve as an example of the heroic character. As Blüth argues:

The ending of *Lord Jim*—that triumph of death—may be treated as “idealisation going beyond the bounds of human frontiers”, signifying a daemonic attitude (according to Prof. Zieliński). In *Lord Jim*'s heroic acceptance of death there is something non-human—at first sight even something of Byron's pose.⁵⁴

And Blüth has this to say of the main character of *Heart of Darkness*:

A clear example of the daemonic personality is Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. Characteristically, Conrad's attitude towards this character is somewhat ambiguous. At one and the same time he makes him into a monster who tyrannizes the black people and a heroic individual who is capable of total self-denial.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ R. M. Blüth, “Ze spuścizny poetyckiej Apollona Nałęcz-Korzeniowskiego”, *Ateneum* 1939, no. 3.

⁵¹ T. Zieliński, “Filhelleńskie poematy Byrona”, *Wiedza i Życie* 1928, pp. 8-9.

⁵² R. M. Blüth, “Ewolucja heroizmu u Conrada. Rzut charakterologiczny”, *Ruch Literacki* 1932, no. 8, p. 231.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Blüth was of the opinion that the novel *Victory* played a decisive role in the evolution of the Conradian main character, who in this novel can be classified as belonging to the Titanic type. According to Blüth, it was the political situation and above all Poland's recovery of her independence that was mostly responsible for the appearance of optimistic themes in Conrad's writing, which ultimately broke with its pessimistic outlook in *The Shadow Line* and *The Rescue*. The character of Peyrol in *The Rover* represents the final stage in this evolution:

Conrad's pirate has become ready for his well-nigh Titanic death. He alone—the simplest of men—has gained what has eluded all those who, taking a pride in their indifference or romantically entangled in other people's problems, have roamed foreign lands—either voluntarily or after being banished into wildernesses and hearts of darkness—to unknown rivers and coasts which they themselves have discovered. The death for which he has now prepared himself is indisputably triumphant. He has also earned a death crowned with the honours of knighthood: formerly a pirate, but now a heroic cannoneer fighting for Napoleon.⁵⁶

Blüth believed that the factors which were behind this evolution in the main characters of Conrad's novels were certain elements of the writer's biography, the most important of which were: the accusation which Eliza Orzeszkowa levelled against Conrad in her article entitled *The Emigration of Talent* (*Emigracja zdolności*); Conrad's answer to this accusation, i.e. *Lord Jim* (as other Polish critics had surmised before Blüth); the outbreak of the First World War, to which we owe *Victory*; Poland's recovery of her independence, which gave us *The Rescue*; finally, Blüth was of the opinion that *The Rover* was written in response to Conrad's growing popularity in his native land, where he had dreamt of spending the last years of his life.

Although a couple of years later Blüth said that this article had been “too schematic”,⁵⁷ in several of his further publications he went on to develop various hypotheses which had first been formulated in *The Evolution of Heroism in Conrad's Work* (*Ewolucja heroizmu u Conrada*). One of these was a study entitled *Samburański Hamlet* (*The Hamlet of Samburan*), which was devoted to the novel *Victory*:⁵⁸

Victory is one of the best constructed of Conrad's novels. The simplicity of its classical tying and untying of the plot is reminiscent of the masterpieces of Shakespeare—*Hamlet* or *The Tempest*.⁵⁹

Blüth's hypothesis regarding the main character of *Victory* is as follows:

The tragically inactive and rebelliously solitary Axel Heyst has much in common with Hamlet. First and foremost, both Hamlet and Heyst find themselves under the suggestive influence of their fathers' spirits. Heyst struggles to free his soul from the spell of his father's scepticism, just as Hamlet wrestles with himself in order to escape the imperative of vengeance.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁵⁷ R. M. Blüth, “O tragicznej decyzji krakowskiej Konrada Korzeniowskiego” [in:] *idem, Pisma literackie, op. cit.*, p. 262, footnote no. 56.

⁵⁸ R. M. Blüth, “Samburański Hamlet”, *Droga* 1937, no. 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Both works belong to the category of what is known as the Tragedy of Fate. Several times, Blüth highlights the excellent construction of Conrad's *Victory*, noting its highly dramatic character:

The two volumes, which are almost equal in terms of content, correspond perfectly to the compact form of a two-part plot. In the first volume we have the tying of the plot, while in the second we have its untying. As far as possible, the author tries to observe the unities of time and space. The whole action (not counting the Morrison affair, which is an intermezzo or a messenger scene, as it were, introducing the motif which precedes the action) takes place between Davidson's two consecutive visits to Samburan. The duration of the action can thus be precisely determined. [...] A closer examination of the tying of the tragic plot shows that the unity of action is observed.⁶¹

Blüth also interpreted the novel's title as meaning that Lena shows Heyst the real meaning of life:

It is in this that her victory consists, allowing the author to bestow such a triumphant title on the entire work, despite the Shakespearian catastrophe and despite Davidson's despairing declaration that he had "nothing at all" to do in Samburan.⁶²

Another Conradian novel to which Blüth devoted a lot of attention was the last completed novel entitled *The Rover*. In an extensive interpretation published in the elite "Ateneum" journal under the revealing title *Powrót żeglarza (The Sailor's Return)*, he hailed this "historical novel set in Napoleonic times" as "Conrad's most mature work". Blüth was of the opinion that the realization that this novel had an autobiographical basis was essential for its proper understanding, as Conrad had intended to return to Poland towards the end of his life:

It can easily be guessed that at a deeper level within the novel there must have been a connection between the literary "vicarious dream" which comes true in the form of a novel about a sailor's return and those impulses which were freely revealed to his English wife and his Anglicized sons towards the end of his life.⁶³

Inspired by Maria Dąbrowska—a Conrad scholar to whom the article was dedicated—Blüth was particularly interested in the question of the epic character of the novel:⁶⁴

The Rover [...] is a perfectly epic work which is devoid of artificially heightened distance. Conrad orchestrates the action in a classically epic manner, allowing it to run freely in accordance with the passage of time.⁶⁵

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ R. M. Blüth, "Powrót żeglarza. Zagadnienie narodowe w *Korsarzu* J. Conrada", *Ateneum* 1938, no. 3.

⁶⁴ Cf. M. Dąbrowska, "Społeczne i religijne pierwiastki u Conrada", *Wiadomości Literackie* 1932, no. 7; Cf. M. Dąbrowska, *Szkice o Conradzie*, ed. E. Korzeniewska, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1974.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

The absence of personal narrators created by the author in order to comment on the plot meets with Blüth's unreserved approval:

In *The Rover* there is no longer any trace of the author's previous practice of making comments of his own through auxiliary narrators.

Blüth's explanation for this change in narration is as follows:

While he was writing the novel (at a time, let us remember, when—towards the end of his life—he was in the process of making examinations of conscience and doing a lot of meditating), the author must have gone through some deep moral agonizing which made the existence of a real epic distance possible.⁶⁶

In Blüth's interpretation, the fundamental question raised in the novel—shown on the example of the main character: former pirate Jean Peyrol—is the relationship between the individual and the nation to which he belongs. Unlike previous characters created by Conrad ...

Peyrol is one of those who, having strayed into uncharted territories, islands and faraway seas, has found his true self, as it were, and has managed to fulfil his wildest dream—to return to his compatriots in order to recover his national honour and die a heroic death at sea.⁶⁷

According to Blüth, a characteristic feature of this novel is its decidedly negative portrayal of the French Revolution, showing its criminal nature on the example of the murders in Toulon. In Conrad's fiction this was nothing new:

In Conrad's previous novels—*Nostromo* in particular—we have already become familiar with the author's basic attitude towards revolutionary upheaval as such. Looking at human problems on dry land from the unique perspective of a sailor, Conrad sees revolutionary turmoil as the sudden eruption of destructive forces (reminiscent of typhoons and volcanic eruptions)—the explosion or unleashing of the dark forces of the subconscious.⁶⁸

Blüth lays great stress on the fact that the revolutionary atrocities have left their tragic mark on the minds of characters such as Arlette and Lieutenant Real. These moral and psychological wounds can be healed by love, however:

In *The Rover* Conrad gives us yet another (and perhaps his most complete) portrayal of the mystery of love that liberates—a portrayal which differs from that which is to be found in *Almayer's Folly*, where the experience of love brings harmony to the mind of someone who is subjected to the conflicting influences of his mother and father, and also from that which is to be found in *Victory*, where Lena liberates the reclusive Heyst from his traumatic hostility towards the world and the beyond. In *The Rover* we have an entire multiple range of love's liberating processes.⁶⁹

Another interesting suggestion put forward by Blüth is a comparison of the ethos of Peyrol with that of Mickiewicz's tragic hero Konrad Wallenrod. Despite the fact

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

that Conrad may have borrowed certain motifs from Mickiewicz's poem, Blüth is of the opinion that Conrad's Peyrol has a higher moral standing than Konrad Wallenrod.

It is extremely difficult to evaluate Blüth's work on Conrad, as only fragments of a greater whole have come down to us. With this reservation, we can say that Blüth was interested in two fields of Conrad scholarship: Konrad Korzeniowski's biography and Joseph Conrad's fiction. Zdzisław Najder has given the following evaluation of Blüth's achievements as a biographer of Conrad:

In Poland it was Rafał Blüth who began documentary research into Conrad's biography [...] with his study entitled *Two Borderland Families (Dwie rodziny kresowe)*, i.e. the Bobrowski and the Korzeniowski families. Blüth's death [...] interrupted Polish scholarly research on Conrad for many years.⁷⁰

Blüth's fundamental achievement was that in order to give a true and fuller account of Conrad's life, he drew on verified sources of many kinds. In devoting a great deal of attention to Conrad's childhood years, he attempted to show how the traumatic experiences of that period—which were pushed away into the unconscious—cropped up later in camouflaged form (Blüth uses the expression “substitute images”) in the writer's novels and stories. As we can see, Blüth's approach to the interpretation of Conrad's fiction was greatly influenced by the theory of psychoanalysis.

As far as Conrad's writing was concerned, Blüth's interests were idiosyncratic. He devoted relatively little attention to *Lord Jim*—the novel in which most Polish Conrad scholars of the time took a particular interest—preferring instead to work on *Nostromo*, *Victory* and *The Rover*. He would seem to have wanted to trace the development of Conrad's fiction, which in his view was conditioned by the events of the author's life as well as by geopolitical changes in Europe. The artistic aspects of Conrad's novels did not interest him much, as he preferred to concentrate on their moral import, which he saw as their main message.

Seen in the context of Polish scholarship between the two world wars, Blüth stands alongside Józef Ujejski and Maria Dąbrowska as one of the leading Conrad scholars of his day. His tragic death in 1939 (during one of the first mass executions carried out in Warsaw by the German occupying forces)—together with the fact that he did not succeed in presenting his views in book form—prevented his achievements from being known to and appreciated by more than a handful of Polish Conrad scholars. His most outstanding publications—*Conrad and Dostoevsky*, *The Evolution of Heroism in Conrad's Work*, *The Hamlet of Samburan*, *The Sailor's Return* and *On the tragic decision taken by Konrad Korzeniowski in Cracow*—lived on, however, as they were later reprinted in anthologies. It is high time that all the Conradian texts of this outstanding critic were remembered, for they really deserve it.

Translated by R. E. Pyplacz

⁷⁰ Z. Najder, “Wstęp” [in:] *Conrad wśród swoich. Listy, dokumenty, wspomnienia*, ed. Z. Najder, Warszawa: PIW, 1996, pp. 7-8.

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