

POLISH ASSOCIATION FOR AMERICAN STUDIES

NEWSLETTER NO. 15

MARCH 1999

Editor: Jadwiga Maszewska

Assistant Editor: Dorota J. Wisniewska

American Literature and Culture Department

University of Lodz

1998 PAAS CONFERENCE IN USTRON

The last annual PAAS (Polish Association for American Studies) Conference on "Ethical Values in Post(?)modern American Societies and Cultures" was held on October 21st -24th 1998 in Ustron, a picturesque holiday resort in the Beskidy mountains. The weather was lovely, as it usually is in late October in Poland. Last year the conference was organized by the Department of American Literature and Culture of the University of Silesia and subsidized by Komitet Badan Naukowych in Warsaw, as well as by the United States Embassy in Warsaw and Stalexport S.A. in Katowice. About 80 scholars from 6 countries (including Poland, the USA, Germany, Hungary, Turkey and Japan) attended the conference; scholars from several other countries had expressed their interest in participation, but due to unexpected circumstances could not come. Most centers of American Studies in Poland were represented at the conference.

The plenary session was opened by two distinguished keynote speakers: Prof. Samuel Coale of Wheaton College, Norton Massachusetts delivered a lecture on "Searching for a Postmodern Ethics: Oxymoron, Occidental Operations, or Open Enigma?" and Ms. Kate Delaney, the Cultural Attaché of the United States Embassy in Warsaw, read a paper entitled "What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Family Values". Altogether 41 papers were read and discussed in two sections. They concerned various aspects of contemporary American literature, fiction, poetry and drama, new ways of looking at historical, cultural and political phenomena, as well as the perspectives in which contemporary America is perceived at home and abroad. Informal discussions were continued until small hours.

The organizers plan on publishing the conference proceedings in 1999.

Due to the presence of the majority of PAAS members in Ustron, on October 22nd the meeting of the Polish Association of American Studies was held to discuss current problems. A number of new members joined the Association.

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENTS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE AT POLISH UNIVERSITIES

News from the Department of American Literature and Culture, UMCS Lublin

American Studies Workshop/ Seminar

Between 5 and 7 February 1999 Department of American Literature and Culture in Lublin organized a workshop/seminar devoted to the use of film in teaching American Studies. The event was specially organized for young educators from teacher training colleges and American Studies departments in Poland. 50 of them attended 3 days of workshops led by two prominent American scholars: Gene Moore (Universiteit van Amsterdam) and William Uricchio (Universiteit Utrecht). Seminar sessions were supplemented by film screenings, which gave the participants the opportunity to verify theoretical knowledge presented in workshops. The workshop was made possible by a generous grant from USIS in Warsaw. Both participants and organizers agreed that the worksop was a success and that there was a continuing need for such events. A similar event is planned for the next year.

Guest Lecturers

Professor Nancy Burke - "Canadian Literature in English"

Department of American Literature and Culture is honored to host a Distinguished Fulbright Fellow, John R. Leo from University of Rhode Island. Professor Leo will stay in Lublin until June 1999 and he hopes to obtain an extension of his fellowship for another 2 semesters.

New Specialized Courses

John Leo:

- The Road Movie and American Culture
- The Beat Tradition and Postmodernity

Events

Harry Mathews, a famous American postmodernist writer, visited Lublin in November 1998. Mr. Mathews gave a talk on his literary past and present for the students and faculty.

*

Jerzy Kutnik presented a short series of lectures on American culture at Seikei University in Tokyo.

*

Dorota Janowska and Bianka Zarzycka have been invited to present papers at the Black Studies conference in Munster in March 1999.

*

Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska took part in two conferences: The National Polish American-Jewish American Council Meeting in Cambridge, Mass. on 16 November 1998, where she presented a paper "Teaching Jewish History in Polish High Schools after 1989", and in 30th Annual Conference Association for Jewish Studies in Boston on 20-22 December 1998 where she read a paper "The State of Yiddish Studies in Poland."

*

Malgorzata Siwek has received a 3-month research scholarship at Karslstat University, Sweden. She is going to spend April, May and June researching for her doctoral dissertation.

*

Dorota Janowska interviewed an American dance company which visited Poland in October 1998. The interview as well as article on modern American dance appeared in the December issue of *Na Przyklad*.



Publications

Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska

"Julian Strykowski: 1905-1996," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewery*, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 11 (1998).

Jerzy Durczak

- Agnieszka Salska & Grzegorz Gazda, red. "Jerzy Kosinski: Byc tu i tam," *American Studies* 16 (1998), 141-142.
- *Selves between Cultures*, San Francisco-London-Bethesda: International Scholars Publications, 1999, 2nd edition.

Pawel Frelik

"Ziomp," translation of an excerpt from Harry Mathews' *Tlooth*, *Literatura na Swiecie* 6/1998

Malgorzata Siwek

"Interpreting the Wilderness: Responses to Nature in Nineteenth-Century American Travel Accounts," *PASE Papers in Literature, Language and Culture*, Catholic University of Lublin, Lublin, s. 359-368.

News from the Department of American Studies and Mass Media (AMS) University of Łódź

New Faculty

Dr. Piotr Wajszczyk has recently joined ASM's Faculty. He will be teaching courses on various aspects of American economy, including marketing, and business advertising in the United States.

Visits at ASM

Professor David Goodman visited ASM on November 25-28, 1998. Professor Goodman is the Director of the Institute of International Studies, Sydney, Australia, and he gave a lecture on "International Relations in Australia."

Professor Bess Beatty from Oregon State University visited ASM on December 15-18, 1998. She gave a lecture: " Travelling Beyond Their Sphere: American Women in Europe in the 19th Century."

Participation in Events

Elzbieta H. Oleksy and Agnieszka Borkowska participated in the 8th Annual Polish Association for American Studies Conference: " Ethical Values in Post(?)modern Societies and Cultures", University of Silesia, October 21-24, 1998. Elzbieta H. Oleksy presented a paper: "Monstrousness and Authorship: Willa Cather's Sapphire and the Slave Girl, " and Agnieszka Borkowska presented a paper: " New Tramps: Women on the Road in Thelma and Louise and Boys on the Side."

Course Offerings, Spring Term 1999

ASM Faculty teach courses in the five year degree program in International Relations: American Studies and Mass Media and in the MA Special Program.

In the spring semester of 1999 the following courses are offered in the five year degree program:

Elzbieta H. Oleksy American Visual Cultures - MA Seminar (4th year)
David LaFrance American History and Politics - MA Seminar (4th year)
Agnieszka Borkowska American Racial and Ethnic Experience (1st year)
Agnieszka Borkowska Manifestations of American Popular Culture (3rd year)
Ewa Brzezinska Plec a zachowania komunikacyjne (2nd year)
Ewa Brzezinska Zachowania ludzi w organizacji (3rd year)
Elzbieta Durys Amerykanske kino gatunku (2nd year)
David LaFrance US History: Part 2 (3rd year)
David LaFrance North American Integration (4th year)
Elzbieta Ostrowska Kino mniejszosci (4th year)
Tomasz Pludowski Media and America Politics (4th year)
Joanna Rydzewska American Folklore (1st year)
Piotr Wajszczyk American Marketing (3rd year)
Piotr Wajszczyk Economics of the USA (4th year)

50 students are continuing the second semester of the MA Special Program in American Studies and Mass Media. The following courses are offered in this program:

Ewa Brzezinska Organizational Behavior - MA Seminar
David LaFrance United States History and Politics since World War II - MA Seminar
Wieslaw Oleksy Language Use and Function in Interpersonal Communication, the Media and Politics - MA Seminar
Jan Rek American Cinema: Social Problems and Politics - MA Seminar
Piotr Wajszczyk American Marketing - MA Seminar
Andrzej Kreutz Canadian Political Culture
Wieslaw Oleksy Wstep do Mass Mediów
Wieslaw Oleksy U.S. and Canadian Media
Joanna Rydzewska Gender in Alfred Hitchcock's Films

Call for Papers

Elzbieta H. Oleksy has completed a chapter on "American Literary Scholarship in Central Europe and the Baltics, 1989-1997" and submitted it for publication in American Literary Scholarship, annual publication of the Duke University Press. In her chapter she included selected publications from the materials provided by Polish Americanists. She would like to invite colleagues in American Studies to submit their monographs/ edited collections/ articles, etc. published in 1998 to be considered for review in the next edition of American Literary Scholarship. Books sent for review will be returned by mail unless otherwise advised, in which case they will be donated to the library of the Department of American Studies and Mass Media, University of Łódź. Deadline for submission of materials to be considered for review in American Literary Scholarship: April 15, 1999.

News from the American Literature Department Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan

Two public defences of doctoral dissertations were held: Agnieszka Rzepa defended her thesis on: "Androgynous Texts, Androgynous Characters: The Concept of Androgyny in Novels by Contemporary American Women Writers" on June 20, 1998, and Piotr Woryma defended his on "The Interaction of Arts in the Late Novels of Henry James" on February 26, 1999.

*

Marek Wilczynski presented a paper at the "Exile" Conference organized in Ustron in September 1998 by the Institute of British and American Literature and Culture of the University of Silesia.

*

Marcin Turski presented a paper at the PAAS conference in Ustron in October 1998.

*

On March 31, 1999, we were honored to receive Professor Stephen Nissenbaum of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, who is currently Visiting Fulbright Professor at the University of Berlin. Professor Nissenbaum delivered a lecture on "Sexual Prudery and Radicalism in the Nineteenth-Century America".



Publications

Marek Wilczynski

The Phantom and the Abyss. Gothic Fiction in America and Aesthetics of the Sublime (1798-1856) (Poznan: Motivex, 1998)

"The Agency of the Dead Letter in "Bartleby", *American Studies* 16 (1998)

News from the American Literature Section at the Institute of English Studies University of Warsaw

In 1998 we finally inaugurated an academic exchange scheme with the John F. Kennedy Institut in Berlin: in December 1998 Agata Preis-Smith gave a talk there on Rebecca Harding Davis, and on May 12, 1999 dr. Maria Moss from Berlin will lecture at our Institute on Chicano/Chicana literature in the U.S.

*

Professor Nancy Burke from our Section visited the Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin in March 1999: she gave a lecture there on Canadian literature, and read some of her own poetry. She also visited the University in Bratislava where she gave two lectures: on Canadian literature and on women's writing in Canada. In April Nancy Burke is going to participate in a panel at a conference in Vienna on American literature of the South.

*

Agata Preis-Smith has been awarded a Fulbright Senior Research Award for 1999/2000: she will be going to the University of California

at Riverside
to study Camp style in American poetry of the 1960s.

*

Our postgraduate student, Marek Paryz, spent two weeks in March 1999 at the British Library in London, on a grant from the Eccles Center for American Studies. He is working on his Ph.D. thesis concerning motifs of madness in the nineteenth-century American literature.

*

In April Agata Preis-Smith and Piotr Skurowski finally managed to publish the proceedings of the 7th annual PAAS conference (organized by our Section), which took place at Serock in November 1997. The title of the book is the same as that of the conference, *Cultural Policy or the Politics of Culture?*

News from the Department of American Literature and Culture, University of Łódź

Jadwiga Maszewska, Grazyna Zygodlo, Katarzyna Malecka and Kacper Bartczak participated in the 1998 PAAS Conference in Ustron. Kacper Bartczak presented a paper on "Communication and Passion - The Language Aesthetics of Don DeLillo. Jadwiga Maszewska presented a paper on "The Theme of Invention and Construction in Louise Erdrich's Tales of Burning Love".

New Seminars

Winter semester 1998/1999 - Dr. David Francis, the Fulbright Visiting Professor, specializes in American poetry.

Summer semester 1998/1999 - Professor (dr. habil.) Sabine Sielke, was assistant professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute in Berlin from 1992 to 1998, specializes in American poetry, literary and cultural theory, feminist criticism, gender and sexuality studies, African American studies.

Publications



Agnieszka Salska contributed a chapter "Dickinson's Letters from Correspondence to Poetry" to *The Emily Dickinson Handbook* edited by Gudrun Grabher, Roland Hagenbuchle and Ch. Miller, The University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst: 1998. *The Handbook* has recently been reviewed by Christopher Benfey in the NYRB (April 8, 1999).

*

Agnieszka Salska edited with Esther Giger *Freedom and Form. Essays in Contemporary American Poetry*. The University of Łódź Press, Łódź: 1998. The book is a collection of essays following a poetry workshop organized by Giger and Salska at the 1996 EAAS Conference in Warsaw.

*

Agnieszka Salska for the past three years has served as Deputy Chair of Komitet Neofilologiczny Polskiej Akademii Nauk for the 1999 term. Elections to the Committee for the 1999-2002 term have just been held.

*

Krzysztof Andrzejczak - "Smierc wstydu", in "Plus Minus" the appendix to Rzeczpospolita, 273, 21-22 November 1998, *Literatura* 1, January 1999.

*

Kacper Bartczak - "Ucieczka. Running Away." (an article on Don DeLillo's White Noise), *Literatura*, December 1998.

*

Jadwiga Maszewska - "Racism and Slavery in Thackeray's The Virginians," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis, Folia Litteraria Anglica 2*, 1998.

*

Zbigniew Maszewski - "Ike and the Cow: A Reading of an Episode in Faulkner's The Hamlet", *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis, Folia Litteraria Anglica 2*, 1998.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Apocalypse Now. Prophecy and Fulfilment Polish Association for American Studies 1999 Conference

Lódz, December 5-8, 1999*

The theme of the 1999 annual convention of Polish Americanists will, from the perspective of the millenium's end, provide opportunity for investigating the fascination of the American culture with both promise and punishment. We invite papers exploring continuities and fluctuations of the sense of America's special destiny, its spiritual and civilizational mission, its concerns with catastrophic upheavals and self-destructive urges. To what extent have such dilemmas been characteristic of the American cultural consciousness? How do they manifest themselves in politics, social sciences, literature, the media, or visual arts? Are, for example, the current preoccupations with cultural hybridity and the intensified questioning of the role of English as the national language to be perceived as opening vistas of millennial fulfilment or as harbingers of annihilation to national identity and social cohesion? The field of investigation is very broad. We hope it will accommodate established approaches as well as emerging interests in the phenomena of popular culture, in popular literary genres (e.g. science fiction), the new media, religion, or ecology where apocalyptic visions seem to grow more intense as the end of the century becomes imminent. Please, send proposals of 20-30 minute presentations by September 1, 1999 to:

Zbigniew Maszewski
Department of American Literature and Culture
University of Lódz
Al. Kosciuszki 65
90-514 Lódz, Poland
fax: (48-42) 636-63-37
e-mail: jagamasz@Kryisia.uni.lodz.pl

* Please, note the change in conference date from the initial December 9-11 to December 5-8, 1999. Conference organizers wish to apologize for the change and express hope that its consequences will not turn out to be apocalyptic.

FROM THE TREASURER:

FROM THE EDITOR:

The next issue of the PAAS Newsletter can be expected in March 1999. We warmly invite you to share with us any information concerning your research and activities in the field of American Studies.
You may use the following address to contact the Newsletter:



Jadwiga Maszewska
American Literature & Culture Department
University of Lodz
Al. Kosciuszki 65
90-514 Lodz
fax: 48 42 366337

e-mail : JAGAMASZ@Kryisia.uni.lodz.pl

PAAS WWW PAGE:

The Polish Association for American Studies WWW page is located at:

<http://klio.umsc.lublin.pl/users/ptsazlka/paas.htm>

It features the general information concerning PAAS, the Board as well as the latest PAAS Newsletter.
The page is hosted by the Department of American Literature and Culture in Lublin and maintained by Pawel Frelik.

All centers in Poland are kindly requested to send in all relevant information to

ptszalka@klio.umcs.lublin.pl

or the snail mail address:

Department of American Literature and Culture

c/o Pawel Frelik,

UMCS, Pl. Marii Curie-Sklodowskiej 4, Lublin 20-031.

[Back to the main page](#)