Robert Kusek

Unlikely Comrades? South Africa, Poland, and the Solidarity of 'Implicated Subjects'

ABSTRACT The chapter investigates how a number of white South African writers have attempted to negotiate their subject position(s), as well as their forms of 'entrapment' in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, by studying and commenting on the works of selected Polish writers. While discussing a variety of works by Lionel Abrahams, J. M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, Dan Jacobson, and Stephen Watson, as well as their 'dialogue' with the likes of Zbigniew Herbert and Czesław Miłosz, the chapter argues that the latter writers and their oeuvre have been deliberately prioritised by South African authors due to their perceived implication and entanglement in the long history of violence taking place in Central European 'bloodlands.' A comparative and transnational analysis undertaken in this study postulates the existence of a South African–Polish 'literary' comradeship/solidarity—one that cuts through national, ethnic, and geographical boundaries and finds the *raison d'être* of its struggle not in the same enemy but in an acknowledgement of one's implication, namely, an indirect and involuntary participation in past and present injustices.

KEYWORDS comradeship, the implicated subject, Poland, South Africa, transnationalism

Transnational Comradeship: South Africa and Poland

In early 1962, in the first of many attempts to escape South Africa, his "handicap" (Coetzee 2003, 62), J. M. Coetzee arrived in London. *Youth*, the second volume of his *autre*-biographical trilogy, is—much like Joseph Conrad's 1898 novella of the same title[1]—concerned with a young man's

1 A direct reference to Conrad and his works can also to be found in the narrative of *Youth*. During one of his Saturday visits to the Reading Room of the British

Kusek, Robert. 2025. "Unlikely Comrades? South Africa, Poland, and the Solidarity of 'Implicated Subjects.'" In *Contested Solidarities,* edited by Pavan Kumar Malreddy, Frank Schulze-Engler, and Kathrin Bartha-Mitchell, 51–74. Anglophone Postcolonial Studies 3. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2025. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.1559.c24290

formative experience of a journey and disillusionment over the romantic and idealistic vision of life. However, it is also a testament to John's "misery," "plight," and "disgrace" (47, 71, 114, 132), which, one might argue, stem from his multiple, intersectional, and often conflicted entanglements: political, emotional, social, economic, and sexual. For example, John might be constantly preoccupied with looking for his "Destined One" (54, 93) and profess his belief in the "transfiguring power" of love (78), but when Sarah, his Cape Town girlfriend, gets pregnant, he abandons her and makes her arrange an illegal abortion all by herself.[2] Elsewhere, he might declare that he wants to cut all possible ties with South Africa, but he enjoys the comforts of a Kensington flat owned by Caroline, one of his lovers, and financed by Caroline's stepfather, who works in the South African motor business built upon (and profiting from) the policy of racial segregation. He might still sympathise with the "third brother" (Coetzee 1998, 65), but the Pan-Africanist Congress demonstration which is organised in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre and which he witnesses in Cape Town remains of concern to him only to the extent that it can affect his plans of escaping South Africa: "*Will ships be still sailing tomorrow?*—that is his one thought. *I must get out before it is too late!*" (39). Entangled in many aesthetic, personal, and ideological struggles, John—this "implicated subject" *par excellence* (Rothberg 2019)—discovers a sense of unlikely comradeship[3]

Library, John meets Anna, a Polish émigrée who is carrying out research into the life of the English explorer John Hanning Speke. In order to seduce her, he talks to her about Conrad's early life in Poland and his time in Africa as well as his aspirations, which mirror his own: "As they speak he wonders: Is it an omen that in the Reading Room of the British Library he, a student of F. M. Ford, should meet a countrywoman of Conrad's? Is Anna his Destined One?" (54).

2 Whenever John meets a new love/sex interest, he simultaneously questions his own attractiveness and sexual prowess, wonders whether he, in fact, deserves better, or speculates how he might "extricate himself [from a relationship] without ignominy" (54). In one of the episodes, he also allows himself to be picked up by an older man and to be fondled by him (79).

3 The term 'comradeship' and its communist associations appear to be particularly pertinent with regard to J. M. Coetzee and his trilogy. In *Boyhood*, John expresses his "passion" for Soviet Russia and "loyalty to the Red Star" (26, 27), which manifest themselves in, for example, obsessively drawing Russian planes and ships caught in the act of destroying their American enemies; naming his dog Cossack; and referring to himself as "the Russian soldier on the Brandenburg Gate, raising the red banner over the ruins in Berlin" when he witnesses the downfall of his father (160). In *Youth*, John expresses sympathy for the Vietcong and considers joining communist revolutionaries, either in Vietnam or in China. He even sends a letter to the Chinese Embassy in London offering

with the Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert.[4] Together with Joseph Brodsky and Ingeborg Bachmann, whose works offer a counterpoint to his reading of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and F. M. Ford, Herbert becomes John's aesthetic compatriot, who, like Brodsky, "is with him, by his side, day by day" (91). Herbert—whose poetry Coetzee might have, indeed, first heard on the radio during his stay in Britain[5]—speaks to John "from lone rafts tossed on the dark seas of Europe" (91). The lines of Herbert, as well as those of fellow Central and Eastern European poets, are

> release[d] [...] into the air, and along the airwaves the words speed to [John's] room, the words of the poets of his time, telling him again of what poetry can be and therefore of what he can be, filling him with joy that he inhabits the same earth as they. "Signal heard in London—please continue to transmit": that is the message he would send them if he could. (91)

However, in the late 1960s, the "signal" was not only heard in London, Austin, or Buffalo.[6] Similarly to Coetzee's *Youth*, "Place," a poem written by the eminent South African poet Lionel Abrahams, offers an account of another escape—one in which, right after some violent storm, several

---

his services to the regime (153). For more about the generic figure of the comrade, see Dean (2019).

4 It might be argued that Herbert is not the only Pole who attracts John's attention during his London years. Although Andrzej Munk and his film *The Passenger*—arguably the major source of inspiration for *In the Heart of the Country* (1977)—is not mentioned by the narrator of *Youth*, it is more than likely that Coetzee saw it for the first time in London in 1964, when he returned to the UK together with his newly-wed wife Philippa Jubber (cf. Kannemeyer 2012, 130–2; Attwell 1992, 60, 380).

5 The first English-language collection of Herbert's poems appeared in print only in 1968 (Herbert 1968), but individual poems were available to the English-speaking readership prior to that date. For example, the first issue of *Modern Poetry in Translation*, published in 1965, contained four poems by Herbert translated by Czesław Miłosz ("Reconstruction for a Poet," "Poem," "Period," and "The Langobards"). However, it is likely that Coetzee is referring to three BBC radio productions of Herbert's plays that he might have heard during his stay in London: "The Other Room," "The Philosophers' Den," and "Reconstruction of a Poet," broadcast on the BBC Third Programme in 1962, 1963, and 1964, respectively (Taborski 1964, 78). Also, given Coetzee's propensity for collapsing temporalities, violating chronologies, and combing fact and fiction, it is possible that he became familiar with Herbert's poetry only when he moved to the United States in the summer of 1965.

6 Austin (Texas) and Buffalo (New York State) being Coetzee's two US destinations in the period 1965–1971.

white Johannesburgers leave the city and drive to the Rand to hold an outdoor poetry reading near a mine-dump. As the poem's bracketed note of introduction states, the reading took place in the summer of 1969, while the poems recited by a group of friends included those by Zbigniew Herbert and Miroslav Holub, among others (Abrahams 1988, 24). Interestingly, it is neither South African nor American poetry that the speaker of "Place" is able to recollect ("I half forget what poetry we read / our own? Mtshali's? Plath's?" [25]). What the poet remembers instead is the "humane affirmative thrust / of two scientist-poets out of Europe's East" whose "translated lines / we there, with voice and ears and hearts / lent scope and life, brought strangely home" (25).[7]

These two instances of South African writers who are not only avid readers of Zbigniew Herbert's poetry but who also acknowledge the formative role played by the Polish poet's lines in the development of their own writerly idiom seem to welcome at least several conceptual frameworks.

For one, it might be argued that the examples quoted above testify to the existence of the new "axis of filiation" (Gandhi 2006, 10)—one that successfully crosses the South–East divide and goes beyond the well-established communities of belonging contingent on the categories of nation, ethnicity, or race. In this sense, Herbert, Coetzee, and Abrahams could be seen as part of an "affective community" based on various forms of "transnational or affiliative solidarity" (10). What is more, Coetzee's and Abrahams' interest in the "poets out of Europe's East" (or, as a matter of fact, out of the European core) could be read as a manifestation of what Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih have identified as "minor transnationalism" (2005), i.e. a non-binary configuration which prioritises the horizontal model of cultural exchange and opposes vertical (the kind based on the core/centre–periphery structure) methods used to conceptualise the global circulation of ideas, cultures, capital, etc. Adopting such an approach could encourage one to perceive Coetzee's and Abrahams's reading of Herbert as a conversation (though one-sided) between two minor cultures and two

7 Another notable poem that juxtaposes South African and Central European experiences and topographies and, consequently, partakes in establishing what one might call a "collaborative geography" (Craggs, Geoghegan, and Keighren 2013) is Stephen Watson's "The Other City," written in memory of Zbigniew Herbert after the Polish poet's death in 1998. The poem not only juxtaposes Herbert's Warsaw with Watson's Cape Town (both "bitter-sweet"; the former "besieged" by the Third Reich and the Third Rome, the latter "besieged' by on-going racial violence [Watson 2000, 150, 152]]) but also builds a number of transnational links and connections between their distinct (yet similar) historical experiences in the twentieth century as well as pointing to a shared dialectic of the "illusions of hope" and "delusions of hopelessness" (150).

minor literatures: South African and Polish.[8] Additionally, it is also possible to discuss Coetzee's and Abrahams's aesthetic (but also ideological) reading choices as a deliberate act of re-positioning and de-provincialising their own oeuvre in their attempt to escape South Africa and enter the global literary canon[9]—especially in the light of Herbert's iconic status and his outgrowing the domain of Polish or Central European literature. Coetzee himself suggests the very possibility of this interpretation in his partly (auto)biographical essay "What is a Classic?"—particularly when he writes about choosing classical musical culture, represented by Bach, over the middle-class popular musical culture of his South African childhood. While suggesting two alternative readings of the episode (which he calls "transcendental-poetic" and "sociocultural"), Coetzee asks the following question: "[Was] I [...] symbolically electing high European culture, and command of the codes of that culture, as a route that would take me out of what I must have felt, in terms however obscure or mystified, as an historical dead end—a road that would culminate (again symbolically) with me on a platform in Europe addressing a cosmopolitan audience on Bach, T. S. Eliot, and the question of the classic?" (Coetzee 2001, 9). Given the fact that the essay closes with Coetzee's discussion of Herbert ("the great poet of the classic of our own times" [16]), it might be justified to claim that the very same question and the very same "sociocultural" interpretation of one's identity formation can be formulated with regard to Coetzee's early election of Herbert and positioning the latter in the very heart of his literary patrimony.

Although all of the suggested conceptual models appear to be potentially quite productive and likely to offer some new interpretative formulas for the South African—decades-spanning and multifaceted—response to Polish literature and Polish writers (cf. Popescu 2010; Kusek 2020), the present chapter would like to investigate several instances of this 'dialogue' by referring to Michael Rothberg's concept of the 'implicated subject'—one

8 My reading of South African and Polish literatures in terms of '*littérature mineure*' is indebted to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's conceptualisation of the category, in which "minor literature" is not primarily the literature of numerically small nations/groups but the literature of oppressed minorities, avant-garde literature, or literature characterised by a minor usage of the major language (1975).

9 Or, alternatively, re-provincialising it by means of creating a "minor-to-minor network" (Lionnet and Shih 2005, 8) where one provincial (minor) literature (South African) does not encounter a "major" literature (British or American) but, instead, establishes a system of connections with another provincial literature (Polish).

which, according to Rothberg, occupies an "ambiguous space [...] between and beyond the victim/perpetrator binary"[10] (Rothberg 2019, 33), as well as remains entangled in both historical and present-day forms and mechanisms of injustice and violence.

There are several reasons why Rothberg's approach might be both appropriate and useful in illuminating the relationship between South African and Polish "comrades." Although his 2019 study does not make overt connections between South Africa and Poland, its discussion of William Kentridge's *Drawings for Projection* (especially the connections between apartheid and the Holocaust that these works explore) and the Warsaw Ghetto (which Rothberg considers an "enduring focus of multidirectional acts of memory that engage with the transnational legacies of *colonial* and *racial* violence" [124; emphasis mine]), as well as numerous references to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp and its so-called "internationalism," suggest that South Africa and Poland might deserve a comparative and transnational analysis. This line of investigation could not only acknowledge similar modes of implication in the history of violence, inequality, and persecution but also identify and scrutinise a cultural solidarity ("solidarity-via-identification" [3]) that existed between South African and Polish (or Central European) artists prior to the demise of apartheid and, to a lesser extent, after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Rothberg suggested the very possibility of this South African/Polish intersection six years before the publication of *The Implicated Subject*, i.e. in his 2013 essay "Multidirectional Memory and the Implicated Subject." The piece offers a discussion of Dan Jacobson's *Heshel's Kingdom* (an [auto] biographical account of South African Jewish writer who returns to pre-WWII Poland and Lithuania in search of the traces of his grandfather, Rabbi Heshel Melmed) and William Kentridge's *Drawings for Projection* (a series of short animated films which explore South Africa's political history). Rothberg's essay, which deals with the problems of the legacies of transgenerational traumas and on-going implication in historical violence, not only juxtaposes the traumatic landscapes of South Africa with those of Central Europe[11] but, more importantly, points to the possibility

10 Elsewhere, Rothberg states: "The implicated subject serves as an umbrella term that gathers a range of subject positions that sit uncomfortably in our familiar conceptual space of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders" (Rothberg 2019, 13).

11 The mining pits near Kimberley and the Holocaust death pits concealed by Lithuania's innocent-looking landscape, as well the site of the former concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau and the town of Vereeniging, which is located next to Sharpeville. The latter parallel has been suggested by Kentridge in one

of linking different forms of individual and collective implication across the categories of nation, geography, memory, or the past.

Rothberg's intuition to locate the likes of Dan Jacobson and William Kentridge at the heart of his model is not the only reason why one might be tempted to consider other South African writers/artists and, consequently, recognise them as potential "figures of implication," the inhabitants of the grey zone (on a par with Jacobson and Kentridge). In fact, while reading Rothberg's 2019 study vis-à-vis the life and work of, for example, Lionel Abrahams, J. M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, Stephen Watson, or Rose Zwi,[12] one is struck by how South African authors have been—at various times and on various occasions[13]—entangled in complex forms of implication that are carefully unveiled by Rothberg in his book. For example, as white South Africans in the apartheid-governed regime, they were inevitably "aligned with power and privilege" (Rothberg 2019, 1) to which non-white South Africans had no access. It is the very alignment and the fact that they unavoidably "inhabit[ed] [...] regimes of domination" (1) that in the end allowed many of them to be beneficiaries of the system and of the "material and social advantage" (15) that it provided (e.g. education, travel or publishing opportunities).[14] Also, their implication in various forms of oppression (racial and gender, past and present) was often accompanied not only by a sense of denial or unconsciousness of their own entanglement (as this chapter's brief discussion of *Youth* has shown) but also by what Rothberg calls "self-reflexivity" and the ability to confront historical violence: a condition that can be recognised as one of the parameters of implication (11, 19). J. M. Coetzee has alluded to this sense of implication a number of times—most explicitly, perhaps, in his Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech delivered in 1987. In that piece, he argued that, in South Africa, everyone born with a white skin belongs to a "closed hereditary

of his commentaries for *Drawings for Projection*. See Rothberg (2013, 50, 56); Kentridge (2010, 110–1).

12 It should be noted that most of the writers privileged by the present essay are South African Jews, who, as Rothberg notes, were particularly "caught between varieties of racism and vacillating between accommodation and resistance to the apartheid regime" (Rothberg 2019, 24).

13 I am aware of Rothberg's warning not to think about the implicated subject as an ontological identity and, instead, acknowledge a co-existence of different subject positions (victim, perpetrator, bystander, implicated subject) that individuals and collectives occupy in time; see Rothberg (2019, 8–9).

14 Oftentimes regardless of their dedication to anti-apartheid activism and subsequent persecution by the apartheid institutions of power (e.g. censorship of Gordimer's works).

caste [from which one] cannot resign" ("can the leopard change its spots?" he asked rhetorically [Coetzee 1992, 96]);[15] and he concluded with the following diagnosis of the "implicated" condition of the white South African writer who both inherits and benefits from being a member of his caste:

> What prevents him [from "quitting a world of pathological attachments, [...] anger and violence"] is [...] the power of the world his body lives in to impose itself on him and ultimately on his imagination, which, whether he likes it or not, has its residence in his body. The crudity of life in South Africa, the naked force of its appeals, not only at the physical level but at the moral level too, its callousness and its brutalities, its hungers and its rages, its greed and its lies, make it as *irresistible* as it is *unlovable*. (98, 99; emphasis mine).

Is it possible that, in privileging a number of Polish poets as far as their reading choices were concerned, Coetzee and his fellow South African writers responded not so much to the supposed clarity of the latter's moral positions, their steadfastness and unyielding commitment to resist the political and ideological regime of the time (as has been suggested before, e.g. Geertsema 2014; Kucała 2014) but, as this chapter argues, to their implication and entanglement (or "entrapment," to use Coetzee's term) in the long history of violence taking place in Central European "bloodlands" (Snyder 2010)? To the Polish poets' position as the inheritors of those traumatic legacies? The plausibility of this interpretation is confirmed by Jonathan Crewe in his discussion of the poetry course Coetzee taught (together with Crewe) at the University of Cape Town in the 1970s. According to Crewe, although the course paid tribute to the poetic works of Hugh McDiarmid and Pablo Neruda, its main subject of interest was Herbert and his two poems: "Apollo and Marsyas" and "Elegy of Fortinbras." Crewe clearly interprets Coetzee's choice of Herbert as a "deprovincialising" strategy;[16] yet the main reason for prioritising Herbert is the latter's ambiguous position and resistance to be easily positioned in a binary model of perpetrators or victims ("neither a Stalinist nor a

15 He also commented on the mutual entanglement of what Rothberg would define as 'victims' and 'perpetrators': "In a society of masters and slaves, no one is free. The slave is not free, because he is not his own master; the master is not free, because he cannot do without the slave" (Coetzee 1992, 96).

16 His understanding of the term is different from the one suggested earlier in this essay, however. For Crewe, deprovincialisation appears to be synonymous with responding to the global literary fashions of the time: "At a time of Marxist academic enthusiasm, it was salutary to encounter an Eastern Block writer," he writes (19).

freedom-loving poster-boy of the US State Department" [Crewe 2013, 19]), as well as his being powerfully affected by the legacy of oppression and suffering handed down from one generation to another. Crewe writes:

> Herbert was clearly the product of a difficult, complex, European-Polish history in which Poland had experienced successive occupations by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. That culture had generally been rendered invisible by the Manichean Cold War division between Communism and Democracy. Herbert's metapoetic sophistication, long memory, and tightly controlled intensity evidently appealed to Coetzee, as did Herbert's allusive or allegorical subtext of political violence, cruelty, and totalitarian repression. (19)

(Un)likely Comrades

In the light of the above-formulated consideration, I should now like to briefly point to three examples of Polish–South African "comradeship" which should be understood not only as a mode of "belonging," "solidarity," or a commitment to a "shared vision of the future" (Dean 2019, 9, 10, 12) but also as a form of transnational affinity between different (yet parallel) types of implication. All three appear to demonstrate the validity of this chapter's central claim, namely that by reading, studying, and commenting on the works of selected Polish writers entangled in their own histories of injustice and past/present systems of oppression, their white South African counterparts have attempted to negotiate their own subject positions and forms of implication in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

Nadine Gordimer and Czesław Miłosz

The first example discussed here is Nadine Gordimer and her summoning of Czesław Miłosz[17] in her seminal 1982 essay "Living in the Interregnum"—a piece powerfully concerned with the ambiguities of living and writing in South Africa, as well as the responsibilities of the writer in oppressive regimes. The fact that Gordimer turns to Miłosz, perhaps Poland's greatest "implicated" poet,[18] should not come as a surprise, given

17 In "The Essential Gesture," Gordimer called Miłosz and Milan Kundera "two of the best contemporary writers in the world" (1988b, 288).

18 The best-known testament to Miłosz's sense of implication in various forms of historical atrocities and forms of oppression is his 1943 poem "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto" (2001a). Michael Parker observes that even though

her life-long interest in writers from Central and Eastern Europe (Milan Kundera and Ivan Turgenev, among others)[19]—especially in a text that clearly has an ambition to be read across nation-states and that underscores transnational involvement in various forms of historical violence. It is in the opening paragraphs of "Living in the Interregnum" that Gordimer defines apartheid as "the ultimate term for every manifestation, over the ages, in many countries, of race prejudice" (262).[20] She further adds that "[e]very country could see its semblance there; and most peoples" (262). In Gordimer's vision, none of the white settler population and their offspring is innocent—she sees apartheid as a "bluntness" that "revealed *everyone's* refined white racism" (262; emphasis mine).

Gordimer's essay, which she accurately identifies as a confession and an acknowledgement of one's sins (or, as a matter of fact, one's complicity), unambiguously voices the writer's concern with her position as a white South African writer and her belonging ("whether [she] like[s] it or not" [264]) to what she calls a "segment" of white South African society which—in the state of interregnum, an ambiguous period in-between the old and the new when, as Antonio Gramsci notes, *fenomeni morbosi* are likely to crop up (Gramsci 1971, 276)[21]—does not wish to operate in dichotomous logic: either run away from the new order or find ways to "survive physically and economically" (264).[22] According to Gordimer, this segment of the South African population which was "never at home in white supremacy" (270) and which is characterised by a painful awareness of its implication and corruption ("we have 'seen too much to be innocent,'" Gordimer repeats after Edmundo Desnoes [266]) has been incapacitated by its overpowering sense of "white guilt" (266). It is here that Gordimer

the poem's speaker, a gentile, attempts to "differentiate himself from death's helpers," he, nevertheless, feels "complicit in this and all the other despicable crimes carried out over the centuries against Jews and other races by poor specimens of humanity claiming to be Christians" (8). Cf. Błoński (1990).

19 Cf. Popescu (2010, 153); Jackson (2017, 31–5, 53–4).

20 She also calls apartheid a "habit" which an "average South African is not conscious of" (266)—an observation which is re-iterated in Rothberg's study with regard to the implicated subject's sense of unconsciousness of their own entanglement(s).

21 For a recent discussion of Gramsci's 1930 statement which serves as a motto to Gordimer's *July's People* (1981), consult Achcar (2022).

22 "The state of interregnum is a state […] of contradictions" (269). For Gordimer, it is also a situation which requires an "accommodation of paradox" and a necessity to move between the positions of the victim and the perpetrator (e.g. Gordimer's recollection of attending a public meeting concerning the Swaziland deal).

turns to Miłosz—a writer who throughout his life continued to struggle with a powerful guilt complex (cf. Franaszek 2017, 410; Miłosz 1981, 126) and who made it one of his oeuvre's major themes—for the first time. While attempting to define the condition of her social "segment" (her "people") and, consequently, also herself, Gordimer quotes Miłosz's line about the threat posed by guilt which is capable of "sap[ping] [a modern man's] belief in the value of his own perceptions and judgements" (266). She argues that what white South Africans require (in order to achieve the kind of future that could be shared by both black and white South Africans) is to become the individualised moral subjects who would reclaim their agency and thus find a way to overcome a paralysing culture of self-victimisation. It is not enough to "weep over what's done," she says, and adds: "We have to believe in our ability to find new perceptions, and our ability to judge their truth" (266).

Miłosz's words become central to Gordimer's process of understanding the condition of the white South African 'implicated subject' and a sense of passivity which impedes any potential attempt to resist or dismantle the existing racial structures. By referring to the Polish poet (via carefully selected quotes), she alludes to an otherwise unlikely parallel between South Africa of the late 1970s and early 1980s and pre-WWII Poland—especially with regard to the implicit "powerlessness of the individual" who becomes entangled in various historical and political mechanisms of the time (271; Miłosz 1981, 120).[23] Most of Miłosz's lines quoted by Gordimer come from his literary attempt to situate himself in a wider political and social context, namely *Native Realm*, published in English in 1968—an (auto)biographical narrative concerned with the writer's early life and, simultaneously, a nostographic account of his titular Polish–Lithuanian "native realm." It is not difficult to guess why Gordimer must have found this account appealing and relevant to her own (and her country's) situation. The subject of Miłosz's recollections is his homeland: the repeatedly

23 Originally, the fragment about the "powerlessness of the individual" that Gordimer quotes in her essay follows Miłosz's discussion of the political situation in Poland and Central Europe in 1939: "On one side were the Germans—Hitler and the four Horses of the Apocalypse. On the other was Russia. In the middle was the nauseating Polish Right, which, in the perspective of time, was doomed to failure. The groupings of the Centre—Populists and Socialists undermined by Communist sympathies—were difficult to take seriously. Parliamentary methods were discredited in the eyes of my generation. […] My state of mind in those days [1939] could be described as the same dream over and over: we want to run but cannot because our legs are made of lead. I had come up against the powerlessness of the individual involved in a mechanism that works independently of his will" (Miłosz 1981, 120).

colonised territory of the Commonwealth, subjected to acts of racial, economic, and religious violence, inhabited by Poles, Lithuanians, and Jews, who, as Miłosz observes, "hated not only their [latest] sovereign, Imperial Russia, but each other" (16). The fragment of *Native Realm* that attracted Gordimer's special attention (and which, one might argue, mirrored her own beliefs) is to be found in the chapter entitled "Marxism," which, much like "Living in the Interregnum," is concerned with the relationship between politics and the writer's life. At the heart of its argument lies the question about one's position vis-à-vis the demands imposed by various regimes in which one is entangled—in the case of Miłosz, his bourgeois/gentry background, Roman Catholicism, and Polish nationalism as well as Communism. Miłosz writes in the following manner about his response to the 'either/or' logic embedded in his early experiences: "I was stretched [...] between two poles: the contemplation of a motionless point and the command to participate actively in history; in other words between transcendence and becoming. I did not manage to bring these extremes into a unity, but I did not want to give either of them up" (125).

How to respond to one's sense of implication and the fact that one is incapable of (or averse to) occupying either of the binary subject positions (a Pole or a Lithuanian, a believer or an agnostic, a nationalist or a Communist)? How—to quote another of Miłosz's auto/biographical lines cited by Gordimer in her essay—does one act when one has been used to drinking "Manichean potions"? (270). Miłosz recalls a sense of guilt which he developed in the course of his Catholic upbringing and its after-effects: the feeling of disgrace when, for example, a radical literary critic accused his early work of political passivity and aesthetic reactionaryism (of "wanting to keep [his] hands clean" [Miłosz 1981, 124]); or when his friends—"the embodiment of intellect, daring, and capacity for self-sacrifice in the struggle with the blockheaded authority of the state" (126)—were tried and sentenced for "leftist" sympathies while he "curled up in the sun" (125).[24] For Miłosz, the kind of guilt that is likely to develop in an individual aware of their entanglement and participation in various forms of injustices (as well as of being a beneficiary of power and privilege that result from those injustices) is a potential threat that might lead to one becoming a "direct agent of harm" (Rothberg 2019, 1). For Miłosz, guilt is an "ally of any

24 Elsewhere, Miłosz writes about the painful incident in the following manner: "I sat at the hearings in the courtroom, clenched my fists in anger at the existing political system and also felt ashamed of my role as an outsider, who was never involved in organisational aspects. I was not aware of their involvement with the Communists, but suspected it" (in Franaszek 2017, 158).

ideology,"[25] as it invalidates one's subject position understood as an ability to subjectively understand and make meaning of the world. It is this kind of guilt, this "abdication of the will" (Gordimer 1988a, 267) that Gordimer is rightly suspicious about when she ponders over the role that her "people," her "segment" with their morally compromised position can play in the "new that cannot yet be born" (266). By overcoming the sense of guilt, they are more likely to find a way "out of the perceptual clutter of curled photographs of master and servant relationships, the 78 *rpms* of history repeating the conditioning of the past" (270). When she quotes Miłosz for the last time, she chooses a two-liner ("What is poetry which does not save / Nations or people" [272]) from his poem "Dedication," written in 1945 and addressed to Miłosz's fellow poets who—unlike himself—fought and died in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 (Miłosz 2001c). This is a telling choice, indeed; and, one should add, coherent with other pieces by Miłosz selected by Gordimer to provide a commentary on her personal and political views regarding South Africa. Not only is it a poem which is set in its own interregnum ("You mixed up farewell to an epoch with the beginning of a new one" [Miłosz 2001, 77]); not only is it a piece which pronounces its faith in literature's obligations towards individuals and communities as well as attesting to the dangers posed by a new ideological regime (in Miłosz's case, the communist regime, with its desire to erase the memory of the Warsaw Uprising from history). Most importantly for the present discussion, it is a confession by a poet who, despite his feeling of guilt and shame, professes a belief in the possibility of ending a cycle of violence[26] and thus finding a way to "reconcile the irreconcilable within himself" (Gordimer 1988a, 278).

Dan Jacobson, Adam Mickiewicz, and Czesław Miłosz

Gordimer is not the only South African writer who has turned to Miłosz, her "countryman,"[27] while trying to undo the knots of her enmeshment with apartheid. Miłosz also features in the work of Gordimer's fellow South African Litvak Dan Jacobson—more specifically, in the already

25 He traces the origins of his future complicity and acknowledgement of People's Poland to this pre-WWII feeling of guilt (125).

26 "They used to pour millet on graves or poppy seeds / To feed the dead who would come disguised as birds. / I put this book here for you, who once lived / So that you should visit us no more" (Miłosz 1973, 45).

27 Miłosz was born in Sztetejnie (nowadays Šeteniai) in 1911. His home village is located approximately 150 kilometres from Žagarė, the birthplace of Nadine Gordimer's father Isidore Gordimer.

mentioned memoir entitled *Heshel's Kingdom*. The story of Jacobson's travel to Lithuania in the early 1990s to visit the place where his mother was born and where his family continued to live until 1941 (i.e. to Varniai) is much concerned with transnational parallels between South Africa and Central Europe.[28] This is particularly conspicuous in Jacobson's discussion of South African and Central European landscapes, in which his hometown of Kimberley and the Northern Cape are fused with the town of Varniai and the Lithuanian countryside—both presented as border-/hinterlands and a provincial space carved out within another provincial space. In Jacobson's memoir, Varniai's description as "remote, out-of-the-way, lacking streets and convenient transportation to the central city of the country" (18), as a dwelling where only one brick-walled house exists (23), is constantly juxtaposed with the writer's near-identical account of Kimberly: "shabby, bypassed place even within South Africa" (74) where the veld "beg[ins] not fifty yards from [one's] garden" (72). For the writer, South Africa and Central Europe are each other's spitting image: both are "provincial" (68, 145), holding the status of "rough-and-ready annexe" to civilisation (68); both are described using the same repertoire of adjectives: flat, empty, silent, vacant (71, 109, 110, 113, 149, 181, 183). Jacobson is also struck by a "surprising likeness" (117) of houses that he encounters in Lithuania with those that surrounded him in South Africa since his birth.

However, Jacobson's interest in topographical and architectural parallels between South Africa and Central Europe remains just a prelude to Jacobson's effort to understand his own position in South Africa (as a South African Jew), the position occupied by other social and ethnic groups, and the network of relationships that have developed between them. While trying to look at his early years spent in Kimberley, Jacobson will conclude that "the society in which we found ourselves was quite as fissured as any to be found in Lithuania and […] almost as comprehensively ruled by administrative fiat" (72). Though Jacobson is careful not to draw straightforward parallels between Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa, or between Central European Jews and Black South Africans,[29] he cannot resist building analogies between various ethnic and national groups that have populated both regions. The dominant position occupied by the Poles in

28 For a thorough discussion of these parallels and further development of the claims formulated in this sub-section, see Kusek (2023).

29 Unlike, for example, Rose Zwi, who acknowledges a direct correspondence between the two historical phenomena. "How can we fail to recognise our own lives in those of the black people?" (Zwi 1997, 48) her father will ask when commenting on the living and working conditions of the black mine workers upon his arrival in South Africa from Lithuania.

Lithuania reminds him not only of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in Ireland but also of the English-speaking South Africans who have dominated the country's intellectual and cultural life. Conversely, ethnic Lithuanians are perceived as Central Europe's Afrikaners. Both ethnic Lithuanians and Afrikaners are, in Jacobson's words, a "proud but despised group, cherishing a language and culture which they knew to be looked down on by their white, English- (or, given the present discussion, Polish-) speaking compatriots (their Ascendancy)" (151); both are directly involved (as bystanders and perpetrators) in the history of oppression and violence—the genocidal policy of Nazi Germany and apartheid, respectively. Elsewhere, his visit to Kaunas's and Vilnius's synagogues and subsequent speculations about the museum role they were supposed to perform once the extermination of the European Jews had been completed become conflated with what he sees as analogous ethnographic displays which he saw in South Africa, featuring the works of the San people who, in the nineteenth century, were pushed to the edge of extinction by Cape colonists (143).

It is, again, by bringing two poets "out of Europe's East," namely, Adam Mickiewicz and Czesław Miłosz, that Jacobson appears to indirectly talk about his complex standing with regard to South Africa[30]—including his inevitable participation in sustaining injustices in the very country to which his family emigrated so as to escape persecution. He knows that, as a white South African, he is no longer entitled to claim the position of the victim of racial violence;[31] that the diamond pits which he re-visits in the opening section of the book and which become inextricably linked to the death pits in Lithuania have been based on suffering, subjugation, and exploitation of Black South Africans. One might claim that Jacobson's own entanglements in power hierarchies are reflected in those that he identifies in Mickiewicz and Miłosz. Interestingly—and crucially for the present argument—he sees both poets as inhabiting different and often overlapping regimes of domination, despite their own subjection to the oppressive power of, for example, Tsarist Russia. For example, he sees them as belonging to the class of the Polish landed gentry, i.e. hereditary landowners whose economic well-being largely depended on Lithuanian serfs. Additionally, he pays attention to the fact that, although born in Lithuania, they were Poles who spoke Polish, wrote in the Polish language, and

30 This reading is supported by the fact that Jacobson, whose memoir is filled with descriptions of the South African landscape, first refers to Miłosz in the context of the latter's "plangent" evocations of the "remote Lithuanian landscapes of his childhood" (151).

31 Despite frequent instances of antisemitism.

identified themselves culturally with Poland and the West (for instance, Jacobson refers to Miłosz as a "passionately bookish Francophile" [151]). If one were to follow Jacobson's parallels between South Africa and Lithuania (and recognise historical alliances between Afrikaners and Lithuanians, Black South Africans and Central European Jews, etc.), then it becomes clear that Jacobson reads his identity,[32] as well as the story of his and his family's entanglements—a mixture of victimisation, domination, and complicity[33]—through the prism of Mickiewicz and Miłosz. He reads himself as an English-speaking and English-educated Jew born in South Africa who consistently elected English and (Central) European culture to be his points of reference[34] and who cannot but acknowledge his position as a beneficiary of the system of colonial and imperial violence. But there is another aspect of Jacobson's transnational 'implicated subject' that the writer fails to notice in his discussion of Mickiewicz and Miłosz—one that unites all three writers. They all resorted to the same manner of undoing the knots of their enmeshment in the oppressive systems they were born into: they escaped from their homelands into exile.[35]

J. M. Coetzee and Zbigniew Herbert

The last example privileged by the present discussion is concerned with how Polish literature might be activated to help in one's confrontation with multiple forms of past and present violence that one is implicated in—not only those related to racial oppression or economic exploitation

32 Jacobson addresses this issue in detail in his (auto)biographical collection *Time and Time Again* (1985). Of his precarious South African identity, which seeks and requires other (trans)national forms of self-identification, he writes the following: "As so many others have done [...] I found it wasn't the reality of the countries from which the books and movies came that I was compelled to doubt, but the reality of the country I lived in: this undescribed and uncertified place where not a single thing [...] was as other places were. Everything around us was without confirmation, without background, without credentials; there was something unreliable, left out, about the whole place, and hence about all of us, too" (8–9).

33 Jacobson extensively writes about different attitudes towards apartheid among South African Jews, including that of his uncle, who embraced Afrikaner nationalism. In *The Implicated Subject,* Rothberg quotes Kentridge referring to the subject position of South African Jews as "'an interesting position' between accommodation and marginalization" (111).

34 Similarly to Mickiewicz and Miłosz—both Polish-speaking and electing Polish and Western European culture as their points of reference.

35 Mickiewicz to France; Jacobson to England; Miłosz to the United States.

but also violence towards animals and nature. I am referring here to a curious appearance of Zbigniew Herbert's poem "Apollo and Marsyas" in a catalogue entitled *Cripplewood/Kreupelhout*, which was produced as a companion piece to the exhibition by the Belgian artist Berlinde De Bruyckere displayed in the Belgian Pavilion of the 2013 Venice Biennial—the exhibition whose curator was J. M. Coetzee.[36] Despite defining his role as a curator, J. M. Coetzee served primarily as a "source of inspiration" for the artist—as powerfully testified to by a series of letters exchanged between De Bruyckere and Coetzee over a period of seven months (from September 2012 to March 2013) which comprises a substantial part of the show's catalogue.

The piece that De Bruyckere showed in Venice—a monumental mould of a dead and uprooted tree covered with many layers of wax and flesh-coloured paint[37]—clearly attributed fleshiness to wood. It did not only represent the metamorphosis (the wood-into-flesh/flesh-into-wood transformation) but, as a matter of fact, embodied or enacted it. For Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, the work was reminiscent of a fractured and bandaged body, a "prehistoric corpse, or medieval royalty entombed in a cathedral"; it was "the embodiment of the spectacularized uncanny par excellence" (Buchloh 2013, 316). It was also interpreted—especially due to the use of specific materials, such as wax, horse's skin and hair, cotton, and wood—as the embodiment of suffering and violence that has been inflicted upon the entire natural world by the humankind.

True to the role that has been assigned to him by De Bruyckere, Coetzee remains the piece's major "source of inspiration." Consequently, he provides the artist with two literary pieces (later included in the catalogue) which, one might argue, help him not only voice his preoccupation with the position that one can occupy in the face of suffering (those of a witness,

36 For a detailed discussion of co-operation, see Kusek and Szymański (2015).

37 The artist herself spoke about "Cripplewood/Kreupelhout" in the following manner: "You enter the space and see an enormous tree. I've worked with trees before, but on a much smaller scale, and always in vitrines. I bought old vitrines and used the same encaustic technique. I start from the dead tree and make a mold. We begin with that negative, a silicone mold, and in that we paint the encaustic in many layers, with epoxy and iron at the center to make it stronger. Only when you take the wax out of the mold can you see the resulting surface. Then you put all the parts together […] and then paint it layer after layer—as many as 20 layers altogether. […] I use the same palette here as in the human bodies. So it looks really human. That is a subject of much of my other work, and in fact you can look at the tree as a huge, wounded body. It's as if it needs to be taken care of—as if nurses came by and bandaged it" (Hirsch 2013).

a by-stander, or a perpetrator) but also point to one's multiple entanglements in different, both past and present, forms of oppression.

The first piece is a short story entitled "The Old Woman and the Cats." It narrates John's visit to his mother, the retired writer Elizabeth Costello, who spends the last days of her life in a small Castilian village taking care of feral cats and a mentally disabled man called Pablo. Out of all Coetzee's fictional creations, Elizabeth Costello has addressed (and embodied) the sense of implication in the most ostensible manner—not only by criticising one's refusal to acknowledge the horrors of animals' lives and deaths[38] and pointing to one's participation in the present-day industry of death which "cuts [animals] up and refrigerates, and packs them so that they can be consumed in the comforts of our homes" (Coetzee 2004, 66) but also by building an analogy between the meat industry and the Holocaust and comparing two modes of implication: in the Holocaust and in the industrial slaughter of animals. When giving a "lesson" on human capability and eagerness to "close [their][39] hearts," on humans being impure and corrupted yet simultaneously refusing to "feel tainted" by animal suffering (Coetzee 2004, 80), she memorably formulates the following verdict on the condition of the implicated subject and one's understanding of it:

> We point to the Germans and Poles and Ukrainians who did and did not know of the atrocities around them. We like to think they were inwardly marked by the after-effects of that special form of ignorance. We like to think that in their nightmares the ones whose suffering they had refused to enter came back to haunt them. We like to think they woke up haggard in the mornings and died of gnawing cancers. But probably it was not so. The evidence points in the opposite direction: that we can do anything and get away with it; that there is no punishment. (80)

But in responding to De Bruyckere's somewhat desperate plea to provide her with "[s]omething else, something new that [Coetzee] feel[s] could be related to [her] work […]; [a] text, a story, an essay maybe" (De Bruyckere and Coetzee 2013, 29), Coetzee offers an additional contribution which is to

38 The "horrors" and "deaths" that, according to Costello, take place around us: "I was taken on a drive around Waltham this morning. It seems a pleasant enough town, I saw no horrors, no drug-testing laboratories, no factory farms, no abattoirs. Yet, I am sure they are here. They must be. They simply do not advertise themselves. They are all around us as we speak, only we do not, in a certain sense, know about them" (Coetzee 2004, 65).

39 In the lecture, Costello constantly uses the pronoun "we"—thus commenting on her own position of implication. This aspect is also addressed by Elizabeth's comment about her wearing leather shoes and carrying a leather purse.

help the artist in her creative process, namely a poem by Zbigniew Herbert entitled "Apollo and Marsyas," i.e. one of the major pieces that Coetzee read and taught at the University of Cape Town in the 1970s (Crewe 2013). By placing Herbert's poem—one that offers its own version of the well-known mythological story and focuses on the aftermath of the duel[40]—in the context of De Bruyckere's artwork, as well as the fictional character of Elizabeth Costello, Coetzee, once again, points to the Polish poet as a kind of lens through which one can investigate one's own "response-ability" (Haraway 2016, 28) and modes of involvement into multiple forms of violence (towards fellow humans beings, animals, nature, etc.): not only across geography, race, or time, but also across species. It is justified to claim that by evoking Hebert's poem, in which Apollo becomes an indifferent witness to Marsyas's agony,[41] Coetzee manages to mobilise a range of responses (or entanglements, or implications) to one's participation, often indirect, in injustices—those of "judges [who] have awarded victory to the god," of Apollo with his "nerves of artificial fibres," of a "petrified nightingale" which falls at Apollo's feat in the wake of Marsyas's scream, and, ultimately, a tree to which Marsyas was tied and which in the final line of the poem turns white (138, 139, 140).

Herbert's poetic image of a white, grief-stricken tree—a pine tree[42] to which Marsyas is nailed and which, as a result, becomes a crippled tree—is central to my reading of the role Polish literature has played in various attempts undertaken by South African writers to understand their own position in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. Herbert's poem might, indeed, offer some much-needed commentary on the work of De Bruyckere and the piece's problematisation of one's engagement with the world: in particular, one's responsibility for (and response-ability in the face of) suffering. However, it could be argued that its major aim is to reveal Coetzee's *own* direct implication in the history of violence in South Africa.

40 Herbert calls this aftermath "the proper duel" (Herbert 2008, 138).

41 Perhaps also a perpetrator, given the ambiguity of the line about Apollo "clean[ing] his instrument" (138). For a detailed discussion of the poem and its interpretations, see Barańczak (1987, 58–9).

42 On ancient writers, who almost unanimously (with the exception of Pliny) identified the tree on which Marsyas was hanged as a pine tree, see James Frazer's commentary on Book 1.4.2 of Apollodorus' *The Library* (Apollodorus 1921, 30–1). Interestingly, a lone pine tree (synonymous with death and destruction) also features in Czesław Miłosz's post-WWII poetry—particularly a poem entitled "Outskirts" ("Farther on, the city torn into red brick. / A lone pine tree behind a Jewish house" [Miłosz 2001b, 65]). For more on the image of the lone pine in Miłosz's poetry and its place in the poet's wartime landscape, see Okopień-Sławińska (2013).

This essentially (auto)biographical interpretation of Coetzee's evocation of Herbert's poem is validated by notes that are to be found in Coetzee's papers held at the Harry Ransom Centre at the University of Texas in Austin. In an early handwritten draft of what was to become *Boyhood*, under the date of 11 May 1993, Coetzee makes a direct link between a crippled pine tree and his life in South Africa (HRC). In this entry, he evokes the deformed trees that grow on the golf course in Cape Town—the pine trees that are both alien and a dangerous species; alien because they are native to the Mediterranean region and were introduced to South Africa during the seventeenth century and dangerous since they use more water than native vegetation. In Coetzee's reading, they become a metaphor for his own position as a white South African citizen: "Deformation. My life as deformed, year after year, by South Africa. Emblem: the deformed trees on the golf links in Simonstown" ("Notes for autobiography, 11 May—8 August 1993," 1/1).[43] A tainted pine tree evoked by Herbert in "Apollo and Marsyas" thus becomes just another version of Coetzee's damaged Cape Town pine trees, whose "bones," as Coetzee observes elsewhere, are twisted by "something in [their] genes, some bad inheritance, some poison" (De Bruyckere and Coetzee 2013, 46). Herbert's and Coetzee's cripplewood trees metamorphose into each other and, therefore, become the symbols of the implicated subject who, just like them, "grows out of the buried past into our clean present, pushing its knotted fingers up through the grate/gate behind which we have shut it" (46).

Conclusion

In one of his essays about poetry from "the other Europe," Stephen Watson re-affirms the centrality of Polish poetry—Zbigniew Herbert, in particular—to South African literary production. In his view, their lines "provide [them, i.e. South Africans] with a complete education as to the character of the [twentieth] century itself, illuminating its crimes, more insidious temptations, while also suggesting how these might be resisted" (1990, 110). Speaking of their ability to occupy multiple positions simultaneously

43 David Attwell also makes a reference to this fragment in his 2015 biographical study of Coetzee's writing, entitled *J. M. Coetzee and the Life of Writing*. He not only explains the reason for the trees' shape (the result of south-easterly wind from the Atlantic Ocean) but also emphasises the fact that their deformation is a "mockery of the [golf] club's wistful founders." Most importantly for the present discussion, he sees them as "emblems […] for the effects of place and history on one's character" (Attwell 2015, 4).

(between optimism and pessimism), he concludes that Polish poetry "says something for us, […] speaks on all of our behalf, even though our historical context might seem utterly remote and alien to such voices as [Herbert's]" (110).

Jodi Dean is most right when she repeatedly states that "anyone but not everyone can be a comrade" (35) and that comradeship should by no means be "substantialize[d] […] via race, ethnicity, nationality" (39). It is precisely this kind of anti-identitarian comradeship that the present chapter has attempted to discuss with regard to selected South African and Polish writers—one that cuts through national, ethnic, and geographical boundaries and one that builds a shared sense of belonging among those who are "on the same side of the division" (35). However, it has also argued that the *raison d'être* of the South Africa-Polish 'literary' comradeship is not the struggle against the same enemy (a totalitarian regime which materialises in the form of apartheid and Communism, respectively) but an acknowledgement of one's implication, namely, an indirect and involuntary participation in past and present injustices. In short, the very comradeship that the chapter has prioritised in its discussion of South African writers' 'dialogue' with their Polish 'comrades' is one between individuals who are not only "bastard people" (Dean 2019, 30)—those disposed and constantly in pursuit of their 'real' home, even if such an endeavour takes them as far as the European core—but also 'implicated subjects.'

ORCID®
Robert Kusek https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9969-0221

Acknowledgements

This research was funded in whole by the National Science Centre, Poland, [Grant no. 2020/39/B/ HS2/02083]. For the purpose of Open Access, the author has applied a CC-BY public copyright license to any author accepted manuscript (AAM) version arising from this submission.

Bibliography

Abrahams, Lionel. 1988. "Place." In *Lionel Abrahams: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Cullinan, 24–25. Johannesburg: A.D. Donker Publisher.

Achcar, Gilbert. 2022. "Morbid Symptoms: What Did Gramsci Really Mean?" *The Journal for Studies on Power* 1 (2): 379–87.

Apollodorus. 1921. *The Library*. Translated by James George Frazer. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann Ltd.

Attwell, David, ed. 1992. *J. M. Coetzee—Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Attwell, David. 2015. *J. M. Coetzee and the Life of Writing*. New York: Viking.

Barańczak, Stanislaw. 1987. *A Fugitive from Utopia: The Poetry of Zbigniew Herbert*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Błoński, Jan. 1990. "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto." In *"My Brother's Keeper?": Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*, edited by Antony Polonsky, 34–52. London: Routledge.

Buchloh, Benjamin H. D. 2013. "The Entropic Encyclopedia." *Artforum International* 52 (1): 311–17.

Coetzee, J. M. 1992. "Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech (1987)." In *J. M. Coetzee—Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, edited by David Attwell, 96–99. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Coetzee, J. M. 1998. *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life*. London: Vintage.

Coetzee, J. M. 2002. "What Is a Classic? A Lecture." In J. M. Coetzee, *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays*, 1–16. New York: Penguin Books.

Coetzee, J. M. 2003. *Youth*. London: Vintage.

Coetzee, J. M. 2004. *Elizabeth Costello*. London: Vintage.

Craggs, Ruth, Hilary Geoghegan, and Innes M. Keighren, eds. 2013. *Collaborative Geographies: The Politics, Practicalities, and Promise of Working Together*. London: Royal Geographical Society.

Crewe, Jonathan. 2013. "Arrival: J. M. Coetzee in Cape Town." *English in Africa* 40 (1): 11–35.

Dean, Jodie. 2019. *Comrade: An Essay on Political Belonging*. London: Verso.

De Bruyckere, Berlinde, and J. M. Coetzee. 2013. *Cripplewood/Kreupelhout*. New Haven, CT: Mercatorfonds.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1975. *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure*. Paris: Les éditions de Minuit.

Franaszek, Andrzej. 2017. *Czesław Miłosz: A Biography*. Translated by Aleksandra Parker and Michael Parker. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press.

Gandhi, Leela. 2006. *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Geertsema, Johan. 2014. "Hidden Literality: Coetzee, Beckett, Herbert, and the Attempt to 'Touch Reality.'" In *Travelling Texts: J. M. Coetzee and Other Writers*, edited by Bożena Kucała and Robert Kusek, 21–33. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Gordimer, Nadine. 1981. *July's People*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Gordimer, Nadine. 1988a. "Living in the Interregnum." In Nadine Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places*, edited by Stephen Clingman, 261–84. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Gordimer Nadine. 1988b. "The Essential Gesture." In Nadine Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places*, edited by Stephen Clingman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 285–300.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks by Antionio Gramsci*, edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers.

Haraway, Donna. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Herbert, Zbigniew. 1968. *Selected Poems*. Translated by Czeslaw Milosz and Peter Dale Scott. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Herbert, Zbigniew. 2008. "Apollo and Marsyas." In Zbigniew Herbert, *The Collected Poems: 1956–1998*, translated by Alissa Valles. New York: Ecco/Harper Collins.

Hirsch, Faye. 2013. "Correspondences: An Interview with Berlinde De Bruyckere." *Art in America*. July 8, 2013. http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/interviews/correspondences-an-interview-with-berlinde-de-bruyckere/.

HRC. 1993. J. M. Coetzee Papers, Box 27.2, "Notes for Autobiography, 11 May—8 August 1993." 11 May 1993: 1–3.

Jacobson, Dan. 1985. *Time and Time Again: Autobiographies.* London: Andre Deutsch.

Jacobson, Dan. 1998. *Heshel's Kingdom*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Jackson, Jeanne-Marie. 2017. *South African Literature's Russian Soul: Narrative Forms of Global Isolation*. London York: Bloomsbury.

Kannemeyer, J. C. 2013. *J. M. Coetzee: A Life in Writing*. Melbourne and London: Scribe.

Kentridge, William. 2010. "Landscape in a State of Siege." In Dan Cameron et al., *William Kentridge*, 108–11. New York: Phaidon.

Kucała, Bożena. 2014. "On Lost Causes: Zbigniew Herbert and J. M. Coetzee." In *Travelling Texts: J. M. Coetzee and Other Writers,* edited by Bożena Kucała and Robert Kusek, 35–47. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Kusek, Robert. 2023. "South Africa-sur-Nemunas: Transnational Hinterlands in Dan Jacobson's *Heshel's Kingdom*." *English in Africa* 50 (2): 7–28.

Kusek, Robert. 2020. "Przypadkowy turysta? John Maxwell Coetzee w Europie Środkowej—rekonesans." *Śląskie Studia Polonistyczne* 15 (1): 1–16.

Kusek, Robert, and Wojciech Szymański. 2015. "An Unlikely Pair: Berlinde De Bruyckere and J. M. Coetzee." *Werkwinkel* 10 (1): 13–32.

Lionnet, Françoise, and Shu-mei Shih, eds. 2005. *Minor Transnationalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Miłosz, Czesław. 1981. *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition.* Translated by Catherine S. Leach. New York: Doubleday.

Miłosz, Czeslaw. 2001a. "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto." In Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, 63–4. New York: Ecco/Harper Collins.

Miłosz, Czeslaw. 2001b. "Outskirts." In Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, 65–6. New York: Ecco/Harper Collins.

Miłosz, Czeslaw. 2001c. "Dedication." In Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems*, 77. New York: Ecco/Harper Collins.

Okopień-Sławińska, Aleksadnra. 2013. "'Outskirts' as Another 'Song on the End of the World': A Contribution to the Definition of Czesław Miłosz's Poetic Art." In *Miłosz in "Literary Memoir" ["Pamiętnik Literacki"]*, translated by Ursula Phillips, 18–34. Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich.

Parker, Michael. 2017. "Introduction." In Andrzej Franaszek, *Czesław Miłosz: A Biography*, translated by Aleksandra Parker and Michael Parker, 1–12. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press.

Popescu, Monica. 2010. *South African Literature beyond the Cold War*. New York: Palgrave.

Rothberg, Michael. 2013. "Multidirectional Memory and the Implicated Subject: On Sebald and Kentridge." In *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*, edited by Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik, 39–58. New York: Routledge.

Rothberg, Michael. 2019. *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press.

Snyder, Timothy. 2010. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books.

Taborski, Bolesław. 1964. "Polish Plays in English Translations: A Bibliography." *The Polish Review* 9 (3): 63–101.

Watson, Stephen. 1990. "Two Writers from the Other Europe." In Stephen Watson, *Selected Essays, 1980–1990*, 103–119. Cape Town: Carrefour Press.

Watson, Stephen. 2000. "The Other City." In Stephen Watson, *The Other City: Selected Poems 1977–1999*, 150–52. Cape Town: David Phillips Publishers.

Zwi, Rose. 1997. *Last Walk in Naryshkin Park*. Melbourne: Spinifex.