

ABSTRACTS

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Poles - Germans: Partnership of Societies

Activity in the area of international relations has become after 1989 one of the major elements of changing the Polish state's image abroad. Animators of the civil movement in Poland's local governments in counties and communes became important actors in establishing an understanding with Germans. They could refer to the Catholic traditions of the lay elites of the past decades and shared an interest in their neighbours accompanied by a need to create a common platform with them. Far away from politics, they sought to solve the current problems both in the dimension of professional milieus and in the domain of local communities. Examples of various types of initiatives towards mutual understanding between Poles and Germans can be found in the materials published in this volume, sent in at the request of the editor.

Izabela Drozdowska

"The Unburdened." Polish - German Literary Relations after 1989. An Assessment

Due to generation shift the Polish-German literary relations are beginning to be shaped by the generation of the "unburdened" - people who do not have personal memories of the Second World War.

The first decade after the political breakthrough of 1989 abounded in meetings, workshops and bilateral literary festivals, but those events were mostly regional in character, and the more popular ones, like the five editions of the Polish-German Boat of Poets bordered on the so-called "kitsch of reconciliation". Several such meetings of writers resulted in bilingual volumes of prose and poetry. In the propagation of the literature of the neighbouring country an important role is played by the Polish Institutes in Germany and the Goethe Institute in Poland, regardless of the differences in the profile of both institutions.

The border region seems a natural place of cultural exchange, literature included. However, in recent years we have witnessed a surprising phenomenon - the emergence of a new Polish-German borderland in the capital of Germany, which is perceived by many Poles and also many Germans as a country in its own rights. A number of institutions and Polish writers resident in Germany create a specific milieu that often undertakes bilateral initiatives.

Another plane of encounter, in spite of asymmetry in interest on both sides is the presence of Polish and German themes in literature, although in this case even the young generation is not free of stereotypes.

Wanda Pilch

Responsibility of the Individual and of the Organization

Organization has always accompanied human beings in their social life. The goal for which

people unite into various forms of organization defines its nature, e.g.: from tribal to political (Hobbes' state), social (Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*) or institutional-beaurocratic (Weber's beaurocracy). The role and place of humans in the organization have changed over time, just as personal responsibility within the organization, up to the present situation when individual responsibility (moral responsibility) is "concealed" behind a façade of regulations, procedures and formal decrees. What is needed today is not merely transparency of the law and its principles, but perhaps above all a transparency of human interests and motives. Although positive and codified law of the organization: rational, predictable and open, replaces the old natural "laws and powers" (called "divine" or "magical" by some), this does not allow or justify an obliteration of individual and moral responsibility. The article deals with human propensities to "cope with" responsibility or its dispersion, even evasion. The author takes up the problems of legitimation, institutionalization and formal procedures, all of which are troublesome issues for scientific-cognitive discourse, involving a controversy over what counts as part of institution and what as organization. Attention is drawn to a crucial though often overlooked distinction between stability and repeatability of social behaviour (social institutions) on the one hand, and stability of social structure (social organizations) on the other. Such reflection deliberately exceeds the bounds of sociology, as it also uses the critical-normative framework of philosophy, and this ultimately justifies its final normative and social postulates.