


STEFAN ZABIEROWSKI – CONRAD RESEARCHER

Karol Samsel

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2047-4508>

(University of Warsaw, Poland)

Abstract: The study is an attempt to discuss and summarize the multidirectional and multifaceted Conradist achievements of Stefan Zabierowski. I carefully try to present the scholar's work on many planes so as to reveal his precursorship, which is not always visible at first glance. It is Zabierowski who creates the entire background of reading and reception research in Conrad studies, starting from the monograph from 1971, entitled *Conrad w Polsce. Wybrane problemy recepcji krytycznej w latach 1896-1969* [Conrad in Poland. Selected problems of critical reception in the years 1896-1969] up to *Dziedzictwo Conrada w literaturze polskiej XX wieku* [Conrad's Legacy in Polish literature of the 20th century] from 1992. From the perspective of interpretive research, Zabierowski-the researcher represents the exegetical school, devoting most of his attention to one work, the analysis of which has been deepened over the years, also using modern reading theories (Umberto Eco's concept of the open work) – *Lord Jim*. In the discussion on the so-called Joseph Conrad's Polish, as well as borderland background, Zabierowski proposes a competitive metaphor to the one comparing Conrad's writing to the cathedral in Kamieniec Podolski by Paweł Hostowiec (Jerzy Stempowski) – Conrad's literature is the Slutsk Belt of competing currents, motifs and poetics and as such, it requires original intertextual reflection. Zabierowski initiates it by comparing the Gould marriage from *Nostromo* with the Niechcic marriage from Maria Dąbrowska's *Nights and Days*.

Keywords: Stefan Zabierowski, reading and reception research, *Lord Jim*, intertextuality, Umberto Eco, Slutsk Belt

The workshop of Stefan Zabierowski as an expert in Joseph Conrad is in a way defined by his metaphor of complexity and multidimensionality of Conrad's writings. First of all, one needs to know that Polish research on Conrad is characterised by a particular affinity to build such metaphors, and this trend was initiated by Paweł Hostowiec (namely Jerzy Stempowski) in his renowned and praised "Bagaż z Kalinówki" where the author of the *Heart of Darkness* was made equivalent to... the Cathedral of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul in Kamieniec Podolski ("where – as Stempowski-Hostowiec illustrates it – there used to be a minaret, which used to feature the gilded figure of Our Lady"¹). Let us, perhaps, explain that strategy of

¹ Paweł Hostowiec [Jerzy Stempowski], "Bagaż z Kalinówki" [Baggage from Kalinówka], in *Conrad żywy* [Conrad Alive], ed. Wit Tarnawski (London: B. Świdorski, 1957), p. 88.

Conrad's similar imaging, rather artistic, indeed. It would be about the expression of Conrad's writing, represented features of his style, or workshop as an enigma. This enigma would be, however, very specifically symbolised with a symbol derived from Conrad's nobility or eastern nobility background.

Zabierowski often refers to this research symbolism, but not extending it in an unchanged form, but rather in a contrary form with a clear and non-enigmatic message. Conrad's writing is not a cathedral in Kamieniec here but, as Zabierowski presents it, a skilfully made kontoush sash, as could be associated with the reality of his childhood and adolescence both at home and outside it, with the Bobrowski and Korzeniowski family sash. As a reminder: kontoush sashes were signed separately for the production site, and differentiated both in the aspect of quality and the decoration methodology, featuring unique motifs: eastern, oriental, western-European, or specially ordered from French decorators, which resulted in stylistic abundance seemingly comparable, according to the author of *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru* [Conrad in the Perspective of His Reception], to the abundance of Conrad's writing. In the final part of his important synthetic study entitled "Joseph Conrad i '-izmy'" [Joseph Conrad and '-isms'] of 1994, Zabierowski constructs his comparison:

And just as in the kontoush sashes worn by Conrad's Polish predecessors, the Borowski family of the Jastrzębiec armour, and the Korzeniowski family of the Nałęcz armour, various motifs intertwined, still amazing with the beauty of their composition, various elements of various trends and different poetics intertwined in the writing art of *Lord Jim*'s author in the same way.²

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Stefan Zabierowski had his debut as a Conrad researcher in 1965 with a text that clearly predicted the future orientation of his research on the author of *Lord Jim*. This was a brief study in the fifth edition of *Ruch Literacki* bimonthly, entitled *Conrad w oczach polskich krytyków* [Conrad in the Eyes of the Polish Critics]. The text clearly determined the future profile of Zabierowski as a researcher providing the most reliable and the most thorough monographer of the Polish twentieth-century culture of Conrad's perception, including his writings and his legend.³ It is worth pointing out that he started his work as a researcher who, back in the 1960s, had no access yet to the most important theoretical and methodological means and reference points to perform his research. This is because, firstly, the entire Hans Robert Jauss' reception theory was developed in the late 1960s, so when Zabierowski presented his doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Henryk Markiewicz, entitled *Conrad*

² Stefan Zabierowski, "Joseph Conrad i '-izmy'" Joseph Conrad and '-isms', in Zabierowski, *W kręgu Conrada* [Within Conrad's Circle] (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2008), p. 97.

³ Stefan Zabierowski, "Conrad w oczach polskich krytyków" [Conrad in the Eyes of the Polish Critics], *Ruch Literacki*, no. 5 (1965), pp. 244-247.

w Polsce. *Wybrane problemy recepcji krytycznej w latach 1896-1969*⁴ [Conrad in Poland. Selected Problems of Critical Reception in the 1896-1969]. Secondly, Polish research on the problem of reception were initiated only after Zabierowski had become a renowned researcher, and his proposals to interpret Conrad competed against theoretical and methodological proposals of such researchers as Janusz Sławiński, referred here as the author of the study entitled *Odbiór i odbiorca w procesie historycznoliterackim* [Reception and Recipient in the Historical Literary Process] of 1981.⁵ In 1977, a major monograph was written, edited by Tadeusz Bujnicki and Janusz Sławiński, *Problemy odbioru i odbiorcy* [Problems of Reception and Recipient], whereas in 1979, Wydawnictwo Morskie publishing house in Gdańsk published one of the most mature and detailed volumes of Zabierowski's essays defined by this scope of interest: *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru* [Conrad in the Reception Perspective].⁶

It is worth remembering that, with time, within the framework of his research on Conrad's reception in Poland, Zabierowski became a capital researcher of intertextuality of twentieth century works referring to the writings by the author of *Nostromo*. The best examples of that have been provided by the latest volume that provided most exemplifications thereof, namely *Dziedzictwo Conrada w literaturze polskiej XX wieku* [Conrad's Legacy in the Polish Literature of the 20th Century] published in 1992. In the chapter devoted to Maria Dąbrowska, the most impressive fragments of the argumentation in this aspect are the ones where Zabierowski analyses Dąbrowska's novel *Noce i dnie* in the aspect of Conrad's intertextuality. Before Wolfgang G. Müller proposed the first theory of intertextuality as interfigural,⁷ Zabierowski himself, based on his own workshop and own interpretation practices, had proposed an intriguing and maturely differentiated interfigural pairs between *Noce i dnie* and *Nostromo* (namely: Bogumił and Barbara Niechcic vs. Charles and Emilia Gould, Barbara Niechcic as a character built on the interfigural template of Conrad's "sensitive figures" like Decoud or even Heyst from *Victory*, Anzelm Ostrzeński and Lucjan Kocięł vs. Charles Gould as people of "material interest"⁸).

⁴ Hans Robert Jauss, *Literary History as Provocation*, Polish trans. Małgorzata Łukasiewicz, afterword by Kazimierz Bartoszyński (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 1999). Cf. Stefan Zabierowski, *Conrad w Polsce. Wybrane problemy recepcji krytycznej w latach 1896-1969* [Conrad in Poland. Selected Problems of Critical Reception in the 1896-1969] (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1971).

⁵ Janusz Sławiński, "Odbiór i odbiorca w procesie historycznoliterackim" [Reception and Recipient in the Historical Literary Process], *Teksty*, no. 3 (1981), pp. 5-34.

⁶ *Problemy odbioru i odbiorcy. Studia* [Problems of Reception and Recipient. Studies], eds. Tadeusz Bujnicki and Janusz Sławiński (Wrocław: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1977). Cf. Stefan Zabierowski, *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru. Szkice* [Conrad in the Reception Perspective. Essays], Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1979.

⁷ Wolfgang G. Müller, *Interfigurality. A Study on the Interdependence of Literary Figures*, in *Intertextuality*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett (Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), p. 107 (and following).

⁸ Stefan Zabierowski, "Maria Dąbrowska," in Stefan Zabierowski, *Dziedzictwo Conrada w literaturze polskiej XX wieku* [Conrad's Legacy in the Polish Literature of the 20th Century] (Kraków: Oficyna Literacka, 1992), pp. 63-67.

Similarly nuanced and thought through descriptions of Conrad's intertextuality in the reception perspective can be found in other chapters of Zabierowski's book devoted to Antoni Gołubiew, Jerzy Andrzejewski, or Jan Józef Szczepański. This makes the author of *Dziedzictwo Conrada* [Conrad's Legacy] an exceedingly comprehensive and multidimensional researcher of reception that thoroughly follows the traces of intertextuality. One can thus say that Zabierowski's research opposed the analyses of "impact" and false "impact-related" intuitions prevailing in Poland in the aspect of Conrad's writing. Within the framework of global research on Conrad, his consistently published monographs forming a tetralogy (1971: *Conrad w Polsce. Wybrane problemy recepcji krytycznej w latach 1896-1969* [Conrad in Poland. Selected Problems of Critical Reception in the 1896-1969], 1979: *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru* [Conrad in the Perspective of His Reception], 1988: "Autor-rodak." *Pisarze polscy wobec Conrada* ["Compatriot Author." Polish Writers vs. Conrad], 1992: *Dziedzictwo Conrada w literaturze polskiej XX wieku* [Conrad's Legacy in the Polish Literature of the 20th Century]) must be a true precedent. Undoubtedly, one can say Zabierowski developed his own style of research on the twentieth-century reception of Conrad's writings in Poland. The only competition to his concept could be formed by John G. Peters and his book *Joseph Conrad's Critical Reception*.⁹ Zabierowski, however, prevails over Peters with his complementarity, or the eclectic approach (in the good sense) whereby, particularly in books such as *Dziedzictwo Conrada* [Conrad's Legacy], he accounts for not only critical, but also artistic reception of Conrad's writings, while providing an almost "simultaneous" analysis in the line of his argumentation.

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One should not forget that Zabierowski was also a long-term exegete and interpreter of Conrad's novel to which he willingly returned upon any occasion: *Lord Jim*. Zabierowski's interpretations of *Lord Jim* began in 1974 with the first publication in *Przegląd Humanistyczny* magazine of his essay "Pięć interpretacji 'Lorda Jima'" [Five Interpretations of 'Lord Jim'], which was then amended and published anew several times. The essay, as "Pięć typów interpretacji 'Lorda Jima'" [Five Types of Interpretation of 'Lord Jim'], was published in *Studia conradowskie* [Conrad Studies] in 1976, became the last chapter of *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru* from 1979, and contributed to Zabierowski's important popular science book entitled *Jak czytać „Lorda Jima”?* [How to Read 'Lord Jim'?] from 1997. Chronologically, "Pięć interpretacji 'Lorda Jima'" was last published in Zabierowski's book *W kręgu Conrada* [Within Conrad's Circle] from 2008. And this version of the article, already from the 21st century, should be juxtaposed with the previous one, still dating back from the 20th century.

In 2008, Zabierowski does not introduce many significant changes to the text from 1974. He does not interfere with its tissue. There is, however, one important

⁹ John G. Peters, *Joseph Conrad's Critical Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

moment pointing to a change (although discrete) to the concept as such. I mean here the very beginning of *Pięć interpretacji*, on pages 97-99 in *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru*, where (despite the fact that Zabierowski intends to depict qualitative equilibrium between *Lord Jim* and *Nostramo*, he inadvertently points to the higher form of the former novel) *Lord Jim* was a discovery of brilliant frame of reference in the aspect of style and workshop, whereas the later *Nostramo* is just an adaptation thereof, after the discovery of the most spectacular topics and form of expression. It seems rather clear what Zabierowski aims at by such opening of his essay. He intends to show the ‘antagonism’ of Conrad’s masterpieces¹⁰ and thus differentiate one of them, *Lord Jim*. The assumption is that the differentiation is not intended at discounting the other work. Valuation of *Lord Jim* vs. *Nostramo*, however, occurs in many parts of the text, which is perhaps why the scholar resigned from this part of his essay in its later versions.

“Pięć interpretacji ‘Lorda Jima’” is also one of the first Polish texts of historical-literary nature that responded to Eco’s theoretical and methodological breakthrough.

Let us remember that Zabierowski first published his study in 1974; whereas a year earlier, in 1973, Czytelnik published *Opera aperta: formae indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*, translated by Jadwiga Gałuszka. And although Zabierowski only signals the interpretation of *Lord Jim* in the poetics of the open work as an option, one cannot deny his sensitivity to the change in the theoretical and methodological trend in literary studies. It is worth pointing out that, at the end of “Pięć interpretacji” from 1979, Zabierowski hints that Andrzej Zgorzelski’s important essay from the volume *O kompozycji tekstu Conradowskiego* [About the Composition of Conradian Text] on the composition of *Lord Jim* could become a “precious complementation of his text.”¹¹ Considering the Zgorzelski’s far-reaching, or even uncompromising opinions about Conrad’s novels, such as that

Lord Jim does not refer [...] at all to any ethical or moral system that would be external to the text itself,” and “is simply a literary system of signs that builds a model of the world and the model of its perception, and the system is not completely explained by philosophical or ethical classification,¹²

one should state that it was this scholar in Poland who proposed a fully coherent concept for semiotic interpretation of *Lord Jim*.

It is very meaningful that Zabierowski admitted the same line of thought. *Lord Jim*, in Zgorzelski’s semiotic interpretation that was as if appropriated by Zabierowski who proposed five classical ways to interpret the novel, and who knew Eco’s concept

¹⁰ The term taken from Zbigniew Majchrowski, expert in Mickiewicz. Zbigniew Majchrowski, “Antagonizm arcydzieł: ‘Dziady’ a ‘Pan Tadeusz’” [Antagonism of the masterpieces: *Dziady* and *Pan Tadeusz*], in Zbigniew Majchrowski, *Mickiewicz i wiek dwudziesty* [Mickiewicz and the 20th Century] (Gdańsk 2006).

¹¹ Stefan Zabierowski, “Pięć interpretacji ‘Lorda Jima’” [Five Interpretations of *Lord Jim*], in Zabierowski, *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru*, p. 130.

¹² Andrzej Zgorzelski, “O kompozycji ‘Lorda Jima’ uwag parę” [Several Remarks on the Composition of *Lord Jim*], in *O kompozycji tekstu Conradowskiego* [About the Composition of Conradian Text], ed. Andrzej Zgorzelski (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1978), p. 95.

in 1974, is remarkably close to Eco's concept of the open work. It is tempting to say that Zgorzelski could undertake a comparative analysis that was not performed by Zabierowski, but importance of which was pointed out, as the 'sixth,' supplementary, semiotic interpretation of *Lord Jim*. What must be added here, however, is that the reference to Zgorzelski did not appear in further versions of Zabierowski's essay. It is also missing in the latest version from 2008. Has it become obsolete or inadequate?

Certainly, there are such parts of Zabierowski's interpretation of *Lord Jim* that make the reader crave for more. The aforementioned antinomy between *Lord Jim* and *Nostromo* (or rather "antagonism of masterpieces") is a reflexion that is exciting and requiring a development in the form of a separate text but which, unfortunately, was removed during further transformations of Zabierowski's text. In his book *Jak czytać „Lorda Jima?”*, there is a small part devoted to impressionism in the novel. Not only does it evoke the reader's feeling of being unsatisfied, but it is also disputable. By bringing the impressionism in Conrad's prose down to the effect of delayed decoding, Zabierowski in fact equalises it with fragmentation and the techniques of fragmenting the image of the events. Such approach seems too simplified back in 1997, when compared to studies as the one by Eloise Knapp Hay.¹³ Soon afterwards, it turned entirely obsolete owing to John G. Peters and his breakthrough work *Conrad and Impressionism*.¹⁴

4

In Zabierowski's research on Conrad's Polish perception, there are many outstanding although underestimated studies striking with the depth of detail and multidimensionality of approach. Many of them were devoted to the interwar period: this group of texts includes not only the earlier "Między totalizmem a personalizmem (z polskich dyskusji o Conradzie w latach 1932-1939)" [Between Totalism and Personalism (from Polish Discussions on Conrad in 1932-1939)] from the volume *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru*, but also "Conrad na scenie polskiej (okres międzywojenny)" [Conrad on Polish Scene (the Interwar Period)], written after 2000, from *W kręgu Conrada*. Zabierowski is also an author of astounding fragments that enliven and deepen the stereotypical approaches to some facts related to the reception. In *Polskie spory o Conrada w latach 1945-1949* [Polish Disputes about Conrad in the Period 1945-1949], the scholar differentiates and deepens Jan Kott's approach to the writer, unanimously considered to of liquidating nature, reminding that, in 1945, "among

¹³ Eloise Knapp Hay, "Joseph Conrad and Impressionism," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 4, no. 2 (1975), pp. 137-144.

¹⁴ John G. Peters, *Conrad and Impressionism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Cf. Stefan Zabierowski, "Impresjonizm w 'Lordzie Jimie'" [Impressionism in *Lord Jim*], in Zabierowski, *Jak czytać „Lorda Jima?”* [How to read *Lord Jim*?] (Katowice: Wydawnictwo „Książnica" 1997), pp. 75-78.

one hundred books publication of which was an urgent need, he listed as many as two books by Conrad: *The Mirror of the Sea* and *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*.”¹⁵

In the perspective of Zabierowski's broadest studies on reception, major studies in the recent years include a reliable discussion of the *Conradiana* by Rafał Marcei Blüth, published on the 160th anniversary of the writer's birthday by the *Więź* Publishing House. The publication became a precedent mainly owing to the concept of the erudite selection of writings and a study where Zabierowski presented new ways to synthesise the study on reception which, by the way, used the most optimal solutions worked out within the framework of his workshop. Zabierowski often referred to Blüth's studies on Conrad, starting from his book *Conrad w Polsce. Wybrane problemy recepcji krytycznej w latach 1896-1969*.¹⁶ He exposed the aspect of Blüth being a precursor initiating the genetic-biographic school of interpreting Conrad from the perspective of his childhood and youth, the “two families from eastern territories of Poland”: the Korzeniowski and the Bobrowski family, whereas he also estimated the approach with which Blüth has been most frequently identified in the Polish reception, namely the psychoanalytical and psycho-biographic approach. While pointing out that Blüth originally initiated the research on the less commented upon Conrad's novels (*Nostramo*, *Victory*, *The Rover*), while he was also one of the first to introduce the model of reliable Conradian comparative studies in Poland (the scholar's study on Conrad and Dostoevsky), Zabierowski convincingly reveals this entire dispersed Conradology as an “unestablished link” in the interwar reflexion over the author of *Lord Jim*, which apparently played a major role in determining the depth and the focus of the post-war studies on the author (Blüth was discovered and referred to, although in different ways, by Róża Jabłkowska, Roman Taborski, and Zdzisław Najder).

Conrad w Polsce. Wybrane problemy recepcji krytycznej w latach 1896-1969 is a special volume also due to the presence of detailed comparative essays referring to the literature of the Polish background of Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski (Conrad and Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński, Malczewski, Norwid, Fredro, or the literature of Polish Positivism, etc.). It was Zabierowski who initiated the poetics of this comprehensive text – comparative impression, which was taken on by Wit Tarnawski with the essays in *Conrad. Człowiek – pisarz – Polak* from 1972. Both these sources still have the status of leaders in the research and synthesising the Polish-language intertextuality of Conrad's writings, particularly intertextuality related to the Polish Romanticism.¹⁷ In my opinion, this is an achievement comparable with the one of the

¹⁵ Stefan Zabierowski, *Polskie spory o Conrada w latach 1945-1949* [Polish Disputes about Conrad in the period 1945-1949], in Zabierowski, *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru*, p. 56.

¹⁶ Stefan Zabierowski, *Polska legenda Conrada* [Conrad's Polish Legend], in Zabierowski, *Conrad w Polsce*, pp. 13-44.

¹⁷ Cf., among others, essays by Stefan Zabierowski, “Conrad a romantycy polscy (Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński, Malczewski, Norwid, Fredro), Conrad a polska literatura ‘pozytywistyczna’” [Conrad and Polish Romanticists (Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński, Malczewski, Norwid, Fredro)], in *Conrad w Polsce*, pp. 133-155, 175-185, and Wit Tarnawski, “Echa mickiewiczowskie u Conrada, Conrad a... (Malczewski, Fredro, Żeromski, polski pozytywizm)” [Mickiewicz's Echoes in Conrad's Writings, Conrad

English language studies on Conrad occurring simultaneously, from Andrzej Busza (1966) through (contemporarily) G. W. Stephen Brodsky (2017). While Zabierowski and Tarnawski proposed to precisely define intertextual frame of reference to analyse Conrad's Polish identity, Busza and his successors through Brodsky followed the vast, seemingly unlimited description (often interdisciplinary), aiming primarily at contextualisation (and re-contextualisation) of the search for Polish inspirations for Conrad's writings. Nowadays, in the time perspective, these two images are perfectly complementary.¹⁸

In his studies in Conrad and the Polish case, Zabierowski is remarkably close to the style of Conrad's biography. It is worth comparing his method of describing Conrad's biography with the method of biographic narrative chosen by Zdzisław Najder in his *Życie Conrada-Korzeniowskiego* [The Life of Conrad-Korzeniowski], published in 1980. In this case, the point of reference was Zabierowski's thick study (of over 100 pages) entitled *Polska misja Conrada* [Conrad's Polish Mission] from 1984. The author often continued the motifs from this book in separate studies, including the article *Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski i sprawa niepodległości* [Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski and the Independence] published in 2017 in the *Arcana* bi-monthly. In his narrative on Conrad's biography, Najder skilfully joins erudition and novelisation, using suggestive moments of such constructed narrative to express his researcher's point of view. Zabierowski seems much more discrete in this aspect. First of all, he contaminates, and then differentiates the sources: documents, opinions, judgements, testimonies and, as in the case of his books on Conrad's reception, aims at a comprehensive and thematically balance inquiry that could become a transparent mirror of the problem, and even something more, a portal leading to the very heart of the problem.

In this way, the author of *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru* achieves a sort of a reliable and effective balance of bibliography that accounts for both journalism and criticism of the Polish background, as well as global studies on Conrad. In *Polska misja Conrada*, the abundance of various sources is principally manifested by bibliography of eighty items, including Andrzej Busza, Frederick Karl, Czesław Miłosz, and Gustaw Morf, as well as an essay by Maria Kuncewiczowa, or memoirs of Anna and Władysław Tatarkiewicz.¹⁹ The researcher's opinion is here grounded on the continued selection, orientation, followed by re-selection and re-orientation of the selected and balanced source material.

and... (Malczewski, Fredro, Żeromski, Polish Positivism)], in Wit Tarnawski, *Conrad. Człowiek – pisarz – Polak* [Conrad the Man, the Writer, the Pole] (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1972), pp. 203-217.

¹⁸ In this context, cf. Andrzej Busza, "Conrad's Polish Literary Background and Some Illustrations of the Influences of Polish Literature on His Work," *Antemurale X* (1966), and G. W. Stephen Brodsky, *Joseph Conrad's Polish Soul. Realms of Memory and Self*, ed. and Introduction by George Z. Gasyna (Lublin–New York: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, Columbia University Press, 2017).

¹⁹ Stefan Zabierowski, *Polska misja Conrada* [Conrad's Polish Mission] (Katowice: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1984), pp. 119-122.

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The range and multidimensionality of the perfectly balanced sources seems to characterise each type of Zabierowski's statements on Conrad, not just the fragments on Conrad's biography. Therefore, to refer again to the metaphor of studies on Conrad from the study "Joseph Conrad i 'izmy,'" I should repeat my statement: Zabierowski's Conrad is indeed an object of *sub specie* reflexion compared to the kontoush sash: representing the abundance of skilfully encoded legibility but, remarkably, legibility that can be carefully decoded. In this situation, it is the researcher's objective to interpret the most paradoxical metaphors in the writer's workshop. This is what Zabierowski intends to do. A clear example of his research procedures could be formed by one of his last texts, an essay published in *Przegląd Humanistyczny* that revealed the meaning of *homo duplex* used by Conrad to describe his double identity. As Zabierowski explains, Conrad lives, works, and writes while experiencing the 'braid' of many national and civic identities: apart from the most important experience of Polish identity, there are major experiences from England, France, and even (the negative ones) from Russia.²⁰

In order to proceed with the interpretation in the spirit of the kontoush sash, and not the one of the 'mosaic' cathedral in Kamieniec Podolski proposed by Stempowski-Hostowiec, we should proceed analytically: divide the warp and weft, remove the interlacing. Before this can happen, however, we must determine the size, braid differentiator, etc. This "weaving" metaphor can be used to define Zabierowski's workshop and approach to inquiry and material analysis. It must be pointed out that this workshop was also characterised by a mature reflexion over intertextuality, skilfully used to carry out the research on Conrad's reception, among others in the book *Dziedzictwo Conrada w literaturze polskiej XX wieku*. In many aspects, Zabierowski seems to have been a precursor. Firstly, his research on Conrad's reception was proposed in Poland at the time when there was still insufficient reflexion among the scholars on the phenomenon of reception and the reception culture. Secondly, he was ahead of Hans Robert Jauss and his first lectures on the theory and aesthetics of reception that set the theoretical starting point for this type of research. Finally, Zabierowski remained sensitive to contemporary breakthroughs in the interpretation theory: he was one of the first to suggest interpretation of Conrad's writings (precisely: *Lord Jim*) in the spirit of Umberto Eco's open work.

²⁰ Stefan Zabierowski, „*Homo duplex*” (z problematyki przynależności narodowej i państwowej Josepha Conrada) [Homo Duplex (On the Problems of Joseph Conrad's National and Civic Identity)], *Przegląd Humanistyczny* no. 2 (2020), pp. 39-51.

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