

The Sarmatian Review (ISSN 1059-5872) is a triannual publication of the Polish Institute of Houston. The journal deals with Polish, Central, and Eastern European affairs, and it explores their implications for the United States. We specialize in the translation of documents. *Sarmatian Review* is indexed in the American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies, EBSCO, and P.A.I.S. International Database. Since September 1997, files in PDF format are available at the Central and Eastern European Online Library (www.ceeol.com).

Subscription price is \$21.00 per year for individuals, \$28.00 for institutions and libraries (\$28.00 for individuals, \$35.00 for libraries overseas, air mail). The views expressed by authors of articles do not necessarily represent those of the Editors or of the Polish Institute of Houston. Articles are subject to editing. Unsolicited manuscripts and other materials are not returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Please submit your contribution electronically and, if requested, send a printout by air mail. Submissions and Letters to the Editor can be e-mailed to <sarmatia@rice.edu>, with the accompanying mailing return address. Other letters and subscription queries should be emailed to <sarmatianreview@yahoo.com>. Subscription checks should be mailed to

The Sarmatian Review, P. O. Box 79119, Houston, Texas 77279-9119.

The Sarmatian Review retains the copyright for all materials included in print and online issues. Copies for personal or educational use are permitted by section 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. Permission to redistribute, republish, or use SR materials in advertising or promotion must be submitted in writing to the Editor.

Editor: Ewa Thompson (Rice University).

Associate Editors: Tamara Trojanowska (University of Toronto), **Bogdan Czaykowski, 1932-2007** (University of British Columbia).

Editorial Advisory Committee: George Gasynda (University of Illinois-Urbana), Janusz A. Ichnatowicz (University of Saint Thomas-Houston), Bożena Karwowska (University of British Columbia), Joseph A. Kotarba (University of Houston), Alex Kurczaba (University of Illinois-Chicago), **Marcus D. Leuchter, 1909-2008** (Holocaust Museum Houston), Witold J. Lukaszewski (Sam Houston State University), Theresa Kurk McGinley (Lone Star College-North Harris), Michael J. Mikos (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), Jan Rybicki (Kraków Pedagogical University), Dariusz Skórczewski (Catholic University of Lublin), Piotr Wilczek (University of Warsaw).

Copy Editor: Cyndy Brown

Web Pages: Lisa Spiro (Rice University), Scott Gunther (Rice University).

Web Address: <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~sarmatia>.

Alternate Web Address: Central and East European Online Library (www.ceeol.com), under Periodicals—United States—*Sarmatian Review*.

In this issue:

<i>Sarmatian Review</i> Data	1573
<i>Sarmatian Review</i> Award	1575
Raymond Gawronski, SJ, Letter to Miłosz	1576
Andrzej Nowak, <i>The Origins of Modern Polish Democracy</i> (review)	1578
David Goldfarb, <i>Adam Mickiewicz: The Life of a Romantic</i> (review)	1581
James E. Reid, <i>Zbigniew Herbert: The Collected Prose 1948-1998</i> (review)	1583
Mark Edward Ruff, <i>Rome's Most Faithful Daughter: The Catholic Church and Independent Poland</i> (review)	1584
James R. Thompson, <i>Bundist Counter-culture in Interwar Poland</i> (review)	1585
Beata Tarnowska, <i>Andrzej Bursa: Wybór wierszy/Selected Poems</i> (review)	1587
Sally Boss, Jerzy Pilch's <i>A Thousand Peaceful Cities</i> (review).	1588
Adam Mickiewicz, <i>Pan Tadeusz</i> (Book Seven), trans. Christopher A. Zakrzewski	1589
More Books	1597
About the Authors.	1597

Our Take

The crumbling of the humanities

In the summer 2010 issue of *Modern Age*, its editor R.V. Young notes that over the lifetime of humanities professors now approaching retirement, humanities at American universities evolved from being a treasure house of memory to a means of weakening communal memory. Novels and poems used to be read as records of times past and verbal expressions of human passions and desires. Works of history were treated as attempts to find out *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, although Ranke himself could be contested in his brutally biased account of Teutonic dealings with Germany's eastern neighbors. Nevertheless, the principles and assumed goals of research were clear and sources could be rationally contested. Practically anyone could understand texts of even the most prominent teachers of history and literature.

Today scholarly texts are written in a language understandable only to a handful of readers who have mastered the same “secret knowledge.” The focus of research has likewise shifted—certain minorities became almost central to the study of humanities, while mainstream society, its struggles and achievements, its glories and tragedies faded from view. “Men’s history” has largely been replaced by “women’s history” as if the two genders had little in common. The social margin has been pushed to the center of research, while the previous center faded from view. The acknowledged masters of literature are not taught, while contemporary writers with a “correct” ideological agenda are. Thus both the change of topics and the new language conspire to make humanistic studies more and more irrelevant to the student eager to imbibe memory of the past. Our observations indicate that to recruit one major in gender studies or minority studies takes several times more money than it used to take to recruit a major in the masterpieces of European literature.

Economically, 2011 is a tough year. Cuts in salaries, employment, and grants are evident everywhere, including the humanities. Entire departments and schools are losing funding. The outcry of those who are affected is loud and clear: professors know how to complain if their jobs are being eliminated. They start nationwide campaigns to save their chairs.

However, as one looks at the courses these professors have taught or publications that paved their way to the top, one wonders whether they made a real contribution to the common good. Perhaps their disappearance is necessary in order for the new humanities to be born?Δ