

do not want anything else except to hear your voice. If you do not hear what I say or do not accept my question, do not be surprised that I won't trust you because in the end I will not know what values you hold. It is my opinion that Poland cannot push aside its historical guilt toward Ukrainians, and I am ready to tell it to anyone. We have to talk openly, otherwise there will be no useful dialogue.

The modern Pole knows that the so-called *Kresy* are not Polish assets but Polish moral obligations. During the hot days of the Kyiv Maydan and annexation of Crimea by Russia, I wrote an invitation to some Ukrainians from the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast' to come to Poland. One of them lives on Bandera Street, the other on Szuchewycz Street. "It is our personal business what heroes we respect," wrote the Ukrainian friend whom I mentioned at the beginning of this essay. I began to doubt our moral obligations toward the Ukrainians, especially when I saw the second name [it was Szuchewycz who issued the order to murder all Poles with any tools available. *Ed.*].

After 1991 the former UPA members remembered their leaders such as Szuchewycz, but forgot not only about Poles but also about eastern Ukrainians. The myth of the anti-Soviet UPA replete with heroes gained strength as Ukrainians rose from their knees to proclaim an independent state. After Crimea and Putin's declaration on 18 March 2014, the road to Donetsk and Kharkiv in search of national unity became even more difficult: it now led through Moscow.

We do not know what these young Ukrainians think as they march under their red-and-black flags. My intuition tells me that they are not at all like the UPA members two generations ago, that they have more in common with the Maydan, that they represent hope for the future. But they have to tell each other how it really was during the Second World War, and what the *banderistas* and UPA members stood for. Without such confession they will not become one nation, east and west. Δ

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## Germany's Wild East Constructing Poland as Colonial Space

**By Kristin Kopp.** Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012. ix + 255 pages. Index, bibliography. ISBN 978-0-472-11844-1. Hardcover. \$76.50.

### Sally Boss

This scholarly study details the ways in which Germany's eastern neighbors, Poland in particular, became subject to German political and economic expansion the author identifies as colonial. She is meticulously impartial in presenting these ways, but she fails to emphasize, or indeed mention their military aspect.

The author begins by making a distinction between material colonialism—acquiring economic and political power over a territory and discursive colonialism—creating a discourse in which the conquered area is presented as undeveloped and therefore requiring foreign tutelage. In the Polish case, both aspects of colonialism have been successfully practiced. German literature and expository writings are replete with *idées reçues* concerning Poland as a perpetually inferior and primitive territory that would erupt into barbaric chaos were it not ruled by the enlightened Germans. The author rightly points out that in comparison with the actions and writings described in Edward Said's *Orientalism*, the German colonial narrative concerning Poland was much more instrumental, i.e., oriented toward achieving goals advantageous for Germany at a particular historical moment. Rhetorical colonization was particularly deadly to Polish interests since, as Tomasz Zarycki pointed out in his recent book, "any act of naming an object reinforces its social existence" (Zarycki, *Ideologies of Eastness*, 8). German texts were imbued with the prestige of a rising empire, and therefore German writings on Poland as a weak and inferior territory gained wide acceptance in Europe's intellectual life. One should add here that in Poland these negative stereotypes were only vaguely perceived; Polish discourse emphasized the injustices and cruelties of the Prussian conquest. In a medieval Christian way Poles have hoped to

this day that “Europe” would also take heed of these injustices; this, of course, has never happened. Professor Kopp is primarily interested in the German side of the story, and it is that side that she so ably narrates. Thus she describes the narrative “of Slavic otherness and stressing the Slavs’ inherent inability and unwillingness to learn, develop, and progress—and perhaps even their belligerent resistance to such change” (13). Kopp apparently is not aware of the secret clause in the document confirming the third and final partition of Poland, urging that the name “Poland” be erased from memory and the Polish state not mentioned in public discourse. Thus the narrative about Poland that the Germans constructed interpreted Polish risings for freedom as “belligerent resistance” to “progress.” The “talking at cross-purposes” that took place between German and Polish writers appears worthy of another book that would juxtapose these different interpretations and assess their role in German-Polish relations, as well as in German fascination with Russia.

But back to the book. Kopp states that Gustav Freytag’s novel *Soll und Haben* (1855) initiated the tradition of producing colonial narratives that belittled the conquered and justified the conqueror. She also mentions the popular German fantasy that the conquest of Poland was “a conquest by plowshare” according to the diffusionist model adopted by many German historians. Virtually all Poles believe that the said conquest occurred by applying the law of the stronger, i.e., that might makes right. The German push eastward was not benign in the sense that groups of Germans settled to the east of Germany’s ethnic border; it was accomplished with fire and sword, an element of German colonialism that Poles remember much more vividly than the Germans. Here one observes a wide disagreement in the perception of history between Germans and Poles.

*Soll und Haben* was one of the most popular German novels for decades even though it was described as anti-Semitic by some reviewers. No one bothered to declare that it was also virulently anti-Polish. In the mid-nineteenth century Poland had virtually no spokespersons among the German reviewers. The imaginary Poland was Germany’s Other: German *Bürgertum* was juxtaposed with the wild,

chaotic, and primitive Polish space that was clearly unable to achieve self-organization, let alone an orderly economic and social development. Needless to say, no effort had been made by either Freytag or his reviewers to mention Polish republicanism that disdained central control and created a functioning society of free nobles for ten generations. Freytag’s powerful depiction of Poland as a cultural wilderness became the standard image in Germany of the Polish nation, one that justified the nineteenth-century land expropriations benefitting the German farmers (as depicted, from an entirely different standpoint, in Henryk Sienkiewicz’s “Bartek the Victor” [1882] or Bolesław Prus’s *The Outpost* [1886]). These examples from Polish literature are my additions; I wish Professor Kopp were familiar with them and had added them as illustrations of the sociological and political developments she has outlined.

After the Great War Germany lost 13 percent of its territory, mostly to independent Poland that rose from the ashes thanks to Marshal Józef Piłsudski’s persistence and President Woodrow Wilson’s support. Kopp frankly states that in spite of political divisions, “Germans were united around the issue of regaining. . . territory lost in the East” (25). A propaganda machine was unleashed, lost territory was presented as amputation of a limb and Poles as savages only slightly tamed by the German civilizing labor over the centuries. Karl Hampe’s *The Drive to the East* presented medieval Germans as wiping out primitive tribes and bringing civilization to the eastern steppes. Here one begins to understand the fury of a certain German politician who, upon reading Nobel Prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz’s novel *The Knights of the Cross* opined that this novel should have been burned (it presented medieval Germans as savages attacking peaceful and already-Christianized Slavs). On the other hand, Kopp’s account makes it clear that prewar Poles had little idea of the colonial hatred generated in Germany against the Second Polish Republic. This kind of hatred and resentment had to manifest itself in some awful fashion, and it did. Hitler was a predictable product of Germany’s colonial drive to the east.

Time and again Kopp stresses that German imagination created the spacial and diffusionist model of Europe in which Germans are in the center; they dispatch and emanate culture to the periphery. In a manner reminiscent of Ewa Thompson's study of Russian colonialism, Kopp points out that in German novels Germans travel to Poland to acquire goods and teach Poles the rudiments of technology, but the opposite movement never takes place: Poles never cross the border of Germany, they are stuck in their primitive dwellings and methods of production (42). In *Soll und Haben* the expropriation of Polish peasants in Poznań and Prussia occurs peacefully: Germans, it is underlined, use "the power of the plough" rather than deadly weapons; "the Polish bandits" use the latter. From peasant to aristocrat, the Poles are presented as a "*Naturvolk* unable to achieve progress on their own" (55) and positioned beyond historical time.

It is interesting to read Kopp's description of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* and compare it with the image of the *Kulturkampf* and "*die Hakatisten*" preserved in Polish memory. The first takes note of two trends in German politics—the assimilationist (let Poles be assimilated into Germany and the problem of occupying a largely Polish territory will be solved) and the exclusionist (Poles are of a different race and must therefore be pushed aside, hopefully to disappear into Russia or just disappear). In Poland *Kulturkampf* is inalienably tied to the image of the village of Września and its Catholic children being beaten for praying in Polish, as well as with the unjustness of peasant expropriations (*The Outpost* and "Bartek the Victor"). These developments affixed in Polish memory the image of the German as a brute and a barbarian rather than as a careful planner working for the good of the superior German state. Another difference in national memories is the German treatment of Polish Catholic clergy regarded by Germans as supporters of Polish identity and therefore enemies of the German state; Poles have regarded their clergy as defenders of the rights of the voiceless peasants. To this day the Poles perceive Bismarckian expropriations of the 1880s and beyond in moral terms, whereas Germans see them as rational moves that strengthen the

German nationality. This last interpretation has been built into some 300 *Ostmarkenromane* and other literary works that continue to be read in Germany (70).

Kopp repeatedly emphasizes that two models of Germanization existed in the East: the assimilationist and the properly colonial. The first assumed that Poles were just immature Germans and could be "educated" to become Germans. The second was typically colonial in that it drew a thick line between the colonizer and the colonized, emphasizing that Poles were dark skinned and dark haired, while Germans were white skinned and blond. She does not say whether the two models were equally in use, or whether one of them prevailed over the other in social policies and in belles-lettres.

A typical colonial technique analyzed by Said and Anne McClintock consists in depicting the space that the colonized occupy as dirty, degenerate, and disease-ridden due to their inability to organize life—in the case of Poles, the famous *Polnische Wirtschaft*, an expression introduced in Freytag's *Soll und Haben*. Thus the *Ostmarkenromane* show the living space of the Poles as dirty and disorderly and the enterprises through which they earn their livelihood as mismanaged, which in turn causes their inevitable takeover by Germans who introduce good order.

Among the mistakes Edward Said made in *Orientalism* is his blindness toward Europe's "inner colonialism." Kopp points out that Germany knew two kinds of Orientalism: one practiced overseas (of which Said briefly wrote), and the other practiced in the European East (99). Alas, Said so intensely stared at the Middle East and other overseas possessions of the Europeans that he totally neglected the white-on-white colonialism. Kopp makes it amply clear that Germans practiced such colonialism throughout the nineteenth century and also in the twentieth.

Kopp also posits that "the anxiety of reverse diffusion, or the fear, both consciously articulated and unconsciously sensed, that the imperial center was losing strength vis-à-vis its colonial periphery" (100) existed in Germany. Apparently the Slimaks and the Barteks evoked strong resentment among Germans; even though they were defeated, something of the grim

anxiety about the Poles ultimately taking over has remained.

Kopp shows that during the Great War German hopes about annexing large territories in the East (from which Poles and Jews were to be expelled) were still very much in evidence. When the war ended and Germany lost rather than gained territory, the colonial discourse shifted to the colonial successes of the past and to plans to regain what was lost. In the interwar period geographical maps used in schools presented, through various visual tricks, lost territory as German. From such data one can conclude that Hitler was not an aberration in German history, and that the losses incurred after the First World War evoked a savage will (masquerading in the conscious mind as a desire to bring civilization to the untutored) to crush those to whom the eastern territories had been lost. "The *Kulturboden* ideology permeated German representations of the East" (160).

The book concludes with some remarks about contemporary times. The author shows that the diffusionist theory has deep roots in Germany and that it has influenced, among others, Erika Steinbach's political program. The narrative about the alleged German ability to create livable and civilized space for the eastern "barbarians" is by no means dead. "The diffusionist models continue to underlie a subset of representations of German-Eastern European relations" (209).

Alas, as mentioned earlier, the author's familiarity with the history of Poland leaves much to be desired. She does not know that it was not Napoleon that created the Congress Kingdom, it was created by the Congress of Vienna after Napoleon's defeat. Napoleon created the Warsaw Principality (Księstwo Warszawskie) that functioned for a few years as a rump Polish state. The May 3 Constitution was voted in in 1791, not in 1794 (15). The 1846 rising was a peasant rebellion against the landowners instigated by Vienna and meant to weaken Polish presence in the Austrian empire, rather than a rising for freedom; to place it alongside the 1830 and 1863 risings is equivalent to mixing apples and oranges (38). The unfootnoted information that 10 percent of the population in Bismarck's Prussia was Polish seems a bit low (64).

While reading this book that positions the German imagination at the center of civilized Europe, I thought of James Boswell's 1764 poem that presents Germans as Europe's periphery, not unlike the way Germans presented Poles a few generations later:

*Here am I, sitting in a German inn,  
Where I may penance do for many a sin,  
For I am pester'd with a thousand flies,  
Who flap and buzz about my nose and eyes.*

*A lumpish landlord has the easy chair;  
Hardly he speaks, but wildly does he stare.  
In haste to get away, I did not dine,  
And now I've had cold beef and cursed wine.  
And in five minutes, or a little more,  
I shall be stretch'd on musty straw to snore.*

Kopp's book is characterized by an admirable objectivity. In spite of some repetitiveness, it serves as a model of fair scholarship. The book should be translated into German and Polish; it certainly deserves more attention from academic scholars than it has hitherto received. I wish this book would be required reading in German and Polish schools.

The author's final conclusion is that "the mental map of German diffusion" is slowly being replaced by the notion of a "shared European identity" (210). I wish this were true. If this ever comes to pass, Germans will have to come to terms with the fact that their notion of European identity may not be the same as that of their eastern neighbors. In particular, as this book amply demonstrates, Europe's Graeco-Christian identity seems to have been replaced in Germany by a purely secular identity long before the twentieth-century wars. By comparison, Polish identity still has Graeco-Christian roots. However, this is a topic for another book. Δ

## Narrating Migration

*Druga pleć na wygnaniu: Doświadczenie migracyjne w opowieści powojennych pisarek polskich* (The Second Sex in Exile: Migration Experiences in Narratives of Postwar Polish Female Writers), by Bożena Karwowska. Kraków: TAIWPN Universitas, 2013. 268 pages. Index, footnotes. ISBN 97883-242-2289-