

I Am Here / I Inhabit My Own Life. Studies and Sketches about the Work of Anna Frajlich (Tu jestem / zamieszkuję własne życie. Studia i szkice o twórczości Anny Frajlch¹)

Edited by Wojciech Ligęza and Jolanta Pasterska
(Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2018)

ABSTRACTS

Introduction

Works by Anna Frajlich are significant for modern Polish poetry. This significance is validated not only by her verse and prose collections published in recent years, or by her numerous publications in periodicals, literary awards and public readings, but also by the approval – sometimes even enthusiastic – of literary critics. The long-standing importance of Anna Frajlich’s works for Polish culture encourages more systematic study; it endorses detailed analyses and interpretation of her artistic eloquence hitherto left untouched by critical examinations.

Here I am / I inhabit my own life presents a comprehensive and multidimensional evaluation of Anna Frajlich’s literary works, simultaneously providing a space to interpret selected texts. Our arrangement of the research material presents literary subject matter that requires individual consideration, such as indicators of Frajlich’s artistic language, genre aspects and the rules that govern the creation of her literary settings. Readers have the opportunity to observe the main stages and developmental directions of her work, as its most crucial turning points are emphasized – the poet herself aptly refers to these as “metamorphoses”. Her poetry also reveals an element of steadiness in changeability – as we read in one of Frajlich’s poems: “I am standing where I used to stand / it’s the river that’s different”. Thus, two further groups of articles discuss, on the one hand, her relation with literary and cultural tradition and, on the other and the innovative stylistic features of her poetry.

¹ The title is derived from the opening lines Frajlich’s poem “Tu jestem” (Here I Am).

The authors of the articles collected here represent various academic institutions, theoretical schools, practical approaches and, last but not least, different generations. We dare to assume this should enhance interest in the book *Here I am / I inhabit my own life*.

Jolanta Pasterska, Wojciech Ligęza

Beata Dorosz

The Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warszawa

About Anna Frajlich and Her Poems (with an Award in the Background)

The paper is an attempt at an overview of Anna Frajlich's poetry in regard to awarding her the prize of the Association of Polish Writers Abroad for her lifetime accomplishments in London in 2015. It points out the significance of the March '68 emigration, the poet's need to define her own identity and to find a new place to live, the evolution of her attitude to New York City. It particularly emphasizes the need of closer analysis of family and oneiric motifs. It discusses a number of poetry-related issues from the point of view of the poet's literary provenance and in the context of the author-reader relation.

Zbigniew Trzaskowski

Jan Kochanowski University, Kielce

Poetical Habitus of Anna Frajlich

Anna Frajlich's poetry makes a significant contribution to humanistic reflection on the understanding and explanation of the content, meaning, essence of human existence. Philosophical inspirations are combined with a rare observation skill. This way of writing, immanently experienced, consisting in the facilitation, maximally clear recognition of difficult and complicated matters, performs beside the therapeutic functions also the role of parabolization.

Wojciech Ligęza

Jagiellonian University, Cracov

Towards Passing and Recovering Time. On Anna Frajlich's Poetry

In Anna Frajlich's poetry the problems of transience, related to the author's autobiography, play an important part. In her works the lost time becomes the retrieved one. Reflection on current events combines with memories, which creates the particular atmosphere of ecstatic joy and traumatic experiences. The author's Heraclitean poetry speaks about impossible returns, but it is precisely confrontation with one's past that is among the first tasks involved in the search for one's place in the world. In Anna Frajlich's poetic semantics the contrasts of duration and dramatic changes are very important, also as a play between the apology of life and the melancholic feelings of loss. In this poetry the effect of time is perceived sensually. In Anna Frajlich's creative works lost biographic events are

retrieved in the artistic word. Reflection on time in her poems involves adventures of consciousness and deliberations over things in a state of flux.

Barbara Czarnecka
Jagiellonian University, Kraków

Anna Frajlich in the Variants of Time – Who the Poet Is and Who She Tends to Be

Time is one of the categories that organise Anna Frajlich's work. The poet uses this concept in various meanings and there are different aspects of time. There's ordinary, everyday time, in which haste is important (not being late for work) and personal time, intimate time, time of the body and time of aging, of fleeting emotions, and also time that is measured by the passing away of friends. And there's historical time, as if time were measured by bloodshed, historical disasters and art, along with many other temporal creations. Frajlich's writing is a poetical review of the philosophical question of time.

Justyna Budzik
Jagiellonian University, Kraków

(Un)repeatable and Unnamed Time in the Poetry of Anna Frajlich

The essay takes as its focus different dimensions and meanings of time – a recurrent and one of the most important themes in Anna Frajlich's lyrics and prose work. The poet juxtaposes in her poetry and in the collection of her short stories entitled "A Laboratory" (Laboratorium), the 'inner time' – the one that originates in her still vivid memories, with the 'clock time'. Past experiences and images perfectly coexist in this poetry with its author's acute sense of time happening and passing by now. The speaker, in the case of Frajlich's poetic account the author herself, is shown in this essay as a relentless traveler who with the help of her memory revives the sphere of the past time, and yet always shifts herself back to the present reality of her everyday routine and life in New York. This approach corresponds with Henri Bergson's philosophy of time which reverberates in many of Frajlich's poems, and is regarded in this essay as one of the possible perspectives from which her poetry may be interpreted.

Jerzy Madejski
Uniwर्सytet of Szczecin

A Letter, November, Literature. The Biographic Minature of Anna Frajlich

The essay focuses on biographical themes in Anna Frajlich's work, examples of which can be found in various books and literary forms. The art of Frajlich's life-writing is demonstrated based on the analysis of the poem Nad listami Brunona Schulza ['Reading the Letters of Bruno Schulz'] from the volume entitled "Between Dawn and the Wind". The poetic portrait of the Polish writer becomes an opportunity to show the esthetic of Bruno Schulz, as well as to understand the literature of Anna Frajlich.

Agnieszka Nęcka

University of Silesia in Katowice

The (Un)expressed “Transparency of Glass”. About Anna Frajlich’s Prose Miniatures

The author of the sketch interprets Anna Frajlich’s “The Laboratory” as a kind of palimpsest, which allows her (i.e. the very author of the notes) once again to raise questions about the meaning of existence, to test her limits, to be reconciled with her past, soothe her frustrations, and in this way to understand herself and the surrounding reality in more depth. Frajlich’s focus on the minutiae of everyday life reads as a distraction from the Holocaust. Time appears here as an enemy, not only teaching us humility, detachment and patience, but also taking from us what we care about, verifying our plans and expectations. “The Laboratory” appears to be a metaphor for human life, which avoids the perception of human fate only in terms of numbers and generalizing clichés and offers an opportunity to diagnose one’s own concerns, among which (as in the case of the narrator of Anna Frajlich’s prose miniatures) is overpowering fear, which is a consequence of a life of a traveller, a life in a hurry.

Marian Kisiel

University of Silesia in Katowice

Poet of Exile. On the Margins of Two Poems by Anna Frajlich

The paper discusses strategies of exile in two poems of Anna Frajlich: *Ergo sumus* and *Aklimatyzacja*. This experience of exile is existential and artistic, and is associated with the language – native and foreign/alien. The poet – banished from Poland – has not been banished from the Polish language, she has not lost her identity. But at the same time, while becoming part of a different culture, she knows that the relationship with American culture will not be a meeting of foreignness, but rather of indifference.

Bogusław Wróblewski

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin

We from a Bygone Era? Permanence and Change in the Poetic Works of Anna Frajlich

In a recently published collection of Anna Frajlich's poetry one finds in a prominent place the poem entitled *Jeszcze jeden fin de siècle* [‘One More Fin de Siècle’] in which we read a meaningful description of the poet’s situation in history: “we from a bygone era”. Does Anna Frajlich’s work really lean backwards into the last century? Not quite. In many respects it is also poetry of the beginning of the new era. We find here the fleetingness of human existence characteristic of our time, cultural collages retained from postmodernity (for example, Andersen's fairytales), or inter-textual games (for example, the diptych entitled *Z dziennika lektury* [‘From a Reading Journal’]).

One of the basic antinomies organizing Anna Frajlich worldview is the problem of permanence and change. The poem *List Goethego pisany 12 września 1786 roku w Torbole* [‘Goethe's Letter Written on September 12, 1786 in Torbole’] expresses constant astonishment over the transience of human existence in the face of things consistently permanent. Based on the same antinomy is the poem *Z pogranicza* [‘From the Borderland’]. In short, the categories “in the past” and “today”, or “then” and “now” delineate one of two

major axes of Anna Frajlich's poetic reflection on the world. The second axis runs between "here" and "there" – between the New York space and the European space, between the everyday view of the world of the resident of the Big Apple and the childhood space and the family tradition brutally broken by the war.

For many emigrants such time-space positioning cause inner perplexity, an unresolved conflict of values. In Anna Frajlich, however, we deal with the effect of synergy, of which Danuta Mostwin wrote in her book *Trzecia wartość* ['The Third Value'] – as a result of the combination of two axiological orders certain values become reinforced, creating a coherent and stable system.

Józef Wróbel

Jagiellonian University, Kraków

Anna Frajlich's Poland from the Perspective of Exile

Anna Frajlich is a poet who was banished from Poland after the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign and found her own poetic haven in New York, but still returns to the places from her past. Not only Szczecin, where she had spent her youth, but also Warsaw, and even Lviv, which she remembers through the filter of her parents' memories. It is a lost paradise, but sometimes spiced with bitter rejection and the condemnation to exile. An environment untouched by any ideology, Lviv remains for her the place of Polish poetry, which she engages in a continuous dialogue with and which she enriches with her own voice.

Alice-Catherine Carls

University of Tennessee at Martin (Martin, TN, USA)

Life Transcended Holocaust Memorialization in the Poetry of Anna Frajlich

Poetic memorialization internalizes and unites public memorials, personal feelings, and memory. Through iconic images, poetry travels from the general to the particular and from the visible to the invisible; its evocative and integrative powers transcend other memorialization discourses. The poetry of Anna Frajlich, a Holocaust child survivor, exemplifies this type of memorialization. Experiencing the Holocaust through her own and her parents' exile, she uses their private, daily memorializations as postmemory items, as well as her own experience of post-1938 exile from Poland, to journey back to Holocaust spaces. She reveals the Holocaust as discreet watermarks in her work. Her poetry paints a broad historical perspective covering the entire history and suffering of the people of Israel. It also carries an unconditional affirmation of life, an undying song of beauty. Thus poised between death and life, her poetry demonstrates the healing and transformative power of poetic memorials.

Sławomir Jacek Żurek

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

The Poetry of Anna Frajlich and the Cultural Heritage of Judaism. On "Israeli Poems"

Evidence of the presence of references to Jewish culture in Anna Frajlich's literary output is to be found in many of her poetic texts. However, the connection with Judaism is most strongly verbalized in her poetic cycle of "Israeli Poems" (in the volume *Ogrodem i ogrodzeniem*, Warsaw 1993, pp. 70–76), which was created during the author's visit to Eretz Israel in 1991. The cycle comprises seven parts, each with its own title, which differ in terms

of subject matter, style and genre from one another, ranging from a poetic picture to a lyrical joke.

The poetic cycle opens with the poem *Na pustyni* [‘On the Desert’], followed by three lyrical parts that focus on the capital of the state of Israel – *Jerozolima* [‘Jerusalem’], *Sala dziecięca w muzeum męczeństwa Yad Vashem w Jerozolimie* [‘Children’s Room in the Yad Vashem Museum of Martyrdom’] and *Jeszcze o Jerozolimie* [‘More on Jerusalem’], and closes with another sequence of three parts: *Do przyjaciela w Haifie* [‘To a Friend in Haifa’], *Z piosenką tą* [‘With This Song’] and *Cezarea* [‘Caesarea’]. The order of the poems signals the fundamental role played by the topographic and geographic dimensions of this poetry, which – in this way – becomes a diary of a travel from the South to the North (in the context of both place and time).

Agnieszka Żmuda

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

A Portrait of the exiled – Polish and Jewish Women in Anna Frajlich’s

Poetry The article reveals Anna Frajlich’s autobiographical work as a metaphorical discourse on the situation of exile. It is intended to characterize a woman of Jewish origin exiled from Poland after the events of March ‘68, i.e. the person speaking in a poem. Her Polish-Jewish identity was redefined as Polish-Jewish-American, owing to the experience of expulsion. It is a study of feelings associated with a difficult period of emigration, adaptation and acceptance of a new home. As a Pole, she misses the lost country, struggles with the pain of loss and the inability to return, and remembers the old homeland as a place of anti-Semitic persecution. In this discourse of exile poetry, the parents of émigrés, who shared the experience of a forced exodus, were also involved in saving their lives. The March ‘68 migration is presented as a border experiment, which entered into the paradigm of other exiles of the Chosen People since the destruction of the First Temple of Jerusalem.

Anna Fiedień-Kulak

University of Rzeszów

Silence in the Poetry of Anna Frajlich

The article offers an analysis of the poetry of Anna Frajlich regarding the category of silence. In both the structure and the content of four lyric poems, the following mechanisms are singled out: silence, negation and contradiction, the conventions of a riddle or lack thereof. Studying Anna Frajlich’s poetry with the help of these structures reveals deeper contents with direct references to events from her biography, in particular emigration, which constitutes the most important context. Some difficult and painful topics which the poet faces in this way include the exodus, the existential space, a return to the depths of memory, and the relationship to death.

Agata Paliwoda

University of Rzeszów

“He was Here”. About Anna Frajlich’s “Funeral Triptych”

The article analyses Tryptyk żalobny [‘Funeral Triptych’] by Anna Frajlich. The work, dedicated to Jerzy Szczygieł (former boss, friend, or even the poet’s role model), is a poetic account of dealing with the loss of someone close. References to tradition, including antiquity, Old Testament, Jan Kochanowski’s *Treny* [‘Lamentations’] and baroque metaphysical poetry, serve - like other similar intertextual references in funeral literature - to

demonstrate (somewhat comfortingly) that fear of death and helplessness in the face of it are universal and eternal, but so is the uncompromising attitude in attempting to explore its mystery.

Joanna Bierejszyk-Kubiak
University of Szczecin

The City and the Myth Poetry of Anna Frajlich in Consideration of Mythographical Issues

Mythographical criticism seems to be an appropriate and unexploited way of interpreting Anna Frajlich's literary output. In this paper I employ the myth of cosmogony, which involves the process of settlement in traditional societies. The paper includes an analysis of the poems *Miasto* and *Każdy skądś*, which pertain to the subject of settling in a new territory in a literal and symbolical sense.

Katarzyna Niesporek
University of Silesia in Katowice

A Place on the Earth: New York. About Anna Frajlich's Poetry

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate New York as the leitmotif of Anna Frajlich's poems. The city is presented in her early creations as a strange and untamed space. This attitude changes in time, when the same space is shown as something close and familiar. In the book "By Boat" it is displayed as a harbour which Frajlich finally calls "my city" because it becomes her second homeland and place on earth.

Kazimierz Adamczyk
Jagiellonian University, Kraków

New York Harbor of Anna Frajlich

The author analyses Anna Frajlich's poetic records of her experience of exile in order to determine what New York, the place she has lived in for over forty years, has come to mean to her. The article shows the long process of taming the urban space and overcoming the sense of alienation. In the end, New York – a city of immigrants – in all its multiculturalism becomes part of the poet's identity.

Ewa Bartos
University of Silesia in Katowice

On Corporeal Tropes in Anna Frajlich's Poetry

In Anna Frajlich's works one can observe a reflection on corporeality. Even though Frajlich does not shy away from describing bodies which are sensual, erotic, and ones that experience emotions, she also pays attention to bodies which suffer and are stricken with pain. "On Corporeal Tropes in Anna Frajlich's Poetry" is an attempt to take a closer look at the diverse ways in which corporeality is understood by the author of *Łodzia jest i jest przystanią*.

Ewa Górecka
Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz

***Ciemne korytarze* [‘Dark corridors’]. Heart within the Space of the Body in Anna Frajlich’s Poetry**

In Anna Frajlich’s poetry, the body is bestowed with spatial features — with its inner structure, it becomes a multidimensional component of the world. Most of the author’s attention is devoted to the inner side of the body, although she is not indifferent to the appearance of the body and what it generates in the sensual sphere. She is intrigued by the extraordinary nature of the body and the experience of pain and illness treated as a form of cognition. In Frajlich’s poetry, the circulatory system is characterised by movement and stillness; blood is a symbol of existence, fertility and passion. Exposure of the heart and circulatory system falls within the forms of expression established in the literary tradition. Tapping into this legacy, the poet constantly transcends it. The heart and blood are the source of various experiences, but, at the same time, constitute just a point on the line of thought. Existence and cognition, lasting and passing, time and history would be impossible to capture if it were not for the body.

Alicja Jakubowska-Ozóg
University of Rzeszów

“Between Harmony and Chaos”. The Image of Nature in Anna Frajlich’s Poems as the Language of Diagnosing the World

This article discusses the presence in Anna Frajlich's poems of characteristic motifs illustrating both harmony and chaos in the world. It refers primarily to the texts in which the poet perceives images that can be characterised as beautiful, describing the search and desire for beauty or recording beauty, but it also evokes images which contradict order both in the external and spiritual spheres of the central figure of the confessions.

Arkadiusz Luboń
University of Rzeszów

Acclimatization of Poetry. The Polish-American Anthology of Anna Frajlich’s “Poems Between Dawn and the Wind”

The article discusses a set of translational techniques used by Regina Grol in her translations of selected poems by Anna Frajlich, collected and first published in the bilingual anthology “Between Dawn and the Wind”. As shown by the comparative analysis, numerous lexical choices and modifications were introduced during the transfer from source language (Polish) into target language (English) in order to match the meaning and form of the texts with the description of the poet provided by the translator. As a result, such features of Frajlich’s poetry as autobiographical references, focus on topics related to émigré identity or lyrical form based on simple and comprehensible language, are further enhanced by the textual alternations introduced by Grol.

Marcin Wyrembelski
Università degli Studi di Firenze, Italia

“The Ocean Between Us” – Poems of Anna Frajlich in Italian Translation

This article is an attempt to develop a selection of poems by Anna Frajlich translated into Italian. According to the author the Anna Frajlich’s poetry is a missing piece in the panorama of the Polish literature translated into Italian. Guided by this imperative, the author presents his vision of the anthology and analyzes some problems related to the translation of the poems of Anna Frajlich.

Ewa Kołodziejczyk

The Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warszawa

The American Laboratory of Anna Frajlich

Focusing *Laboratorium* ['A Laboratory'] by Anna Frajlich, the paper presents the dialectics of stability and changeability inscribed in this prose. The laboratory is interpreted here as a metaphor of a literary workshop as well as a set of circumstances in which one may experiment both in an artistic and existential way. The article discusses the meaning of the family and the generational community in relation to existential conditions of emigration. It reveals the ways the poet's identity is refined, so that her Jewish, Polish and American experience might be integrated with one another. Also, it demonstrates the process of acculturation in the United States illustrated by the example of the New York City urban space and shows one of its aspects – coming out of emigrant invisibility.

Janusz Pasterski

University of Rzeszów

“The One Who Saved”. Anna Frajlich's Miłosz

The article presents the history of the professional and personal relationship between Anna Frajlich and Czesław Miłosz. Based on interviews, reviews, sketches and recollections the author describes Anna Frajlich's contact with the Nobel Prize winner, trying to determine Miłosz's role in shaping her consciousness as an immigrant, journalist, academic lecturer and finally poet. Miłosz's approach to life, his fidelity to poetry and the ethos of work for Polish culture and literature were close to Anna Frajlich. Miłosz affected her worldview, approach to life and literature, and signs of this influence can be seen also in her poems.

Rafał Moczko

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

Anna Frajlich as a Literary Critic. Notes for a Portrait

The text is the first recognition of Anna Frajlich's activity in literary criticism. The author shows what values in literature and research work she is looking for. Seeking the truth, courage in its proclamation, coherence and consistence of the literary world and artistic maturity in the text are her main principles. Additionally, the essay presents her metacritical views on literary criticism and the assessment of the importance of emigration literature and the achievements of the whole emigration.

Jolanta Pasterska

University of Rzeszów

Kyrgyzstan in the Journey Diary *Dach Świata jeszcze raz*

The paper discusses Anna Frajlich's travel diary based on her visit to Kyrgyzstan in 2014. This is the place where she was born in 1942. The diary was published in the literary magazine *eleWator* in 2015. The author focuses her discussion on three issues: the traveler, the purpose of the trip and the manner in which the place is described. A trip to Kyrgyzstan has become an opportunity for the poet to think on her identity and place in the world. In this perspective, Anna Frajlich's journey to the “Roof of the World” is a personal and universal experience.

Anna Wal

University of Rzeszów

The Exiles of 1968 as Seen in Letters by Felicja Bromberg, Anna Frajlich and Władysław Zając

This article focuses on the correspondence of Felicja Bromberg, Anna Frajlich and Władysław Zając published under the title *Po Marcu – Wiedeń, Rzym, Nowy Jork* [‘After March – Vienna, Rome, New York’]. The authors of the letters left Poland in 1969 under the pressure of anti-Semitic propaganda after the events of March 1968. The letters to be found in this volume were addressed to Amalia and Psachie Frajlich, and written between November 1969 and June 1971. Despite its personal character, the correspondence is a valuable source of knowledge of the situation of the expatriates after 1968, their wandering across Europe and their settlement and acclimatization in New York. It is also an important source of biographical information for the critics of the literary works of Anna Frajlich, who is called the poet of exile.

Jan Wolski

University of Rzeszów

„Dear Ms. Ania”. Literary Debut, Typographical Arcana and Deep Friendship in the Light of the Correspondence of Anna Frajlich-Zając with Stanisław Gliwa

The article discusses the circumstances surrounding the publication of Anna Frajlich’s poetic debut by the publishing house *Oficyna Stanisława Gliwy*, using the correspondence between the poet and the typographer preserved in the Emigration Archive in Toruń. These highly specific personal documents are from the time period between 1975 and 1986. Their correspondence was teeming with details describing the printing process, ways in which small artistic “private press” publishers function, but also very interesting opinions and judgments on poetry, everyday matters, publishing plans, travels, or exhibitions. It’s also a testimony to a friendship growing stronger as the time passed.

Jacek Hajduk

Jagiellonian University, Kraków

The Rome of the Russian Symbolists: Some Notes on Anna Frajlich’s “The Legacy of Ancient Rome in the Russian Silver Age”

The topic of the article is Anna Frajlich’s book entitled “The Legacy of Ancient Rome in the Russian Silver Age” (2007), which is virtually unknown in Poland. First I shed some light on the genesis of the book, then I discuss the Roman tradition in the culture of Russia. In two following subsections I focus on some general information about the book, as well as on a detailed analysis of Dmitry Merezhkovsky’s poem about imperator Marcus Aurelius. Finally, a few conclusions follow on the Moscow-Rome dichotomy.

Ronald Meyer

Harriman Institute, Columbia University, USA

Anna Frajlich’s Studies of Russian Symbolism: The Case of Valery Bryusov

The article analyzes the scientific dissertation of Anna Frajlich *The Legacy of Ancient Rome in the Russian Silver Age* published in 2007. The author analyzes the work of nine poets there, but, in opinion of Ronald Mayer, the example of poetry by Valerij Briusow best reveals the analytical sense of Anna Frajlich, her knowledge of the poetics of Russian symbolists and the culture of 'East' and 'West'.