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“It was empty and silent, except for the devilish laughter of the coyotes” – The Perception of Canada as a Peaceable Kingdom and Promised Land in Selected Immigrant Memoirs

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**“IT WAS EMPTY AND SILENT, EXCEPT FOR THE
DEVILISH LAUGHTER OF THE COYOTES”¹ –
THE PERCEPTION OF CANADA AS A PEACEABLE
KINGDOM AND PROMISED LAND
IN SELECTED IMMIGRANT MEMOIRS**

Résumé: L’attitude du gouvernement canadien et de la société canadienne envers l’immigration a considérablement changé depuis des décennies. Elle a souvent réfléchi l’état de l’économie canadienne et a ainsi reflété les possibilités que le Canada offrait aux nouveaux venus. Le concept du “Royaume paisible” ainsi que la réflexion de Northrop Frye sur l’idéal social canadien – « le mythe pastoral » (Frye 1971: 238) – est juxtaposé ainsi que contesté par sa notion de « mentalité de garnison » (225) imposée aux immigrants par d’autres groupes sociaux, aussi bien que par la nature canadienne écrasante.

L’article vise à examiner l’ambivalence des attitudes canadiennes envers les immigrants venant d’Europe de l’Est dans trois mémoires reflétant deux phases différentes d’immigration : après la Première Guerre mondiale et après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. L’article présente *Marynia, Don’t Cry A Mother’s Legacy* de Apolonja Maria Kojder publié en 1995 et les mémoires de Barbara Głogowska intitulés *Three Generations* publiés dans le même volume que le récit de Kojder et consacrés à l’histoire de l’immigration d’un Polonais, Mike Deputat.

La perception des immigrants du “Royaume paisible” est troublée par le passé traumatisant qu’ils ont connu et par la réalité dure à laquelle ils se sont confrontés au Canada, ce qui était la réalisation d’une autre affirmation fameuse de Frye, selon laquelle « entrer au Canada est une question d’être silencieusement avalé par un continent étranger ».

Le récit *Born and Raised Under a Straw Roof: A True Legacy of the Human Spirit* de Mary A. Drzewiecki, publié en 2000, jette encore un autre regard sur l’hospitalité canadienne et sur l’adaptation des immigrants d’Europe de l’Est.

Bien que douloureux et traumatique, ce récit vise l’image pastorale de Frye et relate le parcours de l’immigration d’après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, celle qui

¹ The title quotation is borrowed from: Kojder 147.

est reconnue pour avoir été un facteur important contribuant au développement de la terre d'abondance canadienne.

Déterminés par les périodes de la migration, les Polonais ont fait face à des conditions de vie complètement différentes au Canada.

Pourtant, les membres des familles de Kojder, de Deputat et de Drzewiecki ont réussi à mener une vie prospère au Canada et ils ont ainsi fui la mort ou la misère inévitable dans une Europe déchirée par des conflits.

The attitudes of the Canadian government and society towards immigration have changed substantially throughout the decades. They have frequently reflected the state of the Canadian economy, and have thus mirrored the opportunities that Canada has offered for newcomers. The concept of the "Peaceable Kingdom," together with Northrop Frye's vision of the Canadian "social ideal" – "a pastoral myth" (Frye 1971: 238), is juxtaposed with and challenged by his notion of the "garrison mentality" (225) imposed on immigrants by other social groups, as well as the overwhelming Canadian landscape.

This paper aims to explore the ambivalence of attitudes towards Canada displayed by immigrants from Eastern Europe in three memoirs reflecting the two different phases of immigration: post-WWI and post-WWII. Apolonja Maria Kojder's *Marynia, Don't Cry: A Mother's Legacy*, published in 1995, reflects upon the hardships that the Kojders had to overcome when arriving in Canada. The family came to Canada in two phases; first the father, Jan, emigrated to Canada in 1925 and his arrival coincided with the economic crisis which Canada faced in the 1930s. Then his wife Marja (Marynia) and daughter Helena came in a second phase of immigration after WWII. The Kojders' perception of the "Peaceable Kingdom" is therefore frustrated by the harsh reality they encountered and the war trauma they went through, which was a realization of another famous statement by Frye, who claimed that "to enter Canada is a matter of being silently swallowed by an alien continent." (1971: 217) This can be read both literally and figuratively in the context of immigration. Similar ambivalent attitudes are also present in Barbara Głogowska's memoir entitled *Three Generations*, published in the same volume as the Kojders' narrative and predominantly contemplating the chances of immigrants in the 1930s crisis-stricken Canada. The third memoir under scrutiny in this study is Mary A. Drzewiecki's *Born and Raised Under a Straw Roof: A True Legacy of the Human Spirit* (2001), which constitutes a successful story of the author's parents' emigration to Canada after the Second World War. The Drzewieckis endured the war in Eastern Europe, met for the first time in a refugee camp in Germany in 1947, and decided to leave for Canada as soon as it was only possible. The memoir describes their difficult but extremely satisfactory determination to succeed in Canada after they reached it in 1949.

The book *Marynia, Don't Cry: Memoirs of Two Polish-Canadian Families*, published in 1995, consists of two separate memoirs: *A Mother's Legacy*, written by Apolonja Maria Kojder, and *Three Generations (The Deputat Family)* by Barbara Głogowska, with a foreword by Benedykt Heydernkorn. The families discussed in these memoirs immigrated to Canada after the First and the Second World Wars but experienced a similar atmosphere towards immigration at the initial phase of their lives in Canada, although their experiences were totally different. There is also a discrepancy in the attitudes of the authors of these memoirs to the narrated story. In the first case, Apolonja Maria Kojder, born in Canada, is the child of immigrants and gives voice to her parents and grandparents as well as her own experience. In the latter case, Barbara Głogowska, born in Poland, an immigrant to Canada herself, has written the memoir on the basis of her friends' – the Deputats' – experience after numerous talks with the members of the family in question.

The title words, “Marynia, don't cry. As long as I'm alive I will help you. And maybe you will survive longer because nobody will bother you. And later your children will help you” (3, 18, 130)², resonate as the recurrent motif of the first story, repeated by the author's great-grandmother in moments of despair. They are connected with a desperate time in Marynia's life, when her husband immigrated to Canada in 1925 and she, left with her parents and three children, faced poverty and eviction. The words, like a memento, are repeated in the book and serve as the legacy of the family, especially the female members of the family, who had to go through uprooting and exile, and then life in Siberia, India, Persia, England, and finally Canada. They become the promise of mutual support of the women in the family and, at the same time, mirror the difficulties the family had to overcome.

The “alien continent” that Helena entered in 1948 with her husband, sister and mother had been advertised by her father as a country where everybody could settle down and earn money. They trusted his vision, and he helped them by partially sponsoring their voyage. When they arrived, however, the Kojders were deeply disappointed:

The first view of this new country was pleasant, but after their train passed through Quebec and Ontario and was well on its way out west, all that Helena could see was parched yellow prairie grass. There were no people anywhere. She started to cry. Why was she coming to this wilderness? (...) Russia had looked better than this. In the three days it had taken to come from Quebec to Saskatchewan, Helena had become completely disenchanted (104).

² The page numbers are the references to the scattered moments in the memoir when the words “Marynia, don't cry...” are repeated.

This comparison to the unspeakable trauma of Siberia with its hard work, frost, and the death of their first daughter emphasized the disillusionment with the Canadian emptiness. They had definitely expected a more populous country, and had never seen such vast spaces (even Siberian forests were for them connected with the overpopulated cabins they had had to live in during their stay in labour camps). Having been so let down by the landscape, they could not even count on Helena's father, as he did not offer much help in finding accommodation or work. Upon seeing the poor and dirty conditions he was living in, Helena remarked: "Another Russia and hopelessness. It was frightening" (Kojder 105). Being very resourceful, Marja Kojder decided to live on her own with her two daughters and Helena's husband. Helena, who had been pregnant for 6 months, had to give birth to her child in a hospital, as this was the standard in Canada. She was stunned that she had to pay for her stay in the hospital, which amounted to an incredible sum of money for them. Thus, their new life in Canada was initiated with debts and the birth of the healthy and beautiful Apolonja.

Helena, a nurse who had been educated at a prestigious nursing school in Warsaw and had worked as a nurse during the war, eventually found work in a nearby hospital. However, her recollections after many years of work were not very pleasant, and show Canada to be a country inhospitable to immigrants at that time:

Helena found nursing in Canada more difficult than overseas. The wages were low and she only had one day off a week. And, in Canada, the nurses had to do much more menial work. Also, even though she had a broad range of experiences and training, she felt that she had to prove herself because as an outsider, the staff watched her more closely. She felt isolated and ill at ease because her life experiences were so different from those of her Canadian colleagues (Kojder 110).

It coincided with other instances of humiliation when, for example, a senior nurse deliberately threw pills on the floor so that Helena had more work to do (Kojder 136), and so she "[woul]d say she had to try to be better than the other people because she was an immigrant" (Kojder 137).

This constant feeling of being inferior was also endured by the children at school. It was again the testimony of the times, the years when Canada still lacked a policy of multiculturalism. The Kojders and other immigrants were, on the one hand, different than "Canadians." As Apolonja Kojder recounts: "At school, we had a reader, *Fun with Dick and Jane*, and there were pictures above the writing. I'd look at the pictures and notice that dad was dressed in a suit and went to an office. None of my friends' dads did that, nor did my dad. The mother in the book stayed at home and cooked. My Mama was a nurse and went to the hospital to work..." (120-121) On the other hand, they felt that their experience was neglected or even disparaged. They truly wanted to

contribute to Canadian culture and felt instinctively that it could be done through their own testimony and its legacy. Even though Apolonja and other immigrant children wanted to learn English, they quickly realized that they had no opportunity to express their native culture openly. “I had come to realize that school (English) had little to do with home (Polish)” (122, 135)³ is a phrase that Kojder repeats a few times in her text. This bitter feeling of being split between two places was intensified when she travelled to Chicago (Kojder 127) and saw the way in which the Polish immigrants living there were able to cherish their culture through mutual support and official assistance (e.g. Polish street names, and monuments of Polish and American heroes such as Pułaski and Kościuszko).⁴ The Kojders, who had lived through exile in Siberia, wanted their experience to be heard by Canadians. Although they were never openly scorned, they suffered from the fact that their experience was not taken seriously, and that Canada was always indifferent towards their possible contribution:

My family often said that no one wanted to listen to what had happened to them during the war. Canadians would immediately say that they had suffered a lot too, because sugar and other kinds of food had been rationed during the war. As if that were an apt comparison to deportation and forced labour (...) In school I'd look at the history books and they never said anything like the stories my family told (Kojder 134).

Their beginnings in Canada were marked by the need to survive psychologically as well as physically. Despite the fact that Canada had been their dream country, and that after some time they had found some happiness there, it never responded to their natural feeling of being immersed in a multi-ethnic salad bowl. Kojder recalls: “In high school there was never any talk in history class about our ethnic roots, even though it was obvious from the names that there were students of Ukrainian, Dutch, French, German, and Polish backgrounds” (135-136).

The Kojders' legacy is therefore full of ambivalent feelings towards Canada, their dream country, and the discriminatory attitude from others which they suffered from. There has not been much critical response to Kojder's memoir, but in what is available the critics point out the atrocities of the Kojders' experience (cf. Węgiński 23) and the aforementioned treatment of the Kojders as intruders, despite their faithful devotion to Canada (cf. Sojka

³ The two different page numbers are also, as above, references to the repeated statements in the book.

⁴ The predicament of language in Kojder's and Drzewiecki's memoirs are discussed in Grygierczyk. An in-depth analysis of the linguistic and generic hybridity can be found there.

321). This disillusionment is best represented near the end of Apolonja Kojder's narrative, when she expresses her sadness about her father's death during a tragic accident at work when he rushed to save another worker:

Also, my father would tell about how some English men at work would say that Canada gave the DPs like Tatu everything. Tatu would be angry because he said Canada never gave him a cent, but he had to work by the sweat of his brow from dawn to dusk to get anything we had. (...) That had been my family's dream, to come to Canada. This was the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey, and streets paved with gold. I never saw anything like milk and honey and gold here on the street as a kid – they were dirt – but that didn't matter because I just wanted some more dolls. But I wished those people hadn't called Tatu a DP and made my parents feel bad (Kojder 136).

It is true that such an attitude can be seen as emblematic of those times. The Kojders reached Canada during the period when the Canadian policy of multiculturalism was not proclaimed yet. It was not even held as a common truth in the minds of average Canadians either. What the Kojders and other similar families needed was not necessarily money and special policies granting them privileges but sensitivity and respect for who they were and what they had lived through.

Interestingly, the second text included in the same volume and referring to post-WWI phase of immigration was not written directly in English by one of the heroes of the story, but is narrated by Barbara Głogowska and translated from Polish by Irma Zaleski, a friend of the family. The narrative poses a different approach to the story of immigration. It tells the story of the Deputat family whose first member, Mike Deputat, came to Canada in 1928, leaving his poor village of Rudawka in Eastern Poland. Though he experienced the poverty of the Depression period in Canada and had to work endlessly to make ends meet, his story is not a story of complaint and disillusionment. As pointed out by Anna Adamek in her review of the book, “[the Deputat] family, established and raised in Canada, did not have any assimilation problems. They became perfectly integrated into Canadian society, at the same time keeping their Polish roots. However, the second story [in the collection] lacks the painful emotion of the immigration experience” (81). In an essay devoted to the volume, Eva C. Karpinsky remarks, “Głogowska's conventional and clichéd account seems like an appendix to Kojder's warm and emphatic, epic-like tribute to four generations of women in her family” (155).⁵ It is probably

⁵ It is indeed true that Apolonja M. Kojder's narrative is more powerful and expressive, but we know nothing about Barbara Głogowska's education or Irma Zaleski's skills as a translator, whereas Apolonja Kojder's successful career is a proof of her literary talent.

due to the fact that the Deputats had not suffered through a traumatic uprooting and the gulags of Siberia, and were more concentrated on providing their children with decent living conditions as well as securing their advanced position in Canadian society through education.

Three Generations is, however, not a story of happiness and freedom. Mike Deputat learned about the Canadian opportunities for success from leaflets which claimed that Canada needed young and healthy men, and thus he expected plenty of work. His first impressions of Canada were very negative. After arriving in New Brunswick, the new immigrants were asked to go to Winnipeg by train at their own expense, although they had no money. Mike Deputat's memories of that time show Canada as "(...) unknown land which they thought was 'somewhere near the North Pole,'" and as a result of this grim vision, "their spirits sank" (Głogowska 144). Mike had various seasonal jobs in Canada, ranging from building rail tracks to cutting down trees, and he worked in various provinces. He was offered some help by a Polish Jew from Toronto. But he also experienced being cheated by other people, for example when some other workers stole his train ticket, or when he paid for a mechanics course which promised a job after completion, which turned out to be empty promises. After many years, when he was already a rich and successful man, he remarked on these early attempts to settle in Canada: "How different is the welcome the newcomer now receives on his arrival in Canada! How things have changed in Canada since those days" (Głogowska 146). Back in the 1920s and 1930s, immigrants received no shelter (they had to build a hut themselves when they worked in the forest), no benefits, no proper tools to do their work, no food and, worst of all, no insurance. These initial years of hard work and constant poverty for a poor young man triggered ambivalent feeling towards Canada in the young Mike Deputat. On the one hand, "it was then that he got to know the Canadian forest, this beautiful, majestic, but also dangerous northern wilderness" (Głogowska 150), but on the other hand, "the land was vast, treeless, and wild. It was empty and silent, except for the devilish laughter of the coyotes" (Głogowska 147), which only emphasized his solitude and miserable situation.

The famous Canadian "rule of law," according to Mike Deputat, was not especially beneficial for immigrants during the Depression. Moreover, women were favored, as they could get jobs more easily in shops, bars, and the textile industry. He realized that people born in Canada also suffered from the same problems, but a good command of the language helped them a lot. There was nobody to turn to for help, as they all "worked long hours for very little pay. There were no minimum wages in those days and few trade unions to protect the workers from exploitation by the owners. And who would dare complain at a time when anyone with a job was considered lucky?" (Głogowska 158). Paradoxically, the end of the Depression, as well as his own personal success,

was brought about by the Second World War. It was the war which made the otherwise "Peaceable Kingdom" flourish. Mike Deputat was hired first at Massey Harris and then at de Havilland, where he even eventually became a boss. "The war opened new, unexpected possibilities for Canada. Suddenly, the war industry was booming, and anybody who was willing could get a job. The Depression was over" (Głogowska 161) Mike states at the end of his story. From this moment onwards, he was a successful citizen of Canada (it coincided more or less with his obtaining Canadian citizenship), and his years of plenty began. Thanks to his knowledge of mechanics, as well as his versatile experience and willingness to work hard, he became an example to other workers. He remarks, "When some English immigrants came to work at de Havilland, they found it difficult to believe that Canada was no longer an English colony and that a 'foreigner' would be their boss" (Głogowska 162).

Mike always believed in the power of education and urged his children to learn English. His wife, who also worked for some time, was urged to learn English in order to integrate and assimilate more quickly. He had realized instinctively that at that time it was still assimilation which could guarantee the best chances to prosper in Canada. Aware of the difficulties in adapting to new circumstances, he always encouraged his children to study. He presented his son, Władzio, as an example. Władzio had always liked school and had many friends there, and his father claimed that his success at assimilation had been the result of his basic knowledge of English when the child started school. Knowing English, he learned faster than other immigrant children and teachers knew how to deal with him. Most immigrant children were at a disadvantage due to their poor English: "Many teachers were not prepared for this situation and considered children who could not speak English to be 'trouble.' For the children, on the other hand, school was often traumatic" (Głogowska 177). Exclusion and stigmatization of the Other were common in Canada at that time. It was in the 1950s, in Toronto, that the Deputats witnessed a gradual change in Canadian society, in the direction of what is now known as Canadian multiculturalism. As Mike remarks: "[b]y that time, provincial departments of education were making space available for heritage language classes that would teach the children the language, culture, and traditions of their country of origin. The 'Canadian mosaic' was becoming a reality" (Głogowska 183), which coincides with an earlier statement that "[a]n increasing number of immigrants came to this country, there were more and more children whose original language was not English. Children who attended their native language schools were no longer laughed at. (...) The children of these immigrants felt at home here" (Głogowska 178).

Successful as his life and choices were in the end, Mike Deputat undeniably earned his living with his own hands, changing jobs, travelling across Canada, changing houses (he even managed to buy a small island and

built a house there, where the family spent their summers, and another one in Florida, where Mike spent his winters after his wife died). His approach to assimilation resulted in his children adapting easier to their adopted homeland, but it also led his family to be more deeply cut off from their traditions than in the case of the Kojders' legacy. An opinion expressed by Stephen Deputat, a representative of the younger generation, is proof of this break from tradition:

It's good to know who we are and what our roots are. But above all, we're Canadians. I don't believe we should live in our own little ethnic groups, but should strive to create one nation, one culture from all these different traditions. We shouldn't be a mosaic, but one country with our own specific Canadian culture. (...) We don't want the free trade with the United States which the Conservative government has introduced. We don't want to be swallowed by the American giant. Canadians are different. They have better manners, more sensitivity, deeper character, more individuality (Głogowska 191).

The story of Mike Deputat and his family poses yet another difficulty, which concerns its generic classification. The authorship on the cover is claimed by Barbara Głogowska who, as one reads in the text, wrote the story in Polish and it was only later that it was translated into English by Irma Zaleski. That is why, it is problematic to call the text a memoir, as we do not hear Głogowska's voice in the story as she is said to be the friend of the Deputats'. As a result of that, the story can be treated as an account of a Polish-Canadian family although the subtitle of *Marynia, Don't Cry* announces that the reader will find *Memoirs of Two Polish-Canadian Families* inside. Moreover, Głogowska's omniscient narration does not offer any doubts concerning her own rendition of Mike Deputat's story as well as there is no discussion concerning the fact that Mike-centred male-dominated story is voiced and narrated by a woman. This does not seem to be the point in the account. These reservations have been alluded to by Anna Adamek (1996) and Eva C. Karpinsky (1998) among the reasons for the weakness of this text in comparison to Kojder's from the same volume.

The other text selected for study here, Mary A. Drzewiecki's *Born and Raised Under a Straw Roof: A True Legacy of the Human Spirit*, published in 2001, presents the post-WWII wave of immigration. This memoir poses yet another view of Canadian hospitality towards immigrants from Eastern Europe. This narrative, however painful and traumatic⁶, drifts towards Frye's pastoral image, rendering the ways in which post-WWII immigration was

⁶ The major part of the memoir concerns the war period and Sylwester's and Janina's way through the horror of the war and the stay in German forced labour camps whereas the final part renders their Canadian 'odyssey'.

acknowledged as an important factor contributing to the development of the Canadian “land of plenty.”

Since the Drzewieckis decided to apply for the government-sponsored immigration program their immigration process started in 1949 with “rigorous screening” (Drzewiecki 139) during their stay in German DP camps. The applicants were given some facilities, but Sylwester Drzewiecki, the family’s progenitor, was frequently humiliated. He was forced to pull his pants down to prove he was not hiding any disabilities, and suffered other humiliating examinations (Drzewiecki 259). He quickly realized that “money talked” (Drzewiecki 248). He endured everything, for his main aim was to receive government-sponsored tickets to Canada. His choice had been influenced by propaganda films in the DP camps showing Canada as a land of plenty with “golden waves of wheat” (Drzewiecki 261). After their arrival (Sylwester came to Canada with his wife, Janina, and their daughter, Krysia), they were placed in the St. Paul camp in the province of Québec, where they had to wait for a work order, with which they were expected to pay off their tickets. On the one hand, it was a period of a few long weeks of waiting in uncertainty, but on the other they were happy, under the care of kind camp officials, and supplied with plenty of food. It was, however, still a difficult phase of poverty, since they had no money and could not even afford a stamp to inform their parents back in Germany about their safe voyage (Drzewiecki 269-271). They were not lucky with the first job contract they received – they were placed on a dairy farm, whose owners grew furious when they saw that the couple had a child. The Drzewieckis were sent back to the camp. The Russian director of the camp, who luckily understood them, scolded the farmers for treating the Drzewieckis like cattle rather than people.

The second work order was better, and they were sent to Nanaimo, British Columbia, to work on a turkey farm. On their trans-Canadian train journey, they missed their connection in Edmonton due to a linguistic misunderstanding. But they finally arrived in Vancouver, where they were picked up by the owner of the turkey farm. Although the work was hard, the owners of the farm, the Martins, turned out to be very helpful and treated the Drzewieckis well. The Drzewieckis were overwhelmed by the conditions on the farm, and kept repeating to each other, “What a good country. Everywhere there is electricity and telephones” (286). What also struck them in Canada was the fact that apart from plenty of food, they always received a modest and satisfactory income and plenty of work that was on offer. The only bitter remarks that appear in the text concern the solitude Janina endured. She missed her parents and siblings very much and she could not really establish any deeper connections in Canada due to her poor or even nonexistent command of English:

She longed for conversation. Without English, she was a prisoner inside her mind. She only had Sylwester and Krystyna with whom to talk. Everything in Canada was different: the customs, the language, the towering thick forests, the rainy climate, the snakes. The farm was several miles from town so even going to church was difficult. Janka counted her blessings and she did not take them for granted. Canada offered them peace, freedom and opportunities that only came in dreams. However, she felt trapped and alone, and missed her family so much that more than once she had cried and wished she hadn't come (Drzewiecki 293).

Soon Janina gave birth to her second daughter, Wandzia, and she did not have much time to ponder over such questions. Apart from Janina's silent wishes, they praised Canada for the opportunities it offered. Contrary to the two previous memoirs, which describe earlier periods, Canada in the 1950s is here presented a land of plenty, from which new immigrants could benefit: “In 1951 they moved into their little brown house. Sylwester and Janka felt like millionaires. They had a house and a car which would have taken a lifetime in eastern Poland” (Drzewiecki 305-306). At first they did not complain at all; even though they did not have a bathroom or running water, their house felt like a palace to them because they owned it. However, due to the lack of some facilities and the birth of their children, they started to build another house and a well, which brought about some technical problems. Furthermore, Janka had to cope with all of the housework and childcare by herself, and she felt isolated, as she could not integrate with their Canadian neighbours due to her lack of English.

The following parts of Drzewiecki's memoir are actually a summary of their changing houses, bettering their living conditions, new cars, digging a well, the arrival of other family members and changing jobs. This compact finale of the text offers the insight into the Drzewieckis' prosperity and proves their determination to feel at home in Canada. This fragment of the memoir is also supplemented with many photographs showing the family, children, their houses and cars to prove their happiness and wealth.

In her essay on the writing of the Polish diaspora in Canada, Eugenia Sojka located this memoir among those which express an affirmative vision of life in Canada. Indeed, Mary A. Drzewiecki, daughter of Sylwester and Janka, praises Canadian hospitality, and she concludes her narrative in 2000 without any of the resentment which resonates within Apolonja Kojder's text. She stated to her parents: “I am so thankful that you immigrated to Canada” (Drzewiecki 328), adding that her parents were “true Canadians,” flying “the Canadian Flag in their front and back yards” (Drzewiecki 336). Mary A. Drzewiecki does not openly discuss the initial solitude her mother must have suffered. Alienation by the lack of English and work did not offer Janina a comfortable position in Canada. Her voice is marginalized in the text as the emphasis of Mary A. Drzewiecki's narration is put on the ways the family

managed to cope in this 'Peaceable kingdom' and land of promise. Yet, the solitude experienced by Janka at the initial phase of their immigration, despite the fact that it is mentioned only in passing (or perhaps due to this fact) creates a shadow of marginalization and ghettoization of certain immigrants on this otherwise positive picture of Canada.

After settling in Canada, Polish people faced totally different conditions which were determined by the times of migration. Yet, the members of the Kojder, Deputat, and Drzewiecki families all managed to have successful lives in Canada, and thus fled inevitable death or misery in conflict-torn Europe. Their diverse experiences of Canada are caused by the times, and the various discriminatory attitudes they encountered in Canada resulted from poverty and the general fear of the Other. These texts are also testimonies of the empowerment of the second generation of immigrants who now, equipped with the tools of language and relative ease of publication, strive to express themselves through the act of writing memoirs.⁷ Although each text discussed here is a family story, the focus of each narrative shifts a little so that the texts provide a particular triad of convergence. Kojder's memoir is definitely focused on the female experiences and proves the necessity of strong feminine bonds which offer support and power. Głogowska's text is a female rendition of a male-centred voice, while Drzewiecki puts the strongest emphasis on the value of the familial aspect, treating the family as holistically as it is only possible and thus showing how being close in a family empowers its members. Despite the different narrative voices in the three memoirs and the varied power that they have as a result of this, these texts offer an interesting insight into a selected aspect of the "rule of law" in the otherwise "Peaceable Kingdom" – Frye's "social ideal."

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⁷ Egan and Helms offer a more detailed insight into the newly emerged family memoir which does not necessarily meet the requirement of literary autobiography or produce any particular generic experiment, but proves the need for self-expression and coping with the trauma of past generations, and thus creates a communal celebration of familial bonds.

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