



Magdalena Wasąg

THE WORLD IN DETAIL. NOTES ON THE MARGINS
OF THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE *LEOPOLD BUCZKOWSKI.*
PRZEŁYŚKI HISTORII, PRZELOTNE OBRAZKI
(*LEOPOLD BUCZKOWSKI. GLIMPSES*
OF HISTORY, FLEETING IMAGES)
BUCZKOWSKI – WAŃKOWICZ – SCHULZ

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School, that's my little school up on the hill. And then the gymnasium. Seven nationalities in one classroom. Literally: Poles, Ukrainians, two Russians, several Jews, three Czechs from a nearby hop-growing colony, even a Hungarian and a Romanian (Buczkowski 1984: 30).

In a conversation with Zygmunt Trziszka, Leopold Buczkowski (1905–1989) recalled his upbringing in a multicultural environment. Born in Podolia, in Nakvasha near Brody, the artist paid close attention to the “distinct temperaments” and “contrasting mentalities” of the people of the Borderlands. Auditory experiences were also significant to him when he immersed himself in the Galician multilingualism and listened to the sounds of words: “Since childhood, I have

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been captivated by the music of words, but this would never have happened but for our **Galicianness** [emphasis added]: a linguistic blend of Polish and Rusyn, with a Jewish twist, heard in the sounds of the *rojte banda* ensemble” (Buczowski 1984: 42–43).

An attempt to recreate from today’s perspective the experience of the pre-war Borderland world which shaped the author of *Black Torrent (Czarny potok)* is an exercise of imagination. Glimpses of everyday life in the Borderlands emerge from stories, photographs, and literature. They can be found, for example, in an old yellowed textbook titled *Światło w chacie (Light in the Cottage)*, printed in 1939 shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War by the publishing house of the Ossoliński National Institute in Lviv¹. In addition to works by such authors as: Maria Konopnicka, Bolesław Prus, Władysław Stanisław Reymont, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Beata Obertyńska, Maria Dąbrowska, Ferdynand Ossendowski, and Józef Czechowicz, the book also contained poems for children by Stefan Themerson: *Na Polesiu (In Polesia)*, *Zielony globus (The Greene Globe)*, *Móg lasu więcej (More Acres of Forest)* (Dańciewiczowa et al. 1939). Particularly noteworthy are Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa’s poem *Stepanko z Podolia (Stepanko of Podolia)* about a young Ruthenian (“Your friend – a Ruthenian from Podolia”) who “walks to school down a white road” (Dańciewiczowa et al. 1939: 184), and a reader about *Święto Jordanu (The Feast of the Jordan)*² by Henryk Balk. These works can be seen as a testimony to the multiculturalism, that Buczowski directly and vividly experienced before the war. When we think of his artistic diversity – as a writer, illustrator, photographer, and graphic artist – we automatically return to the Podolia of the 1930s. It is precisely in the land of his childhood and youth, inhabited by Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews, that we can find the sources of his creative versatility. This mosaic of cultures served as an exceptional space for Buczowski, one that he was captivated by as a young artist. Yet, he knew perfectly well which of these forms were entirely unappealing to him and fuelled his rebellion. As he puts it,

In a fallen civilization, an antivalue simulates a true value, and in doing so it takes over its role. What was known up close was a world of false values in the midst of political terror. Riddled with holes, the conscience does not hold any value. In total times, stop grasping at illusion and appealing to another’s conscience. My rebellion? You see why I have been rebelling.

¹ See Kazimierz Orłoś discussing the role of *Światło w chacie* in school education also after the Second World War (Orłoś 2014: ’01.40–’03.38).

² “Jordan – a winter celebration of the blessing of water under the open sky, observed by the Eastern Church in memory of the baptism of Christ in the Jordan River” (Dańciewiczowa et al. 1939: 185).

I rebelled back in the gymnasium where I encountered the aestheticization of the world for the very first time. How does the world of a classical gymnasium correspond to the life in barracks when the corporal addresses me: “Here, you son of a bitch?” (Buczowski 2001: 169–170).

Buczowski’s rebellion was linked to his deep commitment to authenticity and staying true to himself. Throughout his life, he focused on true values; this was particularly important during the war when all ethical and moral orders were disrupted. His inclination to rebel and refuse to conform to imposed models of upbringing and discipline may have resulted in the fact that in his works Buczowski would often give voice to those who were marginalized. In her discussion of his oeuvre with Hanna Kirchner, Agnieszka Karpowicz states:

[H]e introduced topics that have not been widely discussed until today: telling the history from the perspective of women, children, animals, objects, the Holocaust. He certainly also spoke about that part of the Polish “borderland” history that could not officially be told for a long time and that had to be forgotten (Kirchner, Karpowicz 2015: 22).

The (Un)known Buczowski

Bringing to light that which is rarely spoken about provokes thoughts on Buczowski’s pioneering work, but also serves as a peculiar prelude to what we still do not know about him. Leopold Buczowski is primarily known as a writer, the author of innovative novels such as *Czarny potok* (1954, Eng. *Black Torrent*, 1969) and *Oficer na nieszpiorach* (*An Officer at Vespers*, 1975). His diverse artistic output was presented at a comprehensive exhibition at the ms² Museum of Art in Łódź, entitled *Leopold Buczowski: Glimpses of History, Fleeting Images* (October 29, 2021–February 13, 2022) and curated by Paweł Polit. The exhibition was accompanied by a volume edited by Agnieszka Karpowicz and Paweł Polit. Published in 2021 by the Museum of Art in Łódź, it showcased Buczowski’s visual creativity and the formal variety of his art. In a review of the catalogue, Aleksander Wójtowicz emphasizes that “[t]he most significant novelty of the publication lies in the fact that the image occupies the central place in it and the image does not so much complement the word but rather precedes it” (*Leopold Buczowski...* 2021: back cover). In this context, he also recognizes Buczowski’s modern style as an artist who sought ways to depict the disintegration of the world through various art forms. It is important to note that on each page of the catalogue, we discover the works of the multifaceted artist, presented from various perspectives. The catalogue can, in fact, be seen as a significant polyphony from which the

previously unknown Buczkowski emerges. It spans over 300 pages that feature articles by researchers who studied Buczkowski's writings, biography, photographs, sculptures, paintings, and drawings, along with excerpts from his letters and statements about his understanding of art. It also presents copies of the artist's works: photographs from Pidkamin and Podolia from the 1930s, photographs from Paris (1957), drawings from Pidkamin and Podolia from the 1920s and the 1930s, wartime drawings from the 1940s, historical studies from the 1960s, abstract images, and photographs of sculptures standing close to his home and garden in Konstancin-Jeziorna. The archival materials and Buczkowski's works presented at the exhibition and in the catalogue come from the collection of the Museum of Art in Łódź and from private collections, while typescripts and manuscripts belong to the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw. Just a mention of the diverse materials collected in the volume gives one an idea of the unprecedented effort made by those involved in its creation. In line with the words of Buczkowski, who saw himself as an advocate of interdisciplinary art, the editors of the volume invited and published texts by researchers from various disciplines, including literary studies, cultural studies, art history, and anthropology of art. In the introduction to the catalogue, they write, "This publication accompanies an exhibition that attempts to systematize Buczkowski's visual works by concepts and themes that appear in his writings" (Karpowicz, Polit 2021: 12). The catalogue is arranged in a chronological order, which aims to reflect Buczkowski's world: his pre-war world, connected to Podolia, the Lviv circles, and his friendship with Marian Kratochwil; his wartime world marked by deep trauma and disintegration; and the post-war world that he created in his suburban home-studio in Konstancin.

The catalogue of the exhibition is divided into four parts: *I. Krajobrazy i ludzie. Podole (I. Landscapes and People. Podolia)*, *II. Inwentarze historii. Wojna (II. Inventories of History. The War)*, *III. Abstrakcje i rzeźby. Ogród w Konstancinie (III. Abstractions and Sculptures. The Garden in Konstancin)*, and *IV. Miejsca i osoby. Biografia (IV. Places and People. The Biography)*. Following this structure, we are guided through Buczkowski's works in which he returns to the same ideas and motifs. The concept of revisiting previous creative attempts, modifying them, and incorporating them into new works seems particularly interesting in the context of the need for constant experimentation, which the editors of the volume define as "seeking solutions to formal problems, processing not only fixed, ready-made images or conventions, but also structures" (Karpowicz, Polit 2021: 12). They draw attention to the motifs present in Buczkowski's drawings and sketches, such as forests and trees, horses, beggars, landscapes of villages and towns, hunting, battle scenes, as well as "19th-century upper-class genre scenes".

As noted by Agnieszka Karpowicz, among his visual works, we also find unrealized projects, such as novels or sketches. The exceptionally diverse themes and stylistic aspects of Buczkowski's art captured in the catalogue give a sense of a fragmentary aesthetics, which is, for example, visible in the partially preserved works from the Podolian period and the Konstancin wooden sculptures worn by the ravages of time. Thanks to the photographs included in the volume, we delve into the important memories of Buczkowski's experiences in Podolia. We come close to understanding the borderland sensibility.

Captured in Photographs – Buczkowski's and Wańkowicz's Borderlands

In his introductory text on Buczkowski's photographic oeuvre, Karol Józwiak writes about a "Borderland aesthetic idiom" and lists many elements that constitute it: multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity, diversity of faiths, a unique dialogue of cultures, picturesque landscapes, and, finally, a special, empathetic sensitivity to the plight of the poorest and marginalized – beggars, wanderers, paupers, and war invalids (Józwiak 2021: 25). In Buczkowski's photographs of Pidkamin and Podolia, taken in the 1930s, we see close-ups of children's bare feet, wandering beggars, women wrapped in scarves crowded in the market, and animals that accompany people – horses pulling carts. These images show Buczkowski's passion for studying life and everyday existence. When we look at the photographs taken by other writers born in the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic, we cannot help but notice the distinctiveness of the images, imbued with a unique "borderland" spirit. Born in Koliuzhitsa (currently in Belarus), Melchior Wańkowicz (1892–1974), just like Buczkowski, captured the landscapes of his childhood in photographs.

The Borderlands in Melchior Wańkowicz's Photographs³

The photographs come from the collection of the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, album inscription I.326

³ I would like to thank Melchior Wańkowicz's family, in particular Dawid Walendowski, and the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw for sharing Wańkowicz's photographs of the Borderlands. I also thank Grzegorz Nowak for his kind help and discussions about Wańkowicz's oeuvre.



Fig. 1. Melchior Wańkowicz, *Daleko stąd do światła* (*Far from the Light*). Signed: "Jasne główki dzieci za szybami okien" ("Bright heads of children behind windowpanes"), the photograph illustrated a reportage published in "Kurier Poranny" (Melchior Wańkowicz, *Gdzież ona, wiara sprawiedliwa?* "Kurier Poranny" 1938, no. 202. P 5), volume *Znowu siejemy...* (*Here We Sow Again...*) in the *Nowinkarze* (*Pioneers*) series (Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, I.326/164)



Fig. 2. Melchior Wańkowicz, *Untitled*, Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, I.326/165



Fig. 3. Melchior Wańkowicz, *Untitled*, Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, I.326/079



Fig. 4. Melchior Wańkowicz, *Untitled*, Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, I.326/085



Fig. 5. Melchior Wańkowicz, *Untitled*, Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, I.326/002

The collection of the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw (Grochowiak 2023) includes photographs taken by Wańkowicz⁴ in northern districts of the Eastern Borderlands in the late 1930s (fig. 1–5). They depict, among other things, picturesque landscapes, architecture, Jewish “*plytnicy*” (bargemen), old beggars, children looking through the window of a cottage⁵, and animals, such as horses pulling carts or Wańkowicz’s dog, an Airedale Terrier named Gaweł. Some of these photographs were published after the Second World War. In the afterword to a two-volume selection of Wańkowicz’s reportages and other journalistic texts, at the end of which his pre-war photos were published, Tomasz Jodełka-Burzecki writes:

The illustrations are a fitting complement to *Anoda i katoda* (*The Anode and Cathode*). [A]n entire series of photographs for the cycle titled *Kraj lat dziecińczych* (*The Land of Childhood Years*) consists of original photos taken by Wańkowicz during his travels to the Vilnius and the Novogrudok voivodeships in the years 1936–1937.

The author considered these photos to be irretrievably lost, but one of his readers saved the films from the photographic studio in Vilnius and delivered them to Wańkowicz in Warsaw upon the writer’s return to Poland. It was on the pages of *Anoda i katoda* (*The Anode and Cathode*) that this precious memento of Wańkowicz’s journalistic journeys for the very first time came to life in numerous photos (Jodełka-Burzecki 1980: 436).

Wańkowicz’s borderland idiom can thus be found not only in the narrative of *Szczenięce lata* (*The Puppy Years*, 1934) (Ziółkowska-Boehm 1988; Olszewska 2013: 467–490), a book in which he uses his memory to revisit his roots, his home regions of Minsk and Kaunas. It is also in his photographs that Wańkowicz construed the image of his Borderland identity, which was so important for writers who had experienced a “violent rupture of continuity”. Both Wańkowicz and Buczkowski “were disinherited not only from time but also from space” (Czermińska 2000: 118). The world of the Borderlands that shaped them fell victim to the ravages of war, leaving them with a sense of longing and loss. Małgorzata Czermińska made a list of those Polish writers who were in 1939 “irrevocably disinherited” from the land of their childhood and youth, particularly those who considered the culture of the Borderlands as their own heritage. The list includes: Strykowski, Buczkowski, Kuśniewicz, Odojewski, Konwicki, Żakiewicz, and Róża Ostrowska. Czermińska also points out that the authors of the older generation whose youth was disrupted by the First World War were

⁴ Wańkowicz used a 35 mm camera (Hałaczekiewicz 2023: 136).

⁵ The caption under the photo, *Daleko stąd do światła* (*Far from the Light*), surprisingly speaks to the title of the pre-war textbook *Światło w chacie* (*Light in the Cottage*).

their spiritual forefathers. The younger writers, as well, became exiles – Iwaszkiewicz was exiled from Ukraine, Wańkowicz – from Belarus and the region of Vilnius, and Miłosz too – from the region of Vilnius.

In 1958, in the preface to the post-war edition of *Na tropach Smętki* (*On the Trail of Smętek*), Wańkowicz mentioned a two-volume work about the Borderlands, which had, along with other documents, been burned during the Warsaw Uprising (Wańkowicz 2022: 32). We learn more about this from Stefan Kozicki's footnote in the *Od Stółpców po Kair* (*From Stowbtsy to Cairo*) collection. Kozicki explains that the reportages *Od księcia do szeptuna* (*From Prince to Folk Healer*), *Nie było nas, był las...* (*The Forest Was before Us...*), *Siłaczka* (*Strong Woman*), *Pod wieżą Babel* (*Under the Tower of Babel*), and *Trwanie i przemijanie* (*Endurance and Transience*) were part of a series created as a response to Wańkowicz's journey to the eastern part of Poland, which was published before the Second World War in the Polish daily "Kurier Poranny". These texts about the Borderlands were to be released in a two-volume collection. Their publication was, however, interrupted by the outbreak of the war (Wańkowicz 1969: 35). In the introduction attached to the typescript *Here We Sow Again in Poland* "B"⁶, Wańkowicz thus described its history:

This is part of the articles I found after the war.

The whole two-volume book, prepared for print in 1939, was revised and retyped in our house, and the revised copy was given to Krzysztof Brun (the name is wrong – at the time, Henryk Brun was the owner of the "Krzysztof Brun and son" company; Brun, who was the president of the Polish Merchants' Association, was executed in the village of Palmiry, note – Mieczysław Kurzyna) for safekeeping in his iron warehouse. When Brun was being arrested (and executed at the Pawiak Prison), he whispered that the wife (Zofia Wańkowiczowa) should be informed that the manuscript was given to a trusted servant who kept it in the iron warehouse. Having retrieved the manuscript, the wife gave it to a teacher who lived in the Praga district. When the teacher was being taken to Auschwitz, where she died, she managed to pass a message to my wife about the manuscript's location. My wife retrieved it, and her friend hid it in an attic. But in the attic, the Home Army members were making "filipinki"⁷ and there was a raid, a fire broke out, and the manuscript was destroyed. The copy kept in our house was also destroyed in a fire during the uprising. I had over a thousand photographs for this book. They were with a photographer in Vilnius because Jan Buhak was working on them. I pleaded from Bucharest: "save my film archive".

⁶ Currently, the first edition of *Znowu siejemy w Polsce B* (*Here We Sow Again in Poland* "B") is being prepared, based on found archival materials (compiled by Grzegorz Nowak, introduction and editing by Urszula Glensk).

⁷ Filipinka (ET-40; plural: filipinki) – a hand grenade produced in conspiracy by the Home Army from 1940 to 1944.

In 1960, a Polish man living in Kaunas contacted me and brought scratched film strips. He had seen children in a yard playing with them and burning them. I had no idea how these strips ended up there and who made effort to save them. The visitor from Kaunas inferred that they were related to my work and brought the salvaged remnants. I made an album out of these remains, which I still keep – photographs of peasants, Jews, Tatars, landowners, healers, etc. (qtd. in Kurzyna 1975: 116; see also Nowacka 2017: 273–275).

The photos by Buczkowski and Wańkowicz show a Borderland community defined not only by the place of birth, but also the affinity of ideas, a unique responsiveness to everyday life, and keenness in portraying different types of people. Interestingly, Buczkowski's debut novel *Wertepy* (*Rough Terrain*) was supposed to be published by the "Rój" publishing house, which was co-owned by Wańkowicz⁸. Unfortunately, due to the censor's remarks, the book was not allowed to be printed. In 1938, Buczkowski published excerpts from it under the pseudonym Paweł Makutra in the Lviv-based journal "Sygnały" ("Signals") (Makutra 1938: 4). It is noteworthy that both Wańkowicz and Buczkowski created their autobiographical tales of the Borderlands as the land of their childhood also through photographs imbued with local colour. After the Second World War, the photos taken by them became part of the memory of the Borderlands that no longer existed, a record of human shadows. Included in the catalogue published by the Museum of Art in Łódź, Buczkowski's black and white photographs from Pidkamin and Podolia are even more precious as they allow us to see the history of the Borderlands in a broad context, breaking free from the mythologizing framework of the dominant narrative (fig. 6–8). Thanks to them, we can see that the community of the writers who had their roots in the Borderlands exists not only thanks to autobiographical narratives, but also photographs that aim to capture the atmosphere of the place and time.

⁸ Established by Melchior Wańkowicz and Marian Kister, "Rój" published debut works by: Pola Gojawiczyńska, Witold Gombrowicz, Adolf Rudnicki, Bruno Schulz, etc. For more about Schulz's debut in "Rój", see Rosiek (2012: 121–132).



Fig. 6. Leopold Buczkowski, *Untitled*, from the series of black-and-white photographs from Pidkamin and Podolia, 1930s © Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi / Museum of Art in Łódź



Fig. 7. Leopold Buczkowski, *Untitled*, from the series of black-and-white photographs from Pidkamin and Podolia, 1930s © Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi / Museum of Art in Łódź



Fig. 8. Leopold Buczkowski, *Untitled*, from the series of black-and-white photographs from Pidkamin and Podolia, 1930s © Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi / Museum of Art in Łódź

Hunting for the Human, and Animal Forms – the Oeuvres of Buczkowski and Schulz

Today's war is a naive, though insincere, shoot-off.

Janusz Korczak, *Ghetto Diary*

...the more we get to know people, the more we love animals.

Zofia Nałkowska, *Opowiadania (Short Stories)*

There is yet another writer who belonged to the same geocultural circles as Buczkowski and who was murdered on November 19, 1942 in his hometown of Drohobych by the Gestapo officer Karl Günther. Thirteen years older than Buczkowski, Bruno Schulz was killed as part of the extermination of Jews in the Drohobych ghetto (Orzeszek [n.d.]). When viewed from a biographical perspective, the stories of Schulz and Buczkowski unfolded differently. Buczkowski, whose two brothers died during the war, escaped death. Despite finding himself in the chaotic and unpredictable wartime circumstances, he survived. Unable to erase the nightmare of the “liquidation” of the Jewish population of Galician towns from his memory, he addressed the theme of the Holocaust in his post-war

novels, *Black Torrent* and *Dorycki kruzganek* (*The Doric Cloister*). According to Jerzy Stempowski, “The inability to forget is the starting point of Buczkowski’s entire artistic endeavour” (Stempowski 1988: 127). Buczkowski immortalized all that he wanted to preserve in memory in several ways, including through writing and in drawings. He called his “boyish drawings” Podolian notes; they depicted, for example, a gathering of peasants in front of a tavern or a funeral scene with oxen. Agnieszka Karpowicz points out an important change in his drawing practice. She notes that in the wartime cycle of the 1940s,

what completely disappeared were landscapes: trees, forests, outlines of mountains, rural buildings, and the architecture blended into the Podolian nature, which Buczkowski passionately sketched before the war (Karpowicz 2021: 91).

They were replaced by the silhouettes of people subjected to oppression and violence. These images are strongly saturated with grotesqueness and caricature, which are also typical of Schulz’s drawings. In an interview by Agnieszka Karpowicz, Hanna Kirchner mentioned, among other things, the fact that researchers had not explored the analogy between Buczkowski and Schulz:

The irony and, above all, the grotesqueness constantly present in the drawings would certainly be then more clearly visible. They remind me a lot of Bruno Schulz’s drawings: large heads, small bodies, a peculiar kind of eroticism. We might, perhaps, consider them as examples of Galicianness in literature and art, and examine Buczkowski’s works from this perspective, contextualizing them in a constellation of Galician writers... (Kirchner, Karpowicz 2015: 19).

Looking for traces of “Galicianness” in Polish prose, Marek Wilczyński juxtaposed Schulz’s stories with the works of writers such as Ida Fink, Zygmunt Haupt, and Leopold Buczkowski, in the context of catastrophic literature (Wilczyński 2015: 5–17). It is worth noting that, besides writing, both Schulz and Buczkowski were engaged in visual arts. What they had in common was their focus on details which recurred and were constantly modified in their drawings. The “Galicianness” mentioned by Hanna Kirchner may thus also refer to a certain kind of sensitivity and perceptiveness that focuses on a fragment of the world in which the essence of existence emerges. What stands out in Buczkowski’s works are elements that we recognize as typical of Schulz’s drawings – caricatured human-animal forms. In Buczkowski’s cycle from the 1950s and the 1960s, we find a work that depicts two characters – an old man and a woman-dog. The man is holding a stick in his right hand, and in his left hand he has a string firmly attached to the paw of a naked woman. Her right paw is chained to the man’s shoe. Paweł Polit describes this hybrid figure in the following way: “it resembles

a naked woman with animal front paws, a tail, and ears. The head combines elements of a female face with the shape of a dog's head" (Polit 2021: 161). Under the drawing, there is an inscription: "PAN KIJEM OKŁADA/SPOC-ONY.../ZA USZY CIĄGNIE.../JA, JAK NOGĘ PSISKO/ CZCZĘ JEGO MIEJSCA DLA DZIADA... LUB SZCZĘ" ("THE MASTER HITS ME WITH A STICK /SWEATY.../... PULLS MY EARS /I, LIKE A DOG AT HIS LEG, / WORSHIP HIS PLACE FOR THE GAFFER... OR PISS" (fig. 9). The text serves as a kind of commentary on the roles of the characters participating in this peculiar scene, which Polit interprets as "a hateful hierarchical relationship between a woman and a man" (Polit 2021: 161). The woman is placed in the role of a humiliated animal, the man – in that of her owner. This contrasts with Schulz's works, where the woman is portrayed as an idol and a dominatrix who degrades men (Schulz 2012). In Schulz's drawing *Kobieta z psem o ludzkiej twarzy i mężczyzna z paczkami* (*A Woman with a Dog with a Human Face and a Man with Parcels*, ca. 1930), the woman-idol does not hold the dog on a leash; the dog with a human face stands by her side of his own will (Schulz 2012: 302). It seems that Buczkowski and Schulz accurately measure the emotional charge and the weight of the dependencies that are present in the erotic relationships depicted in their works. This imbalance resonates particularly strongly in Buczkowski's grotesque drawing in which the animal form accentuates the brutality of the situation – the woman being "attached" to the man. The message expressed in a non-straightforward way becomes even more disturbing when we examine the ironic aspects of the drawing. Does the human-animal hybridity suggest an ambiguity of the "attachment" – with a string, a chain, or simply hatred? Does the human-animal figure serve to depict an emotional bond based on fear?

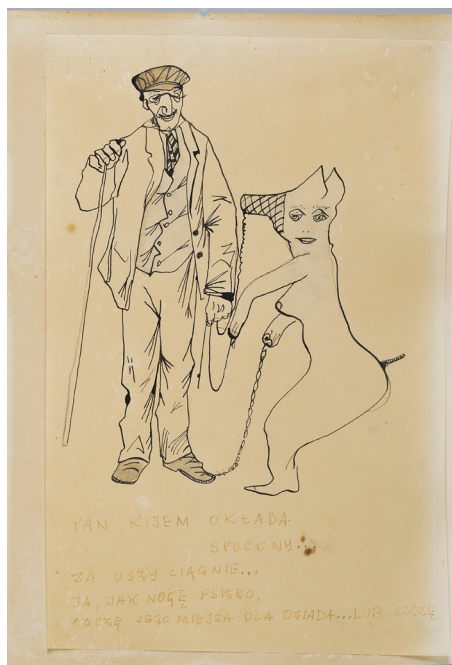


Fig. 9. Leopold Buczkowski, *Untitled (Pan kijem okłada.../The master hits me...)*, from the series of 58 works with grotesque motifs, 1943–1989 (undated) © Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź / Museum of Art in Łódź

The human-dog is one of the most characteristic hybrid beings inhabiting Schulz's illustrations (Rosiek 2003: 73–76), for example *Józef i człowiek-pies (Joseph and a Human-Dog)* (fig. 10, see also Schulz 1992: 112–113)⁹. In *Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass*, we read: “The quality of a dog is an inner quality and can be manifested as well in human as in animal shape” (Schulz 1980: 260). According to Stanisław Rosiek, in Schulz's prose, all human-animal hybrids “have the same goal: to understand the essence, the hidden *physis*, which openly manifests itself in the world of animal forms. Metamorphosis is a means of knowledge and self-knowledge. Thanks to it, what is hidden takes on a visible form” (Rosiek 1992: 58).

⁹ The theme was raised in a guided tour by Wojciech Śmieja titled “*Jak pies, moi bracia, jam szukał schronienia...*” * – Schulz i psy (“*Like a dog, my brothers, I sought shelter...*” * – Schulz and dogs) at the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw (26.03.2023). The event was part of the exhibition programme *Bruno Schulz. Żelazny kapitał ducha (Bruno Schulz: The Iron Capital of the Spirit)*, 26.01.2022–23.04.2023.



Fig. 10. Bruno Schulz, *Józef i człowiek-pies* (*Joseph and a Human-Dog*), “Wiadomości Literackie” 1935, no. 16. P. 5

The tension between the hidden and the visible also reflects the structure of human-animal representations authored by Buczkowski. Animals may thus not only serve as a “symbol of community with humans in being” (cf. Kirchner, Karpowicz 2015: 22–23), but also as a manifestation of hidden values that become uniquely apparent in borderline situations. Buczkowski’s painting *Spotkanie po wojnie* (*Meeting after the War*, 1964 – see *Leopold Buczkowski...* 2021: 154) resembles an epilogue to history, in which hunting for humans rather than animals is no longer an abstract vision. As a result of the war, the intertwining of human and animal experiences became even more complex (Krupiński 2016). Post-war literature offers reminiscences illustrating the complexity of human-animal and animal-human relationships. Sitting in his cosy house, the protagonist of Kornel Filipowicz’s story, having served time in a prison and a concentration camp, speaks seemingly casually, perhaps even too calmly (and, as we may suspect – ironically): “Indeed, **since they hunted me**,

I don't shoot at living beings, I limit myself to shooting at targets, and I do this less and less often as my eyes and hands are no longer as they used to be. But let's say I'll hunt a rat" (Filipowicz 2021: 135, emphasis added). Nightmares in which he was constantly fleeing haunted Buczkowski long after the war (fig. 11). He recalled: "I ran eleven kilometres across fields covered with snow. Perhaps this escape comes to me in dreams?" (Buczkowski 2021a: 226). In a situation of a hunt and an escape, one can see how closely the fates of humans and animals are intertwined. Fortunately, animals keep their "escape distance", the minimum distance to which they allow other predators or humans to approach. It is in those potentially dangerous situations that characters from Schulz's stories – Uncle Hieronymus and Dodo – save themselves by fleeing, strangely reminiscent of animals.



Fig. 11. Leopold Buczkowski, *Untitled*, from the series of 58 works with grotesque motifs, 1943–1989 (undated) © Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź / Museum of Art in Łódź

In addition to featuring hybrid figures (human-animal representations), the visual works of Buczkowski and Schulz share a recurrent motif of horses. In Schulz's case, a pair of horses leading a carriage through a night forest is part

of the primordial image of imagination and constitutes the “endowment of the spirit”, as we learn from a letter to Witkacy (Millati 2003: 176–177). The horses pulling the carriage appear both in the stories of the author of *The Street of Crocodiles* and in his sketches and drawings. The image of a little horse can be found, for example, in a sketch from before 1930. However, the vast majority of Schulz’s artistic works feature a two-horse carriage, in which two naked young women are seated (see, e.g., *W powozach (In Carriages)* – Schulz 2012: 451–466). In these representations, there is a connection between horses and the female figure. These drawings are saturated with the dreamlike and erotic elements characteristic of Schulz’s imaginary. In Buczkowski’s work, on the other hand, horses appear as an integral part of the Podolian landscape captured, for instance, in photographs (fig. 12). Thus, we see horses at a rural fair, standing next to wagons, but they are presented from an unusual perspective – the close-up, low-angle perspective perfectly reveals the details of the horse’s body. Horses also feature in his prose works. Referring to the collection of stories *Młody poeta w zamku (Young Poet in the Castle)*, the young Buczkowski recalls his own drawings in the following way: “I’m referring to the text titled *Dywizja w galerii (The Division in the Gallery)*, where I list horses and draw [them]. Those that were taken into the brigade; I list numerous horses” (Buczkowski 2021b: 103).



Fig. 12. Leopold Buczkowski, *Untitled*, from the series of black-and-white photographs from Pidkamin and Podolia, 1930s © Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź / Museum of Art in Łódź



Fig. 13. Leopold Buczkowski, *Untitled (Duel)*, from the series of 58 works with grotesque motifs, 1943–1989 (undated) © Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź / Museum of Art in Łódź

Apart from that, historical studies from the 1960s included in the catalogue of Buczkowski's exhibition in Łódź revisit the motif of horseback riding and even that of a duel (fig. 13). Buczkowski masterfully painted horses. His post-war works show the development of his skill in drawing horses, which he considered most challenging. As he put it, "I had to draw a horse. Such a drawing would be useful even for an anatomist or a surgeon. Kaczor-Batowski was my teacher. Everything that I painted was lost during the war, only fragments survived" (Buczkowski 2001: 172). It is worth mentioning that in his recollections of Buczkowski in which he mentioned their shared love for Podolia and Volhynia and their close artistic bonds, Marian Kratochwil emphasized their love for animals – listening to nature, cultivating a special gift for observation, including a passion for the lives of horses (Kratochwil 2021: 36–37). One might argue that what serves as evidence of "Galicianness" in the art of Schulz and Buczkowski was their study of animal representation and that horses had an important place in their creative imagination. Another significant affinity, mentioned by Hanna

Kirchner, is the caricatured representation of the human figure. It is most visible when we compare the illustrations presenting Dodo (to whose physiognomy Schulz dedicated much space in both his prose and drawings) with the works that Buczkowski created from the 1940s to the 1960s. Buczkowski's untitled work with the inscription *Stugłowy na rumaku...* (*The Hundred-Headed on a Steed...*) resembles Schulz's images of Dodo, the eponymous character of a short story included in the collection *Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass*. Schulz often drew Dodo with a grotesquely large head and a small torso. The repertoire of caricatured forms present in Buczkowski's drawings also includes unnaturally elongated female legs. In one of his works, we see three types of women whose bodies consist of a head and legs in stockings (fig. 14), arranged from the thinnest to the fattest. This mocking representation may refer to both vain female preoccupation with appearance and the humorously presented male fetish for female legs. However, in Schulz's work, female legs, feet, and stockings are fetishes, a source of fascination and torment for men.



Fig. 14. Leopold Buczkowski, *Untitled*, from the series of 58 works with grotesque motifs, 1943–1989 (undated) © Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź / Museum of Art in Łódź

The above-mentioned motifs that connect the works of Buczkowski with those of other artists originating from the Borderlands certainly do not exhaust the potential links and associations that are evoked by the exhibition catalogue *Leopold Buczkowski. Przebyski historii, przelotne obrazki*. To fully examine the insatiability of the artist who “wanted to paint and, at the same time, write a poem or an essay” (Kratochwil 2021: 36), one would need to create an alternative history of literature and art. The insight with which Buczkowski observed the world makes him an extremely versatile and remarkably topical artist. In an interview given in 1983, he diagnosed the crisis of the world sinking into progressive unification. He expressed his concern about the decline of avifauna: “this year, swifts, nuthatches, wrynecks, and shrikes paid me no visit, only a couple of swallows... Nature takes control over me, gives me direct signals...” (Buczkowski, Zawisliński 1983: 9). Buczkowski was a sculptor for whom the forest was a particularly important creative space and who could discern animal forms emerging from pieces of wood. Therefore, we should perhaps pay heed to his words: “Escaping into nature may save us. Let’s run!” (Buczkowski 2001: 171).

Translated by Katarzyna Ojrzyska

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THE WORLD IN DETAIL. NOTES ON THE MARGINS OF THE EXHIBITION
CATALOGUE *LEOPOLD BUCZKOWSKI. PRZEBŁYSKI HISTORII,
PRZELOTNE OBRAZKI* (LEOPOLD BUCZKOWSKI. GLIMPSES OF HISTORY,
FLEETING IMAGES). BUCZKOWSKI – WAŃKOWICZ – SCHULZ

(abstract)

The article presents reflections inspired by the catalogue of the exhibition *Leopold Buczkowski. Glimpses of History, Fleeting Images* presented at the Museum of Art in Łódź. The volume plays a significant role in presenting Buczkowski as a versatile artist, from various perspectives. It offers an important polyphony of voices from which Buczkowski emerges as a hitherto unknown writer, photographer, painter, sketcher, illustrator, and sculptor. The catalogue also helps expand the list of Buczkowski's artistic references. The article thus examines the significance of the Borderland idiom in his works, and in this context, studies selected photographs of the Borderlands by Melchior Wańkowicz, housed in the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw. It argues that both Wańkowicz and Buczkowski created their autobiographical story of the Borderlands as a land of their childhood thanks to photographs imbued with local flavour. Yet, Buczkowski also makes a crucial reference to works by Bruno Schulz. What they have in common are representations of hybrid (human-animal) figures and the recurrent motif of horses. Consequently, the author argues that studies of animal representations are an essential element of Galicianness in the art of Schulz and Buczkowski.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

Leopold Buczkowski; Melchior Wańkowicz; Bruno Schulz; fotografia; zwierzęta; Kresy; katalog wystawy *Leopold Buczkowski. Przebłyśki historii, przelotne obrazki*