Guide to the Zbigniew Herbert Papers

GEN MSS 527

by Michael L. Forstrom and Olga Lopusiewicz

March 2005

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/

CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 527

CREATOR: Herbert, Zbigniew

TITLE: Zbigniew Herbert papers

DATES: 1968–1989

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.84 linear feet (3 boxes)

LANGUAGE: Chiefly in Polish; some materials in German, English, French and Italian.

SUMMARY: The collection consists chiefly of correspondence and writings relating to Zbigniew Herbert from 1968-1989. There is personal and professional correspondence with Polish literary and cultural figures, publishers, translators and scholars. Noteworthy correspondents include Stanislaw Baranczak, Jozef Czapski, Gustaw Herling-Grudzinski, Konstanty Jelenski, Alina Kalkzynska, Susan Sontag, Jacek Trznadel, Petar Vujicic and Adam Zagajewski. Writings include holograph and typescript drafts of essays and poems in the collections Martwa natura z wedzidlem and Elegia na odejście respectively.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.herbert

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.herbert.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The Zbigniew Herbert Papers were acquired by purchase in 1989 on the Library Associates Fund.
Zbigniew Herbert (1924-1998)

Zbigniew Herbert (1924-1998) was a Polish poet and writer whose work has been extensively translated. He was born in Lwow, Poland, and after the war earned degrees in economics, philosophy, and law. His first book of poetry, Struna Światła (Chord of Light), was published in 1956. Other collections include Hermes, Pies i Gwiazda (Hermes, a Dog and a Star), Studium Przedmiotu (A Study of the Object), Pan Cogito (Mr. Cogito), Raport z Oblezonego Miasta (Report from the Besieged City), Elegia na Odejście (Elegy for the Departed), and Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem (Still Life with a Bridle). Zbigniew Herbert was survived by his wife Katarzyna Herbert.

Biographical information taken from the online Gale Biography Resource Center.

Scope and Contents

The Zbigniew Herbert Papers consist of letters, manuscripts, and personal papers documenting the life and work of Zbigniew Herbert. The collection spans the years 1968-1989, with the bulk of the material dating from 1985-1989.

The collection is housed in 3 boxes and organized into three series: Correspondence, Writings, and Other Papers. Box 3 contains Restricted Fragile Papers.

Series I, Correspondence, consists of incoming letters from over 30 correspondents, as well as a number of outgoing items, including a series of postcards from the poet to his wife. The majority of the correspondence is in Polish, but there is material in German, English, French, and Italian in the collection. All but one of the letters were written between the years 1985 and 1989.

The correspondence allows a glimpse of the poet’s private and professional life, as it comprises messages from publishers, translators, fellow writers, and friends. These include the Polish painter and writer Jozef Czapski, as well as the poet’s translator into Serbo-Croatian, Petar Vujicic.
The Czapski file includes an outgoing message, several handwritten notes, and seven typed letters in which the 90-year-old painter shares his opinions and feelings on issues of poetry, art, politics, Polish history, and morality.

The Petar Vujicic file contains only two letters, but they appear to provide the context to a poem Herbert dedicated to his Yugoslavian translator. Vujicic writes about the importance of Herbert’s poetry in his country, explains his choices for a Herbert anthology, and draws a parallel between the political situations in Poland and Yugoslavia.

Other noteworthy correspondents represented in the collection include Konstanty Jelenski, the literary critic and historian Jacek Trznadel, the poets Adam Zagajewski and Stanislaw Baranczak, and writers at the American Center of P.E.N.

**Series II, Writings**, includes notes, holograph and typescript drafts, and copies of final versions of four poems from the collection *Elegia na Odejście* (1990) and five essays from the collection *Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem* (1993). The series is subdivided into autobiographical writings, essays, and poems, with individual essays and poems arranged alphabetically by title. The materials illustrate Herbert’s writing and editing methods. Manuscripts are often represented by notes and multiple drafts, and manuscript leaves often appear on the versos of correspondence and documentation. Where multiple drafts are present, they are arranged chronologically. Where leaves appear on the versos of correspondence from individuals or institutions with established name headings, cross-references have been added to the finding aid from the correspondence to the writings.

**Series III, Other Papers**, includes addresses and a list of names.

**Restricted Fragile Papers** are housed in box 3.
# Collection Contents

## Series I. Correspondence

**0.21 linear feet (.5 box)**

Series I, Correspondence, is organized into two subseries: General Correspondence and Third Party Correspondence.

### GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 1</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot; General Akademie der Künste (Berlin, Germany)</td>
<td>1968 Dec 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 2</td>
<td>Akzente</td>
<td>1986 Dec 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 3</td>
<td>American Center of P.E.N. Includes letters from Herbert to American Center of P.E.N. and letter from Susan Sontag</td>
<td>1987–88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 4</td>
<td>Aridjis, Homero</td>
<td>1987 Mar 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 5</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot; General</td>
<td>1986 Nov 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 6</td>
<td>Baranczak, Stanislaw Includes color photograph of Baranczak’s family</td>
<td>1988 Dec 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 7</td>
<td>Bayerische Akademie der Schonen Künste See also: Writings, Essays, Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem, &quot;Delta,&quot; Box 1, folder 44</td>
<td>1986–87, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 8</td>
<td>Bielecki, Czeslaw</td>
<td>1987 Apr 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 9</td>
<td>Bienkowski, Zbigniew</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 10</td>
<td>Brodsky, Joseph Includes note from Adam Zagajewski to Herbert</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 11</td>
<td>Bronski, Maciej</td>
<td>1988 May 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 12</td>
<td>Carl Hanser Verlag</td>
<td>1986 Dec 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 13</td>
<td>Chrzanowski, Tadeusz</td>
<td>1987 Jan 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 14</td>
<td>Czapski, Jozef Includes letter from Herbert to Czapski and enclosures</td>
<td>1986–89, n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 15</td>
<td>Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung</td>
<td>1987 Jan 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 16</td>
<td>Dzieduszycka, Teresa Note [in Czapski’s hand?]</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<td>b. 1, f. 17</td>
<td>“G&quot; General</td>
<td>1987 Feb 2</td>
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<td>b. 1, f. 18</td>
<td>Hamburger, Michael</td>
<td>1986 Nov 29</td>
</tr>
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| b. 1, f. 19 | Herbert, Katarzyna  
Letters from Zbigniew to Katarzyna Herbert | 1986–87, n.d. |
| b. 1, f. 21 | Instytut Literacki (Paris, France) | 1989 Feb 27 |
| b. 1, f. 22 | Jelenski, Konstanty A. (Konstanty Aleksander)  
Includes letter from Herbert to Jelenski | 1985–87 |
| b. 1, f. 23 | Kalczynska, Alina; Scheiwiller, Vanni  
Includes copies of third-party letters | 1987 |
| b. 1, f. 24 | Landais, Hubert  
Letter from Herbert to Landais | n.d. |
| b. 1, f. 25 | Marchesani, Pietro | 1986 |
| b. 1, f. 26 | Musy, [Jean?]  
Letter from Herbert to Musy | n.d. |
| b. 1, f. 27 | New York Review of Books | 1987 |
| b. 1, f. 28 | Nowakowski, Marek | n.d. |
| b. 1, f. 29 | Sklarew, Myra | 1986–87 |
| b. 1, f. 30 | Sulik, Boleslaw | 1986 Aug 4 |
| b. 1, f. 31 | Szczepanski, Jan Jozef | 1987 Jan 6 |
| b. 1, f. 32 | Trznadel, Jacek | 1987 Jan 17 |
| b. 1, f. 33 | Vujicic, Petar | 1987 Jan |
| b. 1, f. 34 | Wozniakowski, Jacek | 1987 May 11 |
| b. 1, f. 35 | Zagajewski, Adam  
Includes card signed by Stella Johnston and others | 1987 Jan 25 |
<table>
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<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 36</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>1989 Jan 5</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| b. 1, f. 37 | Douchy, Therese  
Includes memo from Herbert | 1985 Aug 6 |
| b. 1, f. 38 | Gallimard (Firm)  
Includes letters from Jelenski to firm and drafts of translations into French of Herbert poems | 1985–86 |
| b. 1, f. 39 | Unidentified | n.d.       |
Series II. Writings
0.42 linear feet (1 box)
Series II, Writings, is organized into three subseries, Autobiographical Writings, Essays, and Poetry, and arranged alphabetically by title within each subseries.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS
b. 1, f. 40  [“Jestem przede wszystkim pisarzem...”], holograph  n.d.

ESSAYS
-Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem
  “Cena sztuki”
b. 1, f. 41  Notes and drafts, holograph  n.d.
b. 1, f. 42  Draft, typescript, corrected  n.d.
b. 1, f. 43  Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)  n.d.

“Delta”
b. 1, f. 44  Notes and drafts, holograph and typescript  n.d.
  Includes correspondence and documentation on versos of manuscript leaves, including completed form for Fondation pour une entraide intellectuelle européenne
b. 1, f. 45  Draft, typescript and typescript carbon (incomplete), corrected  n.d.
b. 1, f. 46  Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)  n.d.

“Gerard Terboch: Dyskretny urok mieszczanstwa”
b. 1, f. 47  Notes and drafts, holograph, corrected  n.d.
b. 1, f. 48  Draft, holograph, corrected  n.d.
b. 1, f. 49  Draft, typescript and typescript carbon, corrected  n.d.
b. 1, f. 50  Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)  n.d.

“Temat nie bohaterski”
b. 2, f. 51  Draft, typescript, corrected  n.d.
b. 2, f. 52  Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)  n.d.

“Tulipanow gorzki zapach”
b. 2, f. 53  Draft, typescript carbon, corrected  n.d.
b. 2, f. 54  Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)  n.d.

POETRY
- Elegia na Odejście
  “Domysły na temat Barabasza”

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### POETRY > Elegia na Odejście (continued)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 55</td>
<td>Draft, holograph, corrected</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 56</td>
<td>Draft, holograph, corrected</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 57</td>
<td>Draft, typescript, corrected</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 58</td>
<td>Final draft, typescript (photocopy)</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| b. 2, f. 59 | Drafts, holograph, corrected  
Includes letters on versos of leaves | [ca. 1987] |
| b. 2, f. 60 | Draft, holograph, corrected | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 61 | Draft, holograph, corrected | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 62 | Final draft, typescript (photocopy) | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 63 | Drafts, holograph, corrected | [ca. 1988] |
| b. 2, f. 64 | Draft, holograph, corrected | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 65 | Draft, holograph, corrected | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 66 | Final draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy) | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 67 | Draft, holograph, corrected | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 68 | Draft, holograph, corrected | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 69 | Draft, holograph | n.d. |
| b. 2, f. 70 | Final draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy) | n.d. |
## Series III. Other Papers

**2 folders**

Series III, *Other Papers*, is arranged by type of material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
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<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 71</td>
<td>Addresses</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 72</td>
<td>List of names</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
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</table>
Restricted Fragile Papers

0.21 linear feet (1 box)

Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 73</td>
<td>Box 1, folder 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 74</td>
<td>Box 1, folder 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 75</td>
<td>Box 1, folder 44</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects
Authors
Authors, Polish -- 20th Century -- Archives
European literature -- 20th Century
Polish literature -- 20th Century

Geographic Names
Poland

Names
Barańczak, Stanisław, 1946-2014
Czapski, Józef, 1896-1993
Herbert, Zbigniew
Herling-Grudziński, Gustaw, 1919-2000
Jeleński, Konstanty A. (Konstanty Aleksander), 1922-1987
Kalczyńska, Alina, 1936-
Sontag, Susan, 1933-2004
Trznadel, Jacek
Vujičić, Petar
Zagajewski, Adam, 1945-