

Contents

Introduction	17
 1 The Writer as Proteus and Silkworm	21
The Plurality of Incarnations	21
Unity in Variety	24
The Silkworm and the Cocoon	25
The Boiling Hot Star of Transformations	28
Mowa	31
The Processual Performance	32
The Lyrical Persona	34
Authorial Personae	36
The Lens In-Between	38
The Meaning of Masks	39
 2 Modernist Hagiography	43
Gestures of Self-Situating	44
The Intellectual Shape-Shifting	46
Writers as the People of the Book	48
The Book as the Body	49
The Book as the Sacred	51
The Book as the World	52
Epiphanic Poetry	54
The Spatial Poetics of “A Notebook: Bon By Lake Leman”	58
The Site In-Between	60
To Reveal the Presence of Things	63

3 Self-Definition	67
The Idea of Witnessing	67
Corporal Testimony	68
Polish Romantic Martyrdom	69
American Puritan Witnessing with Life	72
Witnessing as Mnemonic Supersession	74
Witnessing of the Camps	75
European Bystanders	76
“A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto”	78
The Ambivalence of Poorness	79
Guilt	80
The Fall of Humanist Anthropocentrism	82
The Mole	85
The Grotesque	89
4 The American Witness	91
Miłosz’s American Popularity	92
Lessons for American Poets	92
A Distinct Author	95
Moments That Judge All Poets	96
The Poet of Witness	98
The Immorality of Art	101
Against Lionization	103
The Witness of Poetry	107
5 The Polish Prophet	111
What Is Polish Culture?	112
Adam Mickiewicz’s Influence	113

Polish Romanticism	115
The Bardic Tradition	116
The Prophetic Tradition	118
Polish Expectations	119
Rescue; Ocalenie	121
“In Warsaw”	123
National and Private Mourning	125
A Self-Conscious Elegy	128
6 The Gnostic Bard	133
Shared Responsibility for the Camps	134
The Evil of the Gnostic World	137
Manichean Duality	139
The Reworking of the Gnostic Thought	140
Polish “Metaphysical” Miłosz	142
“Campo Dei Fiori”	143
Pastime and Horror	146
Karuzela	149
Dramatis Personae	151
Heresy, Faith, and Science	152
The Recurrence of Tragedy	153
Interpretation and Time	157
7 The Realist Perspectivist	161
The Burials of Walt Whitman	162
Double Vision of a Telescopic Eye	163
Presence as a Safe House	165
The Peak Position and the Middle Ground	166

The Movement	168
William Blake's Divine Imagination	169
Friedrich Nietzsche's Perspectivism	170
Against Nihilism	173
The Utopian Hope	176
"Heraclitus"	178
The Same River	180
Love	183
 Conclusion	 185
Situating and Movement	185
 Endnotes	 193
 Index	 237