

FROM “THE UNPUBLISHED EDITION” TO “THE ICONIC BOOK OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY”: THE RECEPTION HISTORY OF GUSTAW HERLING’S *UN MONDO A PARTE* IN ITALY¹

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ABSTRACT *The article presents the reception history of one book (“Un mondo a parte”) in four different historical periods. The key social, political, and historical transformations in post-war Italy will provide an important context for the reflection. “The unpublished edition” from 1958 is now part of the canon of twentieth-century world literature. The belated and turbulent reception history of “Un mondo a parte” in Italy was conditioned by ideology and can also be read as the story of the slow discovery of Gustaw Herling as a writer whose books are published in Italian.*

KEY WORDS *Gustaw Herling, A World apart in Italy, Gulag Literature*

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The reception history of Gustaw Herling's *A world apart* is unique and complicated for a number of reasons. *A World Apart* was one of the first accounts published by the prisoner of the Soviet labor camps – Herling was definitely concerned (as it turned out later, justifiably so) whether people (above all the communists in Western Europe) would believe his testimony. Especially since the account was written by an immigrant and a Pole. Indeed, the very fact that it was a (presumably biased) Pole who described the atrocities of the communist system of forced labor could raise suspicions. People who lived in that terrible day and age and, to use the phrase of Nadezhda Mandelstam that Herling repeatedly quoted in his work, belonged in the “prison civilization” simply did not wish to read such a disturbing testimony. They preferred to remain ignorant and thus seemingly “safe”.

The reception of *Un mondo a parte* in post-war Italy, where the Italian Communist Party was powerful and influential, is conditioned by all of the above issues. However, the reception history of Herling's book is not just the history of how its 1958 (Laterza)² and 1965 (Rizzoli) editions were (not) distributed (although that was indeed a major point). The story continued into the 1990s and the 2010s: two new editions of *Un mondo a parte* from 1994 (Feltrinelli) and 2017 (Mondadori) respectively made Herling well-known in Italy and established him as one of the classics of contemporary literature.

In this article, I will review the reception history of one book (*Un mondo a parte*) in four different historical periods. The key social, political, and historical transformations in post-war Italy will provide an important context for my reflection.

1 / “THE UNPUBLISHED EDITION”

In reviews from 1958, which appeared in the Italian press shortly after the publication of the first Italian translation of *A world apart*, Herling's testimony was discussed in terms of “credibility” and “trustworthiness” of a Polish émigré writer who had lived in Italy since 1955.

In the Milan periodical *La Tribune*, Raffaello Franchini (whose pen name was Roberto Napolitano) emphasized both the importance of Herling's book *per se* and the fact that it was published in Italy in 1958. On the one hand, Franchini regretted that seven years had passed since the publication of *A world apart* in English. On the other hand, he also hoped that since the book was published in Italy after the publication of Nikita Khrushchev's report no one would accuse Herling of being biased or dishonest:

The most recent Italian translation of Gustaw Herling's *Un mondo a parte* (Laterza) has been published seven years after the English edition. It has been too long. Alas, perhaps today the book will be seen as more credible and influential in some circles, especially among communists or para-communists, who are willing to listen to the truth, especially after the publication of Khrushchev's report in which the existence of labor camps in the Soviet Union has been openly acknowledged for the first time and, even more so, after the publication of Pasternak's novel, in which he mentions the camps a number of times with quiet resignation. (Napolitano 1958: 19)

2 The Italian translation was based on the English translation of *A world apart*. In the Italian editions of the book from 1958, 1965, 1994, and 2017, the translators (Lidia Herling-Croce, Herling-Grudziński's wife, and Antonio Maresca) used the pen name Gaspare Magi (Cataluccio 2017:XXIX).

It seems that for Herling the most important and the most-quoted critical observation about his book was that it may be read as a *Bildungsroman*. Paolo Milano used this term in his review of *A world apart* entitled "Torna a vivere la casa dei morti" ("The house of the dead is alive again") (Milano 1958: 17):

Un mondo a parte was written by a young man whose rite of passage and moment of awakening came about as a result of a liminal experience. It may sound strange but, more than a document or a memoir, this book is a *Bildungsroman* or a novel of formation. However, the individual does not come of age in a bourgeois family but behind a barbed wire fence – in a labor camp that is buried in snow. (Milano 1958: 17)

Paolo Milano's remark is very insightful. Indeed, Herling treated it as an interpretative formula which allowed him to look at his work as a coherent and well-planned whole. *Un mondo a parte* was thus not only a document, not only a testimony, but above all a literary work of art. As Herling pointed out in his conversation with Włodzimierz Bolecki: "[...] I made sure to follow one rule consistently, namely that my memoir was not simply meant to be a document or a record of life events. It was meant to be a book whose nature was best described by the Italian critic Paolo Milano in one of the few Italian reviews: it was meant to be a *Bildungsroman* or a story of 'education'" (Herling-Grudziński – Bolecki 1997: 116). In the same interview with Bolecki, Herling further pointed out that his work should not be called a "novel", but, more appropriately, a "story". When Herling quoted Milano, he replaced (consciously or unconsciously?) the word "novel" with the word "story". The Italian critic defined *Bildungsroman* as "il romanzo d'un'educazione". Milano thus used the term novel (*il romanzo*), which, according to Herling, should not be applied to the narrative construction of *A world apart*. Notwithstanding such a terminological inaccuracy, one should not diminish the importance of Paolo Milano's interpretation – he was one of the critics who recognized the greatness of Herling's talent.

Another important review is an article by Angelo Paoluzi. He titled the story devoted to his imprisonment in labor camps published in the Roman periodical *Il Popolo* on 9 July 1958 "Memorie dai campi di concentramento" ("Memories from concentration camps"). The plural form "concentration camps" (*i campi di concentramento*) may imply that the Italian critic made no distinction between Nazi and Soviet concentration camps. Indeed, Paoluzi reads Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* (*If this is a man*) published by Einaudi in Turin in 1958³ in dialogue with Herling's *Un mondo a parte*. For Paoluzi, Levi's book is one of the most important testimonies of a Jew who survived the hell of Auschwitz. The value of *Se questo è un uomo*, as Paoluzi emphasizes, lies in the fact that Levi has managed to present his individual experience as a universal story. *Se questo è un uomo* was a powerful account – it should be read by everyone who still believed in fascism or Nazism in 1958. Levi's story should silence the screams of anti-Semitists forever [Paoluzi 1958]. The same is true for Herling's work. In Paoluzi's eyes, the Nazi and Stalinist camps were both products of twentieth-century totalitarian regimes. For Paoluzi, the testimonies of Levi and Herling are similar – they are a dire warning to all fanatics who, motivated by one ideology or another, wish to "liberate" people but enslave and degrade them instead. Since the review was written in the historical and social context of Italy in 1958, the critic drew particular attention

3 Paoluzi refers to the second edition of Levi's book. The first edition was published by the Turin publishing house De Silva in 1947 as part of the series *Biblioteca Leone Ginzburg*.

to the dangers of national socialism, with which the majority of the Italian intelligentsia was fascinated in the 1950s and the 1960s.

Herling repeatedly emphasized that communists sabotaged the distribution of his book in 1958 – it was never delivered to bookstores. It is evidenced by the testimonies of readers who wished to purchase the first "edition" of *Un mondo a parte* but were unable to do so. I deliberately put quotation marks around the word "edition". I wish to draw attention to the fact that the book was indeed published, but it remains a mystery whether it was properly distributed. A note published in the Italian weekly *Epoca* on 5 October 1958 provides an interesting insight:

Giorgio Biscuola, Frasinelle Polesine (Rovigo); Ugo Ascani, Frontone (Pesaro), Antonio Galiardi, lawyer, Nola; Vincenzo Coresi, Foligno; Michele Camillitti, Laureana di Borrello; Yehuda Wolf, Ramat Gan (Israele); Giovanni Fantini, Sella di Rivignano (Udine), Amos Morari, M.A. from Mantova all write that they were looking for Gustaw Herling's book in various bookstores, but they could not find it; thus, they wish to know who published it.

Response: the book *Un mondo a parte* by Gustaw Herling was published by the publishing house Laterza from Bari. (Libri e editori 1958)

On the one hand, therefore, the book was not available in bookstores. On the other hand, its reviews, and contrary to what Herling maintained, a number of critics reviewed the book, were published in the daily press. This would confirm Herling's theory that Laterza sent the book to various magazines and journals, but failed to distribute it in Italy. In the interview with Włodzimierz Bolecki, Herling thus commented on this situation: "[...] I visited a number of different bookstores – I like going to bookstores very much – and I was surprised to find out that *A world apart* was not available on the Italian market. The book was not a bestseller and thus it is highly unlikely that all copies were sold immediately. I am convinced that Vito Laterza published it 'symbolically' in a very small run – he gave me a few copies, donated a few others to Lidia's family, sent some to different magazines and that was it. In any case, to use Orwell's newspeak, it was an unpublished edition" (Herling-Grudziński – Bolecki 1997: 102).

It turns out that the allegations Herling made about Laterza had been addressed as early as 1958. However, at the time, these questions were not raised by Herling but by Augusto Guerriero, an Italian journalist and essayist who used the pen name Ricciardetto. Guerriero often expressed contempt for Nazi and Stalinist crimes. Let us focus on his article "Tre libri sulla Russia" ("Three Books on Russia") published on 24 August 1958 in the weekly *Epoca*. This text is extremely important, mainly because Guerriero interprets *Un mondo a parte* in the context of two other books devoted to the USSR, namely Alberto Moravia's *Un mese in URSS (A month in the USSR)* (Bompiani: Milan 1958) and Curzio Malaparte's *Io, in Russia e in Cina (Me, in Russia and in China)* (Vallecchi: Florence 1958). Moravia and Malaparte were influential Italian writers who both expressed communist sympathies. Guerriero begins by quoting Malaparte, who quotes Moravia, who says that life in Russia is "boring and ascetic" (*noiosa e senza sesso*), ironically pointing out that he would like to know of a country where Moravia (who also found the United States, Paris, and Capri boring) would not be bored (Ricciardetto 1958: 5). Guerriero then quotes Malaparte, describing, at his own discretion, the "errors" of Stalinism and the rule of the "iron fist" (that is the totalitarian rule of Joseph Stalin). Ricciardetto accuses Malaparte of, for exam-

ple, failing to explain how the rule of the "iron fist" affected innocent people in labour camps. Can such a "critique" of Stalinism be credible? Ricciardetto also points to the shortcomings of Moravia's book: "Constant boredom: as if during the rule of Stalin Russian society suffered only from boredom" (1958: 5).

Ricciardetto discusses the books by Moravia and Malaparte first, because they provide the necessary context for his review of Gustaw Herling's *Un mondo a parte*. Ricciardetto observes that "while Malaparte failed to notice it, since he unfortunately witnessed it first-hand, the author of the book *Un mondo a parte* did clearly see the real and terrifying face of Stalinism". Guerriero argues that some failed to "notice" evil because it became banal: "We, the children of this unfortunate generation, have become so used to the spectacle of evil, injustice, and monstrosity that we are no longer aware of evil, injustice, and monstrosity." The Italian critic rightly observes that the generation that experienced the atrocities of the Second World War suffered from "moral numbness and was insensitive to evil" (Ricciardetto 1958: 5). In his interpretation of *Un mondo a parte*, Ricciardetto points to the consequences of such numbness, arguing that the reader who follows the story of such a monotonous life of "the human community reduced to an inhumane level at some point loses sight of the fact that behind monotony there is unbelievable suffering" (Ricciardetto 1958: 8). However, the value of Herling's account lies in the "power of truth." It was Herling, and not Malaparte, Ricciardetto argues in his ironic polemic with the author of *Io, in Russia e in Cina*, who exposed the real errors and the "behind the scenes" of Stalin's rule of the iron fist. In the final section of "Tre libri sulla Russia", Ricciardetto uses the power of irony to expose Malaparte's distorted vision. He contrasts Malaparte's "critique" with "a world apart" described by Herling: "This (*Un mondo a parte*, M.Ś.) is the true face of Stalinism. Malaparte informs us that Stalin would leave flowers at his wife's grave every day. Sure, Stalin was one sensitive guy" (Ricciardetto 1958: 8).

The question arises as to how *Un mondo a parte* was received under such circumstances or, to be more exact, whether it could have been accepted by the Italian public at all. Ricciardetto argues that the lack of sensitivity to the "spectacle of evil", which stems from the ubiquity of evil, is not the only reason for the unpopularity of *Un mondo a parte* in Italy. The popularity of communism in Italy in the 1950s and the 1960s, which effectively poisoned, or enslaved, the brilliant minds of the Italian intelligentsia (including Calvino and Moravia), also plays a role in this process. The final two paragraphs of Ricciardetto's article, written and published in 1958, sound all too familiar:

And the best part is that Malaparte's book is everywhere – it is prominently displayed in every bookstore. Everyone has read it and everyone talks about it. And no one has read Herling's book – no one can buy it and no one talks about it. It is almost as if the publisher had published it against his will and could not care less about its distribution. This is the fate of books that are based on truth and not on more or less banal phantasies.

I promise to write about such books.

It is almost unbelievable that such words were not written by Herling himself...

2 / "AFTER SOLZHENITSYN"

Although in Italy, unlike in France, Solzhenitsyn's books did not have such a big impact on left-wing intellectual circles, it is worth emphasizing that the reviews of the second edition of *Un mondo a parte* from 1965 were written from a different literary perspective, namely "after Solzhenitsyn". Indeed, *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich* (Один день Ивана Денисовича) was published in 1962.

Massimo Vecchi's article "Nell'inferno di Stalin" ("In Stalinist hell") was published in October 1965, i.e. after the publication of the second edition of *Un mondo a parte*. And, as the critic points out, already "after Solzhenitsyn". *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich* was published in the Soviet magazine *Novy Mir* in 1962. The Italian translation by Giorgio Kraiski was published in 1963 by the Milan publishing house Garzanti. Vecchi consciously refers to Solzhenitsyn's work, proving that it should be read not only as a testimony of a prisoner of a Soviet labor camp, but also as a work of art:

Approximately twenty million people have been imprisoned in the Soviet labor camps and subjected to terrifying physical and moral atrocities. After de-Stalinization, also Russian people began to talk and write about this inhumane tragedy. The most compelling book dealing with this topic, also from the literary perspective, is *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich*. It documents the atrocities experienced by the title hero in a labor camp in 1951. (Vecchi 1965: 60)

Vecchi presents the reader with such a general historical context so that they may understand the significance of Herling's *Un mondo a parte*:

This story [*Un mondo a parte*] is raw and painful, extremely suggestive in its apparent simplicity. It is not an attempt to start a political discussion, but a literary, humane, honest, and convincing document. Herling has learned a lot from Dostoyevsky; the title refers to The house of the dead. Transgressing immediate evocation, this book also expresses deep compassion for a man mocked, insulted, and tormented to such an extent that he is deprived of the elemental dignity and freedom: as Herling argues, "man is humane in humane conditions." And it is his genuine compassion that reignites hope. (Vecchi 1965: 62)

Vecchi lists the basic and most important values of Herling's testimony, which he purposefully calls a "literary document", thus comparing *A world apart* with *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich*. In 1965 (unlike in the reviews from 1958), there was no need to convince anyone that the Soviet labor camps were real. However, we should remember that only "genuine compassion" (*una pietà autentica*) can make us recognize the other as a human being.

As the author of *A world apart*, Herling is seen as the "precursor of Solzhenitsyn" (Maiorino 1974: 3):

[...] Herling's book anticipates *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich* and, in some respects, partakes in its aggressive strength and genuine resentment. Herling's book is filled with more discussions, rage and insults than Solzhenitsyn's; his story is not blessed with as much grace (in both its poetic and Christian sense) as the tale of the

Soviet writer. However, the fact is that Herling's terrifying story is one of the most cruel, absurd, and persistent testimonies of Stalinist hell. (Vigorelli 1965: 79)

Giancarlo Vigorelli claims that Herling exposes the true nature of the Stalinist system. The question of the credibility of the prisoner of a Soviet labor camp (which was seen as a given in 1965) is not even addressed. The Italian critic is more interested in determining just how radical the accusations formulated by Herling and Solzhenitsyn are. Both testimonies are powerful, but the Polish writer's voice, as Vigorelli emphasizes, is stronger.

While *A world apart* was published before *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovic*, it does not change the fact that in the eyes of the general public it was Solzhenitsyn who exposed the crimes of the Soviet concentration camps. Herling repeatedly emphasized the role that *The Gulag Archipelago* (Архипелаг ГУЛАГ) played in the intelligentsia circles in Western Europe. In the preface to the Russian edition of *A world apart*, Herling comments on how Solzhenitsyn's masterpiece was received in France:

Right after the war, the French establishment was completely under the influence of left-wing ideologies. For communists, the stories about the "world of concentration camps" were just nonsense – non-partisan left-wing intellectuals, such as Sartre, firmly believed that "even if it was true, we should not talk about it" (the famous dispute between Sartre and Camus concerning the Soviet labor camps took place at the time). And finally, three volumes of the Archipelago demolished the Paris wall (which had existed not only in publishing houses). If one day someone decides to write the history of the French intelligentsia, he must devote a separate chapter to the role of Solzhenitsyn – he played a huge role, a key role; the history of the French intelligentsia will be divided into two eras, namely "before" and "after" Solzhenitsyn. (Herling 2017b: 350)

In 1965, similarly as in 1958, Italian readers were not yet ready for *Un mondo a parte*. The political climate was not favorable. Herling had to wait much longer for recognition in his second homeland.

3 / HERLING REDISCOVERED

The status of Herling and *A world apart* in Italy changed significantly only after Feltrinelli published the third edition of the book in 1994. In the preface to that latest edition, Herling commented on the troubled reception history of *A world apart* (not only in Italy). The Polish writer points out that at the time when the English translation of *A world apart* was published, i.e. in 1951, the truth about the existence of the Soviet labor camps was called into question by many Western intellectuals who expressed communist sympathies. Herling's situation was extremely difficult, because, as he emphasizes, "it was not at all certain that people would believe that the Soviet concentration camps were as they were, since they were described by a Polish writer and it is a well-known fact that Poles have always treated Russians with hostility" (Herling 2017a: 355). An important moment in Herling's account of how *A world apart* was received by the critics and the general public concerns the reaction of the French publishing houses Plon and Gallimard which both refused to publish the book. Plon informed Herling that the "new editorial

committee" did not decide to publish the book, even though it had been previously accepted for publication and translated into French. Respectively, Herling received a letter from Gallimard, written by the then editor Albert Camus, informing him that *A world apart* was rejected for, and Herling cannot help but point to the irony of this situation, commercial reasons ("Pourtant la décision a été négative, surtout, je crois, pour des raisons commerciales"⁴). Camus did not agree with this decision and emphasized that, in his opinion, the book should have been published and read in every country in the world. The circumstances surrounding these decisions perfectly illustrate how passionately the French intellectuals felt about communism. "I only hoped," Herling remarks, "that they would learn about it from the Russians. And Solzhenitsyn did tell them, causing a real revolution among the French intelligentsia with communist sympathies!" (Herling 2017a: 356).

In May 1994 in *Linea d'ombra*, Pia Pera published the article "Fuori del Mondo a parte: Due libri di Gustaw Herling" ("Beyond *A world apart*: Two books by Gustaw Herling") in which she discussed two books by Herling published in Milan in 1994, namely *Gli spettri della rivoluzione e altri saggi* (Ponte alle Grazie), translated by Vera Verdiani and Marta Herling, and *Un mondo a parte* (Feltrinelli). Pera argues that *Un mondo a parte* is "a chronicle devoid of unnecessary commentary; the author knows that it is better to tell the story in the most impersonal way possible, because the truth about the liminal experience is overwhelming in itself" (Pera 1994: 34).

Pera also comments on how the two previous editions of *Un mondo a parte* were received in Italy. However, she does not focus on the political but on the psychological context, discussing how the émigré writer felt when he realized that the Italian public in his adopted homeland did not pay attention to his dramatic story.

In her parallel reading of *Gli spettri della rivoluzione* and *Un mondo a parte*, Pera demonstrates that Herling's anti-Soviet attitude does not prevent him from being a Russophile. This is possible because the Polish writer is convinced that, apart from the Stalinist hell, "there is also a different Russia; Russia that is able to liberate itself; Russia that has not completely transformed into the land of the dead" (Pera 1994: 36). Paolo Pinto drew attention to the same problem in his article written after the publication of *Un mondo a parte* and *Gli spettri della rivoluzione* in Italy: "Herling is convinced that understanding Russia is a cultural necessity. Russia was an empire of concentration camps but there is also a different Russia 'which is based on the conviction that freedom, dignity, and sovereignty of the individual are the highest cultural values'" (Pinto 1994: 10). Herling firmly believed in the existence of "a different Russia". This question dominated his essayistic and journalistic writing (both in Polish and in Italian) and as such, it requires a careful and detailed analysis.

The 1994 edition of *Un mondo a parte* brought Herling spectacular success on the Italian publishing market. The Polish writer was awarded the Premio Viareggio Internazionale Prize. He was rediscovered (*ritrovato*) and referred to as the "prophet of the Gulag".

4 A letter from A. Camus to G. Herling dated 25 June 1956, in: G. Herling, *Un mondo a parte*, *op. cit.*, the letter was reproduced on an unpaginated page.

4 / THE EPILOGUE: “THE ICONIC BOOK OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY”

In the preface to the 1994 edition of *Un mondo a parte* (Feltrinelli), Herling quoted Edward Crankshaw who firmly believed in the success of *A world apart*:

When *A world apart* was published in England, one of the most important critics and experts on Russian and Soviet affairs, Edward Crankshaw wrote in the London weekly *Observer* that my book would survive the institutions (the Soviet concentration camps) that were described in it. And on another occasion he defined it as a “classic”. I quote Crankshaw without false modesty. (Herling 2017a: 358)

The next Italian edition of *Un mondo a parte*, published by Mondadori in 2017, was indeed seen as a classic (Martini 2018: 9). The works published in the *Moderni* series, including *Un mondo a parte*, were described by the publisher as “the iconic books of the twentieth century” (*libri-icona del Novecento*).⁵ Gustaw Herling was among such masters as Thomas Mann, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, James Joyce, George Orwell, Arthur Koestler, Evgeni Zamiatin, Ernest Hemingway, Italo Calvino, Gabriel García Márquez, Aldous Huxley, Ignazio Silone, Luigi Pirandello, and Eugenio Montale, to mention but a few “iconic” authors.

Fabrizio Accatino published a concise but very accurate article in the Turin daily *La Stampa* tellingly entitled “Quando la nostra sinistra era miope: scrivere dei gulag e non essere creduti” (“When our Left was short-sighted: You write about the Gulag, but they do not believe you”). Accatino clearly points out, even in the title, that the Italian Left was “short-sighted” (*miope*) and that nobody believed the Polish émigré writer when he wrote about the Gulag... The opening paragraph of this short article is very insightful:

There are masterpieces that flow through history and literature of their time like karst rivers. Silent, sometimes invisible, culturally persecuted and ostracized by short-sighted publishers. *Un mondo a parte* is one of the most famous examples of this process in the entire twentieth century. Written by the Polish author Gustaw Herling between 1949 and 1950, it is a story of a two-year imprisonment in the Gulag. It is also one of the first testimonies documenting the cruelties of the Soviet labor camps, which preceded Solzhenitsyn and Shalamov by more than twenty years. (Accatino 2018)

Thus, the prophecies of Russell, Silone, and other “far-sighted” critics became true – *Un mondo a parte* is now part of the canon of twentieth-century world literature. The turbulent reception history of the Italian translation of *A world apart* (all subsequent editions were published on the basis of the same translation) can also be read as the story of the slow discovery of Gustaw Herling as a writer whose books are published in Italian. The first two editions of *Un mondo a parte* were “the unpublished editions”; indeed, as an émigré writer and publicist, Herling was “invisible” for political reasons. The belated reception of *Un mondo a parte* in Italy was conditioned by ideology. The Polish writer experienced the hostility of the Italian leftist intelligentsia personally – he was a lonely man who dared to reveal the truth about the Soviet concentration

5 See: <https://www.oscarmondadori.it/collana/moderni/>, date of access: 18 July 2018.

camps "too soon". It was not until 1994 that the Italian public was ready to accept this disturbing testimony and recognize that Herling belongs to the history of the twentieth-century Italian literature (or to the canon of twentieth-century world literature recognized in Italy). For the Polish writer, the fact that he was finally recognized in his second homeland, which, despite initial reluctance, he truly loved and adapted to emotionally, so that he could speak of himself as an "Italianate man", was of great importance.

Translated by Małgorzata Olsza

FROM "THE UNPUBLISHED EDITION" TO "THE ICONIC BOOK OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY": THE RECEPTION HISTORY OF GUSTAW HERLING'S *UN MONDO A PARTE* IN ITALY

SUMMARY In this article, I discuss the history of the reception of four Italian editions of *A World Apart* (*Un mondo a parte*). The first one, from 1958 (Laterza), did not find many readers, because, as Herling believes, the book was not sent to bookstores due to sabotage. Unfortunately, the second edition from 1965 (Rizzoli) also went unnoticed. This surprised the writer primarily because the Italians already knew Solzhenitsyn's *One Day of Ivan Denisovich* and should have appreciated *A World Apart* both as a testimony and a literary work. However, it was the 1994 edition (Feltrinelli) that brought Herling well-deserved fame. And the final confirmation of the greatness of his work is the posthumous edition of the book (2017, Mondadori) in the series of world literature classics.

OD „WYDANIA NIEWYDANEGO” DO „KSIĄŻKI-İKONY XX WIEKU”: Z DZIEJÓW RECEPCJI *INNEGO ŚWIATA GUSTAWA HERLINGA-GRUDZIŃSKIEGO WE WŁOSZACH*

STRESZCZENIE W artykule omawiam historię recepcji czterech włoskich wydań *Innego Świata* (*Un mondo a parte*). Pierwsze, z 1958 (Laterza), nie znalazło zbyt wielu czytelników, ponieważ – jak sądzi Herling – z powodu sabotażu nie trafiło do księgarń. Niestety, także drugie wydanie z 1965 (Rizzoli) przeszło bez echa. Dziwiło to pisarza przede wszystkim dlatego, że Włosi już wówczas znali *Jeden dzień Iwana Denisowicza Sołżenicyna* i powinni byli docenić *Inny Świat* zarówno jako świadectwo i dzieło literackie. Jednak to dopiero wydanie z 1994 (Feltrinelli) przyniosło Herlingowi zasłużoną sławę. Zaś ostatecznym potwierdzeniem wielkości jego dzieła jest pośmiertna edycja książki z 2017 (Mondadori) w serii klasyków literatury światowej.

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