

# Guide to the Zbigniew Herbert Papers

GEN MSS 527



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## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition .....	3
Conditions Governing Access .....	4
Conditions Governing Use .....	4
Preferred Citation .....	4
Processing Information .....	4
Zbigniew Herbert (1924-1998) .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	4
Collection Contents .....	6
Series I: Correspondence, 1968-1989 .....	6
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE .....	6
THIRD PARTY CORRESPONDENCE .....	8
Letters to Konstanty Jelenski .....	8
Series II: Writings, 1987-1988 .....	9
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS .....	9
ESSAYS .....	9
<i>Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem</i> .....	9
POETRY .....	9
<i>Elegia na Odejskie</i> .....	9
Series III: Other Papers .....	11
Restricted Fragile Papers .....	12
Selected Search Terms .....	13

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** GEN MSS 527

**CREATOR:** Herbert, Zbigniew, 1924-1998

**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 Kalczynska, 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 odejscie* respectively.

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

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## 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 <https://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](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

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

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

The Zbigniew Herbert Papers were acquired by purchase in 1989 on the Library Associates Fund.

## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 3: Restricted fragile material. Reference surrogates have been substituted in the main files. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Zbigniew Herbert Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Zbigniew Herbert Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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## Processing Information

This material was formerly classed as Uncat MS Vault 552.

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## 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 Swiatla* ( *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 Odejscie* ( *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.

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## 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 Vujcic file contains only two letters, but they appear to provide the context to a poem Herbert dedicated to his Yugoslavian translator. Vujcic 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, 1968-1989

0.21 linear feet (.5 box)

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

#### GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

b. 1, f. 1	"A" General	1968 Dec 20
	Akademie der Künste (Berlin, Germany) <a href="#">See: Writings, Essays, <i>Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem</i>, "Delta," Box 1, folder 44; Poetry, <i>Elegia na Odejskie</i>, "Prosba," Box 2, folder 59; and "Smierc Lwa," Box 2, folder 63</a>	
b. 1, f. 2	<i>Akzente</i>	1986 Dec 12
b. 1, f. 3	American Center of P.E.N. Includes letters from Herbert to American Center of P.E.N. and letter from Susan Sontag	1987-88
b. 1, f. 4	Aridjis, Homero	1987 Mar 16
b. 1, f. 5	"B" General	1986 Nov 28
b. 1, f. 6	Baranczak, Stanislaw Includes color photograph of Baranczak's family	1988 Dec 26
b. 1, f. 7	Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste <a href="#">See also: Writings, Essays, <i>Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem</i>, "Delta," Box 1, folder 44</a>	1986-87, n.d.
b. 1, f. 8	Bielecki, Czeslaw	1987 Apr 6
b. 1, f. 9	Bienkowski, Zbigniew	1987
b. 1, f. 10	Brodsky, Joseph Includes note from Adam Zagajewski to Herbert	n.d.
b. 1, f. 11	Bronski, Maciej	1988 May 11
b. 1, f. 12	Carl Hanser Verlag	1986 Dec 22
b. 1, f. 13	Chrzanowski, Tadeusz	1987 Jan 19
b. 1, f. 14	<a href="#">Czapski, Jozef</a> Includes letter from Herbert to Czapski and enclosures	1986-89, n.d.
b. 1, f. 15	Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung	1987 Jan 29
b. 1, f. 16	Dzieduszycka, Teresa Note [in Czapski's hand?]	n.d.
b. 1, f. 17	"G" General	1987 Feb 2

## GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (continued)

	Glasson Deschaumes, Ghislaine <a href="#">See: Writings, Poetry, "Prosba," Box 2, folder 59</a>	
b. 1, f. 18	Hamburger, Michael	1986 Nov 29
b. 1, f. 19	Herbert, Katarzyna Letters from Zbigniew to Katarzyna Herbert	1986-87, n.d.
b. 1, f. 20	<a href="#">Herling-Grudzinski, Gustaw</a>	1987-88, n.d.
b. 1, f. 21	<a href="#">Instytut Literacki (Paris, France)</a>	1989 Feb 27
b. 1, f. 22	<a href="#">Jelenski, Konstanty A. (Konstanty Aleksander)</a> 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	<i>New York Review of Books</i>	1987
b. 1, f. 28	Nowakowski, Marek	n.d.
	Scheiwiller, Vanni <a href="#">See: Kalczynska, Alina, Box 1, folder 23</a>	
b. 1, f. 29	Sklarew, Myra	1986-87
	Sontag, Susan <a href="#">See: American Center of P.E.N., Box 1, folder 3</a>	
	Suhrkamp Verlag <a href="#">See: Writings, Essays, <i>Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem</i>, "Cena Sztuki," Box 1, folder 41</a>	
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 <a href="#">See also: Brodsky, Joseph, Box 1, folder 10</a>	1987 Jan 25

## GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (continued)

b. 1, f. 36	Unidentified	1989 Jan 5
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THIRD PARTY CORRESPONDENCE

Letters to Konstanty Jelenski

b. 1, f. 37	Douchy, Therese Includes memo from Herbert	1985 Aug 6
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b. 1, f. 38	Gallimard (Firm) Includes letters from Jelenski to firm and drafts of translations into French of Herbert poems	1985-86
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b. 1, f. 39	Unidentified	n.d.
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**Series II: Writings, 1987-1988***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.
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## ESSAYS

*Martwa Natura z Wedzidlem**"Cena sztuki"*

b. 1, f. 41	Notes and drafts, holograph	n.d.
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b. 1, f. 42	Draft, typescript, corrected	n.d.
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b. 1, f. 43	Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)	n.d.
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*"Delta"*

b. 1, f. 44	Notes and drafts, holograph and typescript	n.d.
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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.
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b. 1, f. 46	Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)	n.d.
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*"Gerard Terboch: Dyskretny urok mieszczaństwa"*

b. 1, f. 47	Notes and drafts, holograph, corrected	n.d.
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b. 1, f. 48	Draft, holograph, corrected	n.d.
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b. 1, f. 49	Draft, typescript and typescript carbon, corrected	n.d.
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b. 1, f. 50	Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)	n.d.
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*"Temat nie bohaterski"*

b. 2, f. 51	Draft, typescript, corrected	n.d.
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b. 2, f. 52	Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)	n.d.
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*"Tulipanow gorzki zapach"*

b. 2, f. 53	Draft, typescript carbon, corrected	n.d.
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b. 2, f. 54	Draft, typescript, corrected (photocopy)	n.d.
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## POETRY

*Elegia na Odejscie**"Domysły na temat Barabasza"*

## POETRY &gt; Elegia na Odejskie (continued)

b. 2, f. 55	Draft, holograph, corrected	n.d.
b. 2, f. 56	Draft, holograph, corrected	n.d.
b. 2, f. 57	Draft, typescript, corrected	n.d.
b. 2, f. 58	Final draft, typescript (photocopy)	n.d.
<i>"Prosba"</i>		
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.
<i>"Smierc Lwa"</i>		
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.
<i>"Woz"</i>		
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.

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b. 2, f. 71	Addresses	n.d.
b. 2, f. 72	List of names	n.d.

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## 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.

b. 3, f. 73	Box 1, folder 14
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b. 3, f. 74	Box 1, folder 42
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b. 3, f. 75	Box 1, folder 44
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## **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, Polish -- 20th Century -- Archives  
European literature -- 20th Century  
Polish literature -- 20th Century

### **Geographic Names**

Poland

### **Occupations**

Authors

### **Names**

Barańczak, Stanisław, 1946-2014  
Czapski, Józef, 1896-1993  
Herbert, Zbigniew, 1924-1998  
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-