

Title: The Essence of Tragedy in Mostwin's Novella *Jocasta*
Author: Anna Gašienica-Byrcyn, University of Illinois at Chicago

Danuta Mostwin is an acclaimed sociologist, a writer, and a political émigré. Mostwin's profession enabled her to have a direct contact with the Polish émigré milieu. She has been writing prose dealing with the Polish immigrants' issues since 1958. Mostwin's literary work belongs to the canon of the Polish-American émigré literature. Her prose is a valuable source that offers insights into the complex circumstances of the immigrants' uprooted lives.

Jocasta is Danuta Mostwin's short story translated into English, included in the book entitled *Testaments: Two Novellas of Emigration and Exile*. The tale documents struggles and experiences of Henryka Szatkowska and her family who arrive in the United States after World War II in search of a better life in a new society. Throughout their life in "a new country" Henryka and her son, Jan seek what Mostwin calls "a third value," the ability to preserve one's identity and create a new self by exploring American culture and enriching oneself with its values and essentials to lead a contented and fulfilled life. However, the "madness" of their traumatic past complicates their path to achieve their "American dream."

This paper will examine how Danuta Mostwin applies and turns the rules of the classical tragedy to create her domestic, émigré drama by focusing on the structure of the novella, the characters, and their actions. Moreover, the paper will discuss Mostwin's inventiveness and originality in treating the universal themes of identity, family relations, language, and home in her émigré tragedy.